Reducing practice-shock: First-year student teachers' experiences of a campus-based teaching practice model

Moeniera Moosa

Studies in Education Division, School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
Moeniera.Moosa@wits.ac.za
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6231-9370

Abstract

Most initial teacher education programmes include a compulsory teaching practice module and there are various models that could be used for first-year students' teaching practice. In South Africa, the *Minimum Requirements for Teachers Education Qualification* document provides guidelines for teaching practice in initial teacher education programmes, but it does not include specific implementation guidelines. To address this gap, a campus-based teaching practice model to prepare and support first-year students was implemented at a South African university. In this article, I explore first-year students' experiences of this model. I used a mixed methods research design to address this aim. I found, according to their claims, that 89% of participants had benefitted from this model since it provided them with critical insight into what it means to be a teacher. The results of this research could benefit teacher educators and initial teacher education institutions in other places.

Keywords: teaching practice, first-year students, teaching practice model, initial teacher education

Introduction

In education, the term for work integrated learning (WIL) is used interchangeably with concepts such as practicum, teaching practice, teaching experience, professional training or school-based training. All these concepts make reference to the compulsory requirement for pre-service teachers to engage in an authentic classroom setting before they qualify as set out in the *Minimum Requirements for Teachers Education Qualification* (MRTEQ; Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) 2015). In this article, I refer to a WIL model used for first-year student teachers during their first teaching practice that is situated in the wider body of research in initial teacher education (ITE).

First-year university students are particularly vulnerable at university because the transition from high school to university can be a challenging experience for them. Student attrition at universities has become a worldwide concern and is viewed as a calamitous problem in South

Africa (Letseka & Cosser, 2010). The challenges faced by first-year students are multi-causal in nature and can be linked to personal circumstances and problems, funding concerns, course selection, difficulty in forming social networks, and inadequate pre-university education (Araque, Roldán, & Salguero, 2009; Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Ramrathan, 2013; Smith & Naylor, 2001). One of the reasons for high student dropout rates in South Africa is based on first-year students' under-preparedness for higher education as Slonimsky and Shalem (2006) have observed.

In addition to the demands faced by all first-year students, first-year pre-service student teachers face challenges in relation to understanding and meeting the demands of teaching practice because of their own school experiences. The learn-to-teach literature shows that student teachers often underestimate the demand and complexities of what it means to teach (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; Loughran, Mulhall, & Berry, 2008). This presents universities with an opportunity to close this gap by developing programmes that help to prepare first-year students for teaching practice. Our institution has opted for a model that focuses on "procedural" (Kagan, 1992, p. 162) and professional development (Grossman, 1992) since both aspects are regarded as important for first-year students when they make the transition from learner to teacher. The model is comprised of a structured campus-based programme that offers first-year students the opportunity to develop an understanding of the complexities of teaching in a formal and structured setting as we have learned from Rusznyak and Moosa (2014). This teaching practice model was implemented with first-year students to provide them with a deeper understanding of the intricacies of teaching.

In ITE programmes, teaching practice or what is known as learning in practice, refers to the time students spend in a classroom environment as part of their degree course. However, despite practical learning being an essential component of ITE programmes, different countries and teacher training institutions use different models of teaching practice. There is little agreement as to what constitutes teaching practice and how long it should take place. The time required for teaching practice in the United States of America is sixteen weeks whereas New Zealand requires students to complete a minimum of fourteen weeks, but preferably twenty or more weeks, while in England students need to spend at least twenty-four weeks at this (Quick & Siebörger, 2005). In addition, according to Niemi and Jakku-Sihvonen (2011), in Finland the time spent on teaching practice varies depending on the qualification, with up to fourteen weeks for undergraduate degrees and between five to eight weeks for Masters degrees. In China students are required to complete eight to ten weeks, in Australia eight to nine weeks, in Hong Kong nineteen weeks, in Canada twenty-eight weeks, and in Singapore twenty-two weeks (Manzar-Abbas & Lu, 2013) of teaching practice. In African countries like Zimbabwe, students complete five school terms according to Ngara and colleagues (2013) which equates to about seventy weeks while in Malawi, Kaphesi (2013) has noted that students complete twelve weeks of teaching practice.

As is the case elsewhere in the world, the South African policy is unclear about how teaching practice ought to be constituted and various teacher education institutes in the country use

different models (see Reddy, Menkveld, & Bitzer, 2008). This is problematic since it fails to ensure uniformity of teaching practice across all ITE institutions in South Africa.

The guidelines for ITE programmes regarding teaching practice are set out in the MRTEQ (DHET, 2015) document, according to which practical learning is one of the principles that should underpin the design of ITE programmes. Despite WIL being a key component of ITE programmes, the policy document does not specify how the programme ought to be implemented. However, the MRTEQ document (DHET, 2015) does state the period for the WIL component: "students should spend a minimum of 20 weeks and a maximum of 32 weeks in formally supervised and assessed school-based practice over the four-year duration of the degree" (DHET, 2015, p. 25). It is at the discretion of the institutions how they structure the time, the programme, and assessments for students during teaching practice.

With this mixed methods study, I aim to contribute to this field by exploring first-year student teachers' experiences of a teaching practice model. This model was introduced at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa. It was comprised of a campus-based programme and a school-based one. The overall intention of this research was to gain insights into the value of preparing first-year students for teaching practice by allowing them to attend a campus-based programme before they were placed in a school. My goal was to evaluate the effectiveness of this campus-based programme from the perspective of the first-year students who participated in it. Their perceptions of the effectiveness of the programme were evaluated against how useful they found the information when they attended their first school-based practicum.

