

Learning and Practicing Assessment in a Pre-service Teacher Education Program: Comparative Perspective of UK and Pakistani Universities

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Abstract—This paper explores the barriers to the application of learning-supportive assessment at teaching practicum while investigating the role of university teachers (UT), cooperative teachers (CT), prospective teachers (PT) and heads of the practicum schools (HPS) in the selected universities of Pakistan and the UK. It is a qualitative case study and data were collected through the lesson observation of UT in the pre-service teacher education setting and PT in practicum schools. Interviews with UT, HPS, and Focus Group Discussions with PT were conducted too. The study has concluded that as compared to the UK counterpart, PTs in Pakistan face significant barriers in applying learning-supportive assessment in the school practicum settings because of large class sizes, lack of institutionalised collaboration between universities and schools, poor modelling of the lesson, ineffective feedback practices, lower order thinking assignments, and limited opportunities to use technology in school settings.

Keywords—Learning supportive assessment, pre-service teacher education, theory-practice gap, teacher education.

I. INTRODUCTION

DISCOVERIES in the field of cognitive science have brought about revolutionary changes in learning and assessment practices that have replaced traditional testing and examination practices with student-centered active learning approaches [1], [2]. Now assessment, instead of a reward-punishment and fault-finding activity, has become a learning supportive process to facilitate a learner to achieve learning goals [3], [4]. Contrary to the above discussed view, assessment practices at different levels of education in Pakistan (primary, secondary, tertiary) have become excessively anxiety-laden, and stressful processes for learners [5], [6]. Along with other factors such as the role of policymakers, nature of the curriculum, parents' expectations; the major contributors of this situation are teacher educators who design, teach, and implement the assessment practices in pre-service teacher education. Moreover, they teach to test, not teach to learn, and above all the grading race amongst the students has increased pressure and is becoming detrimental for learning too. The assessment of higher-order thinking skills (analytical, critical, creative, problem-solving) is not given its due share in teaching and assessment at practicum schools too. Consequently, PT regurgitate the rote learnt content, without understanding to get high grades [7], [5].

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The preparation of teachers, based on National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan (NPSTP), approved by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, is the sole responsibility of Teacher Education Institutions (TEI). The NPSTP aimed at obtaining competence in ten broad areas: subject matter knowledge, human growth and development, knowledge of Islamic values, instructional planning and strategies, assessment, learning environment, effective communication and proficient use of information communication technologies, collaboration and partnerships, continuous professional development and code of conduct. Among the approved NPSPT, ensuring assessment competence is one of the significant areas in pre-service teacher education programs [8]. For instance, pre-service BEd 4 Years program, consisting on 134 credit hours, eight semesters, designed with USAID's assistance, emphasises the theoretical aspects of assessment and testing with less attention to the practical aspects such as constructing questions that may promote the teaching and assessment of higher-order thinking skills [6], [9]. It has also been observed that assessment techniques currently taught in pre-service teacher education programs are not fully employed because of poor and minimum practice at teaching practicum; and the role of CT (school teachers who mentor prospective teachers at teaching practicum) is also almost missing. Consequently, the learnt assessment strategies in the pre-service teacher education program cannot be translated into practice by the PT when they start their careers as a teacher in schools [5].

This line of argumentation leads to identifying an issue i.e., how the PT can be assessed to develop their knowledge, understanding, and practical competencies to promote classroom assessment practices at teaching practicum. Thus, the focus of this paper is to explore the barriers in applying and adapting assessment techniques to teaching practices while investigating the role of UT, CT, PT, and HPS. The role of CT as mentors at teaching practicum is also significant in this study too. Moreover, the study investigates the practices of teacher education providers (TEP) in the UK in translating theory into practice about the understanding and applying for assessment techniques of PTs enrolled in the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Program. This all is to learn lessons and introduce reforms in the preparation of PT by the TEP in

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Pakistan. Further, it helps to initiate a multi-level dialogue among teachers and teacher educators aimed at helping to bridge the gap between theory and practice and inform classroom practices including helping impact policy development. The findings reported in this paper are related to the following research question:

- How do Pakistani and UK prospective teachers learn

assessment strategies with the support of cooperative teachers and university teachers at teaching practicum in pre-service teacher education program?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework identifies main concepts and explains their relationships in the study.

