



FOSTERING STUDENT TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY THROUGH VICARIOUS EXPERIENCES

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Abstract

Development of teachers' professional identity starts during teacher education. Vicarious experiences are sources of self-efficacy beliefs while teaching self-efficacy is one of the indicators for the teachers' sense of professional identity. This article explores how vicarious experiences during teaching practice, specifically observation of mentor teachers' modelling practices shape student teachers' teaching self-efficacy and professional identity. The data draws on an inductive thematic analysis of oral narrative reflections, that were generated through semi-structured interviews with 15 student teachers and 10 elementary school mentor teachers. Findings suggest that through mentor teachers' modelling practices of effective inclusion techniques, behavior modification techniques, and teacher qualities (values), student teachers can increase their teaching self-efficacy beliefs. Findings identified four elements in terms of how modelling practices and self-efficacy development are related to the construction of student teachers' professional identity, as the habit of reflective behavior, sense of "self" as a future teacher, adaption to a work environment, and knowledge about professional responsibilities of teachers.

Keywords: professional identity; student teacher; mentor teacher; self-efficacy; vicarious experiences

Introduction

The role of higher education programs is preparing students to become well-qualified teachers therefore should be intended to support student teachers'

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acquisition of professional knowledge for teaching. Teacher knowledge has increasingly become a research area of considerable interest, also as a relevant outcome of initial teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The primary goal of the student teaching experiences is to provide the student teachers with the opportunity to apply effective teaching practices and behaviors under the guidance of experienced and qualified university and school mentors (Hudson, Skamp, & Brooks, 2005; Dombi & Kovács, 2015; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Gkolia, Dimitrios, & Koustelios, 2016). Mentors are important factors in determining a student teacher's future success as a classroom teacher. According to Darling-Hammond (2003), having positive feelings and thoughts of being a teacher depends on a good pre-service education. The quality of pre-service teacher education is central for enhancing an education system, and mentors' roles can assist to shape pre-service teachers' development within the school context (Hudson & Hudson, 2010). According to Sayeski & Paulsen (2012), teacher preparation programs should identify those practices of cooperating teachers that contribute to the quality of student teaching experiences, given the weight and importance educators place on the student teaching experience. Without modelling practices student teachers may not be able to visualize effective teaching, therefore role modelling provided by mentors is crucial to professional identity development and an untapped teaching strategy (Hudson, 2002; Hendelman & Byszewski, 2014).

Much recent research suggests the need for more information regarding how and in what ways student teacher's professional identity is shaped by the sources of self-efficacy, specifically through vicarious experiences (Menon, 2020; El-Abd & Chaaban, 2020; Steenekamp, Van der Merwe, & Mehmedova, 2018; Wagler, 2011). This study aims to add to the existing body of literature knowledge on the development of professional identity, the elements on how the vicarious experiences, particularly mentor teachers' modelling practices, influences the development of student teachers' self-efficacy in teaching, in turn, their professional identity.

Literature review

The pre-service teachers require many opportunities to be exposed to the real setting of the school and the multi-faceted roles of the teacher (Chong, Ling, & Chuan, 2011; Bird & Hudson, 2015). Teacher training programs have received attention as researchers and practitioners attempt to understand how to best ensure

graduates are equipped to teach all learners and districts can reduce turnover rates (Ludwig, Kirshstein, & Sidana, 2010). The teacher education environment offers support to student teachers for developing a professional and university studies can make a difference as students make a transition from perceiving themselves and being students to teachers (Van Huizen, Van Oers, & Wubbels, 2005; Chong, 2011; Kelchtermans, 2009). Hong (2010) see the teacher professional identity as well as its development as an ongoing process of clarifying beliefs about teaching and learning, and to establish a discrete sense of what one's roles and purposes are, and what one values as a professional teacher. The personal aspect of identity encompasses individual teacher's personal views, attitudes and beliefs about teaching but also perceptions of themselves as teachers based on their interpretations of the context in which they function and their interaction with this context that influences teacher's decisions about teaching (Kelchtermans, 2009; Carlone & Johnson, 2007; Helms, 1998). Self-support and community support activities were found to facilitate teacher educators' transition and enhance their identity development (Izadinia, 2014).