Theoretical perspective

Debates in the literature indicate that a primary influence on students' perception of what teaching entails is based on their observations of their own teachers while at school (Chong, 2011; Friesen & Besley, 2013; Grossman, et al., 2009; Kelchtermans & Hamilton, 2004; Luft & Roehrig, 2007). This means that first-year teaching students arrive at university with some idea of what teaching is, based on their "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975, p. 62). They have developed a notion of what the practice of teaching is comprised of through observational learning (Bandura, 1977). Lortie (1975) has also argued that students' prior knowledge about teaching is an anticipatory socialisation. This takes place throughout the students' schooling life, and, more importantly, exerts a powerful influence on their learning journey in becoming teachers as Osman, Petersen, Robinson, and van der Merwe (2010) have reminded us. As learners at school, they develop their initial beliefs about teachers' work, the various teaching methodologies used, discipline strategies, and interpersonal relationships between students and teachers when they observe their teachers.

Consequently, first-year students' beliefs about teaching can be laden with "folk pedagogies" (Bruner, 1996, p. 44). The students' perceptions of what constitutes good or bad teaching practices were developed during their own schooling experiences and thus they might "vary greatly in their knowledge and skills before they enter preparation" (Darling-Hammond &

Baratz-Snowden, 2007, p. 114). This means that the first-year students saw only the instructional phase of teaching as Shulman (1988) has noted, which could lead them to believe that their teachers came to class to present information that they found in textbooks. Students are rarely exposed to other aspects of teaching such as the managing of learners and ideas and the emotional aspects of working with children. If first-year students' perceptions of teaching are based on this narrow framework of their own experiences, then it is vital that they are exposed to opportunities that move them beyond these preconceived ideas and uncover the intricacies of what it actually means to teach. Students who are inadequately prepared for the reality of being in a classroom for their first teaching practice might "feel overwhelmed, underprepared [and this leads many to] leave the profession after only a few years" (Schauer, 2018, p. 1).

Theoretical lens

The theoretical lens that informs this article is constructivism. This theoretical standpoint focuses on what people do with information to develop knowledge (Jordan, Carlile, & Stack, 2008). Constructivism proposes that reality is constructed from a perception of one's environment and that each person constructs a different understanding of the world (Watts, Cockcroft, & Duncan, 2013). According to Gray and MacBlain, (2015) learning is an active process with which individuals engage; knowledge is internally generated by an individual and the environment (Cockcroft, 2013). In general, as indicated by Geary (1995), people are active learners and develop knowledge for themselves. In other words, constructivism argues that knowledge is not passively received but is built by the cognising subject (Applefield, Huber & Moallem, 2000; Jones and Brader-Araje, 2002). This approach suggests that first-year students construct knowledge about teaching for themselves either individually or socially as they learn; their ability to make meaning and construct their own knowledge from experience is important for their development as teachers.

Constructivism has two main domains—the cognitive and the social. Cognitive constructivism is the process by which students make sense of the world around them by constructing "their own sense of what is being learned by building internal connections or relationships among the ideas and facts being taught" (Borich & Tombari, 1997, p. 177). In this particular study, first-year students' perceptions about teaching are based on their schooling environments, which (as stated previously) are not necessarily conducive to learning and teaching. They make connections in relation to what teaching entails by making sense of what they observed their teachers doing in school. This can be problematic for many students because of the disparity found in their various school contexts. Social constructivism emphasises the importance of social interactions and the role played by society and culture in learning (Jordan, Carlile, & Stack, 2008). From a social perspective, first-year pre-service teachers develop notions of what teaching is based on the school environments in which they found themselves as learners—a context in crisis in South Africa. From an epistemological perspective, this means that learning to teach requires beginner teachers to think about teaching in different ways from what they have learned through their own experiences (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005).

ITE programmes often have to demystify first-year students' preconceived ideas about teaching. The reality of being in a classroom for the first time allows students the opportunity to explore their initial perceptions of teaching and how they came to hold such beliefs (Borg, 2015; Lortie, 1975). If left unchallenged, these preconceived ideas can affect the dynamics of learning to teach and further hamper the establishment of a teacher identity (Walkington, 2005). Hence a teaching practice model should assist first-year students to reflect critically on their preconceived ideas of teaching in an informed way.

The aim of teaching practice is to assist students to become teachers. However, teaching is an intricate exercise with many intersecting factors. Teacher preparation is a process that aims to produce an effective and competent teacher who demonstrates an ability to teach (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006). Furthermore, teaching practice intends to provide students with a safe environment in which they are able to gain the necessary skills and understanding of what teaching entails, so that they become more self-confident (Moody, 2009).

I argue that placing students in a school too early and without adequate preparation about what teaching entails results in their becoming either skeptical and/ or regretting their decision to become teachers. Becoming a teacher can be an "emotional and demanding experience" (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006, p. 10). Burke (2010) has stated that the overwhelming demands made on first-year students during their first teaching practice can lead to their experiencing what is known as practice-shock. While students cannot be protected from the reality of being in a classroom, they should be given sufficient time and opportunity to distance themselves from their preconceived perceptions and to develop a holistic understanding of what teaching entails. Before students are placed in a classroom, they need to have a nuanced understanding of what teaching involves and how to be and act as teachers themselves.

