The impact of an accelerated teacher training programme based on a pedagogy of enactment on trainees' self–efficacy

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a 'Pedagogy of Enactment' approach on trainee teachers' self-efficacy. Perceived self-efficacy has been defined by Bandura (1997) as, 'people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce effects' (p.7). In the current climate of education and Initial Teacher Training (ITT) there is much discussion about the importance of what it means to be an effective teacher. Self-efficacy, as the belief in one's own abilities, should therefore be considered an important trait for teacher quality and effectiveness.

Self-efficacy scores were collected from Year 1 trainees who had undertaken an accelerated ITT BA QTS Primary Teaching programme at Liverpool Hope University and Year 2 trainees who had experienced a less intensive programme. The scores were compared in order to determine if there was a significant difference between groups and to explore contributing factors. This project was quantitative in nature, using a standardised questionnaire to collect data: Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (NTSES) (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007, 2010). Initial findings show that Year 1 trainee teachers have higher self-efficacy than trainee teachers in Year 2.

INTRODUCTION

This research project explores the extent to which a Pedagogy of Enactment approach can impact upon the self-efficacy of first year trainee teachers. In particular, the research focuses on aspects of module or curriculum design, which promote and impact upon self-efficacy in relation to trainee teachers' school-based practice. Recent changes to the curriculum design of the BA QTS Primary teaching degree means that a comparison can be made of Year 1 trainees who have experienced a year of the new programme. The degree incorporates a strand, 'The Hope Teacher', which explicitly links theory to practice. Year 2 trainees, undertaking the legacy degree, did not experience this approach.

ITT at Liverpool Hope University comprises university-based and school-based training, incorporating block placements in schools within the local area. The majority of school partners are in the Local Authorities of Halton, Wirral, Knowsley and Liverpool.

Knowsley and Liverpool are amongst the five local authority districts with the largest proportions of highly deprived neighborhoods in England, based upon data from the English Indices of Deprivation (Office for National Statistics, 2015). To change outcomes for pupils in these schools, the 'Hope Teacher' strand aims to encourage trainee teachers to discuss the most effective pedagogies of practice that lead to pupil progress.

The 'Hope Teacher' was identified by Ofsted as having distinctive qualities, namely a teacher who takes a full part in the professional life of the school and teaches the whole child with moral purpose. With this in mind, and the recent validation of Hope's new undergraduate degree, we had the opportunity to strengthen the formative learning experiences that we create to more fully articulate the moral dimensions that are essential in the formation of effective teachers. This is increasingly critical within our partnership schools in order to impact upon teaching and learning in respect of the whole child. The value of teaching trainees to teach with a moral purpose is supported by Michaels et al (2007), 'It is encouraging to think that if students are socialized early and intensively into these discourse norms in academic settings, they will internalize them and carry them into the civic sphere' (p. 256).

In response to this, the 'Hope Teacher' strand has been developed which incorporates some of the less tangible dispositions of moral commitment and values-based practice. This strand, part of our wider programme, involves a lecture followed by directed tasks or observations to be carried out on an attachment day in school, which are then reflected upon in the subsequent reflective seminar. This model or cycle (i.e. lecture- school attachment day- reflective seminar) allows trainees to explicitly link theory to practice (Valencia et al, 2009) and therefore consider learning as a subject to be created rather than a created subject, 'teacher educators should actively create situations that elicit the wish for self-directed theory building in their students' (Korthagen, Loughran and Russell (2006, p.1027). Vitally, it also encourages a collective, shared scaffold for reflection and opportunities to learn from peers during the seminar (Manouchehri 2002; Michaels et al, 2007; Lunenberg, Korthagen and Swannen, 2007).

It is a commonly held belief that university-based sessions provide the theoretical underpinnings of learning and teaching pedagogy (Goldacre, 2013) and that school-based training offers trainee teachers the 'environment' in which to apply these. However, this practice creates issues: perpetuating the assumption that expertise in learning and teaching only exists in schools and devaluing the rich opportunities offered through university-based training (i.e. valuable reflection and collaboration with a potentially large group of peers and teacher educators). As Korthagen, Loughran and Russell (2006) describe: 'They learn not so much by being taught by their teacher educators but by structured reflection on their experiences and discussions with peers. In this way the student teachers begin to construct their own professional knowledge (p.29).'

