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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/pie.v36i1.1>

ISSN 0258-2236

e-ISSN 2519-593X

*Perspectives in Education*

2018 36(1): 1-13

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# Voices from the classroom: Pre-service teachers' interactions with supervising teachers

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## Abstract

*Teaching practice is an important requirement to acquire a teaching qualification from South African universities. During teaching practice, it is customary for supervising teachers to guide and evaluate the students' performance. However, very little is known about how the interaction with supervising teachers influences the students' views about the teaching profession. Forty final-year Bachelor of Education students at the University of the Witwatersrand gave their consent to participate in a qualitative study using open-ended questionnaires. This research aimed to explore pre-service teachers' voices, using Denise Batchelor's (2008; 2006) research pertaining to conceptualisations of voice, namely, practical, epistemological and ontological, which were used to analyse the data. The findings suggested that pre-service teachers' pedagogical choices were linked to the supervising teachers' guidance. Many of the supervising teachers framed teaching as a profession that foregrounded administrative tasks and classroom management. Some of the supervising teachers' negative perceptions of the profession caused pre-service teachers to question their choice to become teachers. Another issue was that pre-service teachers wish to feel welcomed and supported at schools, but most experienced a lack of mentorship from their supervising teachers. We recommend that supervising teachers attend workshops and courses on how to mentor pre service teachers.*

**Keywords:** *teaching practice, pre-service teachers, voices, professional practice, mentorship, supervising teachers*

## 1. Introduction

Research on Initial Teacher Education (ITE) internationally (Feinman-Nemser, 2001; Hagger & McIntyre, 2006) and in South Africa (Bertram, 2011; Reeves & Robinson, 2014), has grown considerably in the past decade, particularly with regard to the mentoring of students on teaching practice. There are debates within the literature concerning the effectiveness of teaching practice at schools and the impact of mentoring relationships between supervising teachers and pre-service teachers' (Du Plessis, 2013; Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009; Quick & Siebörger, 2005; Shalem, 2003; Väisänen, Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Toom & Soini, 2017; Yuan, 2016). With the increasing attrition rate of teachers (Fleisch, 2007) and school leavers' reluctance to enrol in

ITE courses, it is imperative to understand what pre-service teachers' experiences are on teaching practice and how this influences their understanding of teaching as a profession. This paper focuses on the voices of pre-service teachers with regard to their mentoring experiences on teaching practice. During the four years of study, the participants completed twenty-four weeks of teaching practice in different school contexts, which included public, private, religious as well as non-denominational schools in South Africa.

Many researchers, such as Seale (2010), Batchelor (2006, 2008), Fielding (2004, 2007) and Kidd (2012), have argued that there is a dearth and undervaluing of students' voices in Higher Education research. Seale (2010:4) claims that the conceptualisations of students' voice is weak and calls for more debate at a Higher Education level regarding how students' voice is "understood and enacted". There has been a call for more participatory research (Fielding, 2004), and this is why we have included pre-service teachers' voices in our investigation.

Acknowledging the voices of the pre-service teachers' experiences about mentoring on teaching practice is important for ITE institutes and supervising teachers at schools. However, there is limited research regarding pre-service teachers' views about their interactions with supervising teachers on teaching practice (Svojanovsky, 2017). By acknowledging these pre-service teachers' voices, we hoped to gain some insights that would help to revise supervising teachers' guidelines on how to mentor pre-service teachers. Thus, the main aim of this research was to understand the experiences of pre-service teachers' interactions with their supervising teachers on teaching practice.

Listening to the voices of pre-service teachers, we gained critical insights into their experiences. This showed how important the supervising teachers' role is in the mentoring process in terms of supporting and empowering the pre-service teachers. We acknowledge that teaching practice positions pre-service teachers in a difficult role, because they need to take ownership of a class that is not their own. By acknowledging their voices in terms of classroom experiences, it allows for greater insight into the type of mentorship the supervising teachers offered, and how the pre-service teachers mediated this complexity. We begin by briefly reviewing selected literature on teacher education, mentorship and voice. This is followed by a discussion of the theoretical framework that underpins this research. Thereafter, the research methods and methodology, ethical considerations and the presentation and discussion of the data will be presented.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Teaching practice**