Chin et al. (2020) examined existing studies related to the development of professional identity in pre-employment training of student interns. This resulted in the synthesis of five promising components that contribute to professional identity development: reflection, mentoring, professional socialisation, self-efficacy and goal orientation, and critical thinking. Richter, Brunner, & Richter (2021) identified four components that have emerged from a variety of studies as manifestations of professional identity in teacher educators: task perception, self-efficacy, job satisfaction (or failure) and personal system of beliefs on teaching. Self-efficacy is one of the indicators for the teachers' sense of professional identity (Canrinus et al., 2011; Hanna et al., 2019; Menon, 2020; Settlage et al., 2009; Chin et al., 2020). Mentoring and practicum experiences can enhance pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, if students are well supported to experience mastery success, receive appropriate verbal persuasion, have role models who offer to affirm vicarious experience, and are guided to make sense of their physiological and affective states (Bandura, 1982, 1997; Pajares, 2002; Cantrell, 2003; Berg & Smith, 2018; Gunning & Mensah, 2011; Palmer, 2006; Bautista, 2011). The teaching practicum offers many opportunities for vicarious experiences. Within the context of teacher efficacy, a vicarious experience refers to observing another individual teaching. In the context of this study, it refers to the student teacher's school placement (teaching practicum). By observing mentor teachers modelling

practices as “sources of aspiration, competencies and motivation” (Bandura, 1997, p. 169), student teachers can learn from different situations that demonstrate and transfer competencies. The provision of highly prepared and effective mentors contributes to the success of student teachers during this high-stakes period of professional development (Bird & Hudson, 2015).

Modelling is one of five key factors when considering effective mentorship and incorporates eight attributes and practices: enthusiasm, effective teaching, rapport with students, hands-on lessons, well-designed lessons, classroom management, and syllabus language (Hudson, 2004). According to Moir (2009), effective mentors model the student teachers teaching practices as tangible evidence of what works and what may not work. The lack of self-confidence and classroom management skills can prevent student teachers' initiative to teach more often under the supervision of mentor teachers (Kurti & Saqipi, 2020). The quality of modelling and the opportunities for student teachers to observe and engage in practices appear key to successful pedagogical development, and can assist student teachers to enact such pedagogy themselves (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Bird & Hudson, 2015). Even the vicarious experiences can generate efficacy beliefs in observers by attaining their success through persistence and effort, efficacy beliefs induced solely by observation and modelling of others tend to be weaker and more susceptible to change (Bandura, 1977).

Objective

The theoretical framework of this article leads into the conceptual framework which is presented in Figure 1. Within this theoretical framework of self-efficacy and professional identity, the aforementioned studies empirically showed that the quality of mentor teachers' modelling practices may be linked to student teachers' perceptions on their self-efficacy beliefs and development of professional identity. But, these studies have some shortcomings. There is a lack of knowledge about how specific mentor teachers' modelling practices are related to components of student teachers' professional identity development.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was two-fold. Firstly, this study investigated the impact of vicarious experiences, specifically mentors modelling practices on student teachers' teaching self-efficacy beliefs. Second, this study investigated how student teachers teaching self-efficacy beliefs perceived through vicarious experiences, contribute to constructing their professional identity.

