

Enhancing teacher training skills by strengthening the teaching practice component

Enhancing
teacher
training skills

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Abstract

Purpose – The ongoing theory vs practice debate reinforces the problems facing teacher training institutions which need to challenge traditional programmes and work towards a tighter coherence between coursework and practical experience. Working more closely with schools to restructure teaching practice is necessary in order to create better tuition experience for students. The paper aims to discuss these issues.

Design/methodology/approach – This project is situated within an interpretivist paradigm and is qualitative in nature. A sample of four South African education faculties was included. Semi-structured and focus group interviews were used to collect data from fourth-year BEd students, lecturers and in-service practitioners.

Findings – The findings indicated that the participants believed that the lack of actual classroom experience, and ineffective organisation of teaching practice, resulted in students feeling ill-equipped. Suggestions are made to improve the organisation of teaching experience and mentorship programmes.

Originality/value – This is an original research paper and it has value for teacher education.

Keywords Teacher education, Practice teaching

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

In initial teacher training programmes in South Africa along with the rest of the world, three components which typically represent traditional training models include: subject matter, professional preparation and school practice/experience. The questions asked of this traditional form of training are: is teacher knowledge adequate? Is it relevant? Will teachers be able to produce learning relevant for the twenty-first century learner? According to Lynd (2005, p. 67), there is a need for “pedagogical renewal”: for too long teacher training institutions have “produced teachers, certified them and sent them on their way” rather than move from the traditional in-service training to a more in-service approach which is integrated into school systems. “One of the more consistent lessons across programmes is the importance of ensuring that teacher training be as practical as possible, which usually means that it is linked to teachers’ teaching experience and that it takes place as close to the school as possible” (Lynd, 2005, p. 64).

Teacher-training institutions need to challenge traditional programmes and work towards a tighter coherence between coursework and practical experience. In order for this to be effective, education faculties need to collaborate more closely with schools to restructure teaching practice and create the best tuition experiences for students. This paper focusses on the following components of practical experience: duration of teaching practice sessions and development of mentorship programmes.

Although this paper is written in a South African context, it contributes to an international understanding since teachers worldwide occupy a “unique territory”. Everything they do, as well as everything they say, models the intellectual, moral and behavioural practices they are attempting to nurture (Hallett, 2010, p. 437). This study investigates the considerations that might contribute to student teachers’ conceptions of teaching as well as the factors which enhance teacher education programmes; helping to narrow the gap between theory and the practice of teaching (Cheng *et al.*, 2010, p. 91).



Conceptual framework

The need to promote the transformation and reconstruction of teacher education in South Africa has placed this research project within a conceptual framework of critical pedagogy which holds the view that learning is self-generated and not just accessible (Freire, 1970). Lombard and Grosser (2008, p. 563) extend this thought by stating that the notion of a critical paradigm has become of paramount importance amongst educators in the twentieth century. For too long, “schooling has been characterised as using a transmission model where teaching is telling and learning is absorption [...]. We need to acknowledge that there has been a major shift in thinking about the concept of knowledge and the processes of teaching and learning [...] and that training is not just based on chalk and talk but that it is based in part, on the issues that arise from lived experiences of practicing students” (Lynd, 2005, p. 12). These shifts are reflected in the theories of Paulo Freire (1970) and Henry Giroux (1988).

Linking theory to practice

The age-old debate surrounding the importance of practical experience is a key component in raising the quality of initial teacher-training programmes. With the theory practice gap, there is a need to “link the theoretical insights about the professional development of teachers with the practice in teacher education”. This integration of the two perspectives, as relayed by Korthagen *et al.* (2006, p. 1022), should lead to the development of a “pedagogy of teacher education that is both empirically based and practically orientated”. While theoretically based knowledge is generally traditional in nature and university based, experience-based knowledge is more school based and focussed more fully on classroom realities (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Korthagen *et al.* (2006, p. 1020) state that:

Traditional approaches to teacher education are increasingly critiqued for their limited relationship to student teachers’ needs and for the meagre impact on practice. Many pleas are heard for a radical new and effective pedagogy of teacher education in which theory and practice are linked effectively.

