



# Teaching practicum in 21<sup>st</sup> century New Zealand

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# Teaching practicum in 21<sup>st</sup> century New Zealand

Peter Rawlins and Louise Starkey

## Executive summary

The project goal was to examine the learning experience of student teachers and their mentors during practicum to enable the development of models for practicum appropriate for 21<sup>st</sup> century New Zealand teacher education programmes.

Ideas about teaching, learning and mentoring are evolving, and the way that preservice teacher education programmes are organised is changing to reflect the subtle movement from 'the craft' of teaching (learnt through apprentice modelling) to teaching as a profession through reciprocal reflective academic study (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). There is limited research which focuses on the learning that occurs as student teachers undertake practicum experience and the extent to which they draw on their learning in the teacher education programme. This research included early childhood, primary and secondary graduate diploma programmes being offered at Massey University and Victoria University of Wellington during 2010.

Data were collected through an online survey of students ( $N=164$ ), their associate teachers ( $N=138$ ) and visiting lecturers ( $N=32$ ). To explore key learning experiences during a practicum experience, a cross-section of student teachers ( $N=11$ ) completed a weekly reflection on their key learning moments, links made to academic study, mentoring, and support. This was followed by open-ended semi-structured interviews of the student teachers and their associate teachers at the conclusion of the practicum. These case studies gave rich data to explore the learning moments from the perspective of student teachers and their associates. Three orientations of data analysis were used in this research. The first developed findings emerging from the context-based interviews, the second orientation focused on the surveys, and the third orientation was from the review of literature. The three orientations were drawn together to summarise the identified critical factors which contributed to student teachers' successful learning on practicum and to develop recommendations which may guide those designing teacher education programmes who are seeking to enhance student teachers' learning during practicum experiences.

The data from this study are a starting point for considering the mentoring and support of student teachers within the context of practicum experience. The following recommendations have emerged through analysis of the data that may be of use to those involved in teacher practicum experiences. Student learning on teaching practicum is enhanced when:

- Teacher education programmes align learning activities such as independent learning tasks and assessments to enable student teachers to make the links between theory and research, and the practice of teaching.
- Processes are in place so that associate teachers are encouraged to be aware of personal connectedness with their student teacher, discuss the style of supervision, possible tensions,

and the role of associate and student teacher (with the student teacher), collaborate with their student teacher in the teaching process, and verbalise and share reflections.

- Student teachers are encouraged through formal and informal structures to access peers to discuss their learning and teaching practice during practicum experience.
- Mentoring and practicum structures scaffold the student teachers through stages of learning – from understanding the context to teaching focusing on particular strategies moving to a holistic approach with multiple strategies, cognisant of the learning and engagement needs of individual students.

At this stage it is proposed that three areas will be examined in detail as a result of this research with findings published in 2011/2012. These include:

#### ***Student teacher learning through the practicum experience***

This article will examine the change in focus across teaching experiences (3-7 weeks). It will report key learning moments which were identified by student teachers, the frustrations they faced and the factors which helped them. It will conclude with implications for universities and the schools in which the students are placed.

#### ***Integrating university study with teaching practicum***

The second article will examine how student teachers were able (or not) to make links between their studies in graduate university courses and their teaching practicum. The findings are based on the weekly reports gathered through a multiple case study research and from a survey of 164 student teachers. The results of this study could be useful in course and practicum model design.

#### ***Supporting and mentoring student teachers through their practicum experience***

The third article draws on the literature on mentoring and a study of student teachers and their mentors during teaching experience. It explores the types of mentoring currently used and examines the support that helped student teachers to reach key learning moments during teaching practicum. The different learning needs across the weeks on practicum are considered.

Links to these will be included in the Ako Aotearoa website.

## Background

Students studying towards a teaching qualification currently undertake a programme that involves both academic study and school or centre-based practical experience. Through the university or tertiary provider they learn theories associated with how students learn, how teachers can teach, subject specific pedagogical content knowledge, and about the education system. This is interspersed with blocked weeks of teaching experience (practicum) in a school where they develop their understanding of the classroom and schooling or early childhood context and apply theory to practice under the guidance or mentoring of one or more experienced teachers.

The concept of mentoring has changed over time. In 1978 Shapiro, Hazeltine and Rowe (cited in Woodd, 1997) identified a continuum of paired support each with a different function. These functions include:

- Peer pal – someone with a similar level of experience or influence to yourself with whom you share information, strategies, and mutual support for mutual benefit
- Guide – someone with a greater level of experience or knowledge that they share for your benefit
- Sponsor – someone who provides material support
- Patron – an influential person who uses his or her power to help advance a protégé
- Mentor – someone with experience, knowledge and influence who is able to guide, advocate and teach a protégé.

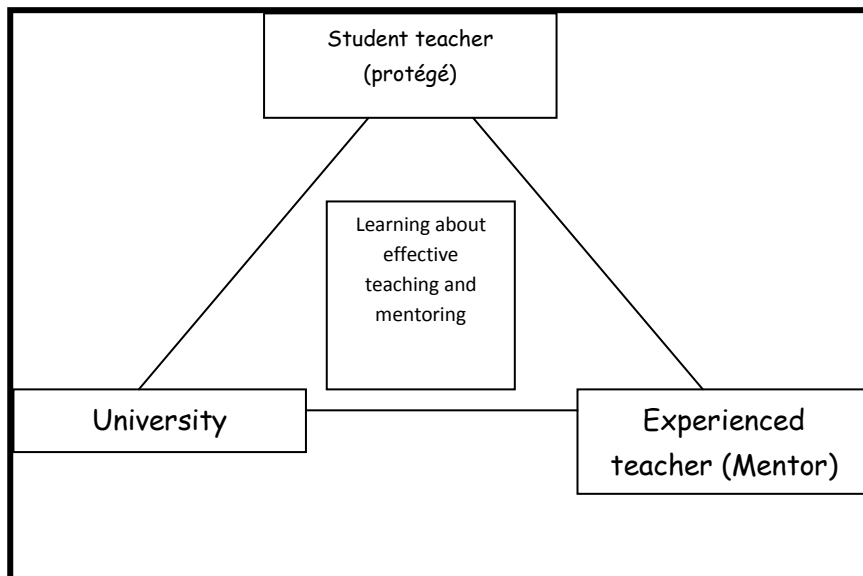
The idea of mentoring does not have one clear definition that has been consistent over time. A definition from Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995) is: *“an off-line person who helps another individual to address the major transitions or thresholds that the individual is facing, and to deal with them in a developmental way”* (p. 165). This definition recognises the importance of ‘just in time’ support and implies the inclusion of reflection, self-awareness and the locus of control for personal development sitting with the individual. Renwick (2001) found that graduates expected to be reflective in their practice.

Critical dialogue is likely to be an important aspect of mentoring student teachers and the literature on critical friends may provide an appropriate framework. The concept of a critical friend was explored by Swaffield (2007). A critical friend builds on the idea of a peer pal, with an added focus building a trusting relationship in which critical dialogue and problem solving can occur. Within the context of teaching, this can include examining pedagogical reasoning and the resulting learning for students, teachers and the organisation.

For critique in a mentoring process to be effective it should include a reflective component at two levels. The mentored (or protégé) has their practice examined and reflects on the reasons for the practice, what could have been done better considering theory and research, and what the next stages of learning are. The second level is reflecting on the mentoring process, how useful the feedback is, how the mentor/protégé relationship can be strengthened or the process refined (Swaffield, 2007).

In the New Zealand context a mentoring process is rarely a one-way learning process, the mentor learns from the process and the protégé, and the protégé learns from the mentor and the process (from personal observations). This aligns with the concept of reciprocity, or *ako*. The concept of *ako* describes “a teaching and learning relationship, where the educator is also learning from the student and where educators’ practices are informed by the latest research and are both deliberate and reflective” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p 20). In a reciprocal learning relationship a mentor and the protégé will be learning from each other. Each member of a learning setting brings knowledge with them from which all are able to learn (Keown, Parker, & Tiakiwai, 2005).

The research reported here examined mentoring and support for student teachers during a practicum experience. The research explored examples of critical discussion, reflection, *ako*, links between academic study and practice, and scaffolding students towards the graduating teacher standards, all which occur between the mentor, protégé and university study as illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: the position of the research within the practicum experience**

### The research method

The practicum experience is an important aspect of a teacher preparation programme. Darling-Hammond (2010) noted that:

*One thing that is clear from current studies of strong programs is that learning to practice in practice, with expert guidance, is essential to becoming a great teacher of students with a wide range of needs. (p. 40)*

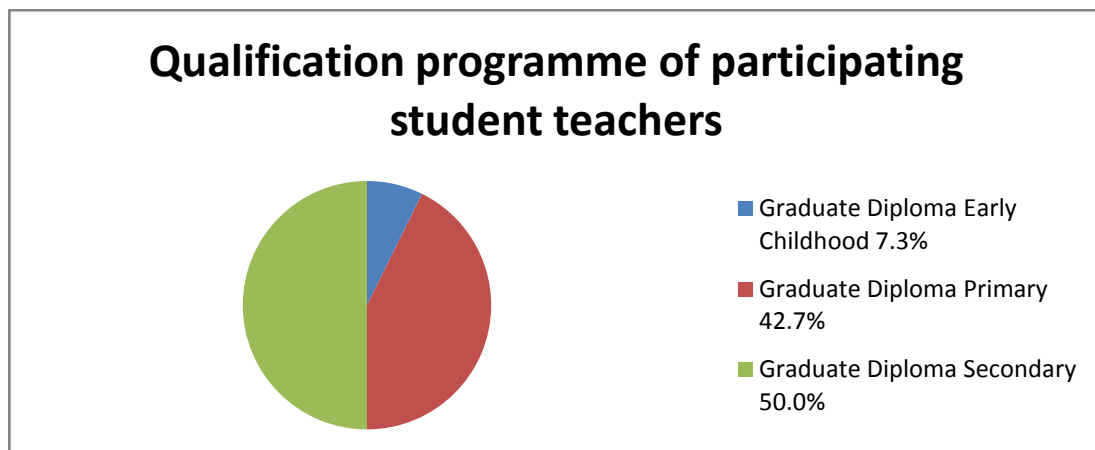
This research explored the research literature and the practice of mentoring during the practicum in New Zealand to identify what could currently be considered to be features in an effective practicum model, including how the link between student teacher, mentor, school and university occurs to maximise the learning for the student teacher. The study included early childhood, primary and secondary graduate diploma programmes being offered at Massey University and Victoria University of Wellington during 2010. The research aimed to:

- examine the reality of student learning during the teaching practicum in 2010 in New Zealand.
- identify critical factors which contribute to student teachers' successful learning on practicum.
- identify practicum models which have been researched and critiqued through international literature.
- Develop recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of teaching and learning practices in teacher education during the practicum experience.

Data collected included an online survey of students ( $N=164$ ), associate teachers ( $N = 138$ ) and visiting lecturers ( $N =32$ ), eleven case studies with weekly reflections during practicum, open-ended semi-structured interviews, and a literature review.

A search through journals and scholarly works was undertaken to identify relevant literature which evaluated the effectiveness of student teacher learning during practicum and/or evaluations of models of practicum relationships/ processes between universities and schools. The literature search was to be carried out by a research assistant who had access through the Victoria University of Wellington library and associated interloan and online subscription agreements. A list of relevant high ranked journals and key words for searching through databases guided the review. An annotated bibliography was developed outlining the key findings of reported research (Appendix 1).

An online survey of associate teachers and student teachers during a practicum which explores the weekly reality, links with academic study, focus of feedback, reciprocity, and how the relationship with the university currently operates was conducted. All enrolled Graduate Diploma of Teaching students and their associates from Massey University and Victoria University of Wellington in 2010 were invited to take part during one practicum March - September 2010, with approximately a third completing the survey. The programmes of the students who engaged in the survey are included in Figure 2. There were fewer students enrolled in the Early Childhood programmes which is reflected in the lower response rate.



**Figure 2: Student teacher participants.**

Eleven case studies were developed to examine in detail the experiences of student teachers and their associates. The case studies gave rich data to further explore the learning moments through descriptions and analysis of the reported experiences from the perspective of student teachers and their associates. Initially the research aimed to include two student teachers per programme. This did not eventuate due to the spread of volunteers; however, a range of students did engage in the qualitative component of the research and they were from a variety of schools and centres

(independent, rural, urban, high and low socio-economic neighbourhoods). Table 1 outlines the case study participants and the data collected.

**Table 1: Case studies**

Reference used	Sector	Length of teaching practicum	Data gathered: Student teacher interview (ST), Associate teacher interview (AT), Weekly feedback and number of weeks completed (WF=x)
S1	Secondary	6 weeks	Wf=6, ST, AT
S2	Secondary	7 weeks	Wf=7, ST AT
S3	Secondary	7 weeks	Wf=7, ST, AT
S4	Secondary	6 weeks	WF=6, ST
S5	Secondary	6 weeks	Wf=6, ST
P1	Primary	7 weeks	WF=6 AT, ST
P2	Primary	7 weeks	Wf=5 AT, ST
P3	Primary	3 weeks	ST AT
P4	Primary	3 weeks	ST
E1	Early Childhood	7 weeks	WF=1, st
E2	Early Childhood	7 weeks	WF=1

The student teachers were asked via email to describe what they learnt about teaching during each week of their practicum and how they learnt this. The number of weekly responses from participants varied due to the demands of the teaching experience.

