

Pedagogies of Practice in English Language Teacher Education: Student Teachers' Experiences and Preferences

Fiona Farr*

University of Limerick, Ireland

Petter Hagen Karlsen

University of Inland Norway, Norway

Correspondence

Email: Fiona.farr@ul.ie

Abstract

This paper discusses the ways in which (English) language teachers are supported in their preparation for professional practice during their teacher education programmes. Using the framework of pedagogies of practice (representations, decompositions and approximations) (Grossman et al. 2009), it surveys 26 student teachers in relation to their experiences of the practice-oriented components of their teacher education programmes to discern their experiences, practices and perceptions. It specifically explores the context of Ireland and Norway. These opportunities to engage in practice, whether individually or collectively, assessed or unassessed, are discussed in terms of their potential for meaningful reflective practice (Dewey 1933). The results suggest that these students have opportunities to engage in a wide array of pedagogies of practice during their teacher education programmes, both individually and collectively. Many of these are assessed but others are formative in nature. Both groups of students place very high value on these practice-engagement elements of their programmes, with this value and preference increasing the closer these activities move towards real classroom practice, which is the most highly prized of all. Implications and suggestions are included in the concluding remarks.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 10 July 2024

Revised: 17 October 2025

Accepted: 06 November 2025

KEYWORDS

Pedagogies of Practice,
Language Teacher Education,
Practicum

How to cite this article (APA 7th Edition):

Farr, F., & Karlsen, P. H. (2025). Pedagogies of practice in English language teacher education: Student teachers' experiences and preferences. *Language Teaching Research Quarterly*, 51, 392–408. <https://doi.org/10.32038/ltrq.2025.51.11>

¹Introduction

This special issue is in honour of Carol Chapelle's contributions to language assessment and learning, and indeed they are numerous and noteworthy over the course of the past 40 years (see Blin & Hubbard, 2025 this volume). I (Farr) first became aware of her work as an MA student with an interest in second language acquisition and language learning and technology, and subsequently had the pleasure of hearing her speak at several CALL-related conferences during the course of my PhD studies. In truth though, her work spans so many facets of applied linguistics and related fields that it is rare to meet a TESOL, French, or other language professional who has not been influenced by some aspect of her practice-oriented research and/or theoretical discussion. It feels slightly inadequate to say that the profession and the academy owes her a huge debt of gratitude and will continue to do so well into the future. One of her first papers that I personally read was published in *TESOL Quarterly* in 2007 (Chapelle, 2007), and it continues to be at the top of my list of favourites. The title alone (*Pedagogical implications in TESOL Quarterly? Yes, please!*) gives us a strong insight into her commitment to keeping a professional focus on and making a difference to practice in the work that we publish in certain outlets. This came at a time when there was a strong emerging trend towards intellectualisation and theorisation within applied linguistics as a still relatively new discipline (Cook, 2015), often attempting to justify our place in the academy. In this context, Chapelle's paper at the time stood bravely among others in firmly arguing for the retention of a pedagogical focus in such journals. As a practitioner at heart, I remember being struck and impressed by her assertions that 'TESOL is not second language acquisition' (p404) 'If an author can state no implications for teaching and learning, *TESOL Quarterly* is the wrong journal' (p405), and most of all by 'Professional knowledge has never been in greater demand' (ibid). This gave me a sense of real legitimacy, as a professional and academic with a foot in both theoretical and professional practice camps, having completed an MA dissertation on interlanguage and fossilisation (Selinker & Han, 2001) and a PhD investigating the discourse of teaching practice feedback, with strong pedagogic implications and applications (Farr, 2010). This legitimacy stays with me, and is, I hope, well-illustrated in the present paper co-authored with my colleague Petter Karlsen, who aligns with such leanings in identity.

The focus of this paper is on understanding theory-practice links in English language teacher education (ELTE) academic programmes (designed for pre-service teachers) through an investigation of the experiences and perceptions of student teachers enrolled on such programmes. The ultimate goal, is, of course, to use these understandings to improve such practices. Teacher education programmes attempt to create a range of opportunities, within given limitations, for student teachers to engage with practice either directly or indirectly. Dewey's initial conceptualisations of practice (Dewey, 1904) distinguish between a 'laboratory' perspective, where the aim is for teachers to develop

¹ This paper is part of a special issue (2025, 50-51) entitled: In honour of Carol A. Chapelle's contributions to language assessment and learning (edited by Christine Coombe, Tony Clark, and Hassan Mohebbi).

theoretical understandings about the subject matter and associated educational principles, and a more apprenticeship orientation, where the aim is to learn the tools of the profession, so to speak, often through direct experience in the classroom. Generally, the laboratory approach sees practice taking place in a relatively controlled context, often through simulations or scaffolded experiences during teacher education programmes where the reality and risk associated with real teaching are removed to an extent. This provides novice teachers with the time and space to develop their understandings without the pressure of the real classroom, which is often overwhelming for them in the first instance. And even as they move closer to real classroom-based experiences, student teachers are often shielded by teacher educators or the regular classroom teacher through their presence and support, and their position of responsibility and authority. In the laboratory, or teacher education context, there are often opportunities for what have been framed as 'pedagogies of practice' (Grossman et al., 2009, pp2064-2091). These have been delimited in three ways, as follows:

- Representations of practice, including the study of practice through, for example, direct observation or professional videos, the examination of written artefacts from students or teachers in the form of written assignments or lesson plans.
- Decompositions of practice, means facilitating students in breaking down practice into its constituent elements to help understanding and later enactment.
- Approximating practice, involves simulating practice through activities such as role-plays, or enacting practice with the support of a qualified team teacher.