Bruner (1990) refers to universities as sites with a focus on scientific knowledge, which is often abstract, decontextualised and impersonal, rather than a more specific focus on how to link theory to practice in concrete, contextualised and personally meaningful ways. Crandall (2000, p. 41) indicates that although “practical experiences such as observation, internship, student teaching, or other teaching practice” have always formed part of the training of language teachers, “these experiences are often too few, too late and not sufficiently focussed on the realities of the classroom”.

Darling-Hammond *et al.* (2005, p. 401) suggest that the “key element for successful learning is the opportunity to apply what is being learned and to refine it”, noting that “cognitive psychologists have found that deliberate practice, i.e. purposefully and critically rehearsing certain kinds of performances, is particularly important to the development of expertise”. Opportunities need to be created by teacher educators to connect practice to theoretical knowledge and make this connected knowledge an integral part of teacher-training programmes. Lampert (2010) states that we need to conceive of this process as “thinking as theory and practice as action”.

It is argued by Grossman *et al.* (2009, p. 274) that to close the gap between theory and practice, a “pedagogy of enactment” should be added to the existing repertoire of pedagogies of reflection and investigation. Wisniewski’s (1982, p. 3) interpretation of enactment is explained as “the master (teacher educator) working with an apprentice (student) just as physicians work with medical interns during their rounds”. In order to solve the problem:

[...] the program in a true professional school would be clinically-based and the theory-practice gap would be systematically attacked [...]. Ideally, courses as we know them would be obsolete in a true

professional school. In their place, competencies blending theory and practice requisite to teaching would be practiced daily on and off campus by professors and their students [...]. A professor of education would make regular rounds, visiting selected schools and projects each week. The analogy here is to a physician making rounds in hospitals and demonstrating skills to interns.

Allsopp *et al.* (2006) believe that teaching experience gives pre-service teachers opportunities to apply what they learn at university within the context of a classroom. Something that is instrumental in developing their notions of the day-to-day life in schools. Darling-Hammond (2006), however, argues that it is not only the availability of the classroom that is important. She agrees with Dewey (1938) that there is a need to pay attention to the relation between experience and education for which she strongly advocates that pre-service teachers need to be paired up with “best practice” teachers who can guide them throughout the programme to apply concepts that are concurrently being dealt with at universities. Darling-Hammond (2006) contends that research suggests that “immersing teachers in the materials of practice and working on particular concepts using these materials, [...] analysing samples of work, videotapes of teachers and students in action, cases of teaching and learning with reflection and case analysis of their experience”, provide students with tools for professional learning. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2008, p. 32) found that:

Field experiences allow candidates to apply and reflect on their content, professional and pedagogical knowledge, skills and professional dispositions in a variety of settings. Designed and sequenced well, field experiences and clinical practice help candidates develop the competence necessary to begin or continue careers as teachers. Student teaching or internship is the culminating experience for teacher candidates.

Further research by National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (2010, p. 2) indicates that “teaching is, like medicine, a profession of practice – prospective teachers must be prepared to become expert practitioners who know how to use the knowledge of their profession to advance student learning [...] in order to achieve this we must place practice at the centre of teacher preparation”.

Duration of teaching practice sessions

Crandall (2000) and Darling-Hammond (1996) feel that teaching, as a profession, needs to be viewed in the same way as the legal and medical professions, with “respect for the role of teachers in developing theory and directing their own professional development through collaborative observation, teacher research and inquiry, and sustained in-service programmes”, rather than the short practical sessions currently offered in many training programmes. Kiggundu (2007) suggests that there be an even spread of teaching experience sessions throughout the year. Students should be sent out at the beginning of the year to observe the processes followed as a kick-start for the year. In addition, students should have four-week sessions in both the second and third terms to expose them to the “management styles and various institutional cultures” experienced throughout the year.

The number of opportunities given to students to teach, and the nature of the diverse classrooms they teach in, result in teachers being much stronger in their first few years of teaching, because “they have a stronger frame with which to interpret important concepts in teaching and learning” (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2005, p. 411). Darling-Hammond *et al.* (2005) believe that while we strive for learning to be an interactive instruction, a form of experiential learning where learners learn by doing, it is necessary for students to have sufficient time to experience the processes involved. Scheyvens *et al.* (2008, p. 51) echo this, and state that active learning should include a wide variety of learning theories, and should encourage critical thinking and reflection.