Open-ended, semi-structured interviews of student teachers and their associate teachers were undertaken at the conclusion of the practicum by researchers from Massey University and Victoria University of Wellington to gather detailed data about the reality of student teacher learning during a practicum, and how the current models operate. For ethical reasons the identity of students at a given institution were not known by that institution. Similarly, the interviews concerning students from one institution were undertaken by staff at the other institution. Three data analysis orientations were used in this research. The first developed themes emerging from the context-based interviews, the second orientation focused on the surveys, and the third orientation was from the review of literature. The three orientations were drawn together to summarise the identified critical factors which contributed to student teachers' successful learning on practicum and to develop recommendations.

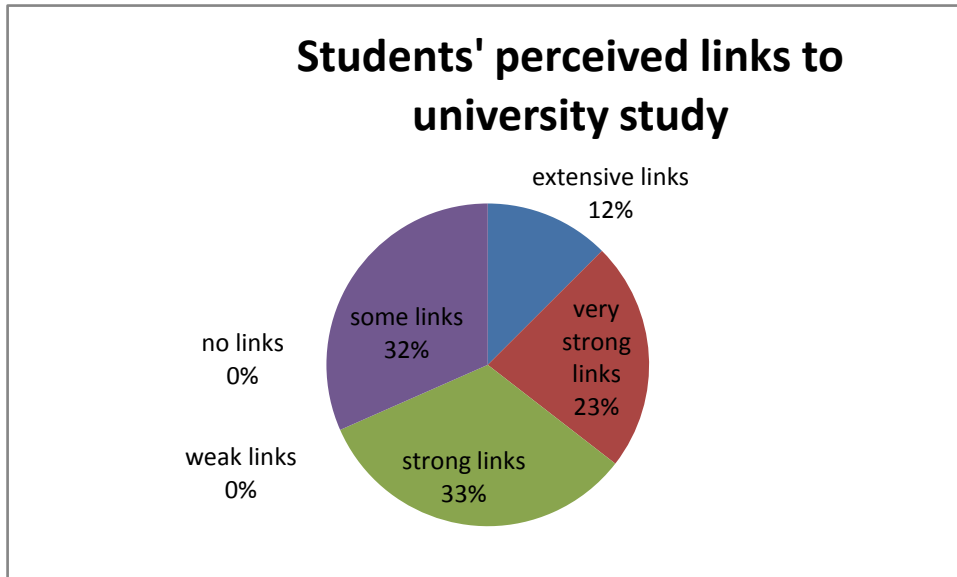
The research gained approval through the Victoria University of Wellington, Faculty of Education Human Ethics Committee and Massey University College of Education Human Ethics Committee.

### **Findings – the reality of student learning during teaching practicum.**

The following summary comments seek to help to identify critical factors which contribute to student teachers' successful learning on practicum. The graphs are developed from the surveys and reflect an initial analysis of the data. The data from the interviews and weekly feedback from the case studies are integrated where appropriate.

### **Links to university study**

We were interested to find out the extent to which student teachers drew on any of their learning activities from their university study whilst on practicum. The student teachers were able to make links between their university study and their experiences and learning on teaching practicum (Figure 3).



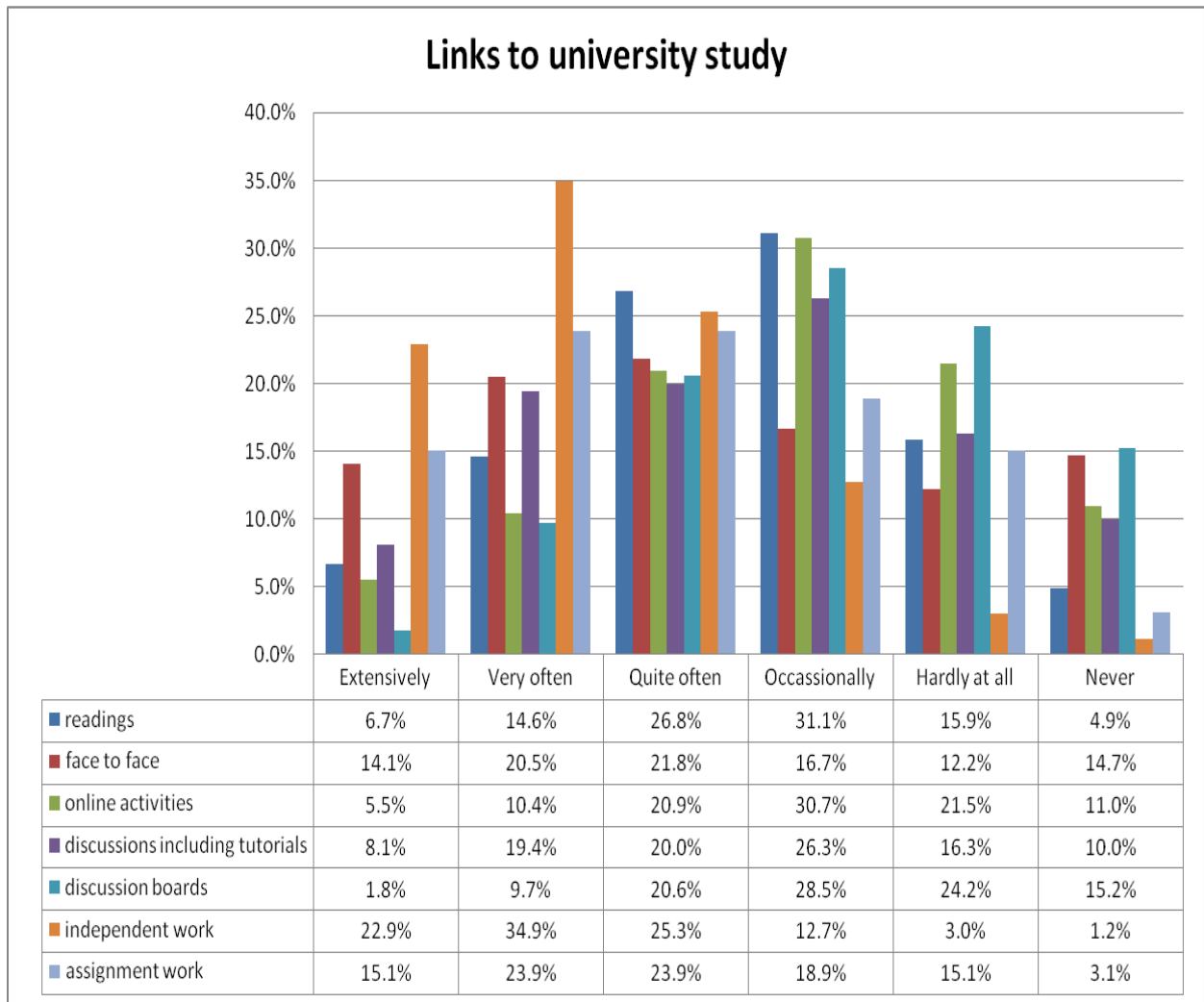
**Figure 3: Students' perceived links to university study**

The links reported in the weekly feedback were sometimes explicit to certain ideas or reading. In week five P5 noted that she drew on Vygotsky's theory of Zone of Proximal Development (McInerney & McInerney, 2010) and also noted that an article by Royal-Tangaere (1997) had been very helpful in understanding a technique her associate teacher was using. The associate teacher utilised Māori Human development learning theory through having an older, more academic learner buddied with a learner who just needed someone to guide them.

The student teachers were each able to make up to eleven (named) direct links to concepts or ideas they had met in their university courses in their weekly feedback. These included readings, tutorial discussions, curriculum documents and concepts discussed in lectures or in the online tutorials. They were drawn upon when planning lessons, considering their teaching practice and considering the school context. For example, S1 noted that she was thinking about the notion of cultural capital that had been discussed in one of her courses.

One of the case study student teachers was studying part time. She had studied one of the two curriculum areas that she was teaching on the practicum. She was able to identify the pedagogical content knowledge within the subject she had studied that she was able to apply on the practicum, and how she felt a lack of this type of knowledge in the subject she had not yet studied. She felt that if she had studied both she may not have been aware of how much she had learnt about how to teach the particular subject (S4, S1).

The surveys explored the type of learning activities in the university programmes that the students found useful when on the practicum (Figure 4). Students seemed to value their independent work, their assignment work and face-to-face classes, and online activities/ discussion boards.



**Figure 4: Student teacher perspective of links between practicum experience and university study**

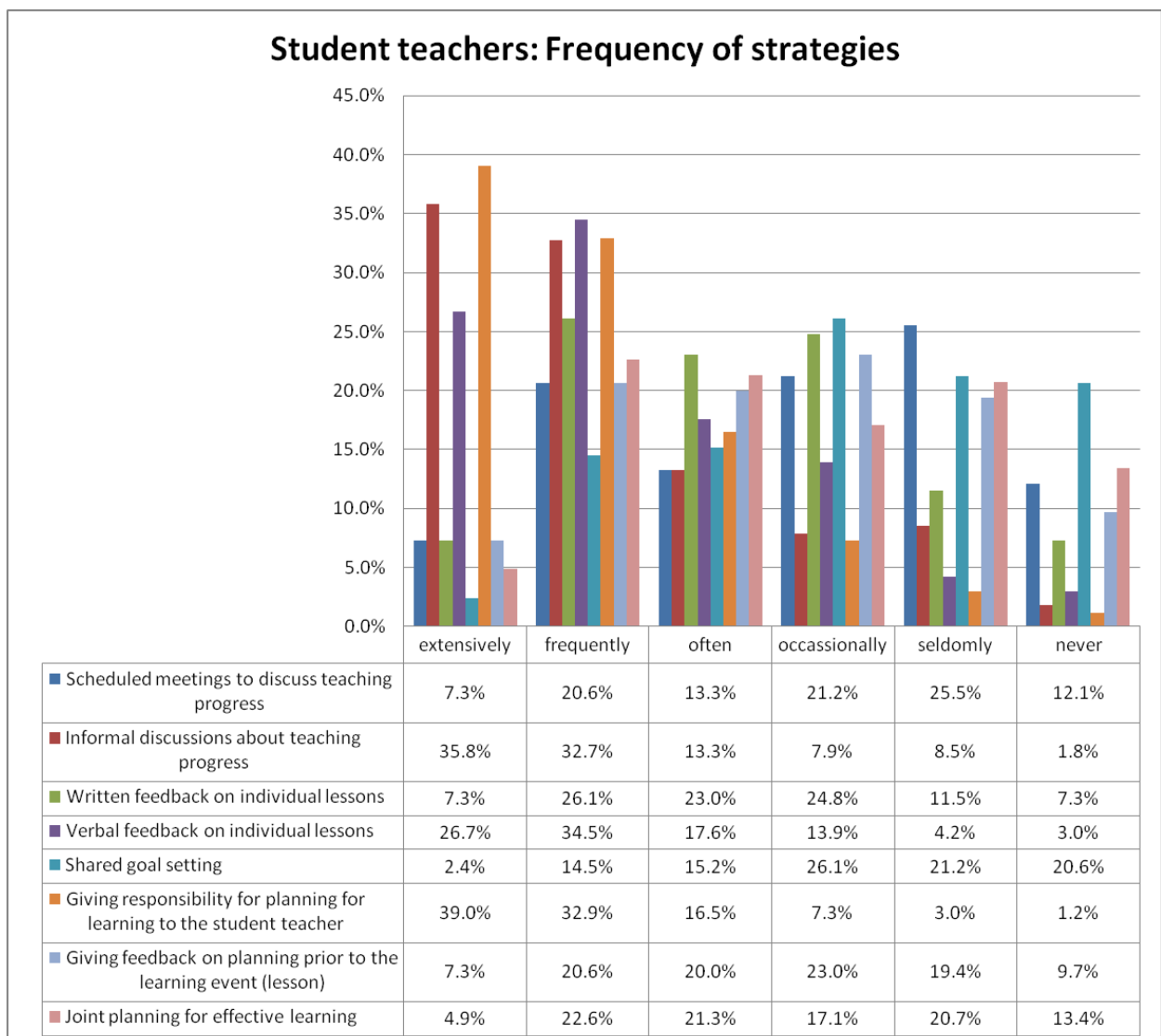
***Mentoring strategies***

We asked the student teachers to describe the frequencies and usefulness of a range of common mentoring strategies to explore the nature of mentoring between the student and their associate teacher. The types of mentoring strategies used by the associate teachers include a wide spread of techniques reported by the student teachers with varying degrees of frequency and identified value (Figures 5 and 6). Of particular note were the following observations:

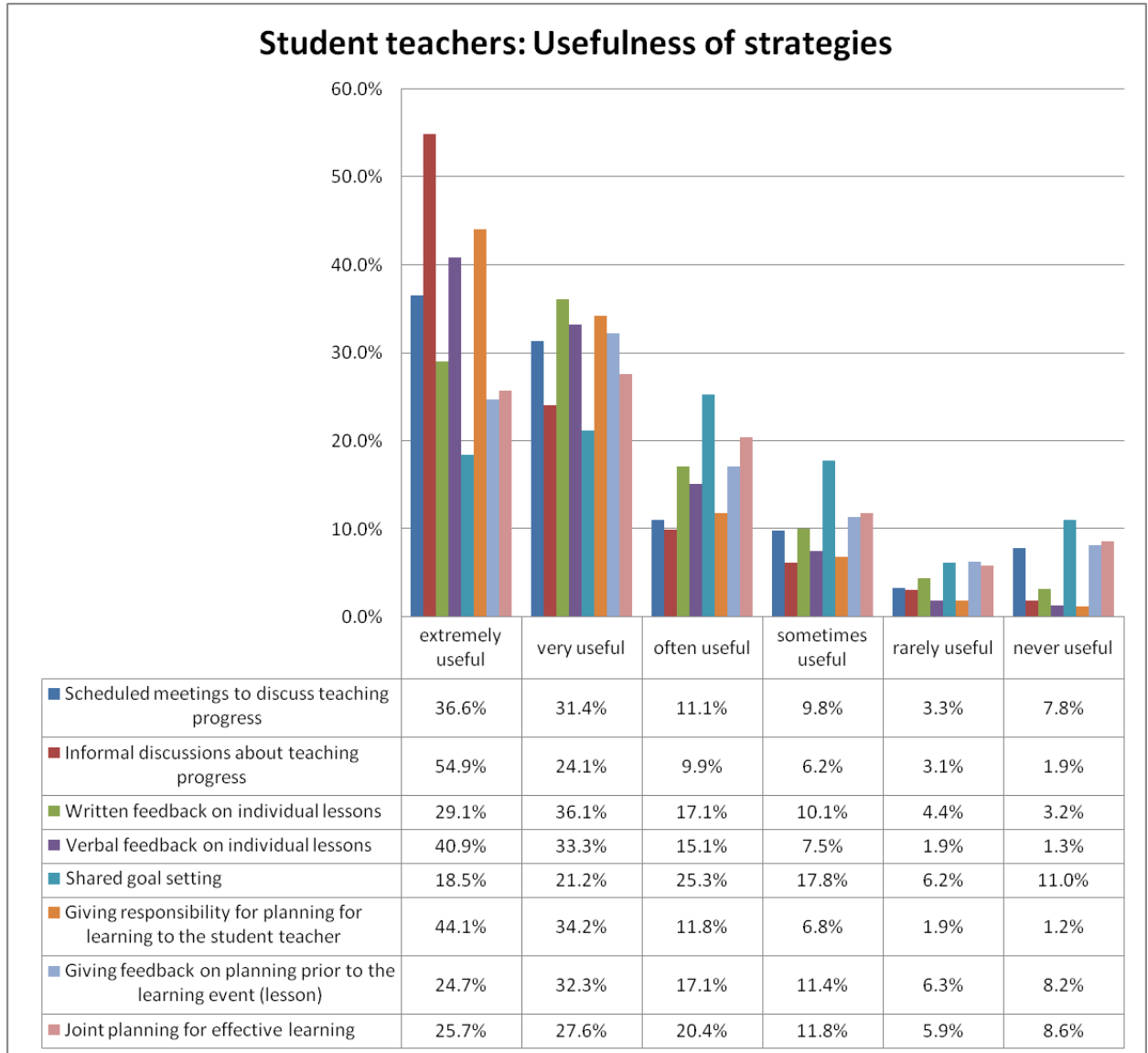
- Informal discussions about teaching practice were used extensively and found to be extremely useful by the students

- Similarly, giving responsibility for planning for learning to the student was also used extensively and also found to be extremely useful by the students
- Verbal feedback on individual lessons was used very often and was found to be extremely useful by the students
- Scheduled meetings to discuss teaching progress were often or frequently used, rather than extensively used, but students placed a high value on these scheduled meetings
- Shared goal setting was reported by the student teachers as being a less commonly used mentoring strategy despite the fact that it was often reported to have some value
- As an overall observation, students appreciated all the mentoring strategies employed by the associate teachers. It seems that there are no poor mentoring strategies.

The case study student teachers appreciated a range of mentoring strategies they experienced with their associate teachers. The relationship they had with their associate was important to the student teachers.



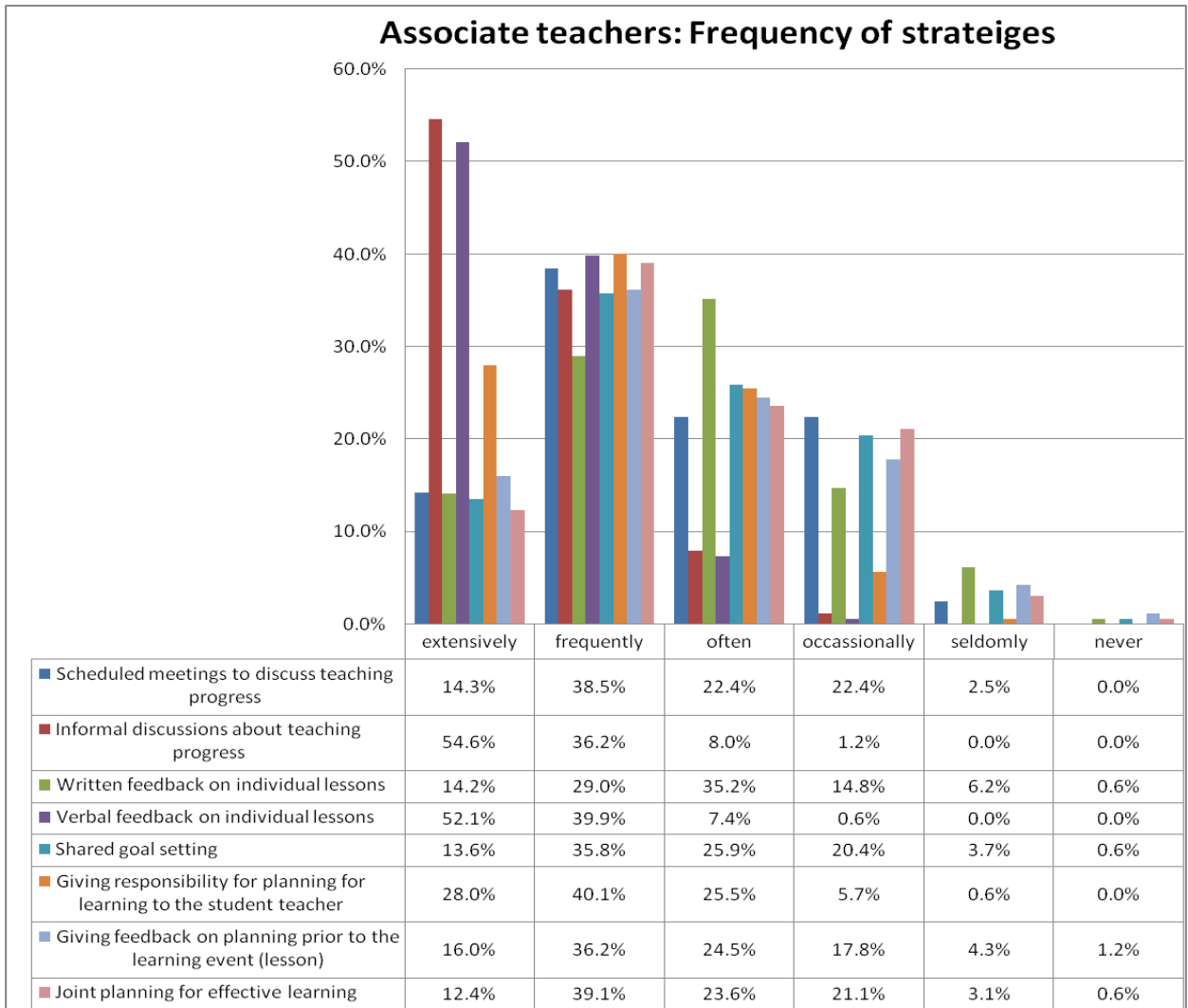
**Figure 5: Student teacher perspective: Frequency of strategies used**



**Figure 6: Student teacher perspective: Usefulness of strategies used**

Figure 7 is the comparable graph from the associate teachers’ survey. The data show relatively high degrees of agreement on the frequencies of most of the mentoring strategies with several exceptions, in particular, the reported frequency of ‘shared goal setting’, and, to a lesser extent, the ‘joint planning for effective learning’, and ‘giving feedback on planning prior to the learning event’.

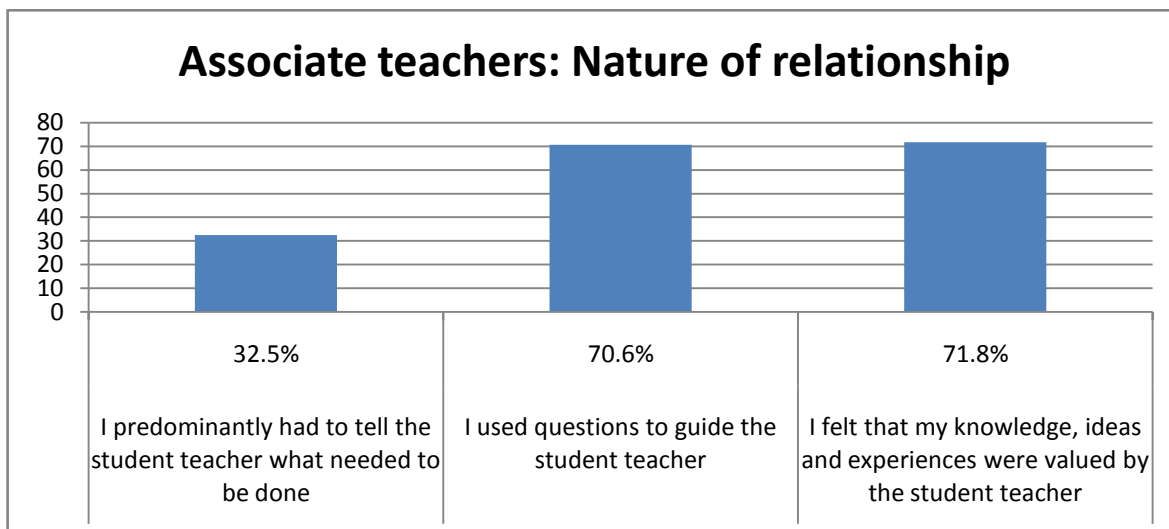
The associate teachers felt they use a wide range of mentoring strategies on a frequent basis with informal and verbal strategies, in particular, used extensively. This may be due to the instant nature of these types of strategies and also may reflect how busy associate teachers are.



**Figure 7: Associate teacher perspective: Frequency of strategies used**

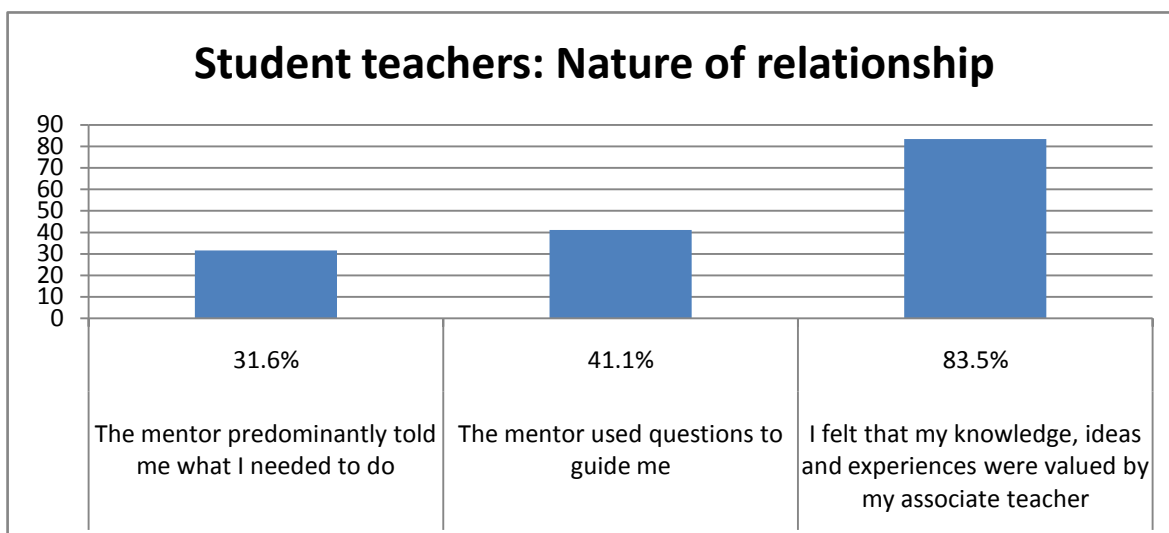
### The nature of relationship

Associate teachers were asked to describe the primary nature of their mentoring relationship with the student teacher. They were offered the option of selecting multiple choices to allow for the complexity of mentoring relationships. The results are displayed in Figure 8.



**Figure 8: Associate Teacher Perspective: Nature of the mentoring relationship**

This can be compared with the student teachers' perceptions of their relationship with the student teachers (Figure 9).

