# THE EIGHT PERSPECTIVES OF THE COOPERATIVE PEDAGOGY AND TEACHING INTERNSHIP TO LEVERAGE THE COMPETENCIES OF THE PEDAGOGICAL STUDENTS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION-BASED THERAVADA IN THE GLOBAL SHIFTS

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## Abstract

This study was qualitative research to study current teaching practicum processes of Higher Education based Buddhism (HEB), Thailand, and to provide the integration dimensions of cooperative education (co-op) and teaching practicum to enhance student teachers of HEB in COVID-19 pandemic and global change. The study used focus group discussion to explore the current teaching practicum skills and processes of HEB. The findings presented that the strong point was the development of being a teacher every academic year before participating in the teaching practicum process according to the identity and philosophy of HEB that produce spiritual teachers based on Buddhist teachings. However, various challenging points need to be enhanced. Thus, the integration of co-op and teaching practicum should be provided actively in 8 dimensions to enhance HEB student teachers' competency: (1) Buddhist ways of global life, (2) self-awareness in health and environmental care, (3) keeping up with modern technology for global changes and pandemic such as adapting digital technology to professional works, learning to apply Artificial Technology (AI) to support their modern teaching, and using modern online teaching-learning platforms, (4) improving and assessing English skills continually from the first to the final years of study, (5) enhancing skills of learning in different or multi-cultures and

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collaboration, (6) self-assessment and professional plan from the first year of study until graduation, (7) enriching academic, life and career preparation, and mental encouraging through the online counseling program, and (8) reflecting and improving on experimental learning.

**Keywords:** The eight perspectives, Cooperative pedagogy, Students in the higher education-based Theravada, Global shifts

## Introduction

The teaching practicum is the highlight of the teacher program. There are possible insignificant differences in teaching practicums among countries. However, the systematic and standardized teaching practicum is a key for professional development (TCT, 2019c). Therefore, the teaching practicum models, systems, and operational processes are the factor in real-world work (MOE, 2019d; OECD, 2019a; UN, 2020). Additionally, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2019, p. 13) created the new 2019 indicators' framework of education focusing on the output, outcome, and impact on jobs and the globe. The OECD (2019a, p. 13) presented the five steps of the educational process: input (financial human, physical resources, education policy, and legislation), process (participation and progression through educational systems, institutions, and classrooms), output indicators (analysis of the achievement characteristics of the educational accomplishment), outcome indicators (the direct effect of the education systems' output such as employability, earning advantages of pursuing more knowledge, and higher learning), and impact indicators (the long-term indirect effect of the consequences, such as skills of perception, knowledge, ability, life and social well-being, social cohesion, harmony, and equity, as well as growth and changes of economic) (OECD, 2019a, p. 13). OECD (2016) showed explicit evidence that the caliber of a teacher is the most remarkable aspect in school determination and the achievement of learners. Besides, the teaching profession needs top talent and high ability and skills (CCE, 2020). The teaching profession should be enhanced with high-standard training approaches. OECD (2014) stated that enhancing the teacher training system improves the teachers' quality, competency, and productivity. Delivering and transferring knowledge methodologies with technological skill, information communication technology use, and problem-solving skills should be inculcated effectively while closely

focusing on student center learning (Assunção Flores & Gago, 2020; Laksmiwati, Adams, & Sulistyawati, 2022). The UN (2020) provided the aims of the 2030 global education coalition to improve remote learning with technology and utilize limited resources. These aims create equitable universal access to education and cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. OECD (2014) stated that prospective teachers must fulfill a minimum of hours for optional and mandatory didactics and pedagogical courses to complete the teaching practicum. Most OECD countries have a teaching practicum duration of 70–120 days as a format of teaching qualification. Russia, Spain, Korea, Turkey, and Japan provide teaching practicum duration of fewer than 40 days. They focus on assessing student teachers using paper-and-pencil examinations (OECD, 2014).

Understandably, the student teacher regards practicum practicing as the most effective strategy, allowing students to meet the real-world profession (Groundwater-Smith, Ewing, & Le Cornu, 2006). In some countries such as the UK, New Zealand, Australia, and Finland, all student teachers enhance real work through their teaching practicum and professional development at schools. For example, The National Teachers' Council in New Zealand supports and approves teachers' education programs and establishes and maintains the standards for teacher registration and practicum operation (TCAN, 2020).