The role of mentors in teaching practice

Barlin (2010, p. 1) states that the role of school-based mentors usually determines the success of the teaching practice experience:

When mentors are well selected, well trained, and given the time to work intensively with new teachers, they not only help average teachers become good, but good teachers become great [...] instructional mentoring programs provide a powerful lever for closing the teacher-quality gap and ensuring that all students, regardless of their backgrounds, have a real opportunity to succeed.

Mentors play an important role in developing pre-service teachers' skills to teach and manage classrooms, since they directly influence students during their teaching practice sessions. During this time, pre-service teachers observe their mentors at work, which impacts on how they learn about teaching skills and strategies, maintaining discipline, general classroom management and administrative duties. All these skills later comprise individual teaching style (Quick and Siebörger, 2005).

In a study conducted in South Africa by Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009), it was found that perception of the influence of mentors on pre-service teachers was subjective, and "varied from student to student". Schoeman and Mabunda (2012, p. 250) confirm that student teachers experienced "low levels of collegiality" from their mentor teachers. For many, according to Kiggundu (2007, p. 31), mentors were excellent role models, modelling good teaching and supporting students throughout the process. Some students, however, responded negatively:

The teachers take advantage of us and they keep us in the computer centre to type their work. Some teachers give us personal assignments. Most teachers in the school are lazy [...].

A report by NCATE (2010, p. 20) indicates that currently in the USA, student teachers sent into schools are assigned to teachers, but managing them just becomes extra work for those teachers. There is an expectation that teachers will train, support and guide the students, yet there is no remuneration or training for these teachers. This abuse results in experiences similar to those to which Kiggundu (2007) alludes.

Kiggundu's (2007) study recommends that greater communication between universities and schools needs to take place. Mentor teachers need to be supported, guided and "constantly empowered" to effectively lead, assist and supervise students during their teaching practice sessions. According to Darling-Hammond (2006, p. 300), the need is to focus on the "what" and "how" aspects of teacher training. These include:

- Well-defined standards of professional practice and performance to guide and evaluate knowledge and clinical experience.
- Extended clinical experiences – well over 30 weeks of supervised practicum and student teaching opportunities in the programme – carefully chosen to support and closely interwoven with coursework.

The above factors, they believe, will help to produce newly qualified teachers' who are able, from their first days in the classroom, to practice like many seasoned veterans, productively organising classrooms that teach challenging content to very diverse learners with levels of skill many teachers are yet to attain' (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 300).

Methodology

This project is situated within an interpretivist paradigm and is qualitative in nature. This study attempts to "access the meanings that pre-service teachers constructed of their knowledge" of practice teaching (Green *et al.*, 2012, p. 323). Semi-structured and focus group (F/G) interviews were the key data collection instruments. A sample of four teacher education institutions nationally was used. Larger providers were selected in each of the four major metropolitan areas: KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape.

Purposive sampling was applied in order to find a “more closely defined group for whom the research question would be significant” (Smith and Osborn, 2008, p. 56). The researchers considered the participants who, according to their judgement, could provide the best information to achieve the objectives in the study (Kumar, 1999, p. 162). In order to obtain this information, 26 lecturers, three in-service teachers and nine F/G comprising 61 students participated in the study. This sample was purposively chosen for the following reasons:

- The lecturers’ “life world” revolved around the daily teaching and training of students.
- Students were final-year BEd candidates whose “life world” was the daily exposure to teaching and learning. They experienced three years of this training and it was felt that, based on their experiences, they were equipped to share their perceptions of their training.
- In-service teachers were based at schools that hosted and mentored pre-service students during practice teaching sessions, and employed students who had recently qualified.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from lecturers and in-service teachers which facilitated depth in the data: probing of key issues added a richer texture to it (Johnson and Christensen, 2004, p. 186). Interview questions were concerned with perceptions of the practical component of the training.

Focus-group interviews were used to collect data from final-year BEd students regarding their perceptions of the practical component. Focus-group interviews allowed participants to “identify, define and contextualise issues” that were important to them in this aspect (Hennink, 2010, p. 208).

The project was underpinned by Maxwell’s (1992) theory of understanding and validity in qualitative research which focusses on: descriptive validity (referring to factual accuracy), interpretive validity (conveying the meaning portrayed by participants accurately) and generalisability (generalising from a set of research findings to other people, settings, times, etc.). Communication validity and data triangulation were used in conjunction to ensure the validity of the results of this project.