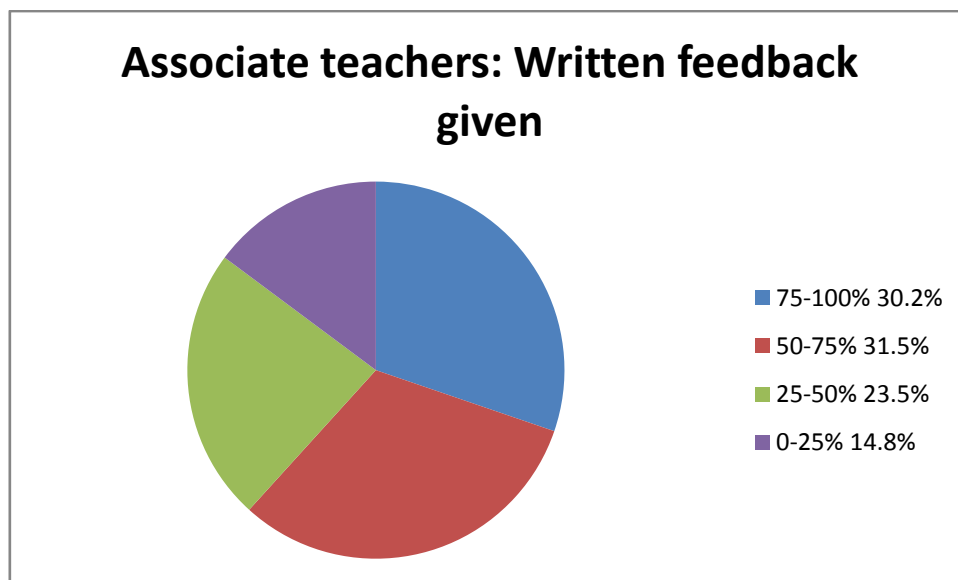
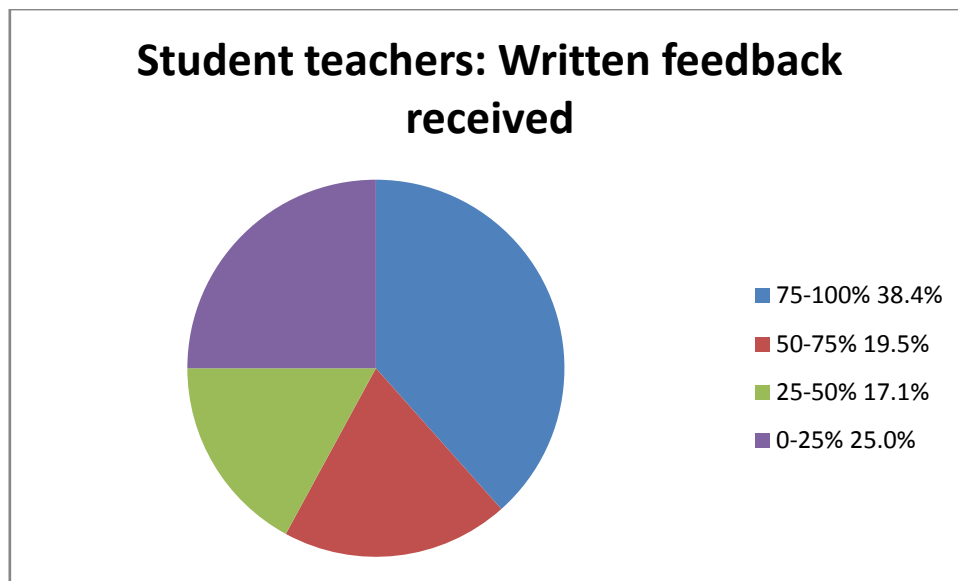


**Figure 9: Student Teacher Perspective: Nature of the mentoring relationship**

Both the associate teachers and the student teachers did not feel that the relationship was heavily weighted towards being 'told what to do'. Although the associate teachers felt that they used questions to guide the student teacher, this technique was less recognised by the student teachers. Also of note is that the student teachers felt very strongly that their knowledge, experience and ideas were valued.

**Written feedback**

One of the areas investigated was the amount of written feedback that was given and received. The percentage figures represent the proportion of times that written feedback accompanied an observed teaching episode or lesson. Adding the blue and red sections in Figure 10 we can see that the majority of students were given and received written feedback on more than 50% of their observed lessons.

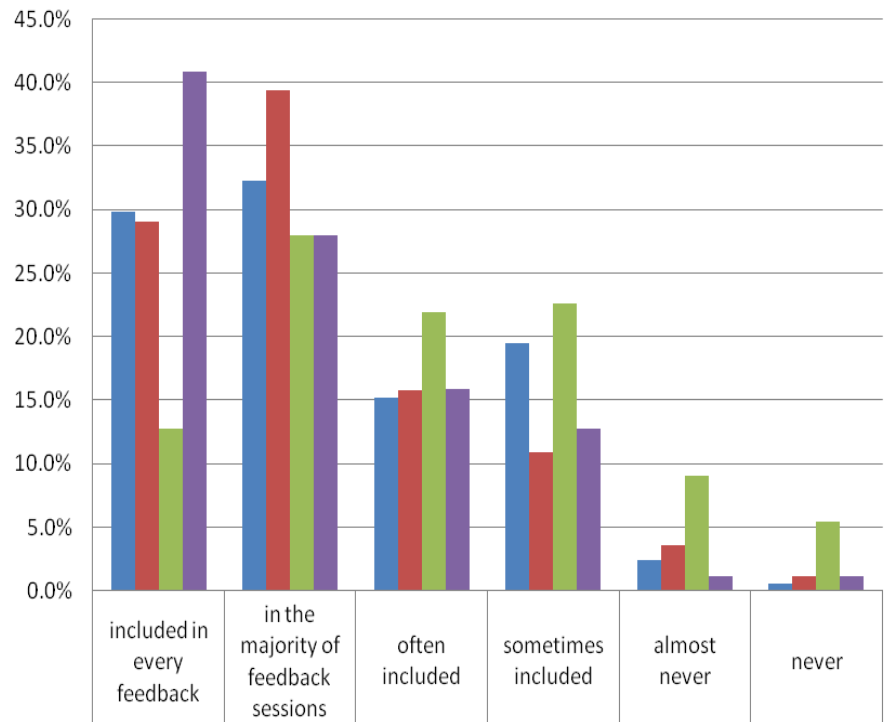


**Figure 10: How often written feedback on teaching practice was received (as reported by student teachers in the first graph or given (as reported by associate teachers in the second graph).**

***Nature of feedback***

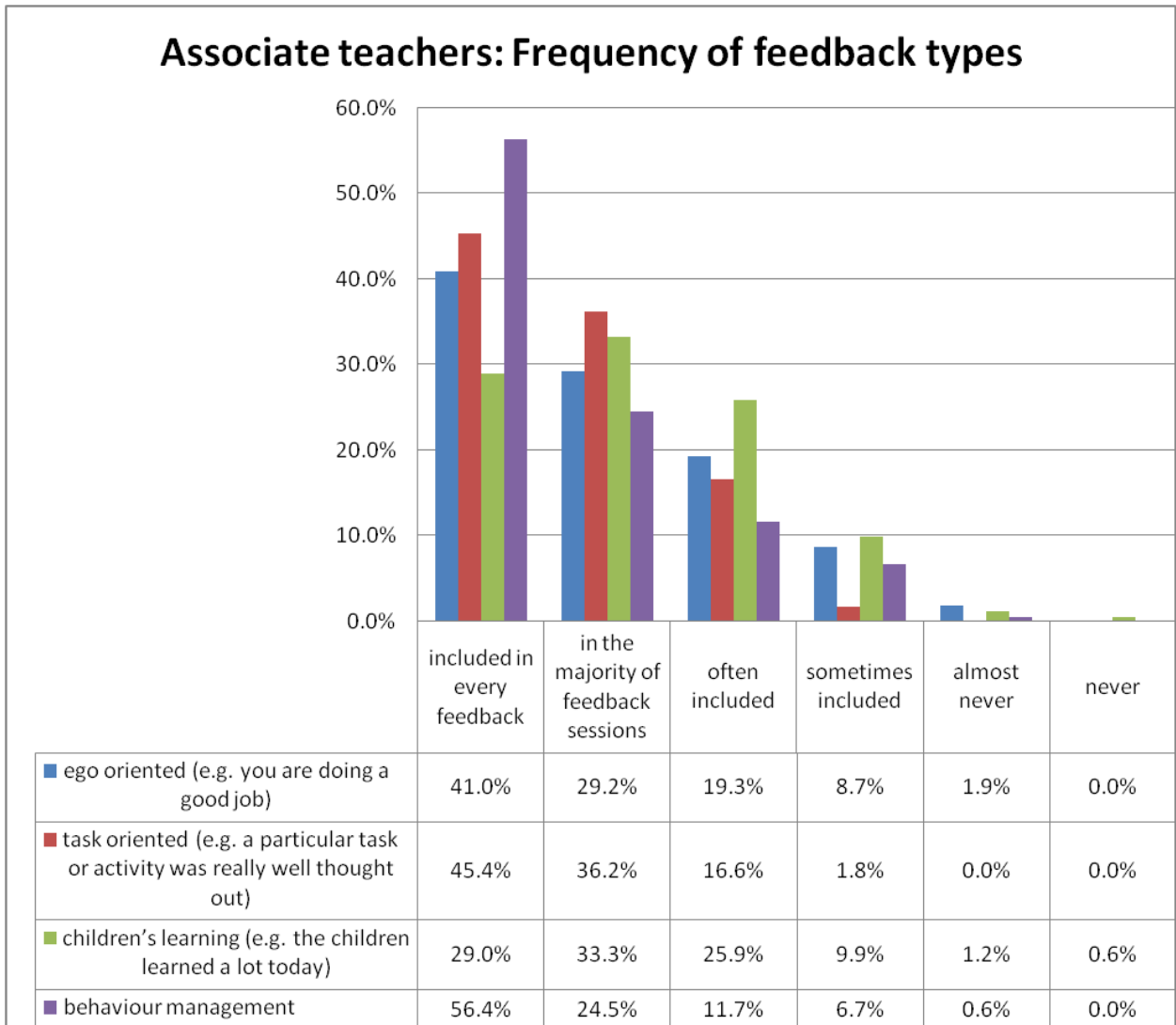
We explored the frequency and nature of the feedback that was offered to student teachers. Figure 11 includes the responses from the student teachers and Figure 12 includes the responses from the associate teachers.

## Student teachers: Frequency of feedback types



■ ego oriented (e.g. you are doing a good job)	29.9%	32.3%	15.2%	19.5%	2.4%	0.6%
■ task oriented (e.g. a particular task or activity was really well thought out)	29.1%	39.4%	15.8%	10.9%	3.6%	1.2%
■ children's learning (e.g. the children learned a lot today)	12.8%	28.0%	22.0%	22.6%	9.1%	5.5%
■ behaviour management	40.9%	28.0%	15.9%	12.8%	1.2%	1.2%

**Figure 11: Frequency of types of feedback from the student teacher perspective**

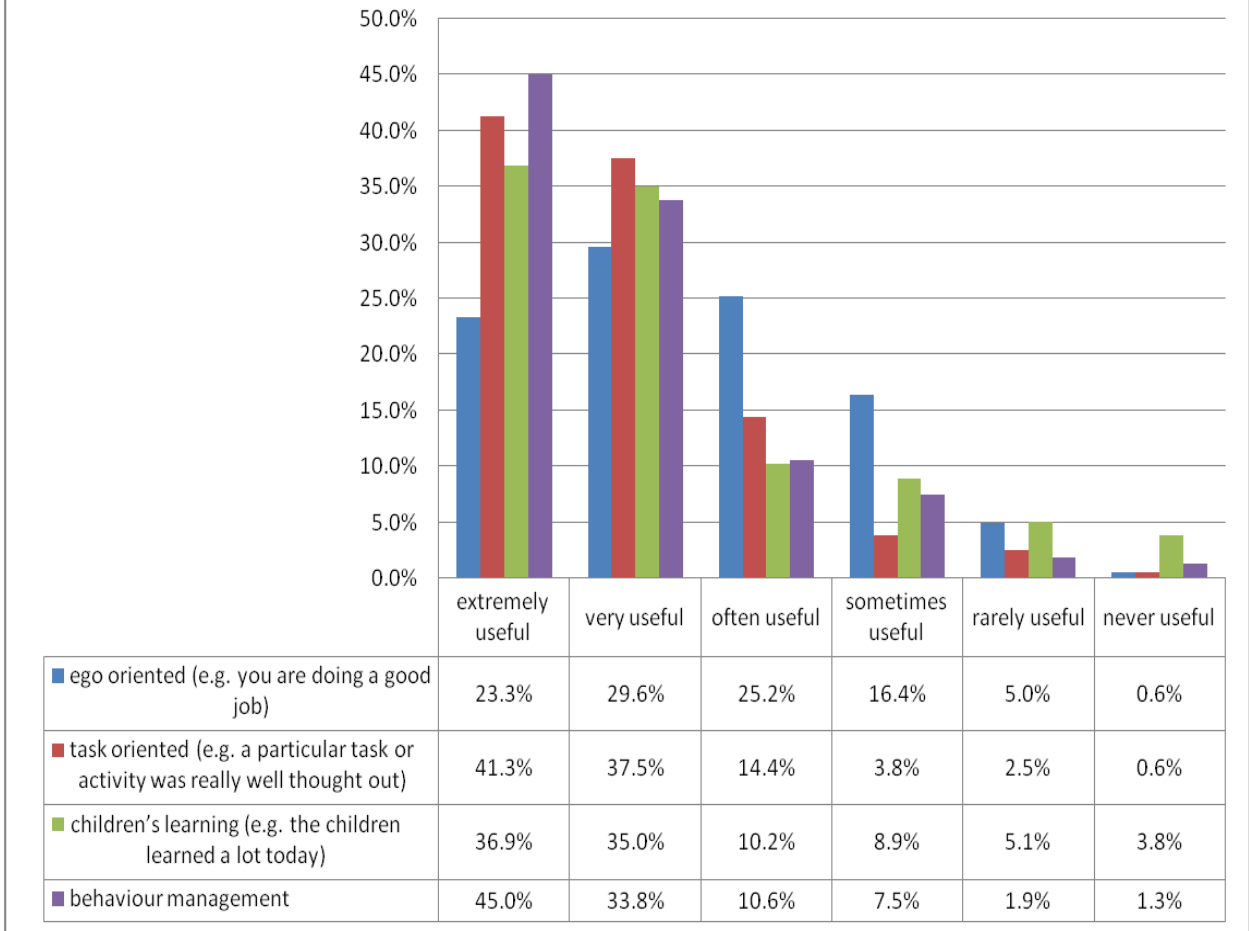


**Figure 12: Frequency of types of feedback from the associate teacher perspective**

From the graphs in Figures 11 and 12 we can deduce that there was an emphasis on providing comments relating to behaviour management with slightly less emphasis on ego-oriented and task-oriented comments. Both of these types of comments were valued by students. The students found any comments made relating to children's learning to be extremely useful. One notable feature of the graphs is that students found any feedback received from their associate teachers to be highly useful.