Teaching practice model

This research aimed to explore first-year students' experiences of a teaching practice model implemented at a particular institute. There were two teaching practice sessions that first-year students were required to attend. Each session consisted of three weeks with one session in May and the second in September. The May teaching practice sessions were used for the campus-based programme.

Structure of a campus-based programme

The ITE programme used previously at this institution was structured to allow first-year students to go to schools for teaching practice within their first four months at the university. During this time, students were expected to complete an observation assignment, but no university tutor was allocated to observe the students as they taught at schools. However, the supervising teachers at schools were required to mentor and support students as well as to complete an assessment form for each of the students allocated to them. Students returned to campus for one day during their teaching practicum in order to meet with a campus-based tutor and their peers. On this day, the students were required to do a micro-teaching session in

small groups: the intention was to give them feedback so that they could improve their lessons before they presented them to the learners at their respective schools.

Rusznyak and Moosa (2014, p. S91) have argued that a campus-based model "offers possibilities for developing students' understanding of teaching as a complex cognitive practice." This led to the teaching practice programme for first-year students being changed so that these students attended a three-week long campus-based programme that replaced the need for students to attend schools during the May teaching practice session. The shift to a campus-based programme provided what Schön (1987) called, more than thirty years ago, a "low-risk setting for novice learning" (p. 17) and, following Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), students could engage in a focused manner on knowledge of practice. It also provided an opportunity for students to engage with their initial conceptions of teaching either by demystifying misconceptions or by engaging with new concepts and information before being placed in a classroom as Hammerness and colleagues (2005) have suggested. Furthermore, the campus-based programme in May provided students with additional scaffolding before they were placed in a school during their September teaching practice. It focused on four skills and knowledge sets highlighted in the MRTEQ document that could not be covered thoroughly by the curriculum in the students' first four months at university: the ability to "communicate effectively in general"; "manage classrooms effectively"; "have a positive work ethic, display appropriate values and conduct themselves in a manner that befits, enhances and develops the teaching profession"; and, last, "to reflect critically on their own practice" (DHET, 2015, p. 64).

For the second 3-week teaching practice session in September, the students were placed in a school and returned to campus only for a day's programme. The tutors for this programme were carefully selected. They included ex-school principals, heads of departments, or retired educators from various schooling contexts who mentored the students and provided them with practical constructive examples and comments. In this way, students were able to reflect on their beliefs and start their exploration of teacher identity.

The overall structure of the campus-based programme had the students attend a lecture each morning and then move into tutorial groups in which they engaged in discussions and completed written and practical tasks. These tutorials, based on the lectures, were led by experienced teachers. Each day the students were required to complete various written tasks, practical tasks, and group-based activities. The programme was based on the two pillars of professional and personal development since these were regarded as crucial aspects for students to start to "think like a teacher" (Hammerness et al., 2005, p. 358). The specific sessions for each of these two sections were conceptualised by the campus-based programme team, prompted by comments and recommendations received from schools, students, and tutors about what additional skills and information first-year students need in order to be more adequately prepared for teaching practice. See Table 1 for the components included in the campus-based programme.

Table 1: Campus-based programme

Professional Development	Personal Development
• Dealing with challenging behaviours: How to manage bullying in schools including managing learner discipline. • How schools function: Learning about general school protocols and procedures. • Classroom practice: Evaluating and analysing examples of classroom practice. • Being a professional: Learning about professional conduct and adjustment during teaching practice.	• Communication: Communicating effectively by using appropriate body gestures and voice projection. • Representations of teaching: Students had to build a statue/model that they felt represented their role as South African teachers. • Personal development: Sessions on emotional intelligence, healthy relationships, stress and copying techniques were offered. • Reflections: All students were given a reflective journal to complete during teaching practices. They were provided with detailed information on the importance, expectations, and requirements for them to complete the journal. • Teaching is an emotional job: Students attended a presentation and completed tasks on the emotional work of teachers.

These skills were included in the programme because first-year students often lacked effective communicative skills, such as how to use their voice and body effectively when presenting lessons. By having them acquire these skills, I hoped to build students' self confidence in a safe environment before they were placed in a school. Classroom management is an aspect that concerns most novice teachers because negative experiences with learners' behaviour has an adverse effect on teachers' instructional efficacy as Juuti, Christophersen, Elstad, Solhaug, & Turmo (2018) have made clear. The session on classroom management was meant to highlight the complexities of teaching, such as dealing with learner discipline and general administrative tasks, so that the students learned that teaching was more than the presentation of content to learners. First-year students are not always aware of these complexities because of their apprenticeship of observation when they were learners at school. Additional sessions in the programme included coverage of the following: school protocols; using reflective journals; issues surrounding bullying and aggression; emotional intelligence; stress and coping mechanisms; and professionalism. All these sessions encouraged the students to challenge their preconceived ideas about teaching.

The campus-based programme planners consciously chose not to have sessions on aspects of lesson planning and presentation since these skills had been covered during the methodology course, as well as in other first-year courses. In addition, the intention was to cover this aspect comprehensively during the second campus-based session in September.

The main question this research aimed to address was: "What are first-year students' experiences of a campus-based teaching practice model?" In order to answer the main research question the following sub-questions were developed:

1. What are the limitations of the model as viewed by first-year students?
2. How have first-year students benefitted from the teaching practice model?
3. How could the model be improved?

These sub-questions will be elaborated on in the findings and discussion section of this paper.