Our aim in the small-scale study reported in this paper, was to survey student teachers' experiences and perceptions of a range of pedagogies of practice in both the Irish and Norwegian context (for a more nuanced account of approximations of practice as well as plans and intentions for continuous professional development, based on data from the same cohorts, see Farr & Karlsen, 2025). The underlying reason for selecting these two contexts, apart from opportunity and access to participants, was that although they share some similarities in terms of the integration of practice opportunities, they also differ in a number of ways, such as, one is at undergraduate level (Norway) and the other at postgraduate, one has a more heterogeneous constituent student grouping (Norway), and one provides practice in the actual future teaching contexts that the student teachers aim to work in (Norway). We were keen to discern if these variables seemed to impact student teacher perceptions and experiences in any way. After providing an account of relevant issues and evidence from similar studies in the literature, we lay out our methodology and materials, before a discussion of the findings and practical implications.

Theoretical Framings and Previous Empirical Accounts

An opportunity to practise is only as useful as the learnings student teachers take from it to inform the next opportunity to practise. This process of learning is often not automatic, or subconscious, and requires, or at least is strongly aided by, a process of reflection in what has become known as reflective practice (RP) (Dewey, 1933, Farrell, 2012). RP has been the backbone of the professional development components of teacher education

programmes for many years, implementing in practice the theoretical positions first espoused by Dewey almost a century ago. Dewey argued that reflective thinking involves a deliberate and systematic approach to problem-solving, which contrasts with routine thinking that relies on habit. He believed that reflective practice fosters deeper understanding and continuous learning. His model of reflection involves three key stages: experience, reflection, and action (for a summary of other frameworks see Farr & Farrell, 2023, Chapter 2). First, one undergoes an experience, in the case of practice, a planned experience. Second, reflective thinking is triggered, where individuals analyse the experience, question underlying assumptions, and consider the consequences. Finally, this reflection informs future actions, leading to informed decision-making and improved (teaching) practices. Dewey stressed that reflection should be an active, persistent, and careful consideration of beliefs and practices based on supporting evidence (see Mann & Walsh, 2017 and Walsh & Mann, 2015 for an account of the importance of evidence in RP). This process, according to Dewey, is essential for professional development, as it encourages continuous learning and adaptation. Overall, his ideas on reflective practice highlight the importance of thoughtful analysis and the willingness to learn from experiences, which are vital for effective teaching and professional growth. His work remains influential, shaping contemporary approaches to education and reflective practice, and has been the foundation of more contemporary discussions and practical advice in the literature (for example, Copland & Mann, 2010, Farrell, 2016, Farrell, 2021). Although reflective practice is often an individual endeavour, it has also been shown to be both effective (for a systematic account of research studies on RP see Farrell, 2017) and worthwhile in a more holistic way when conducted collaboratively in groups, with some showing a preference for peer sharing (Kharlay et al., 2022; Nguyen & Ngo, 2017), and sharing online through social media such as blogs and discussion fora (Farr & Riordan, 2012, Killeavy & Moloney, 2010, Riordan, 2018, Stiler & Philleo, 2003). This collaborative approach is just one of the dimensions that we explore in the study detailed in this paper.

Having explored the process of RP as a primary conduit for teacher development, we now turn to what other studies have found in relation to students' perspectives on the practice components of their teacher education programmes, drawing on the wider educational literature as well as that from ELTE. For students undertaking an MA similar to those reported on in this paper, we know from previous findings that student teachers both value and favour increased opportunities for practice-oriented curriculum components and experiences (Papageorgiou et al., 2018), and often feel that they do not have access to ample exposure as part of their programmes of study (Taskin, 2006). On the other hand, there is a widespread acknowledgement of the complexities and challenges associated with the implementation of practice from an institutional perspective, which is even more pronounced in some parts of the world than others, for example, in remote parts of Africa. Most studies highlight that while student teachers value and appreciate practice opportunities, they all find them challenging and often feel vulnerable during

placements, in particular (Caires et al., 2021). Assessment is generally welcome by students, although there is a caveat that this needs to be fair and justified (Chireshe & Chireshe, 2010). Strong and legitimate arguments have also been made for a continuum in teacher preparation practice from the initial induction of teachers in teacher education programmes right through to initial support as early career teachers before they reach more independent status (Farrell, 2021, Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Most of the studies reviewed so far in this section have gathered student teachers' perceptions and/or experiences in relation to actual classroom practice, often conducted in block placements in schools, rather than on perceptions of pedagogies of practice, implemented in teacher education programmes (with some notable exceptions, often from maths education, for example, Estapa et al., 2018, Kavanagh et al., 2020, Kazemi et al., 2016). Indeed, no such studies were found for ELTE and pedagogies of practice. This study aims to help fill that gap.

