



Intensive Training Programme for Pre-Service Teachers: An Intersectionality Perspective of an Israeli Rural Druse School

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ABSTRACT

The current case-study research was aimed at describing an intensive training programme for pre-service teachers in a rural Druse school in Israel, and understanding how educators participating in the programme perceived collaboration and challenges during the programme. Twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted with educators (pre-service and in-service teachers, coordinator, teacher educator, and principal). Based on thematic analysis, three collaborative characteristics were identified: debate over co-teaching practices; pedagogical theoretical learning and its immediate implementation and reflection; deep and intensive mentorship. In addition, combinations between two axes - professional and organizational domains; and short-term vs. long-term perspectives - yielded four different challenges. The professional domain in the short-and long-term was well established; however, the organizational domain remains unclear. Based on the intersectionality approach, the findings of the current study suggest that a combination of multiple social categories - rural space, and ethnic Druse group - create marginalized features that placed barriers for pre-service teachers. The various challenges are further discussed.

Keywords: Druse, pre-service teachers, teacher education, training program, intersectionality.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the schooling system has identified adjustment difficulties of recently qualified teachers (Howard, 2006). The central difficulty stems from the detachment between the training period stage at college/university and the intake period stage at school in the first teaching positions (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Difficulties are expressed in personal, organizational, and professional domains. To ease adjustment, and to prevent novice teacher dropout, the Israeli Education Ministry has prepared an intensive training programme for pre-service teachers, aimed at enabling a smooth transition between those stages (Nissim & Naifeld, 2018). Thus, during their final year of studies, the teachers also work intensively at school, allowing them a variety of experiences in the teaching profession. This programme is implemented in different geographical regions in Israel. Yet, the significance of participation in the programme for students in different regions is critical. Thus, following the intersectionality approach (Crenshaw, 1991; Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021; Romero, 2018; Woodward, 2021), the combination of the periphery as a rural region alongside belonging to the Druse population, considered a minority, can dictate less power and ability to move forward in the teaching occupation. The current case-study research aimed to describe an intensive training programme for pre-service teachers in a rural Israeli Druse school and to understand how educators participating in the programme perceive collaboration and challenges during the programme.

LITERATURE FRAMEWORK

Teachers' first years at school

Recent studies have focused on the adjustment of teachers in their first years of work in school (Baker-Gardner, 2016; Ingersoll, 2012). Teachers experience difficulties in those first years, mainly in implementing the theories they learnt within practice work (Howard, 2006; Johnson, 2002). One can define those difficulties by examining two career-periods, with a transition between them. The first period, training, is typified by a theoretical and applied learning process of pre-service teachers in aspects connected to teaching spheres. In the second period, the career-cycle which is considered a period distinct from the previous one, teachers undergo the screening and recruitment period (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011) ahead of starting their first teaching position.

In order to help teachers to confront the difficulties which can result from the separation between the stages, attempts are made to connect the two separate stages by widening the practical training programme, with an emphasis on the induction of pre-service teachers at a school for significant periods, accompanied by mentoring processes. Those attempts focus on strengthening ties between the academy which is responsible

for training, and the schools which are responsible for inclusion in school-staff (Attorps& Kellner, 2017). The development process of a high-quality teacher with a clearly defined professional identity results from the necessary integration of the training period, the first teaching position, and later stages too (Mark, 2013). For this purpose, a partnership between the two arenas – the school as a field and the academy - the university or college – as the teaching institution, is highly needed.

Academy-field partnership

In the field there are various models of partnership between academic institutions that train teachers and the field; schools and pre-schools (Goldrick et al., 2012; Ingersollet al., 2014). The impact of those programmes, in which students participate as part of their practical work, are significant for their success (Carver et al., 2009). Research shows that the positive impact of student mentoring programmes in the educational field affects several factors, including the new teacher's commitment to the system, teacher retention, the new teacher's integration processes in the classroom, and student achievement (Ingersoll et al., 2014). Moreover, studies have shown the positive impact on novice teachers as future teachers, after participating in training processes with an effective partnership between academy and field (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). In the past few years, Israel's Education Ministry has encouraged academic institutions to develop ties with the field as part of teacher training processes.