In South Africa, the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification (MRTEQ) (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2015) policy stipulates the principles for the development of ITE programmes in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) throughout South Africa. An important proviso in the MRTEQ (DHET, 2015:10) is practical learning in the form of work-integrated learning (WIL). WIL is a compulsory component of teacher training and entails learning from practice and in practice (Reeves & Robinson, 2014:237). Hagger and McIntyre (2006) argue that the workplace is where a pre-service teacher learns to teach. Further, they suggest, "that in schools people have to confront and deal with all the complex, messy difficulties which make education a demanding real world task" (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006:560). In the same manner, academic programmes ought to be aligned with the practical

application in the actual, complex and messy classroom (Wilson & Demetriou, 2007:215). Teaching practice provides students with the opportunity to gain practical experience in an authentic school context under the mentorship of an experienced, supervising teacher.

## 2.2 Supervising teachers as mentors

The issue of mentorship and its complexities has been discussed extensively in international research (Augustiniene & Ciuciulkiene, 2013; Hagger, McIntyre & Wilkin, 2013; Shanks & Shanks, 2017). In addition, the authors recognise the importance of critically examining the mentor-mentee relationship with specific focus on who this relationship best serves. The supervising teachers' mentorship of pre-service teachers helps to develop their identity and to make sense of their expectations as future teachers. Supervising teachers can be regarded as models of practice, as they provide important information for pre-service teachers to gauge their level of self-efficacy (Schunk, 2012). In addition, the supervising teachers help to develop the pre-teachers' instructional efficacy. Supervising teachers with higher self-efficacy show stronger commitment to their work, which includes mentoring and supporting pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers are also strongly influenced by the views of their supervising teachers (Ure, Gogh & Newton, 2010; Kaldi & Xafakos, 2017). The relationship between supervising teachers and pre-service teachers influences four areas: "the type of feedback, the summative evaluation, the degree of mentoring the supervising teacher provides, and the degree of autonomy given to the preservice teacher" (Shantz & Brown, 1999:693).

Furthermore, Du Plessis (2013:22) indicates that supervising teachers tend to share "experiences and practices with pre-service teachers during teaching practice". Moreover, the mentoring process should contribute towards constructive teaching and learning during the teaching practice period at schools. Therefore, for mentoring to be effective, the quality of dialogue between the supervising teacher and pre-service teacher needs to ensure that pre-service teachers gain optimally from the experience (Talvitie, Peltokallio & Mannisto, 2000). Du Plessis (2013:1) also argued that, "supervising teachers should provide pre-service teachers with emotional support and opportunities to develop their own identities as teachers and to create challenging and complex environments in which to learn". By listening to the pre-service teachers' voices, it plays a vital role in helping to understand their experiences of mentorship.

## 2.3 Theoretical framework

Teaching practice offers powerful opportunities to explore students' voices and their experiences of the profession. In this article, we refer to Denise Batchelor's (2006; 2008) work on voices to argue that the acknowledgment of pre-service teacher' voices is crucial to understand their experiences during teaching practice. Batchelor (2006; 2008) is mostly interested in the question, "Have students got a voice?" The notion of students' voice or the lack thereof is relevant to our research. Broadly defined, there are three types of voice that emerge from Batchelor's research: namely *practical*, which she refers to as the "voice for acting and doing"; *epistemological*, which is "a voice for knowing"; and, *ontological*, which is "a voice for being and becoming" (Batchelor, 2006:597). We used these three descriptions of voice as a framework to analyse this research.

### 2.3.1 Practical Voice – "voice for acting and doing"

Batchelor's concept of a practical voice, which is the "voice for acting and doing", aligns with Kagan's (1992) view that pre-service teachers should be exclusively involved in acquiring

knowledge of learners, establishing a teacher identity and developing a repertoire of classroom routines. These activities are all akin to “acting and doing”.

### **2.3.2 Epistemological Voice – “a voice for knowing”**

According to the MRTEQ (DHET, 2015:64) document, beginner teachers should have the following competencies: “a sound subject knowledge; pedagogical knowledge of their subject; an understanding of the needs of the learners they will be teaching; be able to communicate their subject knowledge effectively; and, be knowledgeable about the school curriculum”. In addition, they are required to understand diversity in the South African context, manage a classroom, have the ability to assess learners work and have a positive work ethic. In this article, we use Batchelor’s (2006; 2008) notion of epistemological voice to represent the knowledge, as described in the MRTEQ (DHET, 2015) document, and have analysed the data accordingly.