Methods and Materials

Participants

This study recruited master's level students from an Irish and a Norwegian university to investigate their experiences with various pedagogies of practice, which included different simplifications and representations of practice as well as practicum in real classrooms. The study totalled 26 participants in all, and the data were collected through a questionnaire, which we will return to in the next section. Both cohorts, henceforth the Irish cohort and Norwegian cohort, were enrolled in the first year of their respective master's programmes. In Ireland, 8 students were recruited from a one-year TESOL master's programme. Despite the small size, this group had a quite heterogeneous profile, with backgrounds from Ireland (n=2), China (n=2), Belarus, Portugal, Spain, and Russia. The participants in Norway were recruited from three integrated master's programmes of teacher education (n=15) and a two-year master's programme in teaching language and culture with a specialisation in English (n=3). More detailed descriptions of these programmes are presented below. The Norway cohort was more homogenous in terms of country of origin, including Norway (n=15), Turkey, Syria, and Angola.

The two cohorts differed in terms of age range and teaching experience. As shown in Table 1, the students in Norway were younger overall than the students in Ireland, likely because the majority of the former group was doing an integrated master's degree as part of their initial teacher education. There were also differences in terms of previous teaching experience. Only three of the students in Ireland reported having taught in classrooms, detailing between three to five years of teaching experience at different levels. Meanwhile, eleven out of eighteen of the students in Norway had taught in the past, in addition to practicum. Their experiences ranged from teaching a few lessons as on-call substitute teachers to several years of teaching experience.

Table 1*Number of Participants and Age Distribution by Country of Study*

Country of Study	Number of Respondents	Age of Participants (Ranges in Years)			
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54
Norway	18	11	7		
Ireland	8		5	2	1
Total	26	11	12	2	1

Study Programmes in Norway and Ireland

The Norwegian cohort was recruited from four different study programs. Initial teacher education in Norway is a master's degree, where the first three years usually constitutes a bachelor's degree and the last two years are an integrated master's degree. Students choose a study programme based on what grades/levels they will be teaching in the future, including years 1-7 (primary school), 5-10 (primary and lower secondary school), and 8-13 (secondary school). Each academic year, the students have mandatory practicum placement in schools at the appropriate levels that is assessed as pass/fail by in-service teachers. This study's participation had between 60 and 95 days of practicum experience at the time of data collection. In addition to these three programs, there were students from a fourth master's programme, a two-year master's degree in the didactics of culture and language with a specialisation in English. This programme is not part of the integrated master's degrees, but it does require a bachelor's degree or comparable competence. These students do not have mandatory practicum during their master's programme, but they would have during their bachelor's degrees. Furthermore, all four master's programmes are organised as semester-long courses on discipline-specific topics, subject didactics, and teaching and learning oriented courses. Each semester of the fourth academic year is organised as five mandatory semesters on campus in addition to coursework such as reading and obligatory assignments. Their degree will culminate in a master's thesis of approximately 30,000 words the final semester of year 5.

The Irish cohort were recruited from a one-year MA in TESOL programme. All of the students already held a bachelor's degree, though not necessarily in a cognate discipline as the MA is designed to cater for pre-service teachers. The MA comprises three academic semesters with the final (summer) semester devoted to dissertation writing (15,000 words) or undertaking a block praxis period accompanied by a reflective portfolio. The students have free choice between these options and although the dissertation option was originally more popular, over the last few years approximately 60% of students opt for the praxis. In the first two semesters, students undertake a number of core courses in language awareness and description, pedagogy, and research methodology and also select from a range of elective modules, one of which is teaching practice. Those with no prior teaching experience are generally obliged to take at least one of the TP modules, although many often opt to take both. This module is fully supported by weekly tutorials where the teachers are assisted and directed in the preparation of their teaching

materials for the following week. They undertake 1-2 hours of teaching per week in the module from about week 4 of the semester, which moves from a peer-teaching component, to team teaching, to independent teaching and also provides an opportunity to do some online teaching. Some of the lessons are observed by a TP supervisor and are assessed on a pass/fail basis only rather than using percentages or grades, hence reducing the risk to students' academic performance.

Data Collection and Analysis Design

The data were collected through a questionnaire administered electronically to the students using Microsoft Forms (Microsoft 365, 2024) in April – May 2024. The students were also invited to take part in a follow-up interview but none availed of this opportunity. Since the sample is small, we used dichotomous, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions to obtain nominal and word-based data (as recommended by Cohen et al., 2018, p.476). The questions were on topics of representations and simplifications of practice, as well as their practicum experience, and informed by theory on pedagogies of practice (see Introduction). Specifically, the respondents were asked if they had the opportunity to examine learners' work, national, state, or local, curricula, textbooks or teaching materials, or videos of classroom teaching, if they had had the opportunity to observe real classroom practice, or if they had engaged in practicum in a real classroom context. We also inquired about whether they completed any reflective tasks or activities linked to the respective categories, whether the representations or simplifications of practice were completed in groups/pairs or individually, whether they were assessed on the reflective task, as well as their perception of the activity's usefulness in preparing them for their future profession as teachers. Additionally, open-ended questions with freely worded answers were included to uncover students' additional practices, their comments on preferences, and further comments. To reduce ambiguity, we added descriptions of simplifications of practice and practicum experience in the questionnaire and piloted the questionnaire to test functionality and comprehensibility.