The Israeli training programme

The wide-ranging training programme 'Academy-Classroom' was developed and crystallized in reliance on the Professional Development Schools model (PDS). It is based on the benefits of active collaboration between an academic institution which trains the student and an educational institution where the student integrates practical experience. It increases the scope of practical training (Mule, 2006), and highlights collegiality and innovation (Adair-Breault, 2013). Since 2016, the Israeli Education Ministry has implemented it in 100 schools. It is grounded on 'establishing partnership between the academic teacher-training institutions and schools in Israel, to improve the quality of training, induction, teaching processes, professional development, and to advance significant learning in schools' (Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 13). The programme's central aims are: (1) to change the place of training from the academic institution to the school 'in the field'; and (2) to change the student's role from a passive observer who spends only a few hours in classrooms, to a full partner in teaching processes (Nissim & Naifeld, 2018) and school-life; and (3) to use practices of co-teaching, with two teachers simultaneously present in the classroom. These practices offer an innovative approach to teaching methodologies and the teacher's role (Pancsofar& Petroff, 2016). In the programme's framework, students spend 12 to 16 hours per week in school, in tandem with theoretical training which is part of their studies. Pre-service teachers who participated in this programme had a significantly higher sense of self-efficacy and more positive attitudes towards the teaching profession (Sasson et al., 2020). The training is offered to various populations of student teachers in Israel including different ethnic communities and various regions.

The intersectionality theory

Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) in order to demonstrate different forms of discrimination experienced by black women. Examining black women in leadership positions, Moorosi, Fuller and Reilly drew on Crenshaw's assumptions and argued that 'by looking at gender and race separately, legal frameworks tend to ignore the experiences of women who are Black' (Moorosi et al., 2018, p. 153). Furthermore, different forms of identities interact with each other such that 'a white, middle-class woman is likely to have very different life experience than a poor, disabled woman of color' (Woodward, 2021).

The intersectionality approach considers the multiple 'axes' of power and difference which shape individuals' positionalities (Brah& Phoenix, 2004; Romero, 2018). Thus, social inequality is not formed by any single factor alone, but by multiple overlapping social locations and systems of power (Walker et al., 2021). In the literature, 'intersectionality' refers to members of intersectional social categories or tokens of experience faced by members of such categories (Bernstein, 2020). While the research regarding intersectionality cases focus primarily on different integrations of gender (Davis, 2008), race, ethnicity, or class, recent studies focus on geographical areas as a relevant unit of social category (Perera-Mubarak, 2013). Thus, the formation of identities and organization of power structures may differ in regard to the specific locations where they happen (Smooth, 2010) and accordingly, at the group level, people can experience multiple marginalization (Choo & Ferree, 2010), particularly at educational settings (Cavendish et al., 2021). Defining the category of rural/peripheral space alongside the category of Druse population as a marginalized group can demonstrate the notion of intersectionality within a specific group in Israeli society.

The Druse rural context as intersectional position

The Druse population in Israel is a non-Jewish minority group of citizens belonging to various subgroups of Arab society (Barakat, 2021; Shamaï& Paul-Binyamin, 2004). Druse educational schools are segregated (Amer

&Davidovitch, 2020; Halabi, 2018) and most of them are located in northern Israel, in a rural region, characterised at specific organizational culture (KheirFaddul et al., 2019).

The combination of Arab ethnicity and the rural region where the school is located may highlight difficulties that pre-service teachers encounter. First, pre-service teachers are required to work in heterogeneous classes with a majority of disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, they must focus extensively on different pedagogical teaching methods (Howley et al., 2014; Putnam, 2015). Second, the teaching profession in Arab communities is characterized by a surplus of trained teachers that makes it very difficult to find suitable jobs (Abu Rass, 2010). Pre-service teachers in those areas are likely to confront unique challenges in addition to the 'routine' challenges of pre-service teachers.

Accordingly, this study focuses on the perceptions of educators who participated or were involved in the training over the whole year in 2018. We examined two main questions:

- (1) What were the characteristics of collaboration between educators during an intensive training programme conducted at a rural Druse school?
- (2) How were the challenges of the pre-service teachers during the intensive training programme reflected, during their work at school particularly and in the educational system generally?