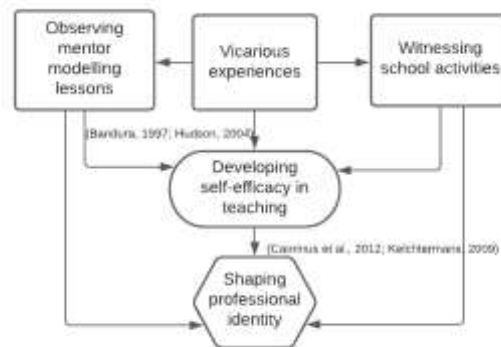


Figure 1. Conceptual framework adapted from Bandura, 1997; Hudson 2004; Canrinus et al., 2012; Keltchermans, 2009

More specifically, the present study addressed the following research questions: 1) *What mentoring practices mentor teachers provided to student teachers in terms of modelling to enhance student teacher's self-efficacy in teaching?* 2) *How can student teachers' self-efficacy in teaching contribute to constructing their professional identity?*

This study aims to add to the existing literature on teaching self-efficacy and professional identity, findings on how student teachers and mentor teachers perceive the impact of mentor teachers modelling practices during pedagogical practice on student teachers' self-efficacy and the construction of professional identity. Also, this study aims to identify which modelling activities were found by student teachers as more useful to learn different types of activities for student engagement and classroom management, in turn, enhance their self-efficacy in teaching.

Method

Participants

The participants consisted of fifteen (15) third and four-year student teachers from the Primary Education Program at the University of Prishtina's Faculty of Education and ten (10) mentor teachers from five public schools at the Municipality of Prishtina. Seven student teachers were in the 3rd year of study, while eight students at the 4th year of study. Of these, thirteen (13) students were

female and two (2) were male, aged 22-26 years old ($M=23.0$, $SD=1.22$). From ten (10) mentor teachers, most of them were female (8), two (2) male, aged 27-53 years old ($M=37.2$, $SD=8.15$) with 5 to 18 years of teaching experience ($M=9.5$, $SD=4.52$).

Data collection instruments

This study employed qualitative methods for data collection in investigating the perceptions of the student teachers and mentor teachers on the influence of vicarious experiences, specifically teacher modelling, on student teachers' self-efficacy in teaching, in turn, construction of their professional identity. The researchers employed semi-structured in-depth interviews and open-ended questions According to Allen (2017), with qualitative studies that utilize open-ended questions, researchers can take a holistic and comprehensive look at the issues being studied. Furthermore, open-ended answers permit respondents to “provide more options and opinions, giving the data more diversity than would be possible with a closed-question or forced-choice survey measure” (Allen, 2017, p 4). The methods of collecting and storing information during the interview included note-taking and the use of audio equipment.

Sampling strategy

Participants are randomly selected and contacted via email/telephone. Individual interviews are assigned when it was convenient for participants. Initially, student teachers and mentors are informed directly face to face with the purpose of this study and to them is given the protocol of interview. Before starting the interviews, participants signed the sound recording agreement which informed them that the interview is confidential and will only be used for research issues with the guarantee that their identity will not be revealed in any circumstance. The interviews lasted between 20-30 minutes.

Research design

The data draws on an inductive thematic analysis of oral narrative reflections. Thematic analysis is a useful approach for summarizing key features of a large data set, as it forces the researcher to take a well-structured approach to handle data, helping to produce a clear and organized final report (King, 2004 *as cited in* Nowell et al., 2017). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data.

Procedure

The interviews were administered individually by a researcher. First, the whole recording was listened to before starting the transcription process. It's developed a more thorough understanding of data through having transcribed it. After the first draft was finished, the material was reader while listening again to the interviews. This process addressed the possible problems or inconsistencies as it's gone along.