Teaching Practicum Method in Thailand: From the academic year 2019, the Bachelor of Education program must learn and enhance the teaching profession according to the new MOE announcement that the teaching practicum must be no fewer than 34 credits of all curriculum credits. Such credits consist of theoretical and practical learning (at least 20 credits) and teaching practicum in educational institutions for not less than one year (at least 12 credits) (MOE, 2019a). The **t**eaching practicum method in Thailand is strictly arranged according to the new MOE announcement in 2019, which provides the details below (MOE, 2019a). Higher educational institutions should provide close systematic cooperation for online and offline teaching practicum supervision by providing supervising teachers and mentors who have professional experience standard and quality. This procedure is collaborated to integrate knowledge content with the real learning conditions in schools, communities, learning environments, and work institutions as a Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) approach (MOE, 2019a).

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Teaching Practicum Standard in Thailand**:** The teaching practicum is essential to building the teaching profession in real situations (Dlamini, 2018). To produce graduate teachers, higher educational institutions must provide the training for teaching professional experience every year, from the first year to the last year of learning. This approach aims to continually improve student teachers' knowledge and teaching profession experiences, create a useful perspective of the teachers' career, and increase a concentration of professional experience training (MOE, 2019d). Higher educational institutions should arrange practical teaching experience in the role of the teacher in educational institutions throughout the semester, not only in the fourth year of practicing the teaching practicum (MOE, 2019a). Higher educational institutions must create external cooperation with educational institutions to provide real teaching skills and create readiness for the teaching profession when working in schools (MOE, 2019a, 2019b). Moreover, in 2019, the MOE announced that the the Teachers' Council of Thailand has a total duty to issue teacher licenses and control the quality of Thai teachers (MOE, 2019a). The Teachers' Council of Thailand provides the regulations on the professional standards (fourth edition) (TCT, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c): (a) Professional knowledge and experience standard means the relevant desire for learning or educational management, which emphasizes knowledge and experience in the development of professionals. Student teachers must have adequate learning or educational management knowledge and experience for their professional work (TCT, 2019c), (b) Performance standard means specifications of the performance and professional development behavior in the educational profession. Student teachers should attain the experience learning goals and continually develop the teaching skills (TCT, 2019c), and (c) The standard of personal conduct means the professional ethics outlined in the pattern of the teacher conduct. These ethics are for the student teachers who practice in the teaching practicum. They should abide by and maintain the reputation and prestige of the teaching profession for society and service recipients (TCT, 2019c).

Cooperative Education: Co-op was first introduced and implemented in a Thai higher education institution in 1993. Due to its effective results, it has been adopted and applied in many higher educational institutions with the MOE support. Presently, the Thai Association for Cooperative Education (TACE) supports co-op nationally (TACE, 2009, p. 5), and the World Association for Cooperative Education (WACE) enhances students' co-op nationally and internationally (WACE, 2020). Thus, co-op can provide students with real workplace experiences. It is an essential instrument to create the 21st century

competency of graduate teachers, such as adaptivity, creativity, morality, ethics, strong mind, adaptability, teacher spirit, and quality (Kim, 2019; MOE, 2019d; TACE, 2010). Therefore, co-op is an essential tool that allows students to gain knowledge and real experiences and enhance digital technology information use, information communication technology, skills, and 21$^{st}$ century competencies of professional life and career development (Crump & Johnsson, 2011; Muyengwa & Jita, 2021; Rook & Sloan, 2021). It is also an active means to fulfill those rapid changes (Srisa-arn, 2016) and can effectively produce the desired quality and rabidly prepare graduates (Groenewald, Drysdale, Chiupka, & Johnston, 2011; TACE, 2009, p. 5; WACE, 2020).

The achievement results of co-op are to enhance graduate production and employability. In 2002, office of higher education commission of Thailand announced a robust policy to support co-op into higher educational institutions in Thailand. Thai association for cooperative education helps function co-op in Thailand (TACE, 2009, 2010). It enhances the special skills, knowledge, and abilities in the professional area. It also improves human skills such as job skills, leadership, problem-solving, teamwork, and global competence nationally and internationally (TACE, 2009, 2010). Hence, to operate co-op around Thai higher educational institutions, office of higher education commission of Thailand creates a connection to cooperate with Thai association for cooperative education to manipulate effectively Thai higher educational institutions and their staff. Office of higher education commission of Thailand and Thai association for cooperative education arrange the workshops, training programs, and courses on cooperative education for the good perceptions of the active role and essential responsibility (TACE, 2009, 2010). Co-op operation is flexible in many forms, such as two or three periods, the third and fourth years of study (TACE, 2009, p. 5).