Willig’s (2001, p. 18) set of basic ethical considerations for professional codes of practice was used which included: informed consent, no deception, right to withdraw, debriefing and confidentiality. All institutions granted approval for the study and ethical clearance was obtained.

Results and discussion

The results and discussion focus on the following themes:

- duration of teaching practice sessions; and
- mentorship programme.

Duration of teaching practice sessions

The time allocated to teaching experience varied from one institution to another, ranging from four to eight weeks per year, with one institution having the full fourth year as school based. Lecturer I (TEI 4) felt that the time frame for practice teaching was inadequate and that as a result, they adjusted the curriculum for the following year. In future, all their fourth-year students would spend the final year exposed to school-based “service learning”. The focus for this teaching experience year was on research and practice teaching only. At another institution, a respondent (Lecturer C: TEI 2) felt that an apprenticeship of six months was of greater value to students. At that time, students were only focussing on “delivering individual lessons and pleasing the lecturers who evaluate them”. A longer

period of time would enable them to participate in the “life of the school”. A respondent indicated that the time frames were appropriate, but only if students were adequately prepared for the teaching experience:

If the teaching practice is only to develop teaching skills then it's not enough. If, for example, it's three weeks, let's say it's 15 weeks and the last three weeks is teaching experience, the first 12 weeks should be specifically where you should have taught them how to teach and then during the three weeks of practice teaching, that is when they can implement it. I think that is for me, a very big concern [...] (Lecturer J: TEI 3).

According to students, three of the institutions had two blocks of four weeks set aside for teaching practice each year. Students at these institutions felt that this was too short a time for them to gain enough experience in a classroom. One of these students responded that:

[...] we should actually spend more time in schools to be able to see what goes on in there so that they have a realistic feel of what goes on in the classroom nowadays and afterwards they can come to us and say this is what the theory says but this is how it is implemented in classrooms and you yourself can find a middle ground of how it is implemented (F/G 3: TEI 4).

The students from three of the institutions indicated that they spent too little time in the field. Eight weeks per annum, according to them, was not sufficient to develop and grow as teachers. One student suggested that:

[...] students should do a three-year course and spend a full year as an apprentice at schools to get a better understanding of the workings of a school [...] (F/G 8: TEI 2).

While this was a good idea, another student (F/G 3: TEI 4) felt that their institution had changed the teaching practice for the new group coming up the following year. According to her, they had not gone out for practice teaching in three years because they would be spending their entire fourth year in schools. The problem, she stated, was that those students would only have experience of teaching one grade, whereas had they taught throughout the four years they would have been exposed. Lecturers seemed to agree with these students and indicated that teaching experience was the most important part of the degree, since it showed how prepared students were. The period, according to the lecturers, was far too short and the supervision, which comprised two evaluations in the four weeks, was definitely inadequate.

Many students agreed that a period of three weeks was too short, and a second suggestion, which most of them found would work, was that “students can perhaps go out for one day in the week initially, and when they return to college they can discuss their experiences and work on their problem areas” (F/G 8: TEI 2). In this way, the exposure would be ongoing, leaving greater opportunity for growth and development of student capacity as teachers.

All in-service teachers (Respondents 1-3) felt that students needed more time in actual teaching experience. “I think teachers need more classroom time” (Respondent 3). She explained that she was fairly newly qualified and indicated that she had completed ten weeks of teaching experience and felt that “it may sound like a long time, but it isn't”.

Respondent 2 contended that it is important to be exposed to every part of the school, “every learning activity, every different job and every extra-mural activity and everything that goes with being a teacher”.

The results of this section of the study support the idea that teacher experience is the most important feature of teacher education. Both lecturers and students, in three of the four institutions, as well as all the in-service teachers indicated that the duration of the teaching experience was too short to learn what was needed. This is revealed in the following statements: “If teaching practice is to develop teaching skills, then it is not enough”; it serves as “a model that allows students to grow and to develop their own teaching skill”; and

“to see if strategies are working”. Both lecturers and students earmarked this area as one that required substantial improvement. According to Darling-Hammond (2006, p. 310), there is evidence that the number of sessions and the duration of the sessions of teaching experience affect student outcomes. Generally, for most teacher-training programmes, the duration of teacher experience is about 10-12 weeks. “More supervised experience with graduated responsibility can have positive effects on candidates’ practice and self-confidence” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 310).