Data analysis

A thematic analysis was utilized to identify patterns of themes in the interview data. During the reading of the material, patterns of responses are carefully coded and recorded. The analysis of data involved constant moving back and forward between the entire data set. After coding, codes are grouped into themes to be able to conclude the data. Themes are reviewed and redefined, and it's taken into consideration that data within themes should cohere together meaningfully. After the themes are named, for each it's conducted and written a detailed analysis. A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results and discussion

Themes derived from interviews with student teachers

Five themes emerged from the interviews with students teachers (*see* Table 1). Results show that mentor teachers can contribute to the development of student teachers' self-efficacy in teaching through modelling student engagement activities, behavior modification techniques and teacher qualities. Findings indicate that vicarious experiences through mentors' modelling are a promising strategy for constructing student teachers' professional identity. Also, lack of resources and conditions for modelling are identified as factors that affect the development of student teachers' self-efficacy and professional identity. Consistent with findings from literature (*see* Wilde & Hsu, 2019; Ashford, Edmunds, & French, 2010), this study found that vicarious experiences can significantly improve student teachers' self-efficacy if they, as the observer, have positive self-comparisons to the vicarious experience information. Furthermore, Ashford, Edmunds, and French (2010) found that inducing verbal persuasion while

providing vicarious experiences can improve student teachers self-efficacy, while Aydin, Demirdögen, and Tarkin (2012) found that vicarious experience was more relevant than verbal persuasion in teachers' routines and in the constitution of efficacy beliefs.

Table 1. Codes and themes derived from the thematic analysis of interview data's with student teachers

Codes	Themes
Managing high number of pupils through engaging them in activities Engagement of passive pupils Combine active and passive pupils in groups Inclusive strategies to engage pupils Special techniques to engage pupils with special needs	Acquisition of student engagement methods
Discussion with pupils about importance for classroom rules; Discussion about the importance of discipline in classroom; Individual meeting out of classroom with disruptive and noisy pupils. Incorporate daily routines to facilitate effective classroom management Punishing by denying the activities they like Usage of effective classroom management techniques Rewards for motivation	Modelling behavior modification techniques
Promotion of self-confidence Using active listening Kindness and empathy Enthusiasm Attitude Close relationship with pupils Caring for pupils needs Answering on each pupils 'question	Modelling teacher qualities (values)
Identity as teacher Feeling as teacher Reflective practitioner Feeling good in front of pupils Understanding responsibility being a teacher Building self-confidence Reflect on weaknesses Attitude Knowledge about profession	Constructing student teachers professional identity
Lack of time to discuss teaching approaches Poor usage of concretization tools Lack of modeling in all subjects Poor usage of different techniques for classroom management Large number of pupils per class/no assistant teacher	Lack of resources for modelling practices

Acquisition of student engagement methods

Results show that mentor teachers' engagement activities were mainly based on didactic principles to ensure active participation of pupils, acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities, to connect theory with practice but less are modelled activities for individualization of learning. Because most of the classes (included in this research) had pupils with special needs, and teachers didn't have assistants, student inclusion was quite challenging. Student teachers admit that mentor teachers were dealing with difficulties to work on the individualized method of teaching, therefore student teachers were engaged to help those with special needs based on the mentor's instructions. Some school mentors modelled specific techniques for engaging pupils with special needs which were used later by student teachers. "*Teacher was dealing with difficulties to devote time for pupils with special needs. To be devoted to them or to other 30 pupils in class?! (Student 11)... I noticed that pupils with special needs liked activities that were linked with daily life*" (Student 4).

According to student teachers, managing large classes through engaging them in activities was the technique that all school mentors used. If pupils started to talk after they finished the schoolwork, teachers engaged them in other activities. Student teachers explain that because of a large number of pupils in class, it was very hard to create workgroups, therefore mainly pupils worked individually or in pairs. School mentor's mostly combined the active pupils with those who were passive. "*Teacher prompt to respond more to those who have been more passive. This had more influence because they engaged with the teacher. The teacher asked questions all the time*" (Student 1) "*I also approached the pupils like her. I used her techniques, for example, how did she engage them*" (Student 5). These results need to be considered in light of developing an understanding of student teachers to create their "personal style" (see Hayer, 1997; Porter 2014; Mitchell, Hirn, & Lewis, 2017), to cope with the challenge of large classes.