Coding and analysis followed the thematic categories outlined in the previous section and were predominantly theory driven. The open-ended questions allowed for data-driven coding of the word-based data as well. Given our small sample, any generalisation is out of the question. However, we sought to provide thick descriptions of the participants' contexts, and we anchored our findings in a theoretical foundation and previous research to ensure transparency and potential transferability. We also plan to build on our dataset through the collection of data over a longer period and from a variety of locations internationally in the coming years (see the conclusion below for further details).

Ethical Considerations and Limitations

All respondents received detailed information about the study before providing informed consent. The respondents were assured that they would remain anonymous in the data and subsequent publications. Participation was voluntary and participants were free to opt out at any time without any negative consequences. Although the students were in

high-stakes situations, we assured them that declining to participate would have no negative consequences. Besides, the questionnaire did not contain any personal or controversial topics. The Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (SIKT) assessed and approved our data handling plan for the side of the research conducted in Norway. The Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the Irish university provided ethical approval for the research conducted in the Irish context.

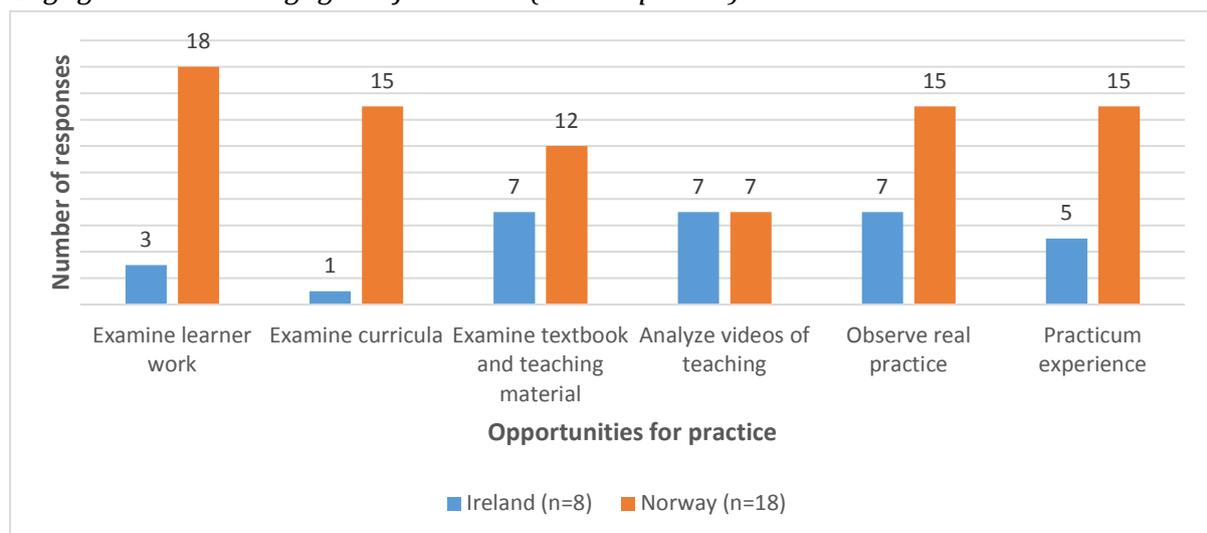
Findings

The findings of our study are presented in the following section. The section is divided into subsections that look reported opportunities of practice, the organisation and activities of these opportunities, and the perceived usefulness of the different activities in preparing the student teacher for their future teacher jobs. All aggregate data are reported as raw frequencies for the sake of transparency.

Pedagogies of Practice: Opportunities for Engagement

In the questionnaire, student teachers were asked what opportunities for practice-related activities or tasks they had engaged in during their studies. These activities or tasks included (1) examining learners' work, for example written work, (2) examining state, national or local curricula, (3) examining or using published textbooks or other teaching materials designed for use in the English language classroom, (4) analysing videos of classroom teaching, (5) observing real classroom practice, and (6) engaging in teaching practice in real contexts. Figure 1 shows the number of respondents who had engaged in each of these categories for each cohort. Keep in mind the discrepancy of total respondents between the cohorts.

Figure 1
Engagement in Pedagogies of Practice (Yes Responses)



The majority of the Norwegian cohort has had most of the listed opportunities, with the exception of analysing videos of classroom teaching, which less than half had done. They also had a high degree of real-classroom interaction either through observation of real practice or practicum placement in schools. Note that the three Norwegian students doing the master's degree in the didactics of language and culture would not have practicum during their current programme but would have had practicum during their initial teacher education. Since the Norwegian cohort is likely to teach in Norwegian schools, it is unsurprising that most of them had examined national curricula. Slightly fewer (relatively) of the Irish cohort had less experience with practicum, examining learners work or examining curricular, having relied more on observation of practice, analysis of videos of teaching, and examining teaching materials. Thus, their training is less hands-on in terms of real classroom practice and arguably less contextualised in the Irish education system, which is less important given that the vast majority of Irish students from this programme will travel abroad to teach after graduation while all of the international students will return home to teach or to some other international location. Lastly, the respondents were asked if they had taken part in any other representations or simplifications of practice. Only one student, from the Irish cohort, gave a response, listing, "short YouTube clips of [teaching practice] in [the teaching practice] module during class time, looking at specific methods/techniques the teacher uses to teach a specific grammar point/skill/vocab. [I] got to practise dialogic reflection with peers".