Research methods and methodology

By following Cresswell (2008) in using both quantitative and qualitative data to make sense of a phenomenon, this mixed methods study aimed at richer data collection and a deeper understanding of students' experiences of the practicum model. This research method proved useful in understanding how first-year students benefitted from a campus-based teaching practice model. Furthermore, in line with Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007, this design allowed for depth and breadth in identifying and understanding the limitations of this model and how its effectiveness could be improved upon. The qualitative and qualitative data was compared for common themes and sub-themes and these multiple views, as expressed in the data, enhanced its reliability and validity.

Participants

The participants in this research were students registered for their first year of a bachelor's degree in education at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa. The participants, male and female, were all full-time students aged between 18 and 56 some of whom were specialising as primary and others as secondary school teachers. Participants were from a heterogeneous group in terms of racial, cultural, and social backgrounds as well as in terms of gender, age, and schooling backgrounds. This assisted in enhancing the variability of the data. Permission to conduct this research was given by the University of the Witwatersrand's ethics committee. Confidentiality has been ensured by not naming any participants. Participants were made aware that their involvement was voluntary in this project, and that they could withdraw at any time if they chose to do so. Out of 523 first-year students, 490 students completed the questionnaire on their experiences of the model, while 33 students did not attend the campus-based programme. (These 33 students had dropped out but had not deregistered from the degree.) The high number of students who participated in the research increased the external validity of the data.

Measures and data collection

In line with suggestions made by Creswell (2013), I used an explanatory sequential design for the study in which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and implemented in two phases. The initial data collection method was quantitative to allow for "objectivity in measuring and describing phenomena" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 21). Immediately

after the three-week campus-based programme in May, the students were asked to complete a questionnaire containing closed questions in which they ranked the various lectures and activities of the programme as "excellent, good, average, or should not be included" (see Appendix 1). This data from the 490 participants was collated to form the basis for the quantitative data.

In the second phase, a qualitative data collection process, open-ended questions were used. This method allowed the participants to express their views freely in contrast to the predetermined choices they had been given in the first phase of the data collection process. Students (n = 490) answered these questions after their second teaching practice session, which was a school-based session in September.

1. What information or skills from the campus-based programme was/were useful during the school-based practicum?
2. What should have been included in the campus-based programme and what should be removed?

The students reflected on the highlights of the campus-based programme and provided suggestions as to how this programme could have been improved in the light of their school-based teaching practice in September. This allowed them to express themselves freely regarding their teaching experience and to reflect on how useful they found the information from the campus-based programme in practice.

Analysis

The quantitative data was collated to present a numeric account of students' preferences of the activities offered during the campus-based programme. This information is presented in Figure 1. I analysed the qualitative data that had been collected in the form of open-ended questionnaires by looking at each questionnaire on its own, and then in comparison with other questionnaires. In this way codes and categories were derived that gave rise to what McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 378) have called "patterns of meanings." I used thematic content analysis in "the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Themes were derived by means of an inductive approach following Mouton and Marais (1993), which allowed for the data to be analysed without any pre-existing notions. The relevant findings of the quantitative and qualitative data were integrated in order to understand the students' point of view about the campus-based programme. This was done by coding the data from both data sets separately into themes and sub-themes. Thereafter, I merged common themes and sub-themes from both data sets to help answer the research questions. The advantage of integrating the data is that it enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings.

Findings and discussion

The findings are discussed by focusing on the students' views regarding the limitations and improvements that could be made to the model and the benefits of the model.

Students' evaluation of various sessions and activities

From the statistical information, which was derived from the quantitative data provided in Figure 1, the results were that over 41% of participants found six out of the eight sessions excellent and worth including in follow-up programmes. These included the following sessions: oral and kinetic approaches to teaching; teaching as a holistic profession; an example of good teacher practice; bullying in schools; teaching as a caring profession, and classroom management. The session on teaching and emotions was ranked as excellent by 31% of participants, which means that this session will be included in future programmes. Only 14% of participants found the session on school structures and procedures useful, and this result might mean that most participants were familiar with this topic, so it should be excluded from future programmes. This data showed that most of the students regarded content that provided them with information on how to interact with learners as a priority in comparison to self-development and informative sessions.
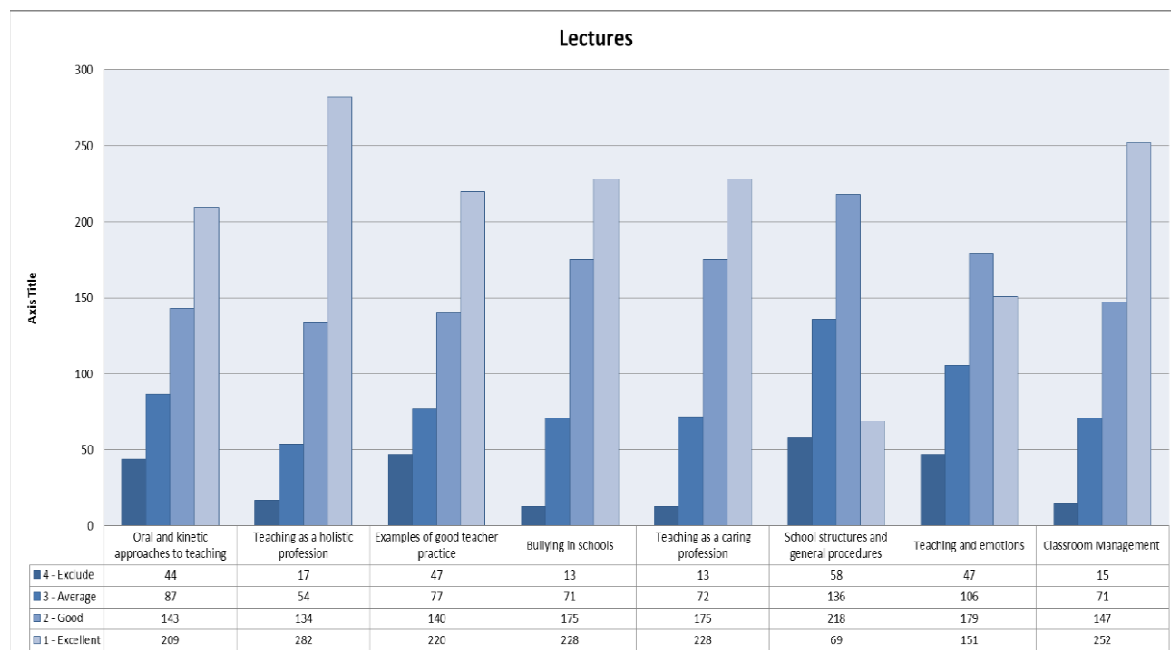