### **2.3.3 Ontological Voice – “a voice for being and becoming”**

What it means to be and become a teacher is an aspect that has received much deliberation in current literature (Luft & Roehrig, 2007; Grossman, Hammerness & McDonald, 2009; Friesen & Besley, 2013; Chong, 2011). These debates emphasise that pre-service teachers might have developed a perception of what teaching is by simply observing their own teachers while at school. Pre-service teachers have used this observational learning to make a judgement regarding what teaching entails. However, these perceptions can be regarded as incomplete, because they are not based on the realities of the experiences of being a teacher (Chong, 2011). The reality of being in a classroom during teaching practice allows students to confront their previous perceptions of teaching.

## **3. Research methods and methodology**

A qualitative research design methodology was used to understand and interpret students’ experiences of their interaction with their respective supervising teachers during teaching practice. The research design aimed to “explore common experiences of individuals and was concerned with open-exploration and understanding to explain relationships and experiences” (Creswell, 2012:20). We were interested in gathering a rich description of students’ experiences, which made qualitative research the most suitable methodology, because it does not privilege one method or discipline over another (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:6). Furthermore, this method allowed for a deeper understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and issues as expressed by the participants’ voices. A qualitative design required the researchers to “make sense of data in terms of the participants” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:461). Richer explanations were generated (Shank & Vilella, 2004:50) by using a phenomenological approach (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009:428), where students were requested to articulate their lived experiences of their encounters with supervising teachers during teaching practice.

The students completed open-ended questionnaires, which were a useful tool to collect data on students’ voices, because they were not restricted to multiple-choice or one-word answers. Questionnaires were the preferred tool to collect the data, as it was impossible to do one-on-one interviews with such a large cohort of participants in a short space of time. In addition, it would have been challenging to conduct focus group interviews, because the data was collected in October from the final-year students. This was shortly before they started their final examinations. The weakness of only using a qualitative design to collect data meant that

it restricted the ability to generalise the findings. However, this weakness was compensated for by using a diverse sample of participants, as they were placed in different school contexts over a four-year period.

The main question that this research aimed to address is: How are pre-service teachers' experiences about the teaching profession influenced by their interactions with supervising teachers at schools?

This will be considered by addressing the following sub-questions:

1. What are students' voices telling us about their mentoring experiences?
2. How do these experiences influence their perceptions of teaching?
3. What are pre-service teachers' expectations from their mentors?

Data was collected by means of open-ended questions that were emailed to participants to complete. The questions participants responded to were the following:

1. What do you expect from schools and supervising teachers during teaching practice?
2. What has been the least beneficial information you have received from a supervising teacher or the school during teaching practice?
3. What have you learnt at school during teaching practice?

All the responses from the participants were collated. The data was analysed using thematic analysis, which helped to identify and reported patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Making analytical sense of the data involved the researchers thinking about the data in new ways. This was done by asking questions of the data, such as, "What are students' voices telling us about their mentoring experiences?" The patterns that emerged were derived via inductive analysis, which is a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into the researchers' pre-existing notions. This open and flexible process was important to allow the students' voices to emerge. By reading through the raw data several times, this helped us to identify similar key concepts and ideas which were then grouped into different categories and sub-categories (Henning, 2010:107). We were aware that by using an inductive approach to analyse the data that it would allow for unexpected and unpredictable categories and sub-categories to emerge. In keeping with this research approach, there is a deliberate maintenance of neutrality in the presentation of the data. This allowed for the capture of rich data, which was categorised into main categories and sub-categories in relation to the participants' perceptions, which have been substantiated by using quotations from the participants. Thus, the participants' responses allowed for patterns to develop and for meaning to emerge from the data. While we may have approached the study with certain research interests, the data collected provided a deeper understanding of the participants' beliefs and experiences of mentorship at schools.

The researchers have been cognisant of their own biases in the analysis and write up of the data in order to ensure the reliability and validity of their findings. To ensure trustworthiness, the two researchers analysed the data independently and then discussed and compared categories to reach "intercoder agreement" (Nunan & Bailey, 2009:428). The validity of the data was ensured because of the multiple views expressed by a heterogeneous group of participants from various school contexts. This meant that the information presented was not from a one-sided viewpoint. Participants, from diverse backgrounds, attended at least six different schools for the purpose of teaching practice over their four years at university, which meant that the information they shared could be viewed as reliable. However, we note that

the data was collected from students who attended one tertiary institute and that it might not necessarily be possible to generalise this information to all students and institutions.