Teaching Practicum of HEB in Thailand: HEB in Thailand has been following the stand of teaching practicum of MOE. However, it has not yet been successful because most Buddhism teachers teach students to memorize Buddhist discourses and histories instead of applying the Buddha's profound teachings into their daily life (Pataraporn, 2011). HEB still face the challenge of pandemic, global changing as well as the reducing students' admission each year. As the results, the researcher feels that this research would provide the dimensions to enhance student teachers for HEB in COVID-19 pandemic and

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global changing using the integration dimensions of co-op and teaching practicum.

## Research objectives

1. To study current teaching practicum processes of HEB.

2. To provide the integration dimensions of co-op and teaching practicum to enhance student teachers for HEB in COVID-19 pandemic and global changing.

## Literature Reviews

Teachers are the most important part of education for national development (TCT, 2020). Teacher production presently focuses on increasing the standard performance and spiritual teachers (Aiemphaya, Noymanee, Anukulwech, & Raso, 2021). They can be enhanced through learning standards, such as supportive learning networks; effective collaboration systems among higher educational institutions, schools, and communities; and digital technology (TCT, 2020; Winithasathitkul, 2020). In Thailand, the teaching practicum method is an essential approach for creating graduate teachers according to the teachers' competency (MOE, 2019d, 2020). Since the academic year 2019, the Ministry of Education, Thailand (MOE) has provided the new announcement that teacher production must rely on a competency-based rather than a content-based approach and focus on the competency of self-learning ability and potential to research for the development of innovation to improve learners (MOE, 2019d). Teachers' competency is a combined form of a relevant set of attitudes, knowledge, abilities, and skills (Rossi & Lopez, 2017) to create a distinct teaching ability that enhances and empowers learners (GOA, 2018, p. 13).

Thai teachers' competencies are based on McClelland's (a psychologist at Harvard University) concept of competency as the personal attributes relevant to the work performance results consisting of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other work attributes (OBEC, 2010). Thai teachers' competencies also include the behavioral characteristics that support the personnel in an organization to work with outstanding results more than others in various situations (Ulla & Winitkun, 2018). Consequently, Thai teacher competencies consist of two major

types: core competency and functional competency. Core competency comprises five items: work achievement ability, service mind skill, self-development skill, teamwork skill, and professional ethics and morals. Functional competency contains six items: course and program management skills, learning development ability, classroom administration and management skills, learners' improvement with research skills, teacher leadership, and building relationship with the community for teaching-learning management (MOE, 2019d; OBEC, 2010).

Presently, modern teachers' competency and teacher production methods are crucial factors to develop the country and human resources per the change in the dynamic world and the advancement of digital technology affecting human learning in the 21st century, as well as the development of new integrated science and cross-culture (MOE, 2019d; Nguyen, 2021; Ulla & Winitkun, 2018). Therefore, the goal of the current teacher education, practicum, and development is to create a modernized teacher meeting both national development strategies and learning in the digital world (Benedek, 2020; Galaczi, Nye, Poulter, & Allen, 2018). The Teachers' Council of Thailand also provides new standard learning outcomes of six learning domains: code of conduct development; knowledge development; cognitive improvement; interpersonal relationship and responsibility skills; numerical analysis, communication, and technology implementation skills; and learning management for graduate teacher methods (TCT, 2019c).

## Research Methodology

Focus group discussion was an instrument to study current teaching practicum processes of HEB. The focus group discussion was beneficial for description findings, in which statistics or quantitative approach was not available, and it was an active instruction (Krueger, 1988; Morgan, 1988; Stewart & Kamins, 1993). The focus group discussion was arranged according to the six steps: (1) preparing the main objectives and essential questions, (2) developing a meeting agenda, (3) planning to record information and use technology, (4) identifying and inviting suitable focus group discussion participants, (5) discussing according to the agenda, and (6) concluding the focus group discussion meeting.