Pedagogies of Practice: Tasks and Assessment

The extent to which the opportunities for the various pedagogies of practice were accompanied by reflective tasks and assessed varied greatly, as shown in Tables 2 and 3. For the Norwegian cohort, most of the students tended to have performed reflective tasks while examining learners' work, observing real classroom practice, or during practicum, and to a lesser degree for the other categories. However, it seemed rare that there were no reflective tasks at all. The same can be said of the Irish cohort, where seven out of eight stated that reflective tasks had always been undertaken when analysing videos of real classroom practice.

For the Norwegian cohort, the practicum and the examination of learners' work and curricula tended to be assessed. Although, it should be noted that the response rate is relatively low and inconsistent compared to the number of positive answers to the questions of reflective tasks. The same can be said of the Irish cohort, although it is hard to discern any coherent patterns in this small dataset.

Table 2*Task-Accompaniment and Assessment: The Norwegian Cohort (n=18)*

Opportunities for Practice	Reflective Tasks			Assessed	
	<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Examine learners' work	11	5	2	6	1
Examine curricula	4	11	-	9	-
Examine textbooks or teaching materials	5	7	-	3	1
Analyse videos of classroom teaching	4	3	-	2	1
Observe real classroom practice	10	4	1	2	2
Practicum	12	3	-	6	-

Table 3*Task-Accompaniment and Assessment: The Irish Cohort (n=8)*

Opportunities for practice	Reflective Tasks & Activities			Assessed	
	<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Examine learners' work	-	3	1	-	3
Examine curricula	-	1	-	-	1
Examine textbooks or teaching materials	2	5	-	2	2
Analyse videos of classroom teaching	7	-	-	2	1
Observe real classroom practice	4	3	-	2	2
Practicum	5	-	-	2	-

Beyond reflective tasks and assessment, we wanted to get a picture of how these activities were organised in terms of group constellations (see Table 4). The Norwegian cohort had significant experience with both groupwork and individual work across the different categories, although groupwork was more common for all categories save practicum, where the organisation of the experiences was balanced. Since the response rates for the categories combined exceed the total number of respondents in some cases, it suggests that several of the activities had included both individual and group/pair work. For the Irish cohort, group/pair work was performed predominantly while doing reflective tasks connected to examining textbooks and teaching materials, while the reflective tasks associated with the analysis of videos of classroom teaching and the observation of real classroom practice were done individually.

Table 4*Individual, Group and Pair Work for Activities for Both Irish and Norwegian Cohorts*

Opportunities for Practice	Organisation of Activities/ Tasks for the Irish Cohort		Organisation of Activities/Tasks for the Norwegian Cohort	
	Pair/Groups	Individually	Pair/Groups	Individually
	Examine learners' work	2	1	16
Examine curricula	-	-	13	6
Examine textbooks or teaching materials	6	1	12	7
Analyse videos of classroom teaching	2	6	6	4
Observe real classroom practice	2	6	15	8
Practicum	2	2	11	11

Pedagogies of Practice: Perceived Usefulness and Preferences

Table 5 shows the distributions of responses from each cohort to the question of perceived usefulness of the different representations and simplifications of practice, as well as real-classroom practicum placement in the overall data across respondents. Note that, since many of the respondents reported that they had not engaged in certain activities, they were not asked to rate the usefulness of said activities. The respondents rated the usefulness on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest value and 5 is the highest.

Table 5
Perceived Usefulness of the Pedagogies of Practice

Items	Ireland-Based Students' Responses (N=8)					Norway-Based Students' Responses (N=18)					
	Degree of Usefulness	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Examine learners' work	-	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	2	9	7
Examine curricula	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	5	7	2
Examine textbooks or teaching materials	-	-	1	2	4	-	-	5	4	3	-
Analyse videos of classroom teaching	-	-	1	1	5	-	1	2	3	1	-
Observe real classroom practice	-	-	-	2	5	-	-	1	5	9	-
Practicum	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	6	9	-

There are several similarities between the two cohorts. Neither group gave any of the representations or simplifications of practice the lowest score of 1. For both groups, observed and hand-on classroom-based practice were rated highest by far by the most respondents. The Irish cohort rated examining textbooks and analysing videos of classroom teaching higher than the Norwegian cohort, while the Norwegian cohort found analysing video as somewhat less useful than their counterpart. Notably, the Norwegian cohort rated the usefulness of examining learners' work high as well, which suggests that they like more hands-on engagement with real learner data and real teaching contexts. That said, the Norwegian cohort tended to rate all simplifications and representations of practice on the medial-to-high end of the scale.