METHOD

Research Design

The qualitative approach was chosen as "intersectionality is an epistemological stance and modus operandi for the examination (and interpretation) of social context" (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021, p. 21). Focusing on the Druse pre-service teachers at rural spatial, a special consideration is given to the context of the school studied during the research. The case-study as an empirical method was chosen in order to 'investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real world context' (Yin, 2018, p. 15). The specific intensive programme was defined as the concrete case using three main characteristics that locate the beginning and the end of the specific 'case': the duration of the one-year programme; the educators who participated in it; and the geographic setting where the programme ran.

Field and Participants

The study was conducted in a Druse high-school, located in a northern rural region of Israel, where the training programme is running. Twenty educators who participated or were involved in the programme were interviewed: five in-service teachers who mentored the pre-service teachers; twelve pre-service teachers (in History and Hebrew subjects); one coordinator teacher, one pedagogical instructor, and one principal. The interviews were held during May-June 2018, toward the end of the year in which the training was conducted. The research was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the department of Education and psychology at the Open University of Israel (No. of approval 3024). All participants were informed of the risks and benefits of participation in the study, and signed the informed consent form.

Data Collection

Collecting the narratives was aimed at representing a diversity of experiences with the teacher education programme, and thus gaining a broader understanding of their experiences. During in-depth interviewing of participants on various aspects of the training, the interviewer could follow their lead and thus identify and understand their perceptions (Marshall et al., 2021). Sampling different participants holding different positions was used in order "to elicit multiple perspectives on a given research question" (Guest et al., 2013, p. 43). Thus, since the data were collected from different populations, they were useful in enhancing data triangulation (Flick, 2018).

The interviews comprised three parts: general questions on characteristics of the intensive training; questions about collaboration during the programme, and challenges during the intensive training. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. In addition, documents of the training materials were collected. All the questions were asked and answered after rapport and trust were established during the interviews (Spradley, 1979). All the interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

The analysis in this study was based on thematic analysis. Coding was guided by the principles of comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), which includes the comparison of any coded element in terms of emergent categories and subcategories. This process was intended "to see if the data support and continue to support emerging concepts" (Holton & Walsh 2017, p. 78). The analysis was based on data-driven inductive coding. Thus, the focus of the analysis was to discover patterns, themes, and categories in the data (Patton, 2002). The analysis process was conducted in three stages: first, different collaboration patterns of the educators emerged from the interviews. Second, categories that related to challenges in two domains were analysed. Third, the categories in the two domains were divided into two periods – the present and the future. Combining the

domains and the periods yielded a model that can describe the pre-service teachers' challenges during the intensive training.

In addition, this process was carried out manually and separately by each of the researchers. After each researcher achieved saturation, mutual agreement between the researchers was obtained.

FINDINGS

The first research question focused on the characteristics of collaboration between the educators in order to achieve joint purposes in an intensive training programme. This question targeted the rationale for the collaborative patterns. Three main themes emerged: debates over co-teaching practices; pedagogical theoretical learning and its immediate implementation and reflection; deep and intensive mentorship. These themes reflect shared practices that involve pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, and the pedagogical instructor, alike.

Co-teaching practices: "In theory it's sometimes better than in practice"

Since co-teaching practice is rather new for the in-service teachers, and requires high involvement and collaboration from both sides – the pre-service and in-service teachers – the participants mentioned it extensively. As Hassan, in-service teacher described: "Team work requires a high level of harmony between pre-service teacher and teacher trainers. It is not something that falls into place automatically, substantial advance preparations and work is needed. There must be advance planning of the lesson structure and the roles of each one involved" (Hassan). Amira, a pre-service teacher, described the efforts required in the process: "It's as if the fact of working as a pair or working with someone else requires many efforts before walking into the classroom. The teacher and the assistant teacher and student have to sit for a not inconsiderable time to reach a place where everything seems to be settled and organized" (Amira). Another voice and different view was offered by Rana, a pre-service teacher: "I don't like it because I don't really teach. I only sit with two students and sometimes help them outside the classroom, while my mentor teacher is teaching the entire class" (Rana). Perceptions regarding co-teaching practices are ambivalent, particularly regarding the different models of co-teaching and preparations for a meaningful practice. These perceptions may also reflect the gap between the theoretical knowledge and the implementation process, as presented later.