Out of the forty final-year B.Ed. students who completed the questionnaire, thirty-two were females and eight were males. Participants were purposively selected (Teddle & Yu, 2007; Palys, 2008). Furthermore, they were also selected for convenience (Merriam, 2009:79) as they were all registered as fourth-year education students at the same HEI. Participants were a heterogeneous group, as they were from diverse racial, cultural, social, gender, age and religious backgrounds.

#### **4. Ethical considerations**

The ethics committee of the university gave permission for this research to be conducted. Permission from schools has not been sort in this particular project as the focus is only students' voices and no mention of particular schools was made. Confidentiality has been ensured by not naming any participants or using pseudonyms. Participants were made aware that their involvement in this project was voluntary and that they were allowed to withdraw from it at any given point.

#### **5. Presentation and discussion of data**

The following categories and sub-categories were derived after analysing the data. Aspects that were indicated by less than forty percent of participants were not regarded as significant and have not been included.

##### **5.1 Pre-service teachers' experiences of mentoring inform them that teaching is about "acting and doing"**

A significant category that emerged was that during teaching practice the participants were confronted with the 'practical' tasks of teaching. Participants indicated these as practical pedagogical choices that they needed to make, based on the guidance by the supervising teachers, which focused on administrative tasks as well as being able to manage classroom discipline effectively. We have categorised them in the following way:

##### **5.2 Pedagogical choices are linked to supervising teacher's guidance**

Forty-three per cent of participants revealed the following: despite what they had learnt about lesson planning, selection, development of resources and learner engagement at university, during teaching practice they made choices that were influenced by the supervising teachers. How students were guided largely depended on the context of the school and the willingness of the supervising teacher to act as a mentor. Some participants were encouraged to use a "purely textbook based, teacher-centred" approach by supervising teachers. Others were encouraged to make use of as many resources as possible.

Some participants were "expected to be able to teach using their [supervising teachers] methods" and felt that if not done then these teachers would not give them positive feedback. From the data, it seems that students were forced to adapt to the teaching style and requirements of supervising teachers. Another reason for complying was the need to 'please' supervising teachers. Thus, it was clear that students were not given an opportunity to develop their own identities (Du Plessis, 2013; Väisänen, Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Toom & Soini, 2017). This meant that the school context did not always provide powerful spaces for

learning as intended (Feiman-Nemser, 2001), and restricted the participants' freedom to make judgements about their practice (Biesta, 2005). Mentorship from supervising teachers was mainly linked to practical craft knowledge.

### **5.3 Teachers must focus on administrative tasks**

Forty five percent of the participants defined teaching as a practical activity as a result of their supervising teachers. The reason for this definition was the number of administrative tasks that needed to be completed daily: "the filling in of registers; the marking of learners' work; and, the collecting of various forms and information from learners". Practical aspects and decisions were therefore foregrounded as central to the work of a teacher, rather than the focus on becoming teachers who used their professional knowledge to promote teaching and learning for all. Responses from a number of participants indicated that, "teaching is not all about teaching" with many foregrounding the practical, akin to Batchelor's (2006, 2008) notion of the practical voice. In our view, this showed that teaching has been minimised to an administrative task.

This view resonates with Kagan's (1992) argument that most student teachers are interested in developing a set of classroom routines. However, Grossman (1992) argues that student's professional development is constrained if procedural routines become the early focus of their training. It was clear from an analysis of the data that many supervising teachers focused mainly on the mastering of administrative tasks during the mentoring process, which could lead students to believe that teaching is simply an administrative job.

### **5.4 The secret to becoming a great teacher is effective classroom management**

Pre-service teachers expressed the view that there were clear messages sent by the supervising teachers about classroom management. In particular, they were told how to discipline the learners, thus the practical voice was foregrounded. Fifty five percent of the participants highlighted the information they received from teachers on how to discipline the learners in the form of 'tips for teachers'. One participant stated that he was told "you need to be strict from the first day, because if you don't put your foot down, you will never have control in terms of classroom management". This opinion led him to deduce that the "theory about classroom management is not always practical".