Open-Ended Comments

Turning to the typed responses to open-ended questions, the patterns of preferences become more salient. When asked which of the outlined pedagogies of practice the students liked in particular, seven respondents from the Norwegian cohort chose to highlight their practicum experience. One student wrote, "I really like teaching practice, since we get the feel of how it is to be a teacher and having your own class. We learn a lot during those weeks and get a lot of experience in teaching." This student teacher clearly emphasises the wealth of experience and independence provided by teaching practicum. Similarly, another student expressed that "being handed the class for myself. I liked this because you get a feeling of how a day in a teacher's life is." Additionally, four other respondents stressed that experience from "real life practice" was preferable. Other

advantages associated with the practicum were how the student would get direct feedback on their teaching practice or, as yet another student wrote, the practicum offers the opportunity to try out teaching for oneself while supervised by experienced teachers. These responses suggest that practicum experiences are favoured because they provide multifaceted and supported experiences from authentic contexts that give a holistic picture of the profession. Furthermore, two students highlighted the assessment of students' work as positive because it provided the opportunity to practise assessment skills. Lastly, one student pointed to being given concrete tasks that were associated with competence aims from the curriculum as particularly inspirational for his/her own teaching.

Of the students in Norway, only four mentioned activities or task they disliked. One point of criticism was levelled against the experienced bureaucracy the student had met from school administrators, which is less relevant to this chapter. The other three, however, criticised the use of roleplays and simulations. One respondent said that the roleplays they had had as part of their teacher training was 'dreadful' and 'a waste of time', as they had not learned anything related to being a teacher. The respondent did, however, acknowledge that their experience with VR-simulation had been 'sort of useful'. Conversely, another student described simulations as being too unrealistic. Lastly, a student stated, "there is not one activity that I particularly dislike, but if I have to choose one that would be role play because I prefer to be in schools and practice my teaching skills rather than playing out a scenario in the classroom that we might encounter in the future" (sic). It would appear the Norwegian cohort, who has had systematic and frequent access to real classroom experience through practicum, are more critical to approximations of practice that attempt to recreate classroom practice. Arguably, authenticity is important to them, and the next best thing is not quite good enough in comparison.

Conversely, of the Irish cohort, only one respondent listed teaching practice as the activity they liked the most. Three respondents pointed to classroom observation as particularly useful. One stated, "Classroom observation. That's really useful. I hope there can be more group analysis together." The opportunity to reflect and analyse their own practices was a useful experience highlighted by four respondents in their freely worded answers. Another respondent concisely wrote,

"I like all the activities: synchronous and asynchronous teacher observation, observation of own TP [teacher practice], and written and dialogical reflections. It is the combination of all of the above that makes this programme so solid, because it allows the learner teacher to compare and contrast, critically analyse and evaluate own TP and that of the experienced teachers, therefore making a conscious link to future implications that allows the learner teacher to grow as a professional."

This quote highlights the importance of approaching pedagogies of practice from different angles, and of having reflective practices tying it all back to one's own teaching practice. There was only one respondent from the Irish cohort who expressed a negative opinion, stating that s/he did not get much out of observing teachers because "[...] I didn't feel like they used any techniques that I wasn't already aware of". There was also one respondent who would have liked to examine local and national curricula more to "see the bigger picture".

In summary, the Norwegian cohort preferred more hands-on practicum experience, while members of the Irish cohort saw the value in a wide array of approaches to practice training, in other words a wider variety of pedagogies of practice. One example was the Irish cohort's positive view of analysing videos of real classroom teaching. Their Norwegian counterparts, however, appear to have had more systematic practicum placements where they were required to teach in an authentic context, and they also much preferred these experiences. Looking at the data overall, one can draw a preliminary conclusion that more practised teachers, or rather, teachers with authentic classroom experiences, are less satisfied with simplifications and representations of practice that are less hands-on. This is not just a feature of the Norwegian system, it would seem, as the more experienced teacher student from the Irish cohort expressed similar sentiments. However, given the caveats, this is an emerging theme to be explored with a larger dataset in the future.

Discussion

While we fully acknowledge the limitations of this small-scale study of student teachers' perspectives of pedagogies of practice from two different geographical locations and in two different programmatic structures, the results are somewhat reassuring and encouraging from a teacher education perspective. It seems that programmes in these two contexts make every effort to link theory with practice in the experiences they offer their student teachers. They do this through the integration of a wide variety of pedagogies of practice including representations of practice, and accompanying decompositions through tasks (e.g. observations), as well as approximations of practice such as role-plays and real classroom practice. Not only does this provide variety for student teachers, it also strongly suggests an incremental and fully scaffolded approach to teacher development until they reach more independent practitioner or qualified teacher status, as advocated by Farrell (2021) and others. This is also in keeping with a move from Dewey's (1904) laboratory approach to a more apprenticeship model over a period of time. Interestingly, these are not always realised in linear ways on the relative programmes, but are iterative and often parallel processes, allowing for even strong theory-practice relevance. Nonetheless, the laboratory approach seems to generally precede the apprentice approach. Even more interesting is the fact that the students who move through the process to teaching more independently, see greatest value in this experience and less in the representations and decompositions, without perhaps

realising that the latter would probably not have been as effective and valuable without the former.