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The focus group discussion instrument was open-ended questions on the following 5 main perspectives:

**Table 1** The focus group discussion instrument with the 5 main perspectives

| No | Questions |
|----|-----------|
| 1 | What do you think about the current teaching practicum process results, strengths, and weaknesses? |
| 2 | How possible is it to use co-op to develop teaching practicum by keeping and following Teachers' Council regulations and requirements and the MOE announcement of teacher production? |
| 3 | Could any co-op issues, such as career preparation, be used to improve the teaching practicum process in order to enhance competency, competitive ability, and employability? |
| 4 | Would any distinguished indicators, such as being spiritual teachers, 21st century and COVID-19, and technology use, be the essential outcomes of the model? |
| 5 | How can we apply the model to enhance student teachers during their teaching practicum? |

The participants were eight representatives of co-op, teaching practicum, educational experts, and student teachers using the purposive selection. The focus group discussion was conducted by volunteers in co-op, teaching practicum, and teaching fields. The characteristics of the eight volunteers are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2** Characteristics of the eight volunteers

| Volunteer no. | Gender/status | Field of expertise/study |
|---------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| V1 | Female | Co-op |
| V2 | Monk | Co-op and teaching practicum |
| V3 | Nun | Teaching practicum |
| V4 | Female | Teaching practicum |
| V5 | Female | Co-op |
| V6 | Female | School teaching |
| V7 | Female | Fifth-year teaching practicum students |

| Volunteer no. | Gender/status | Field of expertise/study |
|---|---|---|
| V8 | Female | Fifth-year teaching practicum students |

### Data Collection and Analysis

The focus group discussion was held in December 2020 for 120 minutes with 8 volunteers. Data analysis was conducted by considering the key elements of three processes of teaching practicum (before, during, and after processes). It was performed from the open-ended question form, sound recording, and volunteers' description. Data were reviewed and analyzed per the following sequence (Berg & Lune, 2014, pp. 338-339): (1) data would be gathered and crated into the manuscript to be read; (2) code would be methodically developed for analysis; (3) manuscript would be sorted by words, patterns, grouping, similar terms, items, categories, phrases, relationships, and disparities; (4) Isolate meaningful patterns and processes would be sorted and examined; and (5) patterns would be identified and discussed and integrated with the related studies to generate the part of content analysis that could be counted and created in thematic content analysis (Berg & Lune, 2014, pp. 338-339).

# Results

**Focus Group Discussion Results**: The semi-structured focus group discussion interview format provided eight volunteers the chance to share (Table 1) their opinions and asked follow-up questions to collect richer and more compelling data (Finn & McInnis, 2014). It was conducted for 120 minutes in December 2020.The results were presented according to the five questions.

**1.What do you think about the current teaching practicum process, such as the strengths and weaknesses of HEB' teaching practicum and the results of the current teaching practicum process?**

V2: for HEB, both priest and lay students have been using the same standard criteria for co-op and the teaching practicum. However, it will be better to create unique standard criteria more appropriate for them. For example, their work and jobs in the temple, social service, and priest duty integrate with their fields of study.

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V1: HEB should provide specific criteria and assessments for priest students, different from those for lay students, during their teaching practicum or co-op. It is interesting.

V3: teaching practicum students of Buddhist universities mostly have humble and polite characteristics which come from learning and practicing Buddhism in HEB. We are still weak in adaptive and life skills.

V6: HEB should enhance adaptive, life, and active skills.

V2: in the teaching practicum, preparation should encourage more technology use and English skills for students.

V7 and V8: we need English skills to prepare for teacher examination, want universities to provide future government teacher examination training, and can use the online system to continue improving our skills and be more confident in teaching and English use.

**2. How is it possible to use co-op to develop teaching practicum by keeping and following the Teachers' Council regulations and requirements and the MOE announcement of teacher production, 2019?**

V1: It is entirely possible to apply co-op to integrate and enhance teaching practicum, especially aboard. For example, the University of Cincinnati enhances students' competency and career development with co-op and prepares them well. Students are allowed to enhance their skills through real-world work. They know the necessary skills needed for development from the first to the final year of study. However, in Thailand, we do not plan students' competency development for each year or let them explore through real-world work from the first to the final year of learning. They can accumulate knowledge and adjust and improve themselves well through co-op or the teaching practicum in the final year only. Students should know their self-assessment with career development.

V2: we can provide the indicators of Buddhist teachings with the Thai qualification framework for co-op and teaching practicum students; thus, students can practice and improve themselves effectively based on the identity of Buddhist universities.

**3. Could any co-op issues, such as career preparation, process, and conclusion, be used to enhance the teaching practicum process in order to improve competitive ability and employability?**

V1: absolutely, we can apply career preparation, process, and development, which are co-op's essential ideas. Because co-op focuses on ready-to-work graduates and future career preparation, the curriculum and teaching practicum process and management should plan and well embed career preparation and let students perform every academic year. For example, they can teach or work in the summer. We can also create career networks with schools, workplaces, and alumni, as well as job fairs, to encourage them. Hence, they will have more skills and better prepare themselves for future work and competitions.