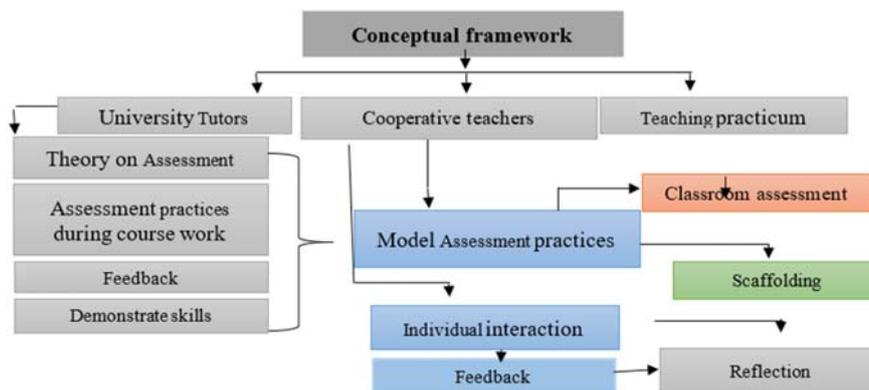


Fig. 1 Conceptual framework

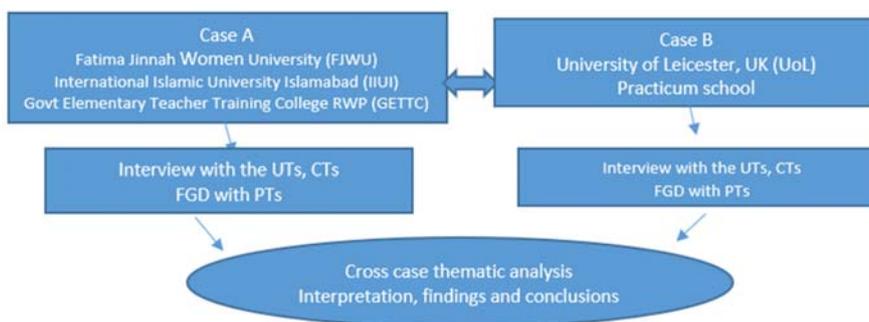


Fig. 2 Overview of the research design

The University Tutor (UT) is responsible for teaching the theoretical underpinning of the Assessment Course and supervising the application of assessment activities in the teaching practicum. Conceptualisation and application of the assessment theories and techniques are the major requirements for teaching this course. Poor theoretical understanding along with limited or lack of demonstration and modelling are the major barriers to learning and practicing assessment for the PT at teaching practicum. The role of UT and CT in this context is explored in the TEI of both countries in context to the theory of Vygotsky for modelling and coaching interaction based on the concept of scaffolding amongst PT, CT and PT. Thus, the scaffolding practices of CTs in providing the learning opportunities to PTs for practicing assessment techniques are checked too. By bridging knowledge and practice gap, we may enable the PTs to acquire autonomy as assessment experts gradually through collaborative interaction and reflection.

II. METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY

A multiple embedded case study design was considered appropriate to investigate the complex nature of the research

problem that required holistic investigation, and involved more than one sub-unit of analysis within the case. The design was useful in understanding PT, UT, CT perspectives, learning and practicing assessment at teaching practicum in BED 4 Years pre-service program in comparative perspective. Case study is the best method when the researcher intends to: (i) define the topic broadly and not narrowly; (ii) cover the complex and contextual conditions; and (iii) rely on multiple sources of evidence rather than single [10]. Furthermore, the embedded nature of the design allows the researchers to combine the multiple means of data to triangulate the study results.

Case Selection

We selected two cases from Pakistan and UK TEPs. Three TEPs and 12 practicum schools; Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU), International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Government Elementary Teacher Training College (GETTC), were included in case A. One TEP (University of Leicester, UK) and 15 practicum schools were included in case B. They were selected by applying purposive sampling technique. According to [11], "purposive sampling helps the researcher to select the individuals and sites for research

because it can purposively inform an understanding of the research problem” (p.125). Eight heads of institutions (four male & four female) participated from Pakistani schools, whereas the heads and senior teachers of the cooperating schools linked to the University of Leicester participated in the study at the occasion of orientation training organised by the University. Major and sub-themes were discussed, triangulated in detail to draw findings and conclusions of the study. A summary of the data collected is presented in Table I.