The underlying assumption for most students and lecturers was that the longer the teacher experience, the more developed the teaching practice and performance of pre-service teachers would be. The data revealed many suggestions from all respondents in this regard. Students felt that the following would improve practice: “students go out one day a week [and] return to college to discuss their experiences”; and “students should do a three-year course and spend a full year as an apprentice;” while a lecturer suggested that students go out for one semester per year. Zeichner (2010, p. 6) contends that “high quality clinical preparation” requires at least 450 hours (one semester) of full-time student teaching. The opinions of respondents that longer teaching experience sessions would enhance their practice are echoed by Darling-Hammond (2006, p. 311), who indicates that more practicum experiences and student teaching, if aligned with coursework, have been found to make a difference in “their practice, confidence and long-term commitment to teaching”.

Arguing about the length of teaching experience, students who completed their coursework and then one year of experience as an intern, felt that they were more ready to enter the field. Data expressing the views of other students, however, indicate that the one-year teaching experience limited students’ exposure to some degree. There is research, according to Darling-Hammond (2006), which asserts that students who have multiple opportunities to teach in many different classrooms have a stronger footing than those who have experienced only one “limited clinical experience” because they have a stronger “frame” with which to interpret important concepts in teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 311).

The role of mentor teachers

There was an overwhelming call from lecturers for re-evaluation of how mentor teachers could provide a greater service to students during their teaching experience. Most lecturers felt that there was a great need for the design of a mentoring course that could guide mentor teachers in how they could assist, guide and evaluate student teachers placed in their care. Lecturer H (TEI 1) felt that, as an incentive, mentor teachers could be granted credits towards further study at universities. This initiative would create links between universities and schools; since there should be a “reciprocal relationship between them”. The lecturer asserted that schools should be seen as an extension of university sites; for student teachers to better understand the relationship between theory and practice. Similarly, students felt that many mentor teachers had not been the role models they had expected and that there was not much they could learn from them. Another student related from her own experience:

[...] they need to evaluate the teachers that they are sending us to because some of the teachers that we get sent to are horrible. Teachers like [...] we don’t learn anything from them. So I think they need to evaluate the teachers that we get sent to (F/G 5: TEI 1)

Lecturer G (TEI 1) recommended:

I want a revision of the whole thing [...]. There should be a handout in terms of what they need to do, there should be guidelines, these are the outcomes in terms of student teachers and we want to see if this was achieved [...] we need to train our mentors. Call them up just before teaching practice [...] engage them to know what to look at [...].

In-service teachers believed that a good mentoring system would assist with the training of students. Mentors could assist in making clear the “role of the teacher”. Respondent 2 stated that finding the right mentor could be critical for students and states that:

The success of a teacher is the mentor who is available for him/her. We have a very different mentoring process where our young teachers are assigned mentors as soon as they get into our school. The mentor is responsible for everything that the young teacher does, down to setting examination papers, tests and every aspect of the teacher is monitored and mentored. That young teacher also knows that there is somebody who she/he can go to and ask questions about anything.

For students to make sense of their experiences during practice teaching sessions, as well as learn from them, depends on the kind of support they receive during this time (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 311). This study reflected a lack of quality support provided to students during their practice teaching sessions. The evidence is reflected in comments provided by lecturers which included that students were expected to mimic classroom teachers and “are told to just teach what learners need to know and to get on with the job” and “they [students] are left to their own devices”. This is supported by research conducted by Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009, p. 70), where the respondents had to indicate the role that mentors played during their teaching experience. They indicated that they were dissatisfied because classroom teachers regarded them as “relief teachers”; they were overloaded with work, they showed no confidence in the student teachers, did not trust them enough to leave their classes in their care and they were made to feel that they were wasting the learners’ and the teachers’ time.

Zeichner (2010, p. 1) suggests that mentor teachers should be selected based on the quality of their teaching, be formally prepared, and provided with incentives and financial support for their work.