Another participant claimed that the theories about classroom management techniques from the university and the schools were prescriptive and differed in reality. Whereas a third participant acknowledged the disjuncture between theory and practice as she stated: "During teaching practice we learn the actual ways in which we would deal with certain situations, because at university we are taught things by the book". Her experience of the reality of the school context allowed her to note the following: "In a class things become unpredictable and the teacher is expected to have to be able to deal with each situation as it arises". This is akin to Hagger and McIntyre (2005) who argued that people have to confront and deal with all the complex, messy difficulties, which make education a demanding real world task. On the one hand, the participants indicated that supervising teachers were not modelling suitable strategies to discipline the learners, but on the other hand, the participants revealed that what they have been taught at university with regard to discipline was abstracted from practice. Tenured teachers might regard the set of skills they have acquired via experience as a full-proof mechanism to promote successful teaching and learning. Reliance on craft knowledge



only, may be traditional, deterministic and not pedagogically sound. It might lead pre-service teachers to believe that what they learnt at university was of no value when faced with the realities of the classroom context. Thus, the pre-service teachers might start to question their voices of “acting and doing”. These views showed that the participants experienced an internal conflict with regard to classroom management issues.

### **5.5 Interacting with supervising teachers affects pre-service teachers’ perceptions of teaching at an ontological level**

As most pre-service teacher education takes place in HEI, there are often tensions between what pre-service teachers feel the focus of their learning should be and what happens in practice: they argue that they require practical knowledge and skills, which is not covered in enough detail during their courses. Many pre-service teachers think that they do not need much theory, and do not see how theory underpins their own practice. This view was perpetuated by their interactions with supervising teachers who mostly focused on aspects of craft knowledge. These tensions were expressed by fifty three percent of participants with regard to the professional judgements that they were required to make during teaching practice.

### **5.6 Pre-service teachers are confronted with supervising teachers’ negativity about the profession**

Participants indicated that they questioned their choice to become teachers, because of their supervising teachers’ personal perceptions during teaching practice. One participant stated: “Some teachers are very negative about the teaching profession, as they often moan about the pay and the workload, which creates a negative environment and makes me doubt my decision to become a teacher”. Another participant said: “Most teachers tell us what a terrible career we are in”. Pre-service teachers’ experiences with supervising teachers have made them question their views about the profession and their choice to become a teacher. One of the participants felt that the supervising teachers’ views had made him question if the “teaching profession is calling (for him) or not”. From these voices, it is evident that some of the participants found that supervising teachers’ comments about the teaching profession were discouraging. Participants expressed a concern that the supervising teachers’ negative perceptions about teaching affected their own attitudes towards teaching.

This finding resonates with a similar study where the participants did not find themselves in emotionally supportive environments (Du Plessis, 2013). Despite Biesta’s (2005) call to inculcate the pre-service teachers’ “educational professionalism” at schools, we argue that this aspect does not often develop due to the negative assumptions from supervising teachers about teaching as shown in this study. Instead, pre-service teachers experience a decline in their teaching efficacy after teaching practice (Matoti, Odora, & Junqueira, 2011; Lindqvist, Weurlander, Wernerson, & Thornberg, 2017). This decline in teacher efficacy affects pre-service teachers’ ontological voice in that they start questioning their decision to become teachers.

### **5.7 Pre-service student’s expectations of a supervising teacher**

Firstly, seventy-three per cent of participants expected their supervising teachers to induct them into the school by explaining school policies and procedures to them, and giving them relevant documents. Secondly, fifty-five per cent felt that they needed to feel welcome in their supervising teacher’s classroom, and this was vital for their success during teaching



practice. Lastly, eighty percent viewed the supervising teachers as mentors and role models who should encourage and empower pre-service teachers, but this did not always happen.

### **5.8 To be inducted into school policies and procedures**

Participants stated they expected their supervising teachers to spend time discussing the school's policies and general procedures with them. In the absence of this happening, a pre-service teacher felt "lost and as if I had to work harder to fit in to the school's procedures and expectations by asking questions". One participant was more specific about what was needed, because she indicated that supervising teachers "should provide us with relevant documents and general information about the school". For another participant these documents should include, "the school's Code of Conduct, a time table and a class list/s of the class I will be allocated to". A third participant felt that if the supervising teacher was clear about the school's expectations, then it would allow her to "make a good impression". From the voices of participants, it is evident that there is a lack of support and guidance from supervising teachers with regard to the pre-service teachers' induction into a school. This led the pre-service teachers to feel unsure and anxious about the correct protocol to follow at a school or how to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Supervising teachers need to be made aware of the unnecessary strain they place on pre-service teachers if there are no induction policies and procedures in place at their schools.