TABLE I
SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTED IN PAKISTAN AND UK (UoL) ABOUT THE OBSERVATION OF TEACHING SESSIONS AND INTERVIEWS OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

| | Pakistan | | | UK (UoL) | | |
|--|----------|----------|--------------|----------|----------|--------------|
| | Session | Time | Participants | Session | Time | Participants |
| TEP Session observed | 5 | 400 min. | 230 | 5 | 260 min. | 174 |
| School sessions observed | 5 | 240 min. | 440 | 5 | 240 min. | 180 |
| University Teacher interviewed | ----- | 255 min. | 8 | ---- | 225 min. | 8 |
| School co-operative teachers interviewed | ----- | 150 min. | 8 | ----- | 195 min. | 7 |
| School leaders | ----- | 130 min. | 4 | ----- | 145 min. | 4 |
| FGDs with PTs | 1 | 51 min. | 11 | 1 | 55min | 10 |

The Instruments of the Study

For the collection of data, we constructed qualitative research tools: structured semi-structured interviews and FGD. The primary constructs of the interview questionnaire are: challenges of assessment practices, assessment techniques and their practice, grade and accountability focused assessment, the role of assessment criteria, nature of PT assignments, support from cooperative teachers in learning about assessment, dialogical approach to learning about assessment, and the role of feedback. The instrument was reviewed by the experts of UoL-UK and experts of FJWU in Pakistan. The findings formulated after qualitative analysis has provided insight about the problems and barriers to learn and apply assessment in a classroom setting that is really a crux of the study. Open-ended interviews were conducted with the UTs and CTs to explore the perspectives and understanding of assessment at teaching practicum. Open-ended questions provided the researchers freedom to change the question approach as per the need of the situation and to dig deep into the teachers’ perspectives. Focused group discussions (one in each institution) with PTs were also conducted to cross-check the data provided by UTs and CTs.

Data Collection and Analysis

The members of the research team collected data after gaining approval from the relevant research ethics review boards of the FJWU and UoL. The researcher tried to be unbiased and controlled their personal likes and dislikes while collecting the qualitative data by transcribing the verbatim

views of the participants. The draft was sent back to the same participants to ensure validity after removing repetition, colloquium phrases and ensuring argumentative flow. We also examined the enacted curriculum through observation of classes of the UTs and PTs, interviews with CTs and UTs, and FGDs with PTs. We observed 10 sessions of UTs and 10 sessions of PTs which consumed 1140 minutes in both case A and case B (Table I). We observed five teaching sessions of UT in Pakistan and five sessions of UT in UK along with the observation of 10 teaching sessions of PT at the teaching practicum. This helped to collect richer information about the learning of assessment practices as well as closing the gap between theory and practice. Interviews with the UTs and CTs and FGDs with PTs were audio-recorded and were later transcribed. Cross case thematic analysis was carried out by open coding, axial coding, analytical coding, and selective coding. The coding matched well except for some minor differences. Approximately 90% yielded consistency in the coding, however, differences were removed through discussions. Themes were extracted from the transcribed interview data through codes. All the collected and analyzed data from multiple sources were then triangulated to provide the pieces of evidence regarding the research questions.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

The themes which emerged from this integration of qualitative interview, FGDs and learning session observation in the three TEPs of Pakistan and one TEP of UK, and eight practicum schools in Pakistan and 13 practicum schools of UK were as under:

1. Introducing assessment techniques and their practice
2. Grade and accountability focused assessment
3. The role of assessment criteria in assessment practices
4. The nature of PT assignments
5. Support from cooperative teachers in learning about assessment
6. A dialogical approach to learning about assessment
7. The role of feedback

III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Each of the emergent themes is discussed concerning both the Pakistani and UK perspectives and evidence from data sets collected in this project is drawn.

Introducing Assessment Techniques and Their Practice

Pakistani Perspective: Teacher educators (UTs) reported that they teach a range of assessment techniques such as portfolio assessment, reflective journals, interview skills, observation and peer assessment in BED programme. However, all these techniques were not reflected in the reported practices at the teaching practicum. The PTs viewed that reflective journal and interview skills are not practised and supported by the UT and CT at teaching practicum. Because the UTs are trained to teach these skills theoretically and they lack the required competence to enable the PTs to apply them in teaching practicum. Resultantly, the PTs go to practicum schools poorly trained to teach and assess students with portfolio, reflective journals and

peer assessment techniques. Moreover, the CTs have not been trained to use reflective journals as a technique that may improve their professional competence in the old One Year BED pre-service teacher education program. Moreover, it has been observed that reflective journal and interview techniques are not used by the PT due to the facilitating and mentoring gap on the part of the UT and CT.