Immediate implementation and reflection: "We try to fill the gap between theory and practice"

This theme reflects the differences or the gaps between academic training at the university before, and parallel to practical training at school. Suzan, for example, an in-service teacher, described her feelings regarding the pre-service teacher she is training: "She worked hard, prepared herself very well, but when she came to the class, suddenly that first shock – how to start talking uninterruptedly, and the students hardly understand her, and then you have to explain, or not to explain, to interpret the words or not" (Suzan). Maged, the pedagogical instructor who is mostly responsible for the theoretical aspects of teaching and their implementation during the programme, described the challenges: "We took a whole class to discuss the fears that arise for new teachers in the face of other teachers with more years of experience and how they can make a contribution, But do we really prepare them for the practical aspect? I am not sure... We do try to fill the gap between theory and practice" (Maged). Niroz, a pre-service teacher, explains the trainer's view: "With didactic support we learn different examples of teaching, but when you get to the classroom it's not exactly what we were told. It's more complicated in the field than in theory" (Niroz). Although the implementation process is complex and highlights the divide between theory and practice, it is also perceived as part of the programme, and shared equally between the in-service teacher and the pedagogical instructor. It can demonstrate the unique role of the in-service teachers as mentors.

Deep and intensive mentorship: "The attitude of the teacher mentor is crucial for the success of the process"

The intensive training broadly connects the in-service and pre-service teachers in a mutual synergized relationship. Concentrating on the specific programme, each pre-service teacher worked with only one in-service teacher. On the one hand, that enables a deeper and meaningful mentorship process, as described: "We are a team. I see everything she does. She is like a parent for me. She was my teacher when I was a student. It is like a dream, and I am learning so much from her before, during and after the lessons" (Soar, pre-service teacher). Or as described by Suzan, an in-service teacher: "When the principal asked me to do this I didn't know what it meant. It is a full commitment and responsible. She is with me all the time, I introduce her to other teachers, I explain, I correct, I share, and I prepare her. She looks at me and sees a model" (Suzan). On the other hand, both in-service and pre-service teachers feel that the pre-service teachers should be exposed to different in-service teachers, since teachers represent diversity in their attitude to the profession, their pedagogical practices, and their work patterns. For example, Mustafa described it: "We are a good team, but I think I need to see different teachers. I spend two days in school and all the time with the same teacher. It is an opportunity to learn more ways of how to do things in class and with students" (Mustafa, pre-service teacher). Amar, an in-service teacher, explained: "I am the only senior teacher in History, but she can learn from other teachers – the homeroom teacher or Arabic teacher. The training isn't only for the subject matter but also for how to be and become a teacher" (Amar). The statements reflect both the meaning of teacher as a model and a mentor, alongside the need for diversity in the experience of following and learning from senior teachers.

The second research question centred around the challenges of the intensive training programme during working at school particularly, and in the educational system generally. The analysis showed four challenges created as result of integrating two axes: short-term vs. long-term, and professional vs. organizational domains (see Table 1). Short-term statements were based on segments which related to the current period of the training, while long-term statements were based on segments relating to the post-training period, including seeking a job as a teacher and adaptive features to new school. In the professional domain, the segments that were included are focusing on pre-service teachers' coping patterns with in-class learning and teaching processes. In the organizational domain, segments included pre-service teachers' coping patterns with the school as an open system by developing relations in school and beyond, employment procedures, and bureaucracy.