This research seeks to ascertain if there is a significant difference in trainees' self-efficacy scores, comparing those who participate in a programme that includes 'The Hope Teacher' strand, which seeks to encourage trainee teachers to construct their own professional knowledge, with those who have not participated in a course that incorporates this strand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

New understandings of children's learning, which may lead to important changes in teaching and pedagogy, are continuously emerging. As a result, teacher educators need to be flexible in approaching their university-based curriculum content (Lunenberg, Korthagen and Swannen 2007; Scott 2015). As trainee teachers are encouraged to be reflective of their own practice in school, it is important that teacher educators also model this approach. With this in mind, the 'Hope Teacher' strand can be seen as a pedagogical approach which scaffolds trainees to interpret new standpoints and theories of learning, translating these into effective classroom practice.

PEDAGOGIES OF ENACTMENT

From a pedagogical standpoint, teacher educators must consider how to plan opportunities for trainee teachers to connect theory and practice so that they are able to teach effectively, using theory to guide their action in the classroom. To make the university-based teacher education experience a meaningful and valuable one, the 'Hope Teacher' strand seeks to mirror the assertion of Korthagen, Loughran and Russell (2006) that, 'one does not learn through experience but through reflection on experience and through interaction with others' (p.1025). Reflection can be identified as the prime means for linking theory and practice. With this in mind, the traditional design of the seminar in Year 1 was reframed in order to encourage trainee teachers to become reflective practitioners. Opportunities for reflective conversations were incorporated into seminars, where discussion points were constantly, and flexibly, framed and reframed to foster a reflection-in-action approach to discussion (Schön, 1983).

A cycle of meaningful collaboration was developed in order for reflection-in-action to take place and for trainee teachers to search for the most effective learning and teaching approaches to employ in their particular classrooms, grounded in theory presented to them during university-based sessions (Korthagen, Loughran and Russell, 2006; McIntyre and Hagger, 1992). This was a far more ambitious approach than the traditional theory-to-practice model, whereby trainees translated a set of pre-determined strategies to the classroom, regardless of whether or not they were meaningful or appropriate to that particular setting. Key to this collaborative process were opportunities for peer discussion, which mirrored key pedagogical elements: thinking, communicating, inquiring and reasoning. Korthagen, Loughran and Russell (2006) stress the importance of working closely with peers either at school or at university in order to learn about teaching. They concurred with McIntyre and Hagger (1992) who stated that, 'collegiality has been demonstrated to be a critical factor in helping individual teachers to develop their classroom practice' (p.276).

Korthagen, Loughran and Russell (2006) considered the need for teacher educators to construct worthwhile opportunities for trainee teachers to engage in aspects of teaching pedagogy as the key focus rather than controlling pupils and ensuring specific learning outcomes dictated by a curriculum. Incorporating this into university-based training, without the conflicting demands found in a classroom, can be meaningful and informative for trainees. The value of this type of university-based training was explicitly shared with trainees, as they too can share the commonly held belief that the most valuable training takes place in the school environment. Linking reflection on practical experiences with theory, created situations where the pedagogical learning of the trainee teacher was embedded in their learning to teach. According to Myers (2002),

all too often the curriculum is the focus of teacher education institutions instead of teaching and learning. A reframing of course content would be necessary, as suggested by Korthagen, Loughran and Russell (2006), 'a subtle, but important reformulation is that this means helping student teachers to learn how to teach i.e. helping them to learn how to help children learn' (p. 1030).

CREATING A DISCOURSE THROUGH A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Within the 'Hope Teacher' strand, tutors facilitate discussion on current pedagogical practices encouraging trainees to create their own theories and make sense, through peer discussions and reflection, of what has been observed or experienced during school-based practice. This discourse, through a community of practice (Lampert et al, 2013), provides trainee teachers with new insights and opportunities to gain from the expertise and experience of others (Putnam and Borko, 1997), rather than merely accepting what they experience first-hand for themselves whilst on school-based training. Terwel (1994) discovered that trainees could accept and develop narrow theoretical perspectives unless supported and questioned by peers.

Fellow peers and teacher educators become enablers in the 'Hope Teacher' seminars and take on the role of 'more knowledgeable other' (Vygotsky, 1978). The dialogic format encourages professional conversations with the aim of deepening and evolving trainees' understanding. For this to happen, trainees need to be engaged, with teacher educators acting as facilitators and posing questions that encourage trainees to think critically and reflect upon their own school-based practice. The interaction between teacher educator and trainee teacher is reciprocal and configures the perspectives of both, with a focus upon expanding their existing understanding of pedagogical practice in the classroom (Nystrand, 2012; Alexander, 2010). For it to become 'accountable talk' (Michaels, O'Connor and Resnick, 2007), trainees are encouraged to listen carefully and build upon each other's ideas, making sense of what has been observed in school. Thus there is a considered pedagogical approach at play in terms of deliberative discourse and reasoning that may involve a certain amount of risk-taking for the trainee teacher when considering how to improve outcomes for their learners.