It was also observed that time allocated for the practice of assessment skills was also not sufficient enough for learning and developing expertise. This was linked to a lack of modelling by UT & CT for the PT, which implies that there is a need for further training of the UT and CT that could see them more directly applying to the model of the assessment practices in classroom situations both in the TEP and in schools. PT C viewed:

“We need more practice in class in a safe environment (microteaching) to improve assessment skills. It is needed to place practicum earlier for us to develop our practice. We need individual attention and clear understanding about the key concepts taught in pre-service teacher education programs”.

UK Perspective: UT from UK, as in Pakistan, accepted that it is difficult for PT to apply the assessment techniques that have been learned in university lessons because of classroom situations that demand multiple activities such as scaffolding, behaviour management, classroom management, grooming confidence, command of the topic, and sufficient time, teacher standards and accountability. They viewed that they solve these challenges by providing modelling opportunities to PT. UT A viewed:

“We demand from the PT not only to explain the assessment concepts but also apply these in the classroom in the form of writing learning outcomes, design assessment techniques, measure learning and provide feedback for enhancing learning”.

Modelling is a standard expectation from both UT and CT in UK, and it forms part of CT and UT training. More regularly in UK, TEP uses portfolio assessments, reflective journals, interview skill observations and peer assessment to assess students' learning during the teaching practicum. The reflective journal is a very important component that is considered to enhance PTs' learning and implementation of assessment practices. PTs are expected to complete ongoing critical evaluations not only of what they have experienced in taught sessions as part of the program but also of their observations of classroom practice led by in-service teachers and their own trial classroom experiences. PTs learn how to conduct such critical self-evaluations through feedback on their reflective journal, as part of a wider portfolio, which is reviewed regularly. The reflective journal forms a stimulus for debate and discussion of practical and theoretical aspects to sharpen the assessment skills of the PT.

Grade and Accountability Focused Assessment Practices

Grade and accountability geared assessment practices have significant effects on teaching and assessment. It may focus the UT, CT, PT and HCS' attention on get grades instead of

experiencing and learning of innovative, authentic and performance-based approaches to learning and assessment.

Pakistani Perspective: The teacher educators viewed that PTs are assessed in terms of grades based on semester results. The PT and the entire education system including the policy makers, parents and teacher educators focus their attention to grades; and the institutions display in print and electronic media, chalking on walls to establish their worth in society. This overall focus on grading instead of learning and practising the assessment techniques may support to the professional competence of PT has been lost. As a result, the prospective teachers in their career as a teacher do not add meaningfully to their professional competence after a year of their experience. Moreover, it would shift the learning paradigm to rote learning instead of critical, creative and problem-solving skills that may contribute to their ongoing professional competence.

UK Perspective: It is notable that practical examinations of skill competency are on the decline in UK TEI examination as a result of recent curriculum changes. However, a range of the Blooms' taxonomy skills has been integrated into examination design. Performance and competence, of course, are inbuilt for the assessment of teacher education programs and teachers need to meet the standards of Qualified Teacher Status. Regardless of their route to teaching, they are examined by portfolio and observation of practice. In addition, they can study teaching academically to gain further qualifications, e.g., through bachelor or postgraduate courses which include additional academic submissions as written essays and reports of inquiries into practice. There is, therefore, a disconnect between PT and school student forms of assessment, unlike the situation in Pakistan, in response to the development of professional accreditation and academic assessment in line with regulation and developments in UK professionals (in this case the Department for Education) and Higher Education institutional practice more generally.

The Role of Assessment Criteria in Promoting Assessment

The assessment criteria used for grading have a significant influence on learning and assessment.

Pakistani Perspective: Awareness and use of criteria for teaching assessment to PT was also lacking clarity. UT viewed that they provide theoretical explanation and practical orientation for teaching 'criteria' for valid assessment. However, PTs did not agree to the views of UTs and viewed that practice about the identification of criteria and writing descriptors have not been provided for them. Resultantly, evaluation of the essay type questions to assess the performance of the students at teaching practicum in majority of the cases is subjective. It has been noted from our analysis that, unlike UK situation, assessment criteria are not linked to Teacher Standards that have been formulated by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan.