Table 1: Four challenges model of pre-service teachers' inclusion in short and long term

	Professional domain	Organizational domain
Present (short-term)	Condition A High adjustment, useful practices of teaching and preparing for classes, well established self-confidence in the teaching profession, exercising different models of co-teaching and different strategies of helping pupils, especially from disadvantaged background.	Condition C Limited established connection (mainly with the in-service teacher, the students and a few teachers). Few, or hardly any, connections with parents, other teachers, or the principal.
Future (long-term)	Condition B Self-confidence about teaching capacities in class and in front of pupils in the specific school where the training takes place. Doubts about transferring the strategies or the knowledge to another school (different level, size, culture, people).	Condition D Uncertainty and unknown future in the teaching profession, lack of available schools and positions that can enable a continuous teaching track Emotional load, confusion with job expectations

Condition A: I am functioning as a professional teacher

Regarding the professional domain, the pre-service teachers described the immediate training period as a good adjustment to the school: "I learnt how to stand in front of class, to be a real teacher and do it step by step" (Waffa, pre-service teacher). The co-teaching model, based on two teachers in class at the same time, was described by the pedagogical instructor: "we learned it theoretically and the teachers were practicing it. It is a bonus that they can work simultaneously with an in-service teacher in class" (Maged). Yet, while the statements regarding professional work during the short-term were positive, many concerns were raised about the profession's possible implementation in future.

Condition B: "How will I do it alone?"

Concerns about the professional domain in the future are demonstrated in the following statement: "In co-teaching two teachers are needed. How will I do it alone?" (Rim, pre-teacher), or "The learning strategies that I practice are good for this school. I don't know if they will fit elsewhere" (Rana, pre-service teacher). A similar statement was made by an in-service teacher: "There are all sorts of things that I believe are difficult to take in during a lesson. The student who's there is learning them spontaneously, but doesn't feel he's actually learning. When does he feel it? As soon as he's alone. I believe that's when he'll start to retrieve all the information which he received during that programme" (Duaa).

Condition C: "I'm excluded from all interactions with parents"

Moreover, while intensive training chiefly focuses on professional methods and practices especially among disadvantaged pupils, it targeted the organizational domain less. For example: "I'm excluded from all interactions with parents and I don't get the whole school job picture" (Mustafa, pre-service teacher), or "They do it in an easy way but not fully integrated" (Roan, in-service teacher). Another in-service teacher elaborated: "There was a decision by the system that students wouldn't attend meetings with parents. Situations with parents are complex anyway, and to bring someone else into a meeting, even just as an observer, is a problematic

process. They were also given a special room, that isn't part of the teacher's room. Sometimes there's a feeling that they're on the sidelines and not really coping with the real life of teachers" (Hassan).

Condition D: Next year I'll have to start all over again

Pre-service teachers were very concerned about their future, and entering the track of in-service teachers in any school in the region within the educational system. For example: "I feel good in this school. However, the principal told me I could not continue here next year. I'll have to start all over again" (Rim, pre-service teacher). The in-service teachers are also aware of the complex situation: "The student keep asking me if any of the teachers are leaving next year. I told her I am going to retire in three years but it is a long time to wait without work when you are very ready to become a teacher" (Hassan). Doubts and uncertainty are strongly established in the context of a rural school, in a region with many educated students in the education profession. Thus, there are limited available positions that offer options for the well-trained pre-service teachers: "It's a small place with few opportunities. The training was very important but all of this can be irrelevant since there are so many students and so few jobs," (Suzan, in-service teacher) or "I want to teach history, that's what I trained for. Only one school offered me a position, teaching Arabic. I do not want it. But in a small place it's more convenient than teaching somewhere a two-hour's drive away" (Amira, pre-service teacher). These four conditions demonstrate the combination of the two domains – the professional and the organizational. Observing and analyzing the two domains illustrate the complex process of the training programme, for both the long-term and the short-term, as we now discuss.

DISCUSSION

The current study was aimed at describing an intensive training programme for pre-service teachers in a rural Druse school in Israel, and understanding how educators participating in the programme perceive collaboration and challenges during the programme.