The collaborative learning environment has high expectations of learners to articulate their stances and formulate or refine their ideas based upon reflection. They need to share their ideas with peers, explore different standpoints, question each other, seek explanation, and take part in higher-order thinking such as directing, classifying, critical analysis, applying, and problem solving. This collaborative discourse leads to new learning and greater depth of understanding.

CYCLE OF AMBITIOUS TEACHING

When teacher educators model this approach during seminars and workshops, their role changes and they move into a cycle of ambitious teaching where trainee teachers' beliefs are challenged: 'When supervisors posed open ended questions and pressed students to provide evidence for teaching decisions it was possible for the supervisors to move beyond supportive evaluative roles to challenge student teacher teaching beliefs' (Blanton, Berenson and Norwood, 2001, p. 241).

The challenge for tutors or teacher educators is to scaffold trainee teachers to construct their own professional vision of what it means to teach ambitiously (Long, van Es and Black, 2013). This cycle of ambitious teaching encourages teacher educators

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> Efficacy beliefs influence whether people think erratically or strategically, optimistically or pessimistically; what courses of action they choose to pursue; the goals they set for themselves and their commitment to them; how much effort they put forth in given endeavors; the outcomes they expect their efforts to produce; how long they persevere in the face of obstacles; their resilience to adversity; how much stress and depression they experience in coping with taxing environmental demands; and the accomplishments they realize (Bandura, 2000, p.75).

A major influence and significance as a source of self-efficacy beliefs is mastery experience (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2007): 'Successes build a robust belief in one's personal efficacy. Failures undermine it, especially if failures occur before a sense of efficacy is firmly established.' (Bandura 1994, p. 71). Hence, direct experience of mastering a task or controlling an environment leads to increased self-efficacy. Two other sources of influence include: (a) vicarious experience, which is based on observation of and modeling from an expert, and (b) social or verbal persuasion from reflective discussion with peers and experts (Bandura, 1997). Although considered to have lesser impact (Jordan, Schwartz, and McGhie-Richmond, 2009), the vicarious and social persuasion influences on self-efficacy highlight the importance of discourse opportunities, which encourage trainee teachers being able to reframe their position. As Gibbs and Miller (2014, p.614) note, 'It is through the interactions implicit within dialogue that alternative possibilities can be considered and developed.' Timing is also a significant factor. Woolfolk-Hoy and Burke-Spero (2005, p.344) state, 'Bandura's theory of self-efficacy suggests that efficacy might be most malleable early in learning, thus the first years in teaching could be critical to long-term development of teacher efficacy.'

METHODOLOGY

The current study sought to investigate the impact on trainee teachers' self-efficacy of an accelerated 'Pedagogy of Enactment' programme, structured around a Cycle of Ambitious Teaching and opportunities for discourse through a community of practice. A standardised questionnaire was used to collect data: Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (NTSES) (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007, 2010). Self-efficacy scores were collected from Year 1 trainees who had undertaken the accelerated ITT BA QTS Primary Teaching programme and Year 2 trainees who had experienced a less intensive programme. The scores were compared in order to determine if there was a significant difference between groups and to explore contributing factors.

PARTICIPANTS

Trainee teachers following the BA QTS Primary Teaching programme completed the questionnaire in the same week of the Lent term 2017. Participants from BA QTS Year 1 (N=127) and Year 2 (N=98) completed the questionnaire individually, with no discussion, in a classroom setting at the university. All responses were anonymised. At this point of their training, both cohorts had experienced the same programme content but with the Year1 trainees on an accelerated programme with some course content material delivered through the 'Hope Teacher' strand of the programme. There was no 'Hope Teacher' strand in Year 2. Furthermore, all participants had completed a 6-week block of school-based training, with the same expectations that they should teach 40% of the timetable by the end of the placement.

MEASURES

The 'Norwegian Teacher's Self-Efficacy Scale- Section E' (NTSES) (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007) consists of six components and a total of twenty-four elements. The six components exemplified by the twenty-four elements include: instruction and adapting it, composition of groups, ability to cope with change, motivating learners, cooperation with colleagues and parents, and maintain discipline which recognise the diversity and demands facing teachers (Avanzi et al, 2013). Sample items included: 'How certain are you that you can explain subject matter so that most pupils understand the basic principles?' (instruction); 'How certain are you that you can control even the most aggressive students?' (maintain discipline). Participants respond on a Likert-scale of one to seven with one indicating 'not certain at all' and seven indicating 'absolutely certain'.