Lectures

	Oral and kinetic approaches to teaching	Teaching as a holistic profession	Examples of good teacher practice	Bullying in schools	Teaching as a caring profession	School structures and general procedures	Teaching and emotions	Classroom Management
■ 4 - Exclude	44	17	47	13	13	58	47	15
■ 3 - Average	87	54	77	71	72	136	106	71
■ 2 - Good	143	134	140	175	175	218	179	147
■ 1 - Excellent	209	282	220	228	228	69	151	252

Figure 1: Students' evaluations of the lectures

Limitations and suggested improvements to the campus-based programme

In order to assess fully the viability of this model, it is important to acknowledge what students regarded as its limitations. The question referring to the limitations of the campus-based programme was left blank by 138 students. The reason for this choice might have been that the students did not identify any of the programme's limitations or that they opted not to state what they were. For 104 students there was nothing extra that needed to be included in

the programme since "it truly was an awesome experience." A total of 24 students were critical about the model and stated that they would have preferred to be placed in a school instead of being on campus.

Students' views on the limitations of the programme focused on two main aspects. The first was that the content covered in the programme did not focus sufficiently on practical skills (n = 209). Second, the students stated that the structure of the programme did not allow them sufficient time for lesson preparation and presentation (n = 66).

Content of the programme

Regarding the content of the programme, 106 students wanted more information on classroom management techniques in various school contexts, and 58 students wanted information on how to interact with supervising teachers.

Classroom management techniques

Even though the campus-based programme included a component on classroom management and how to discipline learners, some of the students stated that the discipline component lacked information on the following: "practical knowledge on how to discipline learners"; different kinds of "reward techniques"; discipline techniques for "different phases or grades"; techniques to apply to different educational arenas, such as urban, public, independent, township, or rural schools. One of the students wished to "have practised or done role play [activities] based on what discipline strategies would work best." From these comments it can be concluded that students expected more procedural knowledge on how to manage discipline, which was not possible to do in this programme.

The most common concern for new teachers is, as Criticos, Long, Moletsane, Mthiyane, and Mays (2009) have made clear, how to control the learners in their classes. For Conley (2010), this includes how to maintain discipline and how to be prepared and able to improvise with regard to unanticipated classroom management challenges. This is in line with Fuller's (1969) view that new teachers develop in phases, the first of which is to focus on themselves and their teaching. This includes their ability to control the classroom, what their supervising teachers think of them, and aspects relating to the learners' learning. The main challenge that ITE programmes face is how to prepare students so that they can mediate their ways in various contexts, but also how to expose them to as many diverse contexts as possible. This is important in South Africa because of the disparity found among schools and the fact that there is no guarantee that students will be placed in familiar school contexts during their teaching practice.

Interaction with supervising teachers

Students indicated major challenges while working with their supervising teachers and they sometimes felt ill-equipped to interact with these teachers. One of the students said, "I think the campus-based programme could have included ways or strategies [of] creating a good

relationship with a supervising teacher." Another challenge was how to deal with opportunistic teachers who were "demanding" and expected the students to do "extra duties" such as acting as a full-time "substitute teacher" which was contrary to the university's guidelines. The university guidelines sent to schools clearly state that student first-year students are meant to observe experienced teachers and not act as substitute teachers because they are not qualified.

There are debates in the literature concerning the impact of mentoring relationships between supervising teachers and pre-service teachers (see du Plessis, 2013; Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009; Quick & Siebörger, 2005; Väisänen, Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Toom, & Soini, 2017; Yuan, 2016) and the effect this has on students. These debates indicate that supervising teachers need to be better equipped to support students on teaching practice since good teachers do not automatically make good mentors.

Structure of the programme

Most recommendations on how to improve the programme were based on structural changes. A total of 313 students felt that the programme should have reduced lecture and tutorial times and recommended that they "do more physical activities." Students expressed the view that the tea and lunch breaks were too long, and they complained about losing interest and attention during long lectures and tutorials. However, some of the students disagreed since they found that the lectures and tutorials covered important and interesting topics, and for them the time allocated was too short. A few students expressed the view that being on campus for three weeks was too long and suggested "two weeks [on campus] and . . . one week for school observation." A total of 66 students felt that they "didn't have enough practice with formulating a lesson plan," despite this having been done in detail during their course on becoming a teacher, which took place before the campus-based programme.