UK Perspective: In UK, teacher standards are divided into eight categories with descriptors of what a teacher should be able to do concerning each standard. The PTs are trained on the basis of assessment standards, and also are made to play active part in pre- and in-service teacher preparation from the

beginning of their pre-service teacher education program. They are encouraged to be reflective and to evaluate themselves against the given standards. They are trained to use descriptors to measure learning on achievement test. This does not rely on evaluations and grades of single lessons but is about performance across time i.e., the reliance on a reflective journal and portfolio. Unlike in Pakistan, CTs are responsible for completing assessment forms and grading the practice of students in each practicum setting. In this way, PTs begin a process of professional development, which will support them into their in-service career, moving from apprenticeship to competency and ongoing reflection. Thus, the school mentors and university tutors play an important role in quality assurance and this is possible due to an ongoing professional and program development process in partnership between the TEP and its cooperative schools.

The Nature of PT Assignments

Pakistani Perspective: The Majority of teacher educators (UT) apply traditional assessment techniques that focus on factual knowledge-based assignments that do not value practical, reflective and problem-solving learning on the part of PT. Therefore, there is a need to reformulate assignments that allow assessment beyond covering knowledge recall i.e., they include only competency-based assessment and assessment of higher order thinking skills. Currently, assignments are rigidly focused to the textbook and its content instead of the learning and practising of skills. PTs need to be self-evaluated; and UTs and CTs need to be open-minded and happy to self-evaluate their own practice, and modelling too. These assignments are required to address the teaching standards approved by the higher education commission of Pakistan, i.e., curriculum, assessment, communication skills, child psychology, collaboration and networking, teaching ethics.

UK Perspective: UTs point to the handbook that PTs take on to practicum placements with them, within which are pages devoted to a description of a range of tasks (science tasks, maths tasks, English tasks, more professional tasks like report-writing), a checklist of what to do in each week, and templates for them to complete their lesson plans and self-evaluations. UT C viewed:

“Before sending PT to a practicum placement, for example, with science, we would go through the task with the students. We would talk them through the expectations of the task and why they’re doing that task and link it”.

Students are guided to write notes on the tasks, observations of the children ideas of what to include in their reflections. Their first placement tasks lead to the first assignment where PTs reflect on the theoretical approaches covered in the program about what they observe in the classroom, linking theories to the practice they have seen and showing their understanding through a written assignment. The tasks can be enacted in any classroom and based on observations of individual children or groups of children. UT C viewed:

“So every assignment from each student is very, very different because they have done different things and they’ve made different observations and they’ve drawn

out and analysed what the children have done in different ways. So although the task is the same for every student, the way that it’s enacted is quite different and it’s really fascinating to read different assignments and how the same task actually has been carried out and interpreted differently”.

Learning About Assessment and Support from Cooperative Teachers

Pakistani Perspective: Competence of the CT is one of the major challenges for the PT in learning assessment in teaching practicum. They are not trained to perform their role as a mentor with PT, and they have not been provided any professional incentives in response to providing the services as a mentor. Moreover, it has been observed that there is no systematic connection between the cooperative schools and Teacher Education Department for the teaching practicum, and cooperative school teachers take it as a pass time game. They usually throw the PTs in the classroom without any support and guidance to face the tough realities of classroom in the beginning of their career which may create lot of resentment against the profession.

UK Perspective: Assessment mentoring is an effective and efficient component of the PGCE at the UoL. At the start of each practicum session, CTs are invited by the University for the training to start their work with each new cohort of PTs. These training sessions are designed on the basis of feedback from previous sessions and updated in light of problems and needs voiced by the cooperative primary and secondary schools. The mentors are trained to work with PTs for their professional development and briefed about their role in PT evaluation. The responsibilities of the mentors have clarity with sequenced activities to engage in with PT. The mentors take no more than two students, and the school is paid a fee per student. For this purpose, University selects schools, and the mentors are appointed after consultation between UTs and CSH. Thus, the mentors get recognition for this role as part of their professional development and its service to the profession.

A Dialogical Approach to Learning about Assessment

Pakistani Perspective: The collected evidence supported the hypothesis that PTs found it difficult to practice teaching and assessment techniques in government school settings on account of a chain of barriers. According to UT, cooperative dialogue amongst the teacher educators, cooperative teachers, university and school management is almost non-existent. Therefore, the learning of assessment that may support and guide learning is nowhere. The stakeholders do not take it as mutual learning and mutually beneficial activity rather take it shifting of responsibilities from schools to universities and vice versa. The dialogical interaction may enable them to address the capacity building, technology usage, large class size problem more efficiently.