V6: yes, students can work with schools as volunteers.

V2–V5: it will be good if HEB can create a strong network and curriculum focusing more on career preparation, real-world competition, and employability.

**4. Would any distinguished indicators, such as being spiritual teachers, 21st century and COVID-19, and technology use, be the essential outcomes of the model?**

V2: yes, the model should include technology skills for the COVID-19 pandemic, enhance distance learning, develop English skills.

V6: most students have good conduct, but they should increase the teacher's responsibility and enthusiasm for work.

V7–V8: during the teaching practicum, we want to improve more skills and supervise online.

**5. How can we enhance student teachers during their teaching practicum this this pandemic?**

V3: right now, all the fifth-year student teachers are already in the second year. Thus, we can enhance and prepare the skills they most need during and after the teaching practicum, such as online technology skills for COVID-19, motivation for their life, and work skills.

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V2: students had to prepare their research works and reports when completing the teaching practicum. Some students could not submit them on time, so we want to use technology and training that support them to complete their work and responsibility.

V4: in this pandemic, mental support and supervision are important for students, so we can apply the model with the topic that provides mental support and encouragement.

V5: we can apply online training and counselling to enhance their knowledge, mental support, work, and life skills; improve their teaching characters; and prepare them for graduation.

The conclusion of the focus group discussion is based on the five questions. It could be divided into three phases of co-op and teaching practicum (before, during, and after participating in the teaching practicum), as discussed below.

**Before Participating in the Teaching Practicum**

HEB should provide specific and appropriate standard criteria for the teaching practicum and specific assessment approaches for their priest students. For example, priest duty, work, jobs, and social service in the temples and schools should be integrated into their fields of study and teaching skills. HEB should effectively enhance their student teachers' adaptive and active life skills, such as English, online and technology, and distance learning and teaching skills. They should continue to improve their competency through self-assessment and development in professional progress each year. They also enrich their skills through real-world work from the first to the final year of study. HEB can create career networks with schools, workplaces, and alumni, as well as job fairs, to encourage them. Thus, they will have more skills and be better prepared for future work and competitions. These can be embedded in teaching practicum preparation and the Thai qualification framework for teacher education.

**During Participation in the Teaching Practicum**

During participation in the teaching practicum, continual skills improvement by effective offline and online supervision is essential. Student

teachers' responsibilities and enthusiasm for work can be supported and monitored by an online system. Particularly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, adaptation and motivation for their life and work skills are important. HEB can apply online training (about ten times) and counselling to enhance their knowledge, mental support, work, and life skills; improve their teaching characteristics; govern teachers' examination training; prepare their future work; and prepare them for graduation.

### After Participating in the Teaching Practicum

After participating in a teaching practicum, student teachers should assess themselves effectively for their future preparation and improvement of their profession. They should also provide feedback, as a reflection on their concrete learning and improvement, and their approaches toward enhancing the teaching practicum support and management processes for more appropriate and active learning in the future.

## The integration dimensions of co-op and teaching practicum

According to the focus group discussion, teaching practicum method, teacher professional standards, the concept and benefits of co-op. Thus, the integration dimensions of co-op and teaching practicum to enhance student teachers for HEB in COVID-19 pandemic and global change should consist of 8 dimensions to  fulfill the needed skills as follows: (1) Buddhist ways of global life preparation and also provide special indicators to prepare and assess between monastic and householder students, (2) self-awareness in global issues such as health and environmental care in new normal (Nations, 2022), (3) keeping up with modern technology such as digital technology for global changes pandemic, adapting and enhancing digital technology and information and communication technology to teaching-learning, communicate and collaborate in their teaching profession effectively, learn to apply Artificial Technology (AI) to support their modern teaching, apply online modern teaching – learning platforms (Bamrungsin & Khampirat, 2022; Laksmiwati et al., 2022), (4) improving and assessing English skills continually from the first to the final years of study (Erarslan, 2021), (5) enhancing skills of learning in different or multi-cultures and collaboration skills (Kim, 2019), (6) Self-assessment and professional plan from the first year of study until graduation,