Mostly, the students made recommendations regarding structural changes to the programme and did not include much about the content. This might be because first-year students are often fixated on peripheral aspects since they have not yet acquired the necessary insights into the complexities of teaching. Another reason could be that the programme demanded interaction with peers and tutors every day because students were expected to be active participants in the learning process, and this is somewhat different from attending lectures. Furthermore, students did not enjoy aspects that demanded critical self-reflection on themselves and how this would affect them as teachers. These sessions were meant to challenge their preconceived ideas and to help them think critically about their chosen profession. The reason for their discontent could be linked to their preconceived ideas of teaching, which were based on their social observations when they attended schools as learners.

The benefits of the model

I derived the benefits of the model by analysing students' responses to the open-ended questions on how the campus-based programme benefitted them when they were placed in a

school. This data was collected after the school-based teaching practice session in September and within the first week of the students' return to campus for lectures. The results showed that 5% of participants thought that they did not benefit from the model. Some of these participants did not specify any reasons for their views while others stated that the schools they attended for teaching practice did not provide any opportunities for them to implement the skills from the campus-based programme. A total of 94% of participants stated that they had benefitted from the model used during the campus-based programme because they were confident when they were placed in a school during the September teaching practice. One of the students stated that "the campus-based programme . . . gave me so much more focused knowledge specifically for teaching. After it, I felt a lot more confident for the next TE [teaching experience] at a school." Overall students' perception of the programme showed that it minimised their experiences of practice-shock when they were placed in a school. This was also shown by the responses that indicated that the campus-based programme provided them with additional skills and knowledge about teaching, and they felt confident when they were placed in schools during the September teaching practice. Furthermore, the programme allowed the students to develop a holistic understanding about teaching and it fostered a critical sense about what it means to be a teacher.

Improved sense of confidence

A total of 287 students indicated that the model allowed them to develop an understanding of how to work with learners, which allowed them to "show confidence" in a classroom setting. The reason for this view was that students felt that they had developed the skills and practised "how to stand and speak in front of a class." Even though these skills were explored in methodology courses and micro-teaching sessions, the programme provided students with additional time and activities to refine these skills. Another student stated that because the campus-based session "didn't just . . . focus on delivering the lesson," this allowed him to become aware of other aspects involved in teaching such as being "motivated." The students' experiences resonated with Moody's (2009) view that students should be given opportunities to develop their self confidence in a safe environment to allow them to improve their skills and to gain a better understanding of teaching.

The development of a critical perspective

The model provided students (n = 107) with an opportunity to engage critically with their preconceived ideas about teaching that they had developed through observation when they were learners at school. Overall, students indicated that the model provided them with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the complexities of what it means to be a teacher. The model assisted a student to "realise what kind of a teacher I need to be in order to assist these learners in the best way possible." Finally, the overall benefit of participating in a campus-based programme was best summarised by a student who said that this particular model "helped or enabled me . . . even when some of the teachers were trying to discourage me from becoming a teacher."

Overall, students indicated that the programme improved their self confidence in a school, but they had been given, too, the opportunity to develop a more critical perspective on what it means to teach. It is important to provide students with an opportunity to demystify their unrealistic expectations of teaching (Hammerness et al., 2005). The dedicated time students spent on campus in preparation for teaching practice provided them with an opportunity to develop a stronger sense of what teaching entails. This started the shift from being a learner to becoming a pre-service teacher, thus helping the students to establish a teacher identity as envisaged by Walkington (2005). The model allowed students to make sense of what is expected of them as teachers at a social and at a cognitive level.

Conclusion

This model of teaching practice was developed in the absence of specific implementation criteria by way of policy documents. The aim of this model was to induct and support first-year students holistically regarding the intricacies of teaching so that they did not flounder when they were placed in a formal school context. This research based on the first-year students' experiences of this model showed that inducting first-year students into the various demands of teaching via a campus-based programme is a viable option. However, students indicated that there were limitations to this programme, too. They recommended that there needed to be a greater focus placed on these issues such as working with specific learners' needs, lesson preparation, how to interact with supervising teachers, practical skills, and information on how to work in various school contexts. Consequently, a campus-based programme should include extra scenario-based and practical activities, with less emphasis on personal development, so that they could be better prepared for their teaching practice. Yet, most of the students indicated that they had benefitted from this model when they were placed in a school since they had critical insights into what it means to be a teacher.

This article adds to the current literature on ITE and possible models that could be used for teaching practice. These finding have implications for policy and practice in that they make a substantiated argument for not placing students in a school at the beginning of their first year. Instead, it argues that students need adequate preparation to challenge their preconceived ideas before re-entering the school context.

One of the limitations of this research is that the impact of the programme was evaluated with one cohort of students immediately after they had returned from teaching practice at schools. Future research could include asking this cohort of students in their final year of study about how this programme informed their teaching practice during their 4-year university course. Another possible research focus would be to obtain data from various cohorts of first-year students so as to evaluate this programme over a period of three years and then to compare the findings. Furthermore, it is important for additional research to be conducted in other universities on the benefits and limitations of this model for the induction of first-year students into the teaching profession. The findings of this article will be, I hope, of benefit to teacher educators, ITE institutions, and help to develop policies on how to implement teaching practice for first-year students in South Africa and other places.

References

Applefield, J., Huber, R., & Moallem, M. (2000). Constructivism in theory and practice: Toward a better understanding. *The High School Journal, 84*(2), 35–53. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40364404

Araque, F., Roldán,C., & Salguero, A. (2009). Factors influencing university drop out rates. *Computers and Education, 53*(3), 563–574. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2009.03.013

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Borg, S. (2015). *Teacher cognition and language education, research and practice*. London, UK: Bloomsbury.