Social-constructivism (Golombek & Johnson, 2019, Vygotsky, 1978) would seem to be alive and well in the pedagogies of practice in such programmes, with room for individual and group task engagement for individual components. This not only supports the learning process through collective and peer-based learning, it is also part of the really important socialisation process (Freeman, 2001) of becoming a fully-fledged member of the profession as a student teacher moves from peripheral to full membership of this community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Through such social engagements with peers and more experienced others, the student teachers help to develop their own teacher identities (Barkhuizen, 2017, Morton & Gray, 2018) and independence in preparation for the professional world. We suggest that this is also true of the fact that many of the pedagogies of practice are assessed, with opportunities for feedback, providing reflective practice opportunities with the aid of more expert pedagogues helping the student teachers to reach a level beyond what they might have reached independently, in other words, to develop within the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). Despite this, however, the real classroom, whether through observations or personal practice opportunities holds the highest value for student teachers in both contexts, which is strongly in line with previous findings (Baecher, 2012, Oudah & Altalhab, 2018, Papageorgiou et al., 2018).

Conclusion

Implications for Teacher Education

We hear Carol Chapelle's words about the importance of professional knowledge ring in our ears as we draw this paper to a close, as they compel us to share our thoughts on professional practice implications. With that, we would like to conclude this paper with three practical recommendations for teacher educators, and teacher education programmes, based on the findings of our study, and others which have come before.

1. The three realisations of pedagogies of practice combine in iterative and complementary ways for learner teachers and their professional development. To maintain and appreciate the value of all, we need to perhaps be more explicit with students about the complementary nature of the three pedagogies and how we see them working in both iterative and incremental ways for a variety of holistic developmental purposes.
2. The inclusion of a practicum in teacher education programmes, particularly short programmes, is both logistically and resourcefully challenging. It is often a hard-fought battle with university administrators and managers to even maintain the exposure to practicum opportunities that have existed in the past. School partnerships take time and effort to develop and expand. However, they are extremely valuable to student teachers and in that reward the effort is more than

justified. It behoves us a profession to maintain strong practice-oriented dimensions.

Each educational context will have particular nuances in the ways in which pedagogies of practice are implemented, for example, examining state curricula in the Norwegian context, as is most relevant for the future trajectory of the student teachers on these programmes, in other words, horses for courses. This is important but a word of caution should also perhaps be mentioned, lest we become too inward focussed in the integration of various representations and decompositions in particular. There is also merit to be had in some diversity of exposure to other contexts from which we might also benefit in terms of comparative learnings.

ORCID

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3800-1837>

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0048-8793>

Publisher's Note

The claims, arguments, and counter-arguments made in this article are exclusively those of the contributing authors. Hence, they do not necessarily represent the viewpoints of the authors' affiliated institutions, or EUROKD as the publisher, the editors and the reviewers of the article.

Acknowledgements

Not applicable.

Funding

Not applicable.

CRedit Authorship Contribution Statement

Fiona Farr: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Investigation, Writing (Original, Review and Editing), Formal Analysis

Petter H. Karlsen: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Investigation, Writing (Original), Formal Analysis, Visualization

Generative AI Use Disclosure Statement

Generative AI was not used in this research nor in the writing of this paper.

Ethics Declarations

World Medical Association (WMA) Declaration of Helsinki–Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Participants

Full adherence to the World Medical Association (WMA) Declaration of Helsinki was maintained throughout this research.

Competing Interests

None.

Data Availability

Data is not publicly available as ethical permission was not granted for this to happen.