UK Perspective: Teacher educators from the UK talked about the importance of dialogic teaching to strengthen assessment practices of PT. This involves the theoretical rationale for dialogic teaching and associated group work,

collaboration, and dialogic strategies to be presented to students based on the published research in this area for PTs to discuss. When PTs come back from their placements, and they have occupied place in directed tasks where they have had to plan for group work and reflect on it, they reflect as a group around questions such as, 'How did you do that? How did it work for you? What did you do? What was good?'

In this way, in cycles of theory, practice and reflection, a range of teaching and assessment strategies are developed throughout the year. This pedagogic process built into the TEP provision accepts that although learning may happen individually, it does not happen in isolation. Like the school students, they are to teach; and PTs learn a great deal from others around them. Further, teachers whether UTs in TEP or CTs and PT themselves in schools; collaboratively interact by utilising multiple learning resources instead of only textbook for formulating learning experiences that may address the learning problems of students in the classroom. Furthermore, social learning is considered to provide a powerful vehicle for such learning. As in school classrooms, PTs are to enter as teachers, ongoing feedback and engagement between teacher and learner create connections and provide the social safety net which allows learners to take risks in their learning and give teachers the opportunities to add to the discussions from their expert knowledge. This sees assessment practices as embedded in the process of teaching and learning with an important formative role.

The role of Feedback

Pakistani perspective: UTs reported that they valued it as important to gather feedback from PT and provide feedback for enhancing learning. However, PTs viewed that CTs did not regularly provide oral and written feedback during teaching practicum. Moreover, this feedback is not linked to the teaching standards approved by the Ministry of Education, as has been done in UK. The feedback form for different subjects as has been developed by the UK partner institution is also missing; and the feedback in majority of the cases is oral, lacking clarity and specification. The micro-teaching components that enable the PT to obtain immediate feedback for learning teaching skills has not been provided by the UT and CT.

One issue with the practicum in terms of developing meaningful CT-PT relationships and opportunities for practicing feedback was the limited duration of each placement. PTs need to experiment with new ideas, try them out and see how they work in different contexts with proper feedback. This requires time to practice, reflect, argue, and try again through receiving continuous feedback. Thus, it can be said that PTs, CTs and UTs need to be confident to be explicit about different learning practices such as reflecting on one's own mistakes and successes, explaining new ideas to peers, asking peers and teachers for help, taking part in discussions and group work. This might require further development of CT and UT skills.

UK Perspective: UTs and CTs in interviews reported similarly to their Pakistani counterparts that they valued the importance of providing feedback to PTs on their use of assessment practices. CTs offer feedback to PTs to help them

reflect on classroom practices and, either in schools or in the TEP, organise microteaching to make up for identified areas for development. Regarding PT practical work/presentations, criteria covered in feedback are: content quality, use of multimedia, eye contact, student involvement, and question and answer responses. A PT reflects on the value of CTs and UTs' feedback:

"We need the kind of feedback that tells us our strengths, weaknesses, and how to overcome them. Self-learning in a friendly environment promotes and enhances feedback and, consequently learning. We need someone sitting behind when we are microteaching, pointing out mistakes and guiding how to develop. We need criteria and the proforma for all assessment tasks, which makes assessment fairer" (PT C).

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

PTs face difficulties in applying student-centred assessment practices owing to several factors in the BEd 4 Years program in Pakistan. The prominent amongst them are missing modelling of teaching skills on the part of UTs and CTs, crowded and congested classroom, lacking support from the school administration and absence of professional networking between cooperative schools and universities. Results agree to the findings of [3], [2] that lack of modelling opportunities to PT is a barrier in the path of leaning the praxis and students centred assessment. When we see PT enrolled in the UK setting, they also face difficulties in bridging the gap between theory and practice about assessment practices. However, the PTs' modelling and practice of assessment techniques in UK are found more rigorous, structured, and effectively supervised. Theoretical underpinning guide and facilitates the enhancement of assessment competence that is missing in the practice of Pakistani counterparts.