Borich, G., & Tombari, M. (1997). *Educational Psychology* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Longman.

Burke, E. (2010). A preventative approach, the educator. In I. Oosthuizen (Ed.), *A practical guide to discipline in schools* (pp. 1–64). Pretoria, RSA: van Schaik.

Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Chong, S. (2011). Development of teachers' professional identities: From pre-service to their first year as novice teachers. *KEDI Journal of Educational Policy, 8*(2), 219–233. https://doi.org10.1016/j.compedu.2009.03.013

Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. (1999). Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher learning in communities. *Review of Research in Education, 24*(1), 249–305. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X024001249

Cockcroft, K. (2013). Piaget's constructivist theory of cognitive development. In J. Watts, K. Cockroft, & N. Duncan (Eds.), *Developmental psychology* (pp. 324–343). Lansdowne, RSA: University of Cape Town.

Conley, L. (2010). The teacher as a classroom manager. In L. Conley, J. De Beer, H. Dunbar-Krige, E. Du Plessis, S. Gravett, L. Lomofsky, . . . & M. van der Merwe (Eds.), *Becoming a teacher* (pp. 76–100). Cape Town, RSA: Heinemann.

Creswell, J. (2008). *Educational research, planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Creswell, J. (2013, November). *Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study*. Paper presented to the Discipline-based Education Research Group Speaker Series, no. 48. http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dberspeakers/48

Criticos, C., Long L., Moletsane, R., Mthiyane, N., & Tony, M. (2009). *Getting practical: About classroom-based teaching for the National Curriculum Statement* (2nd ed.). Cape Town, RSA: Oxford University Press.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Baratz-Snowden, J. (2007). A good teacher in every classroom: Preparing the highly qualified teachers our children deserve. *Educational Horizons, 85*(2), 111–132. https://www.jstor.org/stable/42926597

Darling-Hammond, L., & John, B. (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) 2015. *Minimum requirements for qualification in teacher education.* Pretoria, RSA: Author.

du Plessis, E. (2013). Mentorship challenges in the teaching practice of distance learning students. *The Independent Journal of Teaching and Learning,* 8(1), 29–43. https://journals.co.za/docserver/fulltext/jitl1/8/1/jitl1_v8_a4.pdf?

du Toit, G. (2016). The student teacher and the teaching context. In E. du Toit, F. Louw & L. Jacobs (Eds.), *Help I'm a student teacher! Skills development for teaching practice* (2nd ed., pp. 23–43). Pretoria, RSA: van Schaik.

Friesen, M., & Besley, S. (2013). Teacher identity development in the first year of teacher education: A developmental and social psychological perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 36,* 23–32. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.06.005

Fuller, F. (1969). Concerns of teachers: A developmental conceptualization. *American Educational Research Journal, 6* (2), 207–226. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312006002207

Geary, D. (1995). Reflections of evolution and culture in children's cognition. *American Psychologist, 50,* 24–37. https://psycnet.apa.org/buy/1995-16916-001

Gerdes, H., & Mallinckrodt, B. (1994). Emotional, social, and academic adjustment of college students: A longitudinal study of retention. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 72*(3), 281–288. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1994.tb00935.x

Gray, C., & MacBlain, S. (2015). *Learning theories in childhood*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Grossman, P. (1992). Why models matter: An alternate view on professional growth in teaching. *Review of Educational Research, 62*(2), 171–179. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543062002171

Grossman, P., Hammerness, K., & McDonald, M. (2009). Redefining teacher, re-imagining teacher education. *Teachers and Teaching, Theory and Practice, 15*(2), 273–290. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600902875340

Hagger, H., & McIntyre, D. (2006). *Learning about teaching from teachers* (1st ed.). Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

Hammerness, K., Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (2005). How teachers learn and develop. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do* (pp. 358–389). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research 15*(9), 1277–1288. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687

Johnson, B., Onwuegbuzie, A., & Turner, L. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(2), 112–133. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689806298224

Jones, G., & Brader-Araje, L. (2002). The impact of constructivism on education: Language, discourse, and meaning. *American Communication Journal, 5*(3), 1–10. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/11e2/5b4e83ec8d804d125a4eddf02ceaca39d6fd.pdf?

Jordan, A., Carlile, O., & Stack, A. (2008). Constructivism. In A. Jordan, O. Carlile & A. Stack (Eds.), *Approaches to learning* (pp. 55–67). Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

Juuti, K., Christophersen, K.-A., Elstad, E. Solhaug, T., & Turmo, A. (2018). Finnish teacher education and its contributions to pre-service teachers' instructional self-efficacy. *Issues in Educational Research, 28*(2), 422–437. http://hdl.handle.net/10138/234764

Kagan, D. (1992). Professional growth among preservice and beginning teachers. *Review of Educational Research, 62*(2), 129–169. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543062002129

Kaphesi, E. (2013). Assessing final year undergraduate student teacher on school-based teaching practice at the Polytechnic of the University of Malawi: A dual assessment process. *African Journal of Teacher Education, 3*(2), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.21083/ajote.v3i2.2732

Kelchtermans, G., & Hamilton, M. L. (2004). The dialectics of passion and theory: Exploring the relation between self-study and emotion. In J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. LaBoskey, & T. Russell (Eds.), *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices* (pp. 785–810). Dordrecht, NL: Springer.