Modelling behavior modification techniques

Student teachers admit that the biggest challenge during their last teaching practice was classroom management. They claimed that they felt more confident in classroom management when the mentor had modelled concrete behavior modification techniques to strengthen a new pattern of behavior. Poor classroom management skills and disruptive students are the most significant barriers to professional success (Fideler & Haskelhorn, 1999). The findings indicate that

school mentors modelled discussion with pupils about the importance of classroom rules and that they had incorporated daily routines to facilitate effective classroom management. Also, they used positive reinforcement (as rewards, and small presents for pupils) to strengthen new patterns of behavior. Teachers have used various student-focused strategies to create a supportive environment for students' learning, interactions, and social-emotional behavior (*see* Good & Brophy, 2000). Mentor teachers held individual meetings out of the classroom with disruptive/ noisy pupils but also punished them by denying the activities they like. According to student teachers, the mentors were modelling specific techniques for pupil's behavior modification that enhanced their understanding of procedures of interactions with disruptive pupils and extrinsic motivation. *"If anybody started disturbing and talking, the teacher would go outside the classroom and had a conversation with a pupil. This was more influential than to talk in the presence of others"* (Student 2). Furthermore, results indicate that effective behavior management modelling practices, despite developing the student's self-efficacy in classroom management, foster the establishment of student teachers' styles for behavior management. *"Getting to know the pupils and the class better, I also started to develop my approach style to change their behaviors that hinder the learning process"* (Student 5).

Modelling teacher qualities (values)

Mentor teacher attributes include being supportive of the student teacher, comfortable in talking about teaching practices and attentive listener (Sempowicz & Hudson, 2011). As student teachers indicate, except being friendly and supportive with them, mentor teachers modelled rapport with their pupils and ways to meet their needs. Often, during interviews, student teachers shown astonishment with teachers' attitudes towards pupils, calling them role models. They estimate that the rapport which mentors had established with their pupils facilitated classroom management. Children were expressing a special relationship with the teacher. The teachers have achieved this by maintaining close relationships with pupils and with the freedom of expression they enable. *"I don't remember any situation when the teacher did not answer pupils' questions. She always heard what they have to say. Also, she read each homework. No matter how many questions the children had, she responded to them"* (Student 4). *"Teacher did not leave the school without taking a conversation with the child that wasn't calm; she*

embraced the child, calmed him down and then went home. She was very close to pupils" (Student 13).

Students indicate that their reflections on practice written in their diary (required by faculty) encouraged them to analyze and evaluate their practice. Teacher-education programs should educate critical reflective thinkers for increasingly complex scenarios, while reflective writings need to be lifted beyond the descriptive level (Collins & Clarke, 2008; Mena-Marcos et al., 2012).

Constructing student teachers professional identity

Self of identity is a necessary part of learning how to become a teacher and relates to teacher candidates' ability to deal with a variety of situations in and out of the classroom (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000; 2004). Results show that student teachers felt that they were constructing their "sense of self" (Krasnow, 1993 *as cited in* Hudson, 2002) while they were observing a school mentor who had a high sense of identity and inner direction. "*While I was observing school mentor teaching, I thought 'will I be one day like her'" (Student 1), "I'm seeing myself as a future teacher. I'm positive and enthusiastic about what is coming, and ready for challenges" (Student 4); "Teaching is for me. I always admired this profession" (Student 14).*

Our findings indicate that except for developing self-efficacy in teaching, student teachers were developing values as professional teachers. The study indicated that teaching practicum had enabled them to gain knowledge about the profession, but also to start clarifying their beliefs and values about teaching and learning. Furthermore, students state that they start understanding the responsibility of being a teacher while observing the mentor's behavior, actions, and qualities. Student teachers' engagement in reflective practices has encouraged their sense of reflective practice and their experiences in being reflective practitioners. Through reflection, teachers can assess their skills, develop their sense of self-knowledge and construct new knowledge as the consequences of these reflections (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007; Tay & Jain, 2019). Knowledge of the self is a crucial element in the way teachers construe and construct the nature of their work but also an important element to maintain self-esteem or self-efficacy, commitment to and a passion for teaching (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994; Day, 2004).