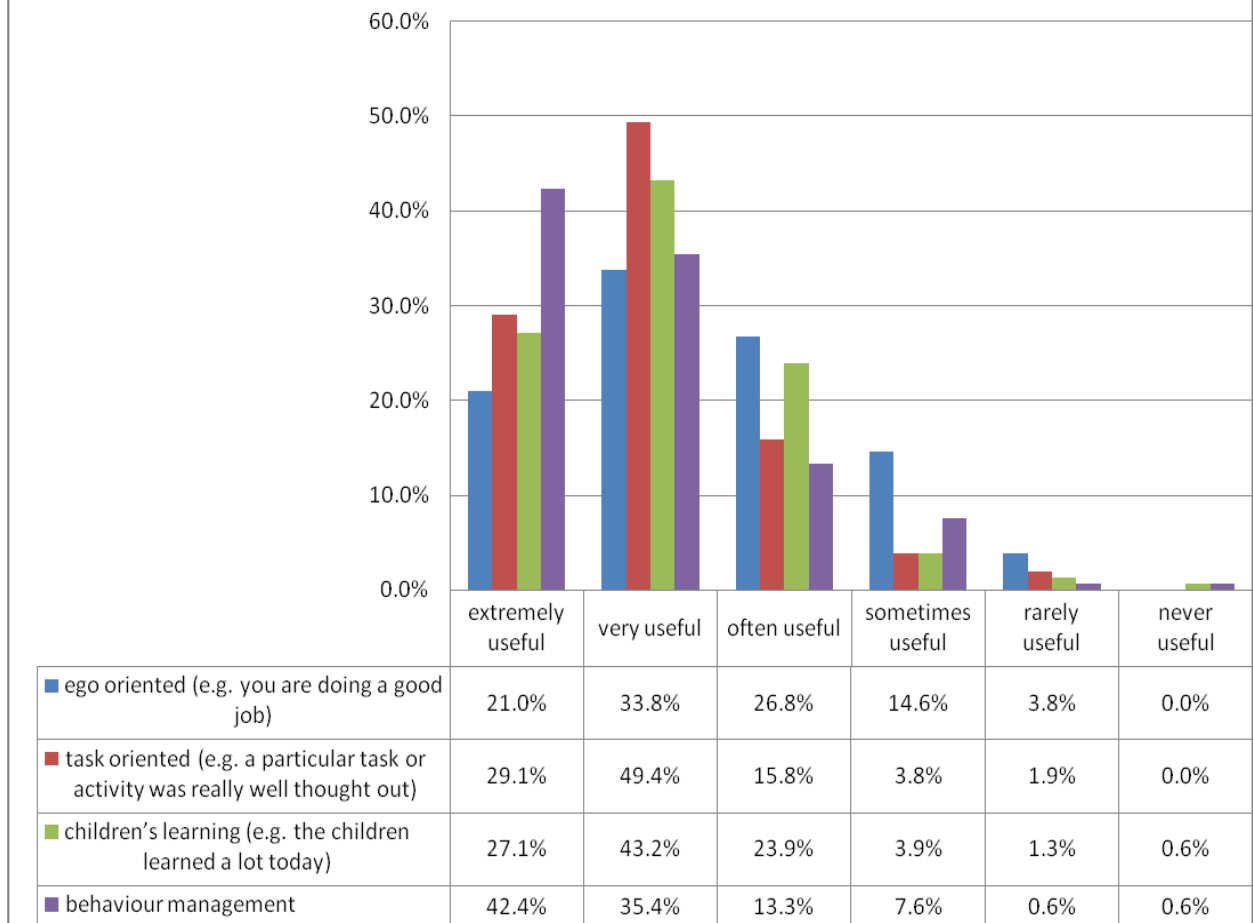
The perception of the associate teachers, students and visiting lecturers about the usefulness of the types of feedback are included in Figures 13, 14 and 15. These are closely aligned with the student and associate teachers finding feedback on behaviour management more useful than the visiting lecturers. The associate teachers feel that they provide a lot of feedback across the spectrum but particularly feedback on 'behaviour management' in almost every session. Associate teachers also perceive that the student teachers found any comments made to be highly useful.

### Student teachers: Usefulness of feedback types

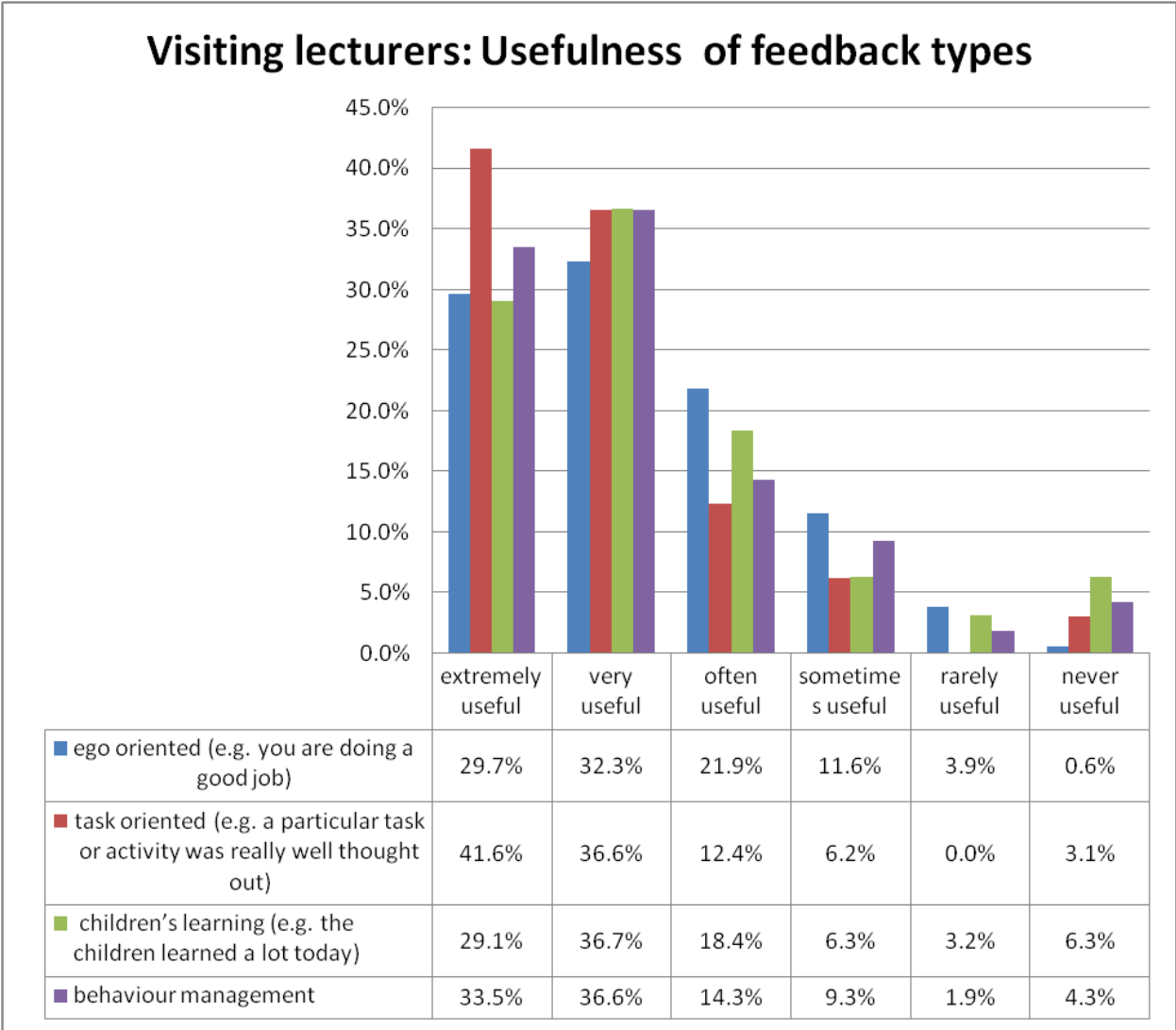


**Figure 13: Usefulness of types of feedback from the student teacher perspective**

## Associate teachers: Usefulness of feedback types



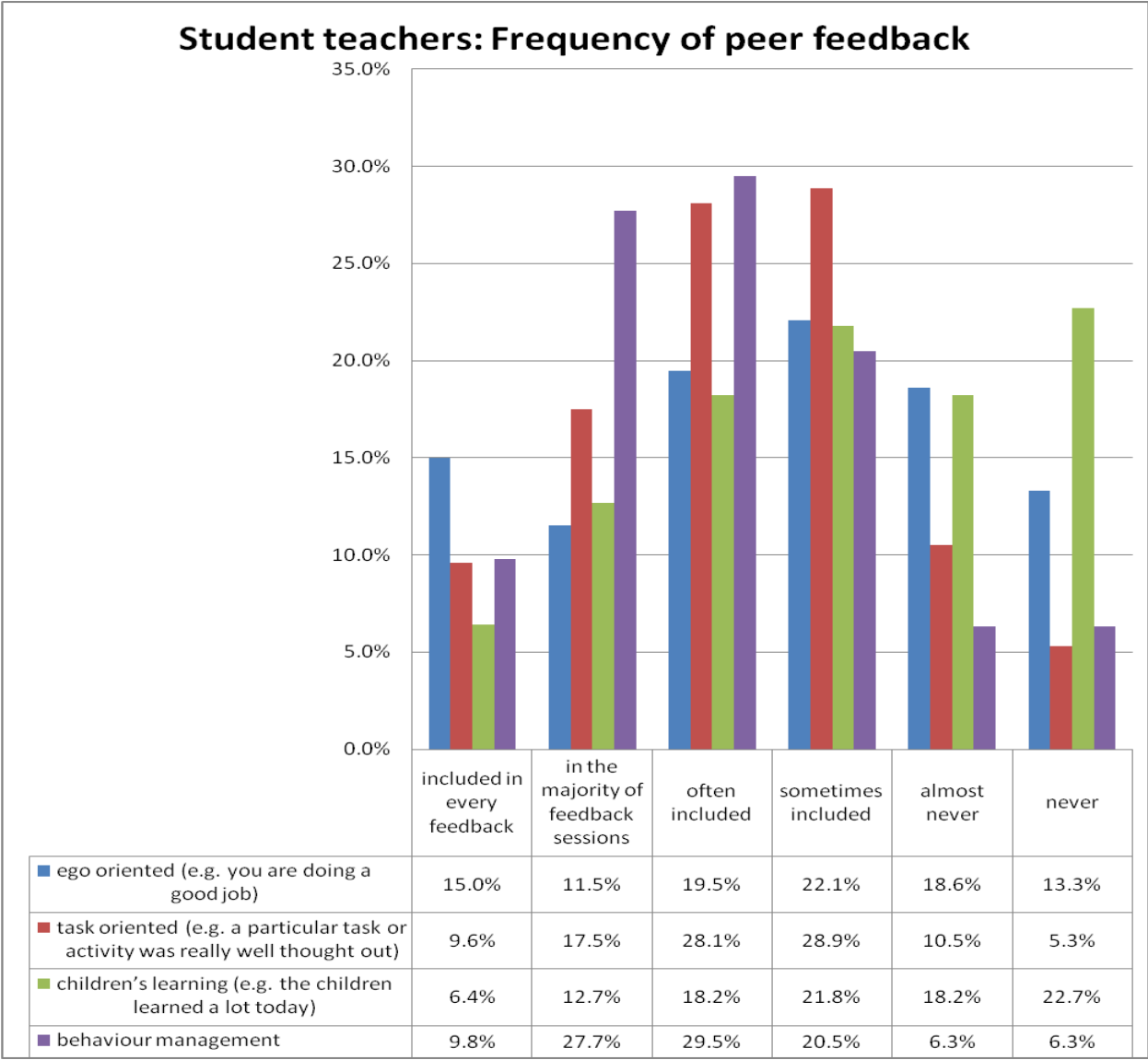
**Figure 14: Usefulness of types of feedback from the associate teacher perspective**