Mentors, according to Walkington (2005), have to rely on, or draw from their own beliefs and experiences in order to provide some learning to students. During practical experience, students need to immerse themselves in the school, “learn about teaching and themselves as teachers, as well as learning to teach” (Walkington, 2005, p. 57). During this period, the school-based mentor needs to be a “master teacher, sharing special expertise which needs to be developed to a level where the practices and underlying principles are understood so the teacher [student] can adapt and innovate, an activity central to professional development” (Thailand Education Reform Project, 2002, p. 34). The need for mentor teachers to be trained specifically for the task of promoting collegial, professional relations is vital.

Recommendations

Both internationally and in South Africa, the gap that exists between preparation and practice of teaching needs to be narrowed. The partnership created between the two, that is, preparation (university based) and practice (school based) is fundamental. The recommendations, therefore, are focussed on two aspects, namely, extending teaching practice sessions and training of mentor teachers.

Learnership/apprenticeship

Lynd (2005) states that training teachers is a process that should take place in a particular context: the most effective form of professional development is that which is based in schools and is related to the activities of teachers and learners. The most successful teacher development opportunities, in addition to course content, are the “on-the-job learning” experiences. NCATE (2010) calls for clinical internships to take place in school settings that are structured and staffed to support learning and student achievement.

It is recommended that the duration of practice teaching be extended to an apprenticeship of one of the four years of the degree which would auger well for the kind of development needed, where students are placed in “best-practice” schools, trained to work in an entire phase and mentored effectively.

Extending the duration of their teaching practice gives students an opportunity to experience teaching along its full continuum; following learners’ cognitive, social and developmental needs, observing how learners learn and how to satisfy their needs by understanding the different learning styles; developing and testing their own pedagogical skills, improving weaknesses and further developing strengths; learning to use evidence critically to make informed professional judgements and decisions; applying knowledge acquired during coursework; and developing themselves professionally and pedagogically.

Mentorship programme

This extended practice teaching period requires mentorship programmes for development of supervision skills for host teachers: something which should enhance the quality of the learning provided within the host schools. Best-practice schools and mentor teachers should be remunerated for the role they play in the development of teachers and should, therefore, be held accountable for their input. Qualified mentors should know how adults learn, know mentoring strategies and how to use them, possess a portfolio of assessment approaches, a complement of personal skills for building trust, and good rapport and communication with candidates. Training needs to be provided to render mentors qualified to supervise and develop students into effective teachers.

Such training should be ongoing in order to create and replenish the pool of expert teachers who have been identified and trained as mentors. Universities possess the resources to reward schools for assistance given (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008, p. 308). These resources should be used to remunerate mentor teachers and the schools identified as professional practice sites.

Conclusion

Central to teacher education is developing a teacher’s theory about teaching, analysis of the teaching process, and reflection. Practical experiences are considered to be the most important and powerful component of the training programme (He *et al.*, 2006), which provide opportunities for this development. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study, which could contribute positively to an international audience, is the consolidation of two domains: classroom teaching (coursework at university) and field experiences (teaching experience in schools).

This study found that all teachers, lecturers and students felt that the time period spent in schools to develop teaching skills, gain experience of participating in the “life of the school” and preparing students to manage their own classrooms, was inadequate. Darling-Hammond (2006) and Gentry (2012) support the suggestion of increasing the duration of teaching practice and states that the most powerful teacher-training programmes are those that require longer and more intense sessions of practice teaching. These extended practice teaching sessions “afforded additional opportunities for students to raise questions, to conduct inquiries into teaching and learning, and to experiment with various management and instructional strategies” (Prater and Sileo, 2002, p. 1).

The study suggests that mentor teachers require training in order to meet the demands of hosting pre-service teachers in their classrooms and schools. Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009, p. 8) believe that before and during practice teaching sessions, there needs to be “thorough public relations groundwork undertaken” in order to “minimise the problems and maintain good relations between student teachers and other role-players”.

Evidence in the data indicates that there was a substantial need for more organised feedback opportunities, which make teaching practice sessions worthwhile. Liakopoulou (2012, p. 53) supports this evidence, stating that feedback received from supervisors is of “decisive importance” and “contributes to the development of the reflection skills of teachers”. In order for feedback to develop into reflection, there should be “adequate and clearly demarcated time frames set for reflection on their teaching, a sense of security among pre-service teachers and the release of fear of evaluation of their teaching and structured discussion about their teaching”.

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Further reading

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