Lack of resources for modelling practices

The lack of a mentoring system, or poor mentoring can have a negative impact on student teachers as well as the overall productivity and professional culture of an organisation (Chin et al., 2020). According to student teachers, mentors should provide more time to discuss teaching approaches and explore more opportunities for students to teach in each subject. The student teachers say that during the teaching practice in school settings, the mentors were very busy with administrative work and teaching process, so they did not have much time to explain to them everything about the process of lesson preparation and learning activities. According to them, the mentors asked the student teachers to be attentive during the class stay and to watch how they carry out the activities. As students say, since the focus of the teachers was the realization of lessons in mathematics and native language, with the reasoning that pupils need to learn these subjects more, the student teachers have not seen the modeling of practices in other subjects. *"The mentor teacher replaced the lessons of other subjects with the subject of mathematics and language with the reasoning that these two subjects the pupils have to master them better. I did not like this. I needed to see teaching in those subjects as well"* (Student 8). *"Replacing art and physical education with other subjects as math or native language, and this caused pupil's dissatisfaction. Mentors weren't modelling practices in all subjects"* (Student 5).

According to student teachers, other reasons that have made it impossible for mentors to model practices were the lack of concretization tools and a large number of pupils in their class (more than 40 pupils). *"Working conditions were so that there was no more possibility for effective modelling. The classroom space was small, while the class had 37 pupils. Two of them were with special needs"* (Student 11). The professional identity of a teacher is highly affected by plenty of factors involved in every educational setting: workload, working conditions, schools' demographics, practices in which teachers are working in and availability of teaching resources (Miller, 2009; Dang, 2013).

Themes derived from interviews with mentor teachers

Four themes emerged from the interviews with mentor teachers (*see* Table 2). Results show that mentor teachers can contribute to the development of student teachers' self-efficacy through enabling acquisition of the classroom management techniques, using appropriate tools and techniques for an inclusive classroom and modeling teachers' attributes. Also, there are identified factors that can contribute

to the formation of student teachers' professional identity. Consistent with the findings from literature (*see* Azim, 2017; Chen et al., 2020; Johnson & Ridley, 2004) this study found that reflective practices and social support can help student teachers to develop their level of professional identity and self-efficacy in a positive way.

Table 2. Codes and themes derived from the thematic analysis of interview data's with mentor teachers

Codes	Themes
Time planning strategies Lesson planning Learning resources Time management Modification of techniques Attractive techniques for classroom management Facing with different situations and how to act	Acquisition of the classroom management techniques
Using inclusion strategies Classroom climate Linking theory and practice Incorporate daily routines to facilitate effective classroom management Attractive activities to engage pupils Age appropriate techniques Motivation for engagement	Using appropriate tools and techniques for inclusive classroom
Close relationship with pupils Speaking closely and quit Patience Appearance Clear articulation and presentation Career goals	Importance of teachers personal attributes
Gain in confidence Adaptability Define career goals Responsibility as teacher Broaden spectrum of variety of experiences and activities for professional development Collegiality Career interests in teaching Supporting environment	Constructing student teachers professional identity

Acquisition of the classroom management techniques

Student teachers state that mentors modelled less the collaborative approaches to create different situations for learning and working in groups, because of difficulties to manage their large classes. Mentors indicate that during practice, students have often been warned that "*they should be willing to react to*

situations that may be unforeseen" (Mentor 2). They even emphasize the importance of facing students with different situations in the classroom to test the response challenges in certain cases. *"You need the maximum commitment, you need to know that you will have days when a pupil wants to go home without a reason, cries without reason and should be constantly prepared for these situations"* (Mentor 3). Mentors were quite collaborative to share with student teachers their personal notebook with daily lesson plans and provide copies of the model plan in which they can be based on the future. Student teachers confirm that mentors shared with them daily/weekly lesson plans but they haven't modelled lesson preparation. Mentors emphasize the importance of time management therefore they advised the student to be careful during lesson planning. *"Students should be very careful during lesson planning and delivery. They should consider the number of pupils, class structure... 1st-grade class pupils are slow in activities"* (Mentor 3). *"The student has benefited a lot of knowledge in time management and how to engage pupils with different techniques"* (Mentor 9).