**Figure 15: Usefulness of types of feedback from the visiting lecturer perspective**

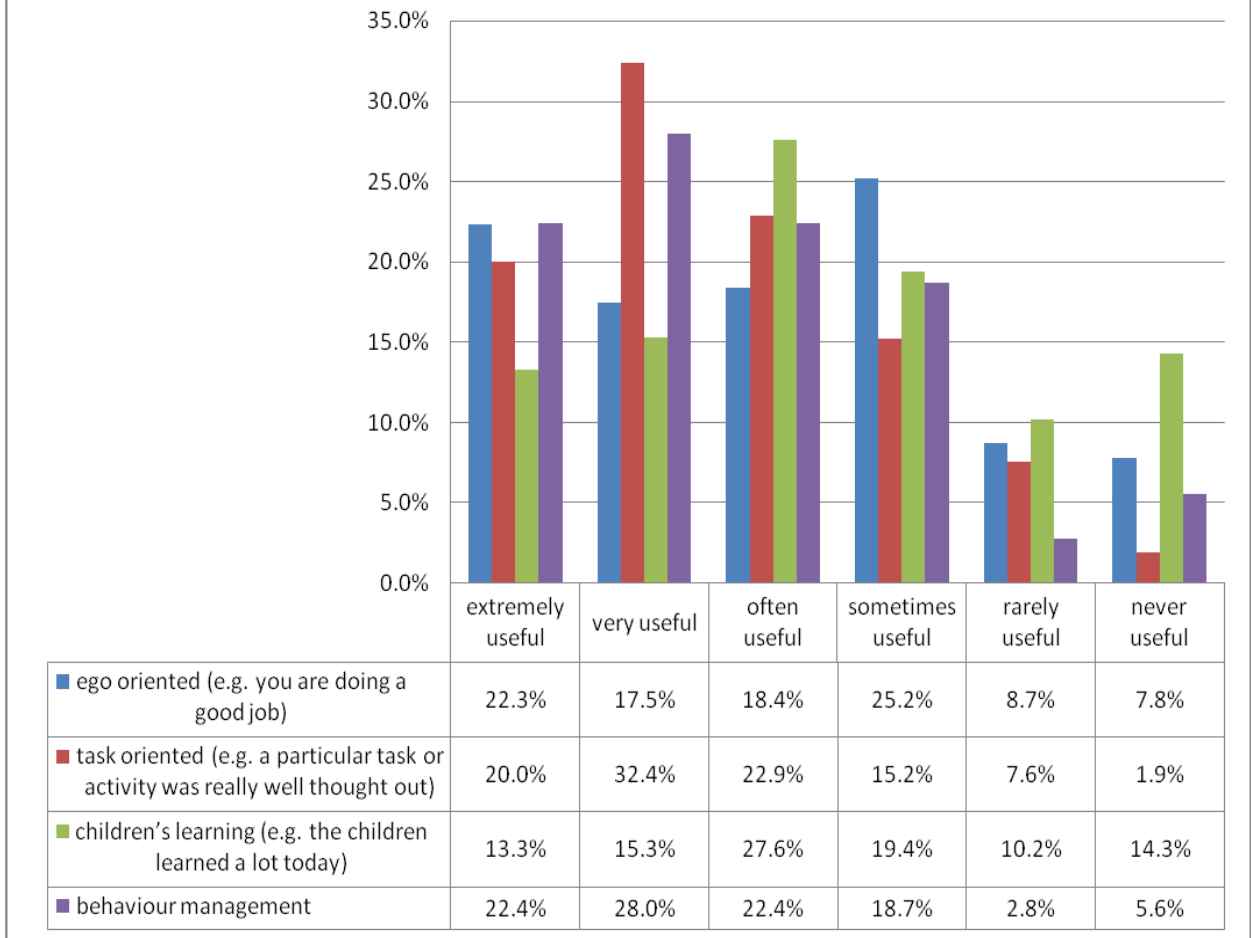
**Support from peers**

A potential source of critique, practical and moral support on practicum is through peers (other student teachers). Over 80% of the students reported that they received additional support from their peers.



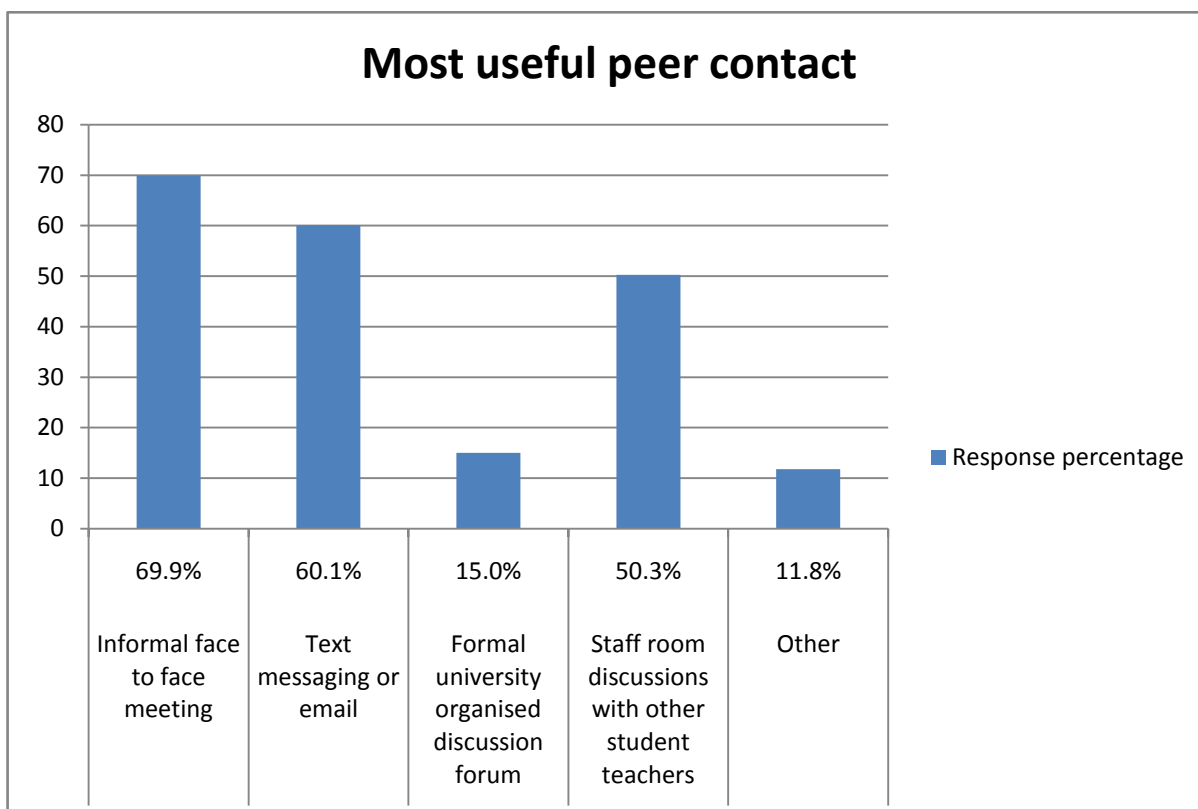
**Figure 16: Frequency of types of peer feedback**

## Student teachers: Usefulness of peer feedback



**Figure 17: perceived usefulness of types of peer feedback**

The informal contact with peers was reported as being more useful than the formal structured university initiated peer support (Figure 18). Over 90% of the student teachers reported giving advice to their peers on matters relating to their teaching practicum.



**Figure 18. Usefulness of types of peer contact**

### ***Changing learning needs over the practicum***

The weekly feedback of student teacher learning, the end of practicum interviews and the surveys were analysed to explore how the learning focus changed over the time of the practicum.

During the first week of the teaching experience some of the key learning that student teachers reported could be categorised as understanding the behaviour of students within the classroom context and how to maintain or establish an effective learning environment. For example:

*Students love to get chatting with you and can become very off task very quickly if you let them. I have also learned that you need to be very proactive regarding behaviour and that stamping on an undesirable behaviour early is very helpful. (S1,W1)*

Some key learning moments (identified by student teachers reporting what they had learnt about teaching at a particular time in their practicum) were particular strategies commonly used by teachers (for example, “Waiting for students to be quiet before giving instructions or information” (S5W1)). Others were strategies that the student teachers had learnt were important (for example, “Learning children’s names” (P4,W1)).

The culture of the learning context was an important learning focus in the first week of a teaching experience. The student teachers in each of the sectors reported how they were focused on learning about the context in which they were going to teach. An early childhood student teacher noted that in “the first week, I [focussed on] knowing the place, knowing each child, and knowing each staff.

*The guidance I received from the staff in the centre was mainly to do with the routines; like how things work in the centre, what behaviour management they use, how they act towards the children” (E1,I).*

Becoming familiar with the culture of the classroom was also important for the primary school student teachers. The focus during the first week for one student teacher was *“observing the way the classroom ran, how my associate teacher taught and interacted with the children, and getting to know each of the students individually, both personally and also academically” (P1,I).*

Getting to know the context included understanding school-wide policies and procedures for a secondary student teacher in her first week: *“My main focus then was to... observe what school policies were, how my associate interacted with her students and was able to maintain control of the class” (S2,I).* Observations sometimes dispelled some misconceptions: *“Students do want to learn even when they say they don’t care” (S5, W1).*

The focus of learning about the learning environment changed over the practicum from observing and discussing what the associate teacher(s) did, to implementing strategies that maintain an effective learning environment. By the middle of the practicum student teachers were developing their experience of using techniques to engage students in learning. For example, in week four (out of seven) a secondary school student teacher noted that: *“I learned that the students responded positively when I swiftly contained low level behavioural issues and clearly outlined my expectations” (S3, W4).* Another secondary student teacher noted in week five (out of seven) that: *“In a classroom, mutual respect for students can enhance understanding of the material and context as students will feel comfortable sharing information” (S2,W5).*

As the practicum experience progressed, there appeared to be a refining of the strategies being used to focus students on learning, and as the understanding of the learning environment increased, the learning moments included which strategy was most appropriate to be used within the context, the individual young person (or group) and the situation. This idea was summarised in one of the end of practicum interviews: *“Managing the learning environment changes from trying different strategies, to evaluating the context of when to use these to having a ‘toolkit’ of strategies and selecting when to use a spade and when to use a fork” (S5, I).*

Although the student teachers at the start of the practicum had noted the importance of getting to know students (particularly surface knowledge, like learning names), there was a subtle change over time: *“learning about your students and having a positive relationship with them would help in maintaining the classroom learning environment” (P1, W7).* This reported learning moment in the final week of the practicum was reported in a similar way by other case study student teachers. A key aspect of the educational psychology component taught through the university courses is the importance of the learning relationship teachers build with their students and this type of learning moment reflects the time when the student teacher has really understood what and why this means.

Understanding what the students could do or knew and being able to use this was reported in the learning in different ways and at different times across the weeks on practicum experience. The way this was reported reflected the student teachers’ understanding of the teaching and learning process. For example: *“I designed maths lessons that I really thought the kids should be able to do,*

*but they couldn't"* (P2, W6/7). This comment reflects the lack of experience or time to align formative assessment with content and relevant pedagogical strategies. With greater knowledge gained through experience and understanding of individual students learning the teacher will likely develop insight into what is appropriate learning activities for such a group of students. Others had the steps broken down by their associate teacher so that the reported learning was positive: *"I learnt...how to observe and assess students to identify and share next learning steps with them"* (P1, W3).

The student teachers increasingly recognised that teaching and learning strategies needed to vary according to the context in a similar way to the classroom management strategies:

*"It has been really great this last week as I have adjusted to teaching a lot more and getting used to the group and class work that I am doing. I can see how I can extend a few children with their thinking as I have gotten to know them better and there are those within my small groups who I know I may need to review things with a bit more but I can see these things while I am teaching and making notes in my weekly planning which has helped with my next steps process. When working with small groups I can interact with some of the students more one on one, which helped me"* (P1, W5).

Gaps in pedagogical content knowledge were not always recognised by the student teachers. In the first week of a practicum a teacher noted that: *"I learnt that patience is important"* (P2,W1). This student teacher had been trying to teach a reading group new words and felt frustrated that they could read the word on one page and not transfer their learning to the next page. She perceived this as they did not remember the word rather than did not transfer the concept to a new page/context [or the student teacher did not draw on educational psychology to explore why the students were not able to do as she had thought they would, instead noting it was a *"low reading group in the class"*].

The students learnt through reflecting on their teaching practice, with one explaining how she recorded her practice: *"This week I learnt about the importance of evidence. I have used it for 3 classes to check understanding and engagement. Having audio recordings and one video to refer back to at a calm moment provided much information about my performance and what was really going on in the classroom. E.g. I thought it was noisy during a group activity but the video showed that all students were actually talking about the intended work"* (S3, W5).