The item construction within the questionnaire was based upon Bandura's self-efficacy theoretical framework (Bandura 1997, 2006 cited in Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2010). Prior to 2010, the NTSES had been tested on small scale samples (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007). The largest study to date included 2249 participants across Norway. Cronbach's alphas for the scales ranged from .77 to .90, indicating high reliability (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2010).

Originally used in Norwegian studies, the 6 components within NTSES are not culturally specific and so can be successfully applied in other cultural settings (Khezerlou, 2013; Avanzi et al, 2013). Indeed, there is potential, as the scale is used more widely, to use data for international comparisons of teacher self-efficacy, of both in-service and trainee teachers. It is intended that the questionnaire will be re-administered each year as part of a longitudinal study, during the final year of the participants' current course and into their early years as in-service teachers, following qualification.

RESULTS

The findings represent the averages of trainee teachers' responses to the NTSES (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007) questions. Series 1 scores relate to Year 1 trainees (N=127) who received the 'Hope Teacher' model of lecture-school attachment day seminar incorporated into their instructional pathway. Series 2 scores relate to Year 2 trainees (N= 98) who had not received the 'Hope Teacher' strand. It is important to note that both year groups, at this point, had experienced the same school-based training and covered the same taught themes.

The findings demonstrate that Year 1 trainee teachers had a higher perceived self-efficacy, in responses to all of the questions, than the Year 2 trainees (see Figure 1). Indeed, although self-efficacy scores for the two groups follow a similar pattern and trajectory of responses, Year 1 trainees record higher self-efficacy in all six components of the NTSES.
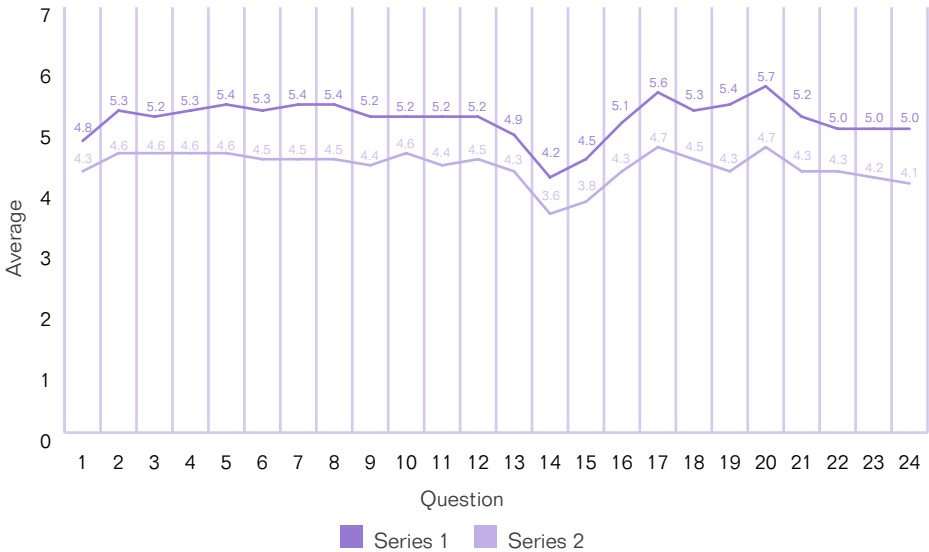

Figure 1: NTSES Survey Responses: Comparison of Y1 and Y2 Averages

Overall, considering responses to all twenty-four questions, Year 1 trainees have an average of 5.9, rating themselves between 'quite certain' (response of 4 or 5 on Likert-scale) or 'absolutely certain' (response of 6 or 7) on the 7-point Likert-scale (see Table 1). Y2 trainees have an average of 4.4, rating themselves as 'quite certain' (response of 4 or 5 on the 7-point Likert-scale (see Table 1).

Table 1: Average Response per Question

	Trainees	
	Year 1	Year 2
Total	142.5	105.4
Average	5.9	4.4

DISCUSSION

Improving the self-efficacy of trainee teachers is crucial in ensuring a resilient workforce and could be a means of safeguarding high retention rates once the trainee teachers have qualified. Questionnaire data suggests that 'Hope Teacher', as the only difference in programme design between the new degree and the legacy degree, has had an impact on trainees' self-efficacy and has gone some way to create higher responses. In

the discussion below, a number of key programme characteristics are considered that may have contributed to this difference.