Using appropriate tools and techniques for an inclusive classroom

Mentors show that their modelling has also encouraged students to engage in activities related to everyday life, and even feel good after their success. They modelled motivational techniques as a driving force for creating a good "school and classroom climate" (Creemers, 1999; Cohen et al., 2009). According to Cohen et al. (2009), a positive school climate promotes student learning, academic achievement, school success, and healthy development. *"I usually use some techniques for good management, to achieve the classroom climate I want; I try to praise them, give them a small gift, like a pencil for example"* (Mentor 5).

Mentors show that their main goal is to involve all students in learning, so they have modeled different practices for student teachers that show ways to engage everyone in activities while adapting to pupils learning styles. *I used different strategies, but more the ones that require everyone to be involved. "During the questioning, I choose those who are more passive to respond"* (Mentor 4); *"I instructed the students to get to know the pupils well, what they like and what they do not like, by adapting the activities to their learning style"* (Mentor 2).

Importance of teachers attributes

Mentors indicate that students are introduced to pupils as teachers to initially create pupils' trust in them, but also to make teacher students feel more

influential. They have modelled the professional presentation in front of the student, but also the right behaviors. Sometimes, student attitude was not at the right level, which made students not eligible for pupils. *"I had a student teacher that was not accepted by children. They didn't like her voice. It was hard to listen to her. Also, she shouted to children"* (Mentor 1). *"Depends from student's career goals, ambitions. The career goal of some of them wasn't teaching, but leadership positions. Therefore, they weren't devoted"* (Mentor 10).

Another value that mentors have tried to prove to students is to try to be an artist when working with children. *"I've been trying to get the student to learn how to keep silent in the classroom. She asked me 'how you are doing that, you give them love but also you shout at them? The teacher should also be an artist"* (Mentor 5). Results show that student teachers felt more confident to get pupils' attention by observing the teacher modelling the right appearance and the good way of articulation. Mentor teachers emphasize that maintaining a professional image is very important in the teaching profession.

Constructing student teachers professional identity

The findings raise the issue of developing a student's willingness and ability to adapt to changing work environment. Mentors have advised their students to be *"more adaptable, to be able to respond to the changing nature of teaching"* (Mentor 3). Given that adaptability directly relates to self-efficacy, there should be curricular intent to develop positive, career-related exploratory attitudes and behaviors (*i.e.*, career adaptability) in student teachers within the context of classroom management courses (McLennan et al., 2017).

Mentors state that that they felt good when, at the end of the students' teaching practice, they have noticed that students have developed self-confidence and understood the responsibility of the teaching profession. *"At the end of the teaching practice, she (student teacher) had more self-confidence because I talked to her all the time (Mentor 3); "Teachers should be willing, and able to take on the professional responsibilities. The most important responsibility is to show respect, love and caring for each pupil"* (Mentor 8). Mentors state that at the beginning of teaching practicum, student teachers found it difficult to develop collegial relationships in their schools. Mentors had included them in meetings with other school colleagues so they can learn to understand collegiality and the importance of cooperation for effective teaching. *"Student teacher had the opportunity to make contacts with other school colleagues, and this helped her a lot to see herself as a*

future teacher” (Mentor 3); “*I always include student teachers in meetings with colleagues, parents, and others so they can see how we communicate and report*” (Mentor 10). Furthermore, mentors emphasize that they had broadened student teachers' knowledge about a spectrum of a variety of teaching methods, techniques, but also different experiences and activities for professional development.