The learning across a practicum experience reported by participants in this study had the following characteristics: At the start of a teaching experience the student teachers focus on the context, processes and routines that exist in the class or centre. As time passes they consider the teaching and learning, especially the planning and once feeling more confident about planning and delivering instruction focus moved to the learning progress and engagement in learning of individual students.

It was at the beginning and end of the practicum that the student teachers most often reported considering the links between their university-based learning and their teaching practice.

## Discussion

How and what student teachers learn while on practicum is an area of limited research. Darling-Hammond (2010) drew attention to the need for student teachers to be learning “about and from practice *in practice*” (p. 40). This study has examined the mentoring and the learning that occurs during a practicum experience from a student teacher perspective.

The link between academic content, such as research findings and theories, and the teaching practicum was of interest in this study. Zeichner (2010) noted that in the US academic knowledge is seen as *the* “authoritative source of knowledge about teaching” (p. 95). The student teachers in this study were able to draw together their emerging academic knowledge with their experiences on practicum. The participants surveyed reported that they did make links to their study at university while on teaching practicum. In particular, 85% reported they drew on (extensively, very often or quite often) what they had learnt through independent study tasks and 65% drew on learning they had attained through university-based assessment tasks. The programmes in which these students were studying were therefore likely to be structured in a way that Cheng, Cheng & Tang (2010) recommended when they concluded that:

*the quality of teacher education programmes can be improved only if the teacher educators help student teachers identify the gap between teaching and theory, and continually facilitate them in connecting their learnt theory and practice. (p. 102)*

The weekly feedback that the case study student teachers completed and the interviews after the practicum gave insight on the links made between the academic programme and learning during practicum, with some student teachers linking particular aspects of their study to specific learning moments. The beginning and the end of the practicum were times when the student teachers focused on the links between learning at university and the practicum experience as students contemplated requirements and evidence they needed to gather to use in impending assignments.

**Recommendation:** Teacher education programmes (continue to) align learning activities such as independent learning tasks and assessments to enable student teachers to make the links between theory and research, and the practice of teaching.

The relationship between the student teacher and associate teacher was an important aspect of the mentoring dimension in the practicum experience. The mentoring relationship between the associate teacher and the student teacher reported can be characterised as one of mutual respect, with both the student teachers and the associate teachers identifying to a high degree that their knowledge and skills were valued by the other partner. Significantly, neither group of participants felt that the mentoring relationship was primarily one of either the associate teachers telling or the student teachers being told what to do. Student teachers were generally given the responsibility for planning for learning and this trust in their abilities was valued by the students. The concept of Ako (Keown et al., 2005) underpinned the mentoring relationships reported in this study. Of note is that, although shared goal setting and joint planning, were used as mentoring strategies, results suggest that student teachers found these strategies useful and they could be more frequently used than they currently are.

Associate teachers used a wide variety of mentoring strategies with a high degree of frequency and, in general, students valued all mentoring strategies adopted by their associate teachers. In particular, informal meetings and verbal feedback seemed more prevalent than planned meetings and written feedback. This preferred method of delivery may reflect the high workload of teachers. Certainly, informal verbal discussions are quick and are consistent with the notion that feedback should be given in a timely manner (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Students did, however, identify that they valued scheduled meetings to discuss progress and it is suggested here that these could be more commonly used. Although written feedback is given, this tends to be more often in a written lesson observation format subsequent to the delivery of a learning episode. Students did not frequently receive either written or verbal feedback on lesson planning prior to the learning episode although this was identified as being valuable by the student teachers. Given this finding, and the previously noted comments about shared goal setting and joint planning, it could be observed that student teachers are commonly asked to prepare lessons by themselves and then receive feedback on the lesson after it has been delivered.

Student teachers received a wide range of feedback types, with feedback on behaviour management being frequently given and highly valued. Interestingly, although both participant groups reported a high frequency of both ego-oriented and task-oriented feedback, ego-oriented is valued less by students as a feedback type. This is consistent with research that has identified that task-oriented feedback is the most effective at improving long-term performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

A range of types of mentoring were experienced, but it appears that as long as the student teachers felt that they were receiving relevant, accurate and timely feedback from at least one associate teacher, the style of the mentoring was unimportant. This concurs with the findings of Hastings and Squires (2002) and Ferrier-Kerr (2009), who identified important factors for consideration when establishing professional relationships in the practicum: personal connectedness, role interpretation, styles of supervision, collaboration-working as a team and reflection. Not all the student teachers in the study reported receiving adequate feedback or mentoring, a finding which aligns with Keogh, Dole and Hudson (2006) who found that not all experienced teachers are effective mentors for student teachers on practicum experience.

**Recommendation:** Processes are in place so that associate teachers are encouraged to be aware of personal connectedness with their student teacher, discuss the style of supervision, possible tensions, and the role of associate and student teacher (with the student teacher), collaborate with their student teacher in the teaching process, give task-oriented feedback, and verbalise and share reflections.

Contact with other student teachers was found to be useful to the learning while on practicum. The formal structures set up by the universities for peer feedback were seen as less useful than the discussions conducted in an informal setting through the staff room or through established friendship networks. The student teachers reported that they did receive a variety of types of feedback from their peers and that they found this feedback useful. Most of this feedback was through informal verbal, text or email contact rather than organised university discussion forums. One might conjecture that student teachers may feel more comfortable with these conversations sitting outside the university structure and away from the eyes of lecturers. Perhaps the use of social networking tools familiar to the students such as Facebook or Twitter might be considered.

However, it should not be assumed that useful conversations will automatically occur. Shapiro, Hazeltine and Rowe (1978, cited in Woodd, 1997) suggested that a peer pal was someone with a similar level of experience or influence to the student with whom they could share information, strategies, and mutual support for mutual benefit. Therefore the programme can help facilitate learning networks prior to practicum experience and to maximise the benefit from peer pals, students can be scaffolded towards gaining an understanding of critical friendship processes.

**Recommendation:** Student teachers should be encouraged through formal and informal structures to access peers to discuss their learning progress during practicum. This could be through placing students in pairs or groups on teaching experience where possible and facilitating the students into carefully selected critical friendship groups or networks prior to the practicum.

The focus of the student teachers' learning changed over time during the practicum experience. Early in the experience the students were focussed on understanding the culture of the context. They observed, discussed and asked about routines, the associate teacher's practice, the students in the class, and school policies and procedures. By the second week the focus was on planning, teaching and evaluating their performance (their pedagogical practice). For some of the students in the case studies there were learning moments that focussed on understanding the learning progress and engagement of individual students in the practicum. It could be that generally speaking the focus for student teachers on practicum changes from the cultural context (a holistic educational psychology perspective) to the pedagogical reasoning and action required for the teaching process as defined by Shulman (1987) through to using a range of strategies, evaluating and modifying teaching practice through individual student engagement and learning. The latter focus was not noted by all of the research participants and could be considered a higher level of achievement in the teaching process as this level of awareness is the core of effective teaching practice (Alton-Lee, 2003). It could be useful for the mentors and structures for the practicum are cognisant of the changing focus, particularly on practicums of six weeks or longer.

**Recommendation:** Mentoring and practicum structures encourage a change in focus over the practicum experience that scaffolds the student teachers through stages of learning; from understanding the context to teaching focussing on particular strategies moving to a holistic approach with multiple strategies, cognisant of the learning and engagement needs of individual students.

## Conclusion

The data from this study is a starting point for considering the mentoring and support of student teachers within the context of practicum experience. Further analysis will develop conclusions that will inform future practice. From initial analysis of the data the following recommendations have emerged that may be of use to those involved in developing preservice teacher education programmes which include practicum experiences:

- Teacher education programmes (continue to) align learning activities such as independent learning tasks and assessments to enable student teachers to make the links between theory and research, and the practice of teaching.

- Processes are in place so that associate teachers are encouraged to be aware of personal connectedness with their student teacher, discuss the style of supervision, possible tensions, and the role of associate and student teacher (with the student teacher), collaborate with their student teacher in the teaching process, give task oriented feedback and verbalise and share reflections.
- Student teachers are encouraged through formal and informal structures to access peers to discuss their learning and teaching practice during practicum experience.
- Mentoring and practicum structures scaffold the student teachers through stages of learning – from understanding the context to teaching focusing on particular strategies moving to a holistic approach with multiple strategies, cognisant of the learning and engagement needs of individual students.

Core findings of this research will be further examined through the publication of the following articles:

***Student teacher learning through the practicum experience***

This article will examine the change in focus across teaching experiences (3-7 weeks). It will report key learning moments which were identified by student teachers, the frustrations they faced and the factors which helped them. It will conclude with implications for universities and the schools in which the students are placed.

***Integrating university study with teaching practicum***

The second article will examine how student teachers were able (or not) to make links between their studies in graduate university courses and their teaching practicum. The findings are based on the weekly reports gathered through a multiple case study research and from a qualitative survey of 164 student teachers. The results of this study could be useful in course and practicum model design.

***Supporting and mentoring student teachers through their practicum experience***

The third article draws on the literature on mentoring and a study of student teachers and their mentors during teaching experience. It explores the types of mentoring currently used and examines the support that helped student teachers to reach key learning moments during teaching practicum. The different learning needs across the weeks on practicum are considered.

Links to these will be included in the Ako Aotearoa website.

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## Appendix 1. Annotated bibliography

**Baek, S.-G., & Ham, E. (2009). An evaluation study on the educational value of teaching practicum in secondary schools. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 10(2), 271-280.**

There are three criteria mentioned in this study for measuring educational value of teaching practicum in Korean context:

- a. practical teaching competence
- b. readiness for teaching
- c. maturity in character.

Participants in the study were 29 pre-service teachers in the College of Education at Seoul National University in South Korea.

The participants' practical teaching competence, readiness for teaching and their maturity in character were assessed twice before and after the teaching practicum. In addition, the authors employed video-portfolio assessment which has been thought to be *"one of the best ways to measure teaching performance"* (p. 274).

This study *"provides a conceptual framework and three instruments for measuring the educational value of many other teaching practicum"* (p. 277).

**Beck, C., & Kosnik, C. (2000). Associate teachers in pre-service education: Clarifying and enhancing their role. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 26(3), 207-224.**

Authors make reference to two models in which associate teachers are involved in their particular role: the practical initiation model and critical interventionist model.

Study began in 1997 and continued for just over two years. *"The centre-piece of the research was a set of semi-structured interviews of 20 of our associate teachers"* (p. 210). In the study, there was a wide range of teaching experience as a teacher and also their experience as AT. Besides the formal interviews with the ATs, authors administered a survey related to aspects of the practicum of the students. Additional information has been obtained from students' assignments and reflection papers, and focus-group discussions.

As a conclusion, the authors found that *"our associate teachers find their role as satisfying and beneficial, and they are performing well on a number of fronts"* (p. 220). Authors maintained that *"another form of indirect professional development we should employ more is involvement of our associate teachers in the university programme"* (p. 221). In addition, Beck and Kosnik stated that *"renewal of partner schools, like support and enhancement of the work of associate teachers, must be embraced as a priority by the university and school of education as a whole if it is to be attained to a significant degree"* (p. 223).

**Brouwer, N., & Korthagen, F. (2005). Can teacher education make a Difference? *American Educational Research Journal*, 42(1), 153-224.**

This is a longitudinal study conducted in the Netherlands. Participants were 357 students, 128 cooperating teachers and 31 university supervisors from 24 graduate teacher education programs. Quantitative survey data and in-depth qualitative data were collected over a period of 4.5 years.

p. 164 presents the Research model used in this study.

The preservice teacher education programs involved in this study have promoted graduates' competence to act in the classroom, particularly their capacity to activate pupils. (p. 213)

*These findings show that the development of graduates' teaching competence was not determined exclusively by influences from the school context.* (p. 213)

According to these authors the three most important components of the interplay were:

the gradual increase in complexity of student teaching activities;

the cooperation among student triads, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors;

the alternation of student teaching and college-based periods. (p. 213)

The authors believe that *"enhancing the effectiveness of teacher education is not only a question of curriculum development but also one of staff development"* (p. 214).

**Burn, K., Hagger, H., Mutton, T., & Everton, T. (2000). Beyond concerns with self: The sophisticated thinking of beginning student teachers. *Journal of Education for Teaching: International Research and Pedagogy*, 26(3), 259-278.**

The participants in this study were 36 who took core subjects of the compulsory National Curriculum that operates in all English schools. They were recruited from 2 different courses of initial teacher education. Each student was filmed teaching 4 times during the year and after each occasion each participant was interviewed *"seeking to explore their thinking in relation to that specific practice"* (p. 260).

The interviewed conducted with participants was *"open and non-judgemental and the questions were focused on a specific shared experience (the observed lesson) to encourage authentic rather than merely plausible accounts"* (p. 260).

The analysis was developed through an *"iterative, inductive process using transcribed data"* (p. 261) and *"coding was carried out by two of the research team using the qualitative data program ATLAS.ti"* (p. 261).

Model used by these authors was that of Brown and McIntyre (1993) which provided a *"model for understanding the nature of teachers' craft knowledge in terms of the actions the teachers took to achieve particular pupil goals in the light they saw as impinging on the teaching situation"* (pp. 261-262).