The structure and planning of the 'Hope Teacher' seminar is crucial in order to ensure that discussion is focused and leads to a deeper understanding, allowing trainees to reason. This concurs with Michaels, O'Connor and Resnick (2007, p.284) who state that 'sense making and scaffolded discussion, calling for particular forms of talk, are seen as the primary mechanism for promoting deep understanding of complex concepts and robust reasoning.' In 'Hope Teacher', trainees become active in discussion, drawing on their observations whilst on their attachment day, sharing and making sense of what they have experienced. In this community of enquiry, thinking and reasoning develops through interaction with peers (Lipman, 1976) and teacher educators who model critical and creative patterns of questioning to encourage active enquiry of complex ideas (Michaels, O'Connor and Resnick, 2007; Putnam and Borko, 1997). This then serves to support the development of trainees' personal philosophy and influences their self-efficacy beliefs whilst impacting upon pupils' outcomes in their placement classrooms.

However, attention must be paid to the fact the trainee teachers enter the course with preconceptions, which may differ from the new views of learning and teaching that teacher educators and school-based mentors may wish to develop within them. Initially, this might distort their understanding of new ideas as they may seek to assimilate them into their existing viewpoints (Putnam and Borko, 1997; Lunenberg, Korthagen and Swannen, 2007). Korthagen, Loughran and Russell (2006) suggest that learning about impactful teaching in the classroom requires approaches that may challenge the usual practices within a university culture and that change must begin within the pre-service training programmes. The 'Hope Teacher' module aims to do this through encouraging reasoning, collaboration and communication with peers, which leads to sensemaking of what is observed and experienced on a school attachment day or whilst on placement. This is achieved via a supportive discourse community of practice provided in the seminar.

The perceived self-efficacy of a trainee teacher at Year 1 is thought to be low, as they have not had the mastery, vicarious or social experiences (Bandura, 1997) that trainees further on in the programme will have via their greater experience in school. Therefore a more explicit approach is necessary in order to support Year 1 trainees in building their personal educational philosophy by initially helping them to make connections between theory and practice. Hence, the self-efficacy results detailed in this paper make a case for the continued inclusion of the 'Hope Teacher' strand in the training programme, with a focus on building a discourse community through verbal and social persuasion influences as detailed by Bandura (1997). This is supported by Tschannen and Wollfolk-Hoy (2007), whose findings revealed that verbal or social influences were a more important concept for trainee teachers than for in-service teachers. Thus, central to the 'Hope Teacher' strand are the opportunities to learn and develop one's own education philosophy through vicarious experience and social persuasion.

Therefore, taking the view of Bandura (1997), we are creating a cyclical approach that begins with vicarious experiences on the trainees' attachment days, then social / verbal persuasion through the 'Hope Teacher' seminar. This leads into a more considered approach to mastery experience whilst on placement, which is based upon the 'scaffold' of the 'Hope Teacher' strand and the trainees' own sensemaking.

CONCLUSION

This paper contributes to a new understanding of teacher education pedagogy and makes the case for a connected approach to university and school-based training. Considered within a cycle of enactment and discourse culture, the 'Hope Teacher' seminar has been shown to be effective in enhancing trainees' self-efficacy. Intellectual space was created for teacher educators and trainee teachers to develop collegial learning relationships, critically analysing school-based practice and sense-making from each other's constructs (Brown, Rowley and Smith, 2016). This helped to bridge the divide between theory and practice resulting in more informed, purposeful practice that should ultimately impact on trainees' performance whilst on school-based placements.

Future work could focus on probing trainees' answers to the 24 questions to identify specific areas of low efficacy and gain an understanding of the factors that may negatively impact trainee teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. The findings could also inform the further development of seminar content into years two and three of the programme in ways that would lead to the development of greater overall self-efficacy.

BIOGRAPHY

Emma Liddy taught as a primary classroom teacher for 22 years with recent experience teaching in an international school in Switzerland. During her time abroad, she held the posts of Head of Primary Physical Education, Primary Curriculum Coordinator and Deputy Head. As an experienced practitioner, she brings recent and relevant expertise to the BA QTS Primary and PGCE Primary courses and takes a proactive approach to the pastoral care of trainees within the School of Teacher Education. She is Head of Year 2 BA QTS and a member of the Primary PE and Primary Mathematics teams. Emma is currently completing her Master's degree at Liverpool Hope University.

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