Conclusions

This qualitative study explored mentoring practices within a specific field of investigation. In particular, the study focused on the development of a student teacher’s self-efficacy and professional identity within the various modelling practices that school mentors have offered during students’ teaching practicum. This study provides practical examples in which a mentor can positively influence student teachers' personal and professional development. Furthermore, the data indicate the development of professional identity elements during teaching practice which is in line with the conceptual framework (*see* Figure 2).

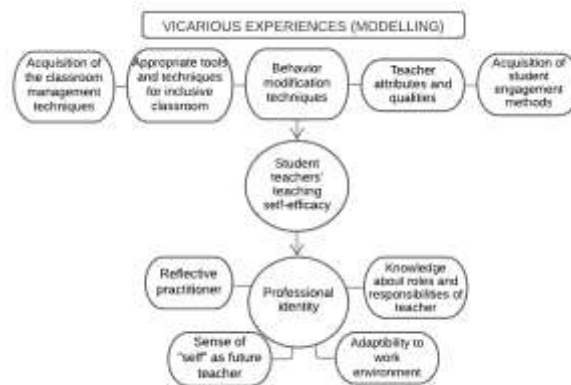


Figure 2. Construction of student teachers' teaching self-efficacy and professional identity

Results show that students felt more confident and effective in teaching after they observed modelling of student engagement activities, behavior modification techniques, teacher attributes, values and usage of appropriate tools and techniques for an inclusive classroom. This study indicates that the mentors were modelling different classroom discipline strategies and techniques so the

student teachers could observe how these strategies worked in practice. Based on the findings, the model of developing successful mentoring practices for teaching includes usage of effective classroom management strategies and discipline skills, developing and maintaining close rapport with pupils, using different instructional strategies as motivation, questioning, linking theory and practice through concretization tools, developing organizational skills for inclusion and, building the professional image through good attitudes and appearance. Despite this, students argue that coping with large classrooms and lack of resources was challenging for both, mentors and student teachers. These elements have made it difficult the modelling of individualization of learning and collaboration approach. Student teachers request more classroom management techniques, more usage of concretization tools, modelling in each subject and more time to discuss the teaching approaches.

The results indicate that except for developing teaching self-efficacy beliefs, student teachers were constructing values as professional teachers. Teaching practice, in particular mentoring experiences, had enabled them to start clarifying their beliefs and values about teaching and learning. According to the results, four elements are apparent in terms of how self-efficacy development is related to the construction of student teachers' professional identity. First, meaningful reflections on real teaching challenges fostered student teachers' critical thinking. Second, the growth of self-efficacy fostered their sense of "self" as future teachers. Third, the growth of self-efficacy in teaching fostered their adaptability to the work environment. Fourth, student teachers understood the roles and responsibilities of a teaching profession, especially the role of attitude, commitment, collegiality, and the importance of professional development. Given that positive mentoring experiences, particularly mentoring relationships can help build an organizational culture of teaching practice and professionalism, it is worth looking at what can be done to prepare mentor teachers to focus their mentoring knowledge and skills in the context of the findings in this study. This study results contribute to the design process of teaching practice programmes and offering qualitative mentoring practices that can foster the development of student teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in teaching and professional identity.

This study had provided practical examples in which a school mentor can positively influence and develop student teachers' teaching self-efficacy, in turn, foster the construction of their professional identity. Given that efficacy beliefs induced just by observation can be weaker and more susceptible to change, mentor

teachers should ensure that except observing, student teachers need to gain positive experiences of their own during teaching. Further research could also explore the relations of other factors for effective mentoring, student teachers' teaching self-efficacy and their professional identity. Furthermore, there is a need for more researches on exploring how professional identity shapes by developing student's self-efficacy in teaching during teaching practicum.

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