**Cheng, M. M. H., Cheng, A. Y. N., & Tang, S. Y. F. (2010). Closing the gap between the theory and practice of teaching: Implications for teacher education programmes in Hong Kong. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 36(1), 91-104.**

While both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in this study the authors mainly report only results from qualitative data. There were 31 year 4 student teachers who participated in in-depth interviews.

Authors stated that there are 3 core common influences developed to the teacher education programme:

1. raising the awareness of various teaching contexts
2. role modelling by lecturers
3. emphasis on self learning

Authors *“believe that the quality of teacher education programmes can be improved only if the teacher educators help student help student teachers identify the gap between teaching and theory, and continually facilitate them in connecting their learnt theory and practice”* (p. 102).

**Conklin, H. (2009). Purposes, practices, and sites: A comparative case of two pathways into middle school teaching. *American Educational Research Journal*, 46(2), 463.**

Conklin’s study looks at two most common pathways into middle school teaching: the elementary and secondary pathways.

The cohorts of student participants in this study were 22 elementary ones and 17 secondary ones. The author conducted class observations in which these students were enrolled and tape recorded each class session. In addition to the observation method, these prospective student teachers completed pre- and post surveys at the beginning and end of the semester. Based on survey data, the author selected 3 preservice teachers from each cohort for in-depth study.

*Providing preservice teachers with opportunities to experience a particular teaching method as learners, step back to analyze the method from the perspective of teachers, and create their own lesson with support is a pedagogy of teacher education that appears to help preservice teachers enact complex forms of teaching.* (p. 496)

Findings from this study *“suggest that teacher education programs need to help preservice teachers learn conceptual and practical tools that are clearly linked to program and course purposes”* (p. 496).

In addition, teacher education programs *“should pay careful consideration to the coherence between teacher education program messages and the messages from cooperating teachers who work with preservice teachers at field experiences sites”* (p. 496).

As a conclusion, Conklin maintains that *“if researchers and practitioners want to better understand the ways in which different features of teacher education pathways matter to preservice teachers’ learning, they must attend to the variation in pedagogical practices within different teacher education courses, in field placement sites, and across different pathways”* (p. 497).

**Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). Teacher education and the American future. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61(1-2), 35-47.**

Author describes the US school context and briefly mentions about what other countries such as Finland, the Netherlands, Singapore, etc. have done to move ahead the teaching education.

learning to practice in practice, with expert guidance, is essential to becoming a great teacher of students with a wide range of needs. (p. 40)

On p. 40 the author highlights features of what exemplary programs do for the success of teachers

The central issue I believe teacher education must confront is how to foster learning about and from practice in practice. The kinds of strategies I have described for connecting theory and practice cannot succeed without a major overhaul of the relationships between universities and schools. (p. 42)

**Fairbanks, C. M., Duffy, G. G., Faircloth, B. S., Ye He, Levin, B., Rohr, J., et al. (2010). Beyond knowledge: Exploring why some teachers are more thoughtfully adaptive than others. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61(1-2), 161-171.**

Authors present four perspectives on why some teachers are more thoughtful than others:

1. Teachers' beliefs and personal practical theories (PPTs)
2. Vision
3. Belonging
4. Identity

Representing different philosophical and epistemological approaches, the four perspectives have worked independently from one another.

*In bringing our four perspectives together, therefore, we have tentatively concluded that teaching that is responsive to students and situations requires teachers who know who they want to become (i.e., self-knowledge) and who are both proactive and skilled in navigating places for themselves as teachers (i.e., agency).*

The two suggestions that the authors offered are:

*we need to push the boundaries of what has been considered teacher reflection toward a multidimensional kind of reflection that takes into account not only what one's vision is but also to sustain it" (p. 167).*

*we believe that we need to study teacher education processes more broadly (p. 168).*

**Fantilli, R. D., & McDougall, D. E. (2009). A study of novice teachers: Challenges and supports in the first years. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(6), 814-825.**

The purpose of this study was to:

*investigate novice teachers' experiences as they move from pre-service to in-service.*  
(p. 815).

*study documents the experience of first, second, and third year teachers in Ontario.* (p. 815)

There were 5 Research questions for this study (p. 815):

1. What are the major challenges new teachers face in their first year of teaching?
2. What existing supports were available to assist new teachers?
3. What supports would have mitigated the challenges they faced as a new teacher?
4. What role did induction and mentorship play in their experiences as a new teacher in Ontario?
5. How can induction practices and mentorship programs better address the needs of beginning teachers in Ontario?

The authors used a mixed method approach in which both quantitative and qualitative analyses were used *“to gain the individualized perspectives and thoughts of novice Ontario teachers regarding the challenges faced in their first year(s) of teaching, and regarding the efficacy of supports in place to assist them”* (p. 816).

On page 816 there is a great figure for describing the methodological approach and research design of the study.

Analyzing survey data two major findings gained attention:

- mentorship status
- ample time to prepare.

**Ferrier-Kerr, J. L. (2009). Establishing professional relationships in practicum settings. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25(6), 790-797.***

Practicum is important for *“associate teachers continued to take the lead in first establishing and then developing the professional relationship, as well as giving student teachers opportunities to learn from and with them”* (p. 796).

The author identified 5 themes as the important factors that might guide associate teachers and student teachers in establishing rich professional relationship in the practicum:

1. personal connectedness
2. role interpretation
3. styles of supervision
4. collaboration-working as a team
5. reflection

Participants were 4 school-based associate teachers, 4 student teachers in their final 7-week block period of practicum, and the researcher (teacher educator) in a New Zealand setting.

In this study the author used an interpretive action research approach.

The author used methodological triangulation involving questionnaires, interviews, observations and reflective journals.

Findings from this study suggest that *“for associate teachers to become reflective practitioners and facilitate reflective practice they must first re-examine their own beliefs and assumptions by examining their own learning and performance as teachers and associate teachers”* (p. 796).

**Goodfellow, J., & Sumsion, J. (2000). Transformative pathways: Field-based teacher educators' perceptions. *Journal of Education for Teaching: International research and pedagogy*, 26(3), 245-257.**

In this study the authors conducted focus groups with 129 field-based teacher educators associated with the early childhood pre-service teacher education at two Australian universities.

There are three notions related to the professional practice of field-based educators:

- a. wisdom
- b. authenticity
- c. passion

p. 251 presents a nice graphical representation of pathways in student teacher professional development.

The authors maintain that collaboration between field-based educators and university-based educators is the key for success in preparing student teachers.

The authors mentioned that *“[a]s facilitators, our impressions were that the field-based teacher educators perceived that they made a valuable contribution to student teachers' professional development, but were unaccustomed to articulating what it was about their work with student teachers that was so beneficial”* (pp. 246-247).

In this study the authors stated that *“pre-service programmes including the on-campus component, can support student teachers' personal-professional development in a meaningful and lasting way, providing they move beyond their traditional emphasis on imparting the theory, skills, and knowledge about teaching’* (Wideen et al., 1998, p. 133)” (p. 252).

**Hastings, W., & Squires, D. (2002). Restructuring and Reculturing: Practicum supervision as professional development for teachers. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 30(1), 79 - 91.**

In this study the authors state that *“restructuring the practicum principally involves making changes to the roles and responsibilities of the various participants”* (p. 80). On the other hand reculturing the practicum involves *“changing the beliefs, customs, attitudes and expectations of participants”* (p. 80).

The authors maintain that *“time (or the lack of it) and the corresponding intensification of work are issues that arise when discussing ways of enhancing the success of school-based teacher education”* (p. 83).

The research method used in this study was a small qualitative action research case study which aimed at *“improving the outcomes from the practicum for the university, the school-based teacher educators as well as the students”* (p. 84).

For this research data were collected from the *“student teachers via questionnaire, mentors by small group interview and co-operating teachers via questionnaire”* (p. 85).

The themes that emerged from the data were:

1. the role of the mentor/supervisor
2. professional development of the mentor/supervisor
3. tensions related to the role
4. sharing ideas
5. opportunities

**Keogh, J., Dole, S., & Hudson, E. (2006, 27-30 November). *Supervisor or mentor? Questioning the quality of pre-service teacher practicum experiences*. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference.**

In this paper the authors argue that *“not all experienced teachers are effective mentors, and they need to undertake professional development and training in effective mentorship to enable them to provide fully-rounded practicum experiences for the pre-service teachers with whom they are required to work”* (p. 1).

The authors describe a program in Australia which focuses on the needs of students in the middle years.

Using the presentation of 2 case studies of pre-service teachers' experiences the authors make the case for professional development, training and some clarification for mentors in the practicum. The authors use an ethnomethodological approach in order to interrogate the data. They used various studies as a lens of analyzing their case studies (e.g., Sands & Goodwin, 2005; Sudzina, Gielbelhaus, & Coolican, 1997; Timperley, 2001, etc.). Their goal was to *“confirm the need for training for effective mentoring in order to facilitate the possibility of positive and productive practicum experiences for all involved”* (p. 12).

See reference list for other studies.

**Moody, J. (2009). Key elements in a positive practicum: insights from Australian post-primary pre-service teachers. *Irish Educational Studies*, 28(2), 155-175.**

This paper investigates “*key elements in a positive practicum, from the perspective of post-primary pre-service teachers in Victoria, Australia*” (p. 155).

The purpose of this study was to “*provide insights into the pre-service teachers’ perceptions of the issues leading to a positive practicum, with a particular focus on the role played by the supervising teacher and the visiting lecturer, and the system of assessment*” (p. 157).

Participants were 16 pre-service teachers who were interviewed using semi-structured interviews “*immediately prior to the practicum, focusing on their attitudes towards the forthcoming and their view of its purpose; the role of the supervising teacher and the visiting university lecturer, and the system of assessment*” (p. 158). In addition, interviews were conducted with 8 pre-service teachers during the course of the practicum. Moreover, more data were collected after the practicum by sending an email questionnaire containing open-ended questions in which students were asked to discuss their perceptions of the practicum (see Table 1 for sample and instruments used for this research).

The four key positive themes which emerged from the data as being central to the achievement of a positive practicum were:

1. support from supervising teacher
2. freedom to develop own teaching style
3. constructive feedback
4. approach to assessment.

**Poulou, M. (2007). Student-teachers’ concerns about teaching practice. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 30(1), 91-110.**

Using reflection after practice which seemed to be a more effective way of students’ beliefs changing, the author in this study “*aimed to explore students’ concerns following their teaching practice experience, once released from the tension which compulsory teaching practice generates*” (p. 94).

Data were collected from journals kept by student teachers which were later content-analysed by two educational researchers.

The author concluded that “*reflection and consequently reconstruction of the image of self as teachers is the tool for both the novice and experienced to cope with the ambiguity of the teaching profession*” (p. 103).

**Vickers, M., Harris, C., & McCarthy, F. (2004). University-community engagement: Exploring service-learning options within the practicum. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 32(2), 129 - 141.**

In this paper the authors aim is to discuss the *“benefits of these programs to the university, pre-service teachers, school students and school communities, and the broader local community”* (p. 130) in Australia.

The authors examined *“service learning as a conduit for the development and maintenance of meaningful symbiotic relationships between the university and the educational community, and the pre-service teachers and the local community”* (p. 129).

**Williams, A., & Soares, A. (2000). The role of higher education in the initial training of secondary school teachers: The views of the key participants. *Journal of Education for Teaching: International Research and Pedagogy*, 26(3), 225 - 244.**

In this paper the author discuss the *“role of higher education (HE) in the training of secondary teachers in England”* (p. 225).

The study had a very large sample size (N=1065) comprised of 280 Higher Education tutors, 441 mentors, and 344 student teachers in England. The authors used a questionnaire in which perceptions of HE were sought.

Table 1 (p. 236) presents the elements related to aspects of competence or relevant knowledge.

Table 2 (p. 237) presents elements related to the development of critical abilities and to the ability to apply knowledge to new situations.

Table 5 (p. 239) presents elements related to various aspects of student support.

The authors conclude that *“this study makes a strong case for sustaining and building on existing partnership. There is no evidence from this study that students or mentors would support further reduction in HE involvement in teacher education”* (p. 242).

**Zeichner, K. M. (1983). Alternative paradigms of teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 34(3), 3-9.**

Zeichner maintained that *“one way to think about alternatives in teacher education is in terms of the concept of paradigms”* (p. 3). The author stated that *“the prospective teacher is viewed primarily as a passive recipient of this professional knowledge and plays little part in determining the substance and direction of his or her preparation program”* (p. 3).

One aspect that I consider as still holding true is that of Zeichner in 1983: *“The issue of the proper relationships between a teacher education program and the institutional form and social context of education is a fundamental question that merits further discussion”* (p. 8).

**Zeichner, K. (2010). Rethinking the connections between campus courses and field experiences in college- and university-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61(1-2), 89-99.**

In US education system Zeichner discussed the use of the third space as being concerned with “the creation of hybrid spaces in preservice teacher education programs that bring together school and university-based teacher educators and practitioner and academic knowledge in new ways to enhance the learning of prospective teachers” (p. 92).

One other aspect that Zeichner highlighted is that all efforts that are contemporary ones in US “involve a shift in the epistemology of teacher education from a situation where academic knowledge is seen as the authoritative source of knowledge about teaching to one where different aspects of expertise that exist in schools and communities are brought into teacher education and coexist on a more equal plane with academic knowledge” (p. 95).

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