Regarding the first question, three themes emerged: debates over co-teaching practices; pedagogical theoretical learning and its immediate implementation and reflection; deep and intensive mentorship. As for the debates over co-teaching practices, the perceptions of co-teaching as useful correspond with previous studies (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2016). Yet the critique over the different models and their fit for pre-service teachers is also described in the literature (Duran et al., 2020). Regarding the connections and gaps between pedagogical theoretical learning and its immediate implementation and reflection, the complexity of this connection is well documented in previous studies among pre-service teachers (Bondía & Gracia, 2021). In terms of deep and intensive mentorship, the findings regarding the importance and complexity of teachers as models and mentors corresponds with former studies which present contradictions regarding the mentorship process (Arshavskaya, 2016; Jonson, 2016) and offer models for implementation (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021).

The analysis of the second research question yielded four conditions that represent present and future periods alongside professional and organizational domains. Two main issues can be discussed regarding these diverse conditions: First, while intensive training can move toward inclusion, it is only partly implemented in the short-term and does not prepare pre-service teachers for the future. A stronger orientation to the future seems necessary (Mark, 2013) in the specific programme and in the general school system. Second, the programme emphasizes pedagogical aspects of the teaching profession, especially in terms of disadvantaged pupils. Yet the teaching occupation is more complex, with other organizational aspects that occupied teachers not only within school (building relations with the principal, students, and parents) but also beyond it (applying for jobs, learning about and getting to know the wider system). This finding corresponds with previous studies that emphasized different solutions for organizational challenges that Arab teachers in rural areas are facing: migration (Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2016), part-time or temporary jobs, substitute teachers, expanding or changing the subject-matter, or abandoning the profession. Organizational dimensions and future orientation should therefore be regarded as integral to the training.

It is particularly important while we are examining the specific programme in light of the theoretical framework of the intersectionality approach. Since the current case-study focused on rural Druse pre-service teachers, it seems that the multiple axes of power shape the participants' positionalities over the long term (Brah & Phoenix, 2001). While the intensive training aimed to facilitate the professional future of the participants as teachers, and all the efforts made during the training, the social categories become barriers (Woodward, 2021) that enable the participants to become teachers regardless of the skills and knowledge they achieved during the programme. The integration of rural space characterized by limited opportunities, remoteness and isolation (Ovenden-Hope & Passy, 2019, 2020) alongside the ethnic Druse background narrow the possibilities. It is worth mentioning that the majority of the participants in the programme are women. Adding the social category of gender as a widespread phenomenon in the gender-biased teaching profession (Grinshtain & Addi-Raccach, 2020), and the particular place of Druse women (Barakat, 2021) render this group marginalized and powerless (Crenshaw, 1991; Moorosi et al., 2018). Hence the gap between the present and the future period and between professional and organizational domains becomes crucial, since the prospects for fitting in the profession are

limited. The intersectionality as a frame in the current study helped in emphasising the disadvantage of the programme for the specific marginalized group in the recruiting and retaining processes (Fenton, 2021).

Two practical implications should be discussed: First, the intensive training is useful in helping the pre-service teacher capture the whole picture of being a teacher. Full and rich support should however be given to diversity of experiences in school, such as different mentors and diverse teaching models. In addition, emphasis should be placed on the organizational domain - interactions with parents, involvement with teachers and the principal in the present, job-seeking, and understanding the educational system for the future. Second, counselling and guidance for finding employment should be part of the ongoing training and as continuance of the training period. This process should be located at the policy level, focused on integration with employment policies in which, for example, incentives will be given to Jewish rural schools which employ Druze graduates (Erlich et al., 2020) or strengthen the requirement to create permanent co-teaching models in schools. This can enlarge the teacher supply and create more jobs, which is particularly necessary in rural localities among minorities groups. A dual benefit can be inclusive help for disadvantaged students and enhancing future employment opportunities for novice teachers. Taking into account creating new and innovative ways to help rural communities (Greenwood, 2013) should be an integral part of planning and conducting training programs for pre-service teachers in those rural areas.

The current study intensifies the need for comprehensive training that takes into consideration the organizational factors and long-term perspective of pre-service teachers. Thus, the portrait of the pre-service teacher is complex and multi-dimensional and goes far beyond the class or even the school environment, especially in rural or disadvantaged contexts. Future studies should focus on comparison between different groups of training programmes regarding their adjustment to the in-service teaching track and exploring the first five years of Druze teachers in schools in the rural space.

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