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(7) receiving the online counseling program during the process of participating in teaching practicum to support academic skills, life and career preparation, and mental encouraging and provide the reflection on learning and experiences for improving (Bamrungsin & Khampirat, 2022; Karo & Petsangsri, 2021), and (8) Experience learning' s reflection and improvement (Kolb, 1984). The 8 dimensions to enhance student teachers of HEB in COVID-19 pandemic and global change presents in the Figure 1:
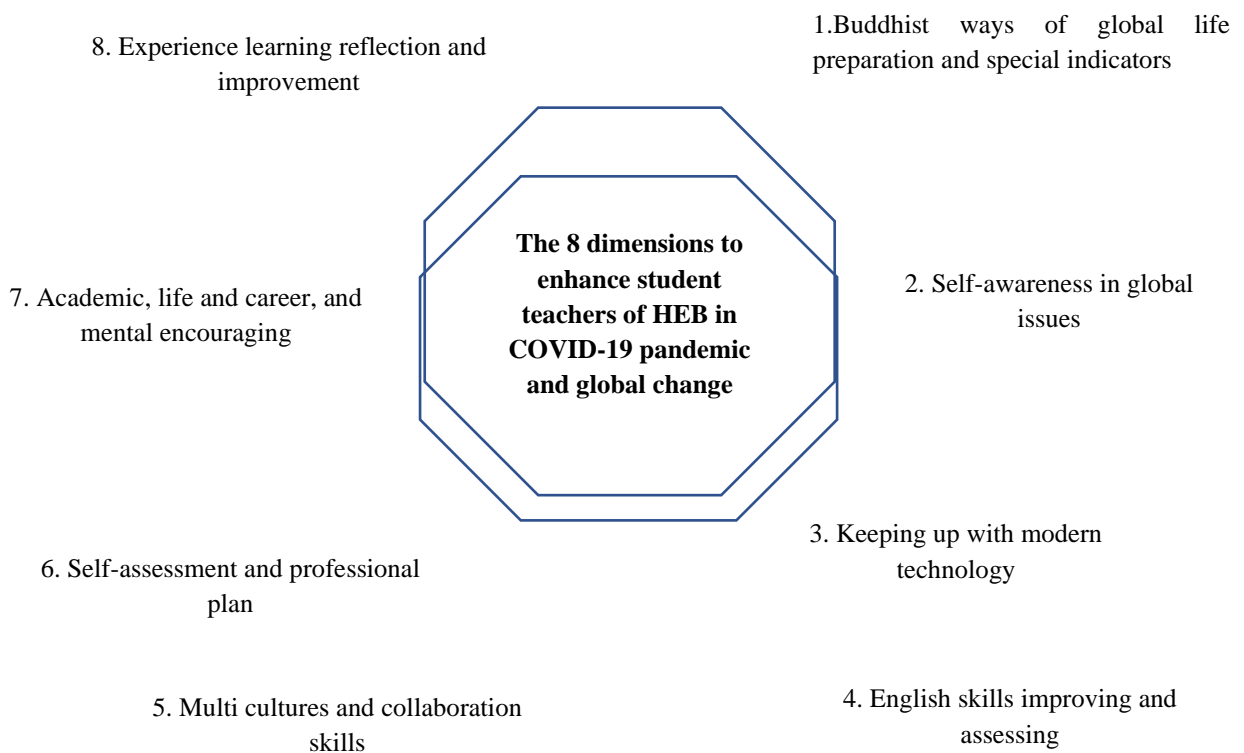
8. Experience learning reflection and improvement

1.Buddhist ways of global life preparation and special indicators

**The 8 dimensions to enhance student teachers of HEB in COVID-19 pandemic and global change**

7. Academic, life and career, and mental encouraging

2. Self-awareness in global issues

3. Keeping up with modern technology

6. Self-assessment and professional plan

5. Multi cultures and collaboration skills

4. English skills improving and assessing

**Figure 1:** The 8 dimensions to enhance student teachers of HEB in COVID-19 pandemic and global change

## Conclusions

After focus group discussion, the findings presented that the strength point was the development of being a teacher every academic year before participating in the teaching practicum process according to the identity and philosophy of HEB that produce spiritual teachers based on Buddhist teachings. However, there are various challenging points that HEB should provide the dimensions to enhance student teachers' skills in this pandemic and global changing. HEB should provide actively 8 dimensions for enhancing student

teachers through before-during-after participating in teaching practicum processes: (1) Buddhist ways of life preparation, (2) self-awareness, (3) keeping up with modern technology, (4) improving and assessing English skills continually, (5) multi-cultures and collaboration skills, (6) self-assessment and professional plan, (8) metal, life and career counseling, and (8) learning experiences' reflection and improvement.

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