Kiggundu, E., & Nayimuli, S. (2009). Teaching practice: A make or break phase for student teachers. *South African Journal of Education, 29*(3), 345–358. http://dx.doi.org/10.15700/saje.v29n3a129

Letseka, M., & Cosser, M. (2010). *Student retention and graduate destination: Higher education and labour market access and success*. Pretoria, RSA: Human Sciences Research Council.

Lortie, D. (1975). *School-teacher: A sociological study*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Loughran, J., Mulhall, P., & Berry, A. (2008). Exploring pedagogical content knowledge in science teacher education. *International Journal of Science Education, 30*(10), 1301–1320. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500690802187009

Luft, J., & Roehrig, G. (2007). Capturing science teachers' epistemological beliefs: The development of the teacher beliefs interview. *Electronic Journal of Science Education, 11*(2), 38–63. http://ejse.southwestern.edu/article/view/7794

Manzar-Abbas, S. S., & Lu, L. (2013). Keeping the practicum of Chinese preservice teacher education in the world's perspective. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 3*(4), 172.

McMillan, J., & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in education: Evidence- based enquiry*. New Jersey, NY: Pearson.

Moody, J. (2009). Key elements in a positive practicum: Insights from Australian post primary pre-service teachers. *Irish Educational Studies, 28*(2), 155–175. https://doi.org/10.1080/03323310902884219

Mouton, J., & Marais, H. (1993). *Basic concepts in the methodology of the social sciences*. Pretoria, RSA: Human Sciences Research Council.

Ngara, R., Ngwarai, R., & Ngara, R. (2013). Teaching practice supervision and assessment as a quality assurance tool in teacher training: Perceptions of prospective teachers at Masvingo Teacher Training Colleges. *European Social Sciences Research Journal, 1*(1), 126-135. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2c0e/dd13951cc2e9a6d13006fe2ae71e752b4c32.pdf

Niemi, H., & Jakku-Sihvonen, R. (2011). Teacher education in Finland. European dimensions of teacher education: Similarities and differences. In M. V. Zuljan & J. Vogrinc (Eds.), *European dimensions of teacher education: Similarities and differences* (pp. 33–51). Kranj, EE: The National School of Leadership and Education.

Osman, R., Petersen, N., Robinson, M., & van der Merwe, M. (2010). *Becoming a teacher*. Cape Town, RSA: Heinemann.

Quick, G., & Siebörger, R. (2005). What matters in practice teaching? The perceptions of schools and students. *South African Journal of Education, 25*(1), 1–4.

Ramrathan, L. (2013). Towards a conceptual framework for understanding student dropout from HEIs. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 27*(1), 209–220. https://journals.co.za/docserver/fulltext/high/27/1/high_v27_n1_a14.pdf?

Reddy, C., Menkveld, H., & Bitzer, E. (2008). The practicum in pre-service teacher education: A survey of institutional practices. *Southern African Review of Education, 14*(1–2), 143–163. https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/sabinet/sare/2008/00000014/f0020001/art00011#Supp

Rusznyak, L., & Moosa, M. (2014). Supporting student teachers through their first attempts at teaching: Possibilities and limitations afforded by school-based and campus-based models of support. *Education as Change*, *18*(sup.1), S91-S105. https://doi.org/10.1080/16823206.2013.877354

Schauer, M. (2018). "Vygotsky for the hood": Connecting teacher prior life experiences and university teacher preparation curriculums for service in urban schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 74*(1), 1–9. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.04.009

Schön, D. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Shulman, L. (1998). Theory, practice, and the education of professionals. *Elementary School Journal, 98*(5), 511–526. https://doi.org/10.1086/461912

Schurink, E. (1998). Participatory action research as a tool for sustainable social development and reconstruction. In A. de Vos (Ed.), *Research at grass roots: A primer for the caring professions* (pp. 405–418). Pretoria, RSA: van Schaik.

Slonimsky, L., & Shalem, Y. (2006). Pedagogic responsiveness for academic depth. *Journal of Education, 40*(91), 35–58. https://journals.co.za/content/joe/40/1/AJA0259479X_72

Smith, J., & Naylor, R. (2001). Dropping out of university: A statistical analysis of the probability of withdrawal for UK university students. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society), 164*(2), 389–405. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-985X.00209

Väisänen, S., Pietarinen, J., Pyhältö, K., Toom, A., & Soini, T. (2017). Social support as a contributor to student teachers' experienced well-being. *Research Papers in Education, 32*(1), 41–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2015.1129643

Walkington, J. (2005). Becoming a teacher: Encouraging development of teacher identity through reflective practice. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 33*(1), 53–64. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866052000341124

Watts, J., Cockcroft, K., & Duncan, N. (2013). *Developmental Psychology.* Cape Town, RSA: University of Cape Town.

Yuan, E. (2016). The dark side of mentoring on pre-service language teachers' identity formation. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 55,* 188–197. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.01.012

Appendix 1: Student Feedback Questionnaire

Campus-Based Programme Feedback

1. Please indicate how you experienced the campus-based programme for first year students by placing a tick (√) in the relevant block.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Needs to be changed	Should not be included in future
Voice and Body Lecture					
Voice and Body Activity					
The A–Z of Teaching Lecture					
The A–Z of Teaching Activity					
Examples of Good Classroom Practices' Lecture					
Examples of Good Classroom Practices' Activity					
Bullying Lecture					
Bullying Activity					
The Heart of a Teacher Lecture					
The Heart of a Teacher Activity					

2. What was the highlight of the programme for you and why?
3. Please indicate any suggestions on how the programme can be improved.