### **5.9 To feel welcome at the schools**

Participants indicated that they wished to feel welcome at the schools. For one participant, this meant being "treated like the staff members, with due respect". Another participant stated that she "expects teachers to be kind, helpful and welcoming instead of feeling threatened by me and behave[ing] in a hostile manner". A third participant said: "[I] expect[s] the school to be more helpful in helping me do what I have to do for those three weeks. If you [schools] volunteer to have us as students, then you should be willing to help us". She further stated that the "majority of the teachers just ignore you like you're not there until they need you to staple the exam papers and I find that quite rude... then they belittle you in front of the learners which I have experienced". It is during teaching practice that pre-service teachers form a perception about various schools in particular and the teaching profession in general. Participants felt unwelcomed and belittled in some school contexts, as they were not treated as junior colleagues, but as learners.

### **5.10 To act as mentors and role models who empower and encourage them**

Participants stated that they expected supervising teachers to act as mentors and role models who were able to empower and encourage them during teaching practice and about the teaching profession as a whole. One participant felt discouraged by a "supervising teacher who does not give any feedback at all and one who leaves me alone with learners throughout the whole teaching practice experience, but wants to comment when my university tutor comes". Participants felt let down and angry at the unwillingness of some supervising teachers to support them (Talvitie, Peltokallio & Mannisto, 2000). Barnett (2007:167) notes that it is not knowledge that will carry pre-service teachers forward, but their capacity to embrace multiple and conflicting frameworks and to offer their own positive interventions in that milieu.

One of the participants felt that pre-service teachers "come into a classroom to make a difference, not [to] imitate the educator you have been observing". A second participant reported

that she needed “some amount of motivation (from her supervising teacher) when it gets challenging”. After receiving feedback from the supervising teacher, a third participant stated that, “then she would leave me alone for the rest of the day to implement that feedback before observing my final lesson of the day to see whether I had improved using her suggestions. Participants indicated that they expected and needed feedback, motivation and input from their supervising teachers with regard to their teaching in general and their lesson planning (Shantz & Brown, 1999). As this did not happen often, the pre-service teachers frequently felt unsupported and unwelcome at the schools. Supervising teachers’ lack of feedback, support and mentorship of pre-service teachers has a negative impact on their sense of ‘being and becoming a teacher’.

## 6. Conclusion

Mentorship by supervising teachers plays a key role in pre-service teachers’ growth and development during teaching practice. A powerful way of understanding the importance and complexities of this interaction is by giving pre-service teachers the opportunity to articulate their experiences of this relationship. This means that it is imperative to include their voices in ITE research, which this paper has done by focusing on Batchelor’s (2006; 2008) concepts of practical, epistemological and ontological voice.

One of the main findings was that most of the pre-service teachers’ pedagogical choices were linked to the guidance that they received from their respective supervising teachers. The data revealed that many supervising teachers framed teaching as a profession of acting and doing, where the administrative tasks required in teaching were foregrounded, as were issues surrounding classroom management. An additional finding was that interacting with supervising teachers affected pre-service teachers at an ontological level, because they were confronted by some of the supervising teachers’ negativity about the teaching profession. This caused the pre-service teachers to question their choice to become teachers. Furthermore, the pre-service teachers would like to be made welcome at schools during teaching practice: they needed the supervising teachers to act as mentors and role models, who encouraged and empowered them. A third finding was that pre-service teachers indicated that their epistemological needs were not met on teaching practice, as they wished that supervising teachers would spend more time inducting them into the school, by explaining the school’s policies and procedures.

This article has highlighted how pre-service teachers’ experiences of teaching and learning could be improved in practice by focusing more closely on the relationship that they have had with their supervising teachers. In order for this to be achieved, there needs to be more focus placed on the mentoring pre-service teachers receive from their supervising teachers during teaching practice. By acknowledging pre-service teachers’ voices, we gained some insights which would help to revise supervising teachers’ guidelines on how to mentor pre-service teachers. We recommend that supervising teachers need to be empowered by attending mentoring workshops and or short course.

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## (Endnotes)

- 1 In this paper the terms “pre-service teachers” and “students” are used interchangeably. Reason being that pre-service teachers are also students at the university.