The use of a reflective journal is more regular in UK TEP than in Pakistan. By reflective journal, PTs learn the implementation of assessment practices and conduct ongoing critical evaluations of what they have experienced in taught sessions as part of the program and their own observations of classroom practice led by in-service teachers and their own trial classroom experiences. Studies conducted by [11] and [12] agree that 'transfer' of experiential learning to bridge theory practice gap requires to develop meaningful activities that involve students in 'real' experiences and encourage reflection on those experiences in order to facilitate meaningful learning. In Pakistan, the reflective journal is valued by UTs as an important component that may enhance PT learning and application of assessment practices. According to [9], "PTs are equipped with theoretical knowledge about these modern assessment techniques but are not made to develop their skills to use such techniques and assess any progress in such application. As a result, PTs continue to practice the traditional assessment techniques (paper and pencil test) at teaching practicum that may not support and enhance the learners' academic achievement, despite holding appropriate knowledge about a wider range of practices".

PTs need to develop their expertise to use it to assess the learning of students in school settings by consuming enough time for the practice of assessment skills and a more structured provision of their opportunities to observe, experiment and reflect on assessment practices during the practicum in Pakistan, as has been done in UK. This could involve systematic observation of practice in teaching practicum by CT, then discussion with PT and UT to inform evaluation and self-evaluation.

Grade-focused high-stakes assessment in Pakistan is detrimental to learning higher-order thinking of creativity, critical, problem-solving, and imaginative skills. It is killing the creative, innovative, and critical thinking potential of the PT, and supporting to promoting rote learning, use of unfair means, and anxiety of both students and teachers. Whereas in the UK, PTs have enough space to learn and assess higher order thinking skills in performativity mode based on *Qualified Teacher Status*.

Fundamentally, the assessment of the PT to enter the profession would be best aligned to the teacher education standards already prescribed by the Pakistan Ministry for Education. Currently, assessments are not aligned to these teacher standards. This would be best developed through collaboration between all stakeholders in the teacher education provision so that everyone is empowered to understand what is required of the teachers and have a voice in operationalizing how this assessment might best work in practice. In UK, there is no written examination for the PT in PGCE program. They are judged and graded on National Teacher Standards that are divided into eight categories with descriptors of what a teacher should be able to do concerning each standard.

The study establishes the need of school-university partnership model that incorporates the voices of both the school and university for promoting ownership and responsibility for designing and implementing pre-service teacher education program that may address the challenge of learning supportive assessment of PTs. As in UK, Pakistani CTs can also find a status in which they can share in the pride they feel in mentoring new entrants to their profession and the schools in which they work. Education Department may recognise their valuable services in sustainability for the profession.

The nature of assignments in Pakistan is theory-based, checking factual information, and repeated textbook-based questions. The study conducted by [6] also verifies that theory-laden assignments have little scope for promoting the practice in the PT enrolled in pre-service teacher education programs. Whereas in UK, the nature of assignments is evolving not fixed, assessing problem-solving skills instead of factual knowledge and focusing on creativity instead of rote learning.

The approved role of the CTs and UTs in the evaluation of the lesson of the PTs is also found missing that has been required to be addressed constructing lesson assessment scales. The CTs are trained to use these scales and analyse the PTs performance in joint meetings of UTs and PTs. The meeting may be face to face or virtual mode to save time and resources. The use of technology may support to decrease the travelling

cost and embedding resources that are available free of cost on the websites. However, in UoL, the role of CTs is an effective, efficient, systematic, professional and financially recognized component of the PGCE program. They are trained how to work with PT for their professional development and briefed about their role in PT evaluation.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that a new assessment policy is needed which allows examinations to be expanded beyond covering knowledge recall to include competency assessment. This should include observance of the Pakistani teacher standards and a reflective portfolio, some of which are already in place in Pakistan. The UTs and CTs are required to be trained in providing assessment learning opportunities to the PTs to enact assessment techniques instead of only providing theoretical knowledge of assessment. Moreover, it is factual and evidence that only theoretical understanding of reflective journal writing on the part of PTs, CTs and UTs is not sufficient to develop reflective journal writing competence in prospective teachers enrolled in BEd 4 Years program. UTs and CTs working with PTs have to learn the *practice* and *modelling* of the student-centered assessment practices such as the writing of critical journals, critical review assignments, interview skills and conducting case study action research.

We further recommend that textbook wording and factual knowledge-based assignments must be replaced by the problem-solving projects that require PTs' reflection, critical input, imaginative and multi-dimensional input. Observation feedback forms, as well as training in lesson analysis, will provide evaluation tools for supporting and assessing classroom practice.

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