References

- Baecher, L. (2012). Feedback from the field: What novice preK-12 teachers want to tell TESOL teacher educators. *TESOL Quarterly*, 46, 578-588. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.43>
- Barkhuizen, G. (2017). Language teacher identity research: An introduction. In G. Barkhuizen (Ed.), *Reflections on language teacher identity research* (pp. 1-11). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315643465-5>
- Blin, F., & Hubbard, P. (2025). Carol Chapelle and technology for language learning: Over forty years of leading the way. *Language Teaching Research Quarterly*, 50, 7-17. <https://doi.org/10.32038/ltrq.2025.50.02>
- Caires, S., Almeida, L., & Vieira, D. (2012). Becoming a teacher: Student teachers' experiences and perceptions about teaching practice. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(2), 163-178. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2011.643395>
- Chapelle, C. (2007). Pedagogical implications in TESOL Quarterly? Yes, please! *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(2), 404-406. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1545-7249.2007.tb00068.x>
- Chireshe, R., & Chireshe, E. (2010). Student teachers' perceptions towards teaching practice assessment. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 24(4), 511-524.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Cook, G. (2015). Birds out of dinosaurs: the death and life of applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 36(4), 425-433. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amv038>
- Copland, F., & Mann, S. (2010). Dialogic talk in the post-observation conference: An investment for reflection. In G. Park, H. P. Widodo, & A. Cirocki (Eds.), *Observation of teaching: Bridging theory and practice through research on teaching* (pp. 175-191). LINCOM.
- Dewey, J. (1904). The relation of theory to practice in education. *Teachers College Record*, 5(6), 9-30. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9798855801415-014>
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process (revised edition)*. D.C. Heath. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/1415632>
- Estapa, A. T., Amador, J., Kosko, K. W., Weston, T., de Araujo, Z., & Aming-Attai, R. (2018). Preservice teachers' articulated noticing through pedagogies of practice. *Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education*, 21, 387-415. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s10857-017-9367-1>
- Farr, F. (2010). *The discourse of teaching practice feedback. An investigation of spoken and written modes*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203846742>
- Farr, F., & Farrell, A. (2023). *The reflective cycle of the teaching practicum*. Equinox.
- Farr, F., & Karlsen, P. H. (2025). From practice to practice: Reflective practice in language teacher education as a steppingstone to professional practice and CPD. *Language Learning Journal*, 1-16. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2025.2585866>
- Farr, F., & Riordan, E. (2012). Students' engagement in reflective tasks: An investigation of interactive and non-interactive discourse corpora. *Classroom Discourse*, 3(2), 126-143. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/19463014.2012.716622>
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2012). Reflecting on reflective practice: (re)visiting Dewey and Schön. *TESOL Journal*, 3(1), 7-16. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.10>
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2016). *Reflective practice for novice language teachers: From trainee to teacher*. Equinox.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2017). *Research on reflective practice in TESOL*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315206332>
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2021). *TESOL teacher education. A reflective approach*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001). From preparation to practice: Designing a continuum to strengthen and sustain teaching. *Teachers College Record*, 103(6), 1013-1055. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/016146810110300601>
- Freeman, D. (2001). Second language teacher education. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 72-79). Cambridge University Press.

- Ghousseini, H., & Herbst, P. (2016). Pedagogies of practice and opportunities to learn about classroom mathematics discussions. *Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education*, 19, 79-103. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s10857-014-9296-1>
- Golombek, P. R., & Johnson, K. E. (2019). Materialising a Vygotskyian-inspired language teacher education pedagogy. In S. Walsh & S. Mann (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of English language teacher education* (pp. 25-37). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315659824-4>
- Grossman, P., Compton, C., Igra, D., Ronfeldt, M., Shahan, E., & Williamson, P. (2009). Teaching practice: A cross-professional perspective. *Teachers College Record*, 111, 2055-2100. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/016146810911100905>
- Kavanagh, S. S., Metz, M., Hauser, M., Fogo, B., Taylor, M. W., & Carlson, J. (2020). Practicing responsiveness: Using approximations of teaching to develop teachers' responsiveness to students' ideas. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 71(1), 94-107. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487119841884>
- Kazemi, E., Ghousseini, H., Cunard, A., & Turrou, A. C. (2016). Getting inside rehearsals: Insights from teacher educators to support work on complex practice. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 67(1), 18-31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487115615191>
- Kharlay, O., Wei, W., & Philips, J. (2022). How do I teach? Exploring knowledge of reflective practice among in-service EFL teachers in Ukraine. *Teachers and Teaching*, 28(2), 188-205. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2022.2062709>
- Killeavy, M., & Moloney, A. (2010). Reflection in a social space: Can blogging support reflective practice for beginning teachers? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(4), 1070-1076. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.11.002>
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning. Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/2804509>
- Mann, S., & Walsh, S. (2017). *Reflective practice in English language teaching. Research-based principles and practices*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315733395>
- Morton, T., & Gray, J. (2018). *Social interaction and English language teacher identity*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Nguyen, H. T. M., & Ngo, N. T. H. (2017). Learning to reflect through peer mentoring in a TESOL practicum. *ELT Journal*, 72(2), 187-198. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccx053>
- Oudah, F., & Altalhab, S. (2018). Saudi EFL teaching training programmes: Teachers' perceptions and needs. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 8(11), 1407-1414. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0811.04>
- Papageorgiou, I., Copland, F., Viana, V., Bowker, D., & Moran, E. (2018). Teaching practice in UK ELT master's programmes. *ELT Journal*, 73(2), 154-165. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccy050>
- Riordan, E. (2018). *TESOL student teacher discourse. A corpus-based analysis of online and face-to-face interactions*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315682297>
- Selinker, L., & Han, Z. (2001). Fossilization: Moving the concept into empirical longitudinal study. In C. Elder, A. Brown, E. Grove, K. Hill, N. Iwashita, T. Lumley, T. McNamara, & K. O'Loughlin (Eds.), *Studies in language testing: Experimenting with uncertainty* (pp. 276-291). Cambridge University Press.
- Stiler, G. M., & Pilleo, T. (2003). Blogging and blogspots: An alternative format for encouraging reflective practice among preservice teachers. *Education*, 123(4), 789-798.
- Taskin, C. S. (2006). Student teachers in the classroom: their perceptions of teaching practice. *Educational Studies*, 32(4), 387-398. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/03055690600948091>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society. The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Walsh, S., & Mann, S. (2015). Doing reflective practice: a data-led way forward. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 69(4), 351-362. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccv018>