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## Are they really ‘ready, willing and able’? Exploring reality shock in beginner teachers in South Africa

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This article reflects on the experiences of 100 South African beginner teachers and contextualises their experiences of reality shock by applying the ‘ready, willing and able’ model of Shulman and Shulman (2004). A discourse analysis of critical reflection on experiences during their first year(s) of teaching provided insight into the challenges they faced and indicated a correlation between the results of this study and the aims of the ‘ready, willing and able’ model. In this qualitative study the question is asked as to whether tertiary institutions might have an extended responsibility to better equip beginner teachers for handling the academic and emotional realities they will face. This article contributes to the growing body of knowledge on beginner teachers and reality shock through advocating an attitude of critical analysis and self-reflection that can empower beginner teachers to handle unpredictable situations, adapt and learn from experience and manage their experience of reality shock and stress during their first year(s) of teaching. The solution might be a shared responsibility that is guided by a commitment towards interdependence and inter-activeness within the system and all the role-players.

**Keywords:** beginner teacher; pre-service teacher training; reality shock

### Introduction

Armed with a teaching qualification, beginner teachers enter the workforce and most likely accept a full-time teaching position. The expectation is clear that they will successfully transition from a theory-orientated pre-service teacher to a well-rounded practice-based teacher within the first few years of employment. Reality shock, however, often quickly sets in for most of them; beginner teachers find themselves to be directly confronted with the gap between theory and practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Mugaloglu & Doganca, 2009; Ünver, 2014).

Experience of such a gap is often a defining point in a teaching career and usually has one of three possible outcomes: the new teacher will work through reality shock, fall back on the skills and knowledge that he or she has obtained during training and thrive in their chosen career (DiCicco, Sabella, Jordan, Boney & Jones, 2014). The teacher alternatively could simply try to survive through the reality shock and the following year with its heavy workload and emotional burden. In unfortunate cases, the experience of severe reality shock could lead to the third scenario where a teacher would tender their resignation (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009).

A large body of national and international research is available on the aftermath of the abovementioned reality shock (Arends & Phurutse 2009; DiCicco et al., 2014; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Flores, 2006; Kirkland, 2014) but much less has been done on trying to proactively prevent reality shock through direct focus on pre-service teaching programmes. The question can thus be posed as to whether the quest for readiness of beginner teachers both in South Africa and globally involves an additional responsibility to better prepare students for the realities of teaching. The further question need to be asked as to whether the content of the teaching programmes at tertiary institutions in South Africa pays enough attention to preparing students to cope with reality shock, or whether the focus is largely on academic preparation and content of subject methodology, thereby possibly exposing beginner teachers to situations they might not feel equipped to handle. The findings of this study may also contribute to addressing this issue on a global scale.

### Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Prominent studies of beginner teachers, including Fantilli and McDougall (2009), Flores and Day (2006), Fraser (2007), Mugaloglu and Doganca (2009), Taylor (2014), Ulvik, Smith and Helleve (2009) and Ünver (2014), highlighted the sudden and sometimes dramatic experience of the transition from student to beginner teacher. Many researchers (Arends & Phurutse, 2009; DiCicco et al., 2014; Kazemi, Franke & Lampert, 2009) have emphasised the impact of this reality shock that confronts new teachers as they take on the full responsibility of being full-time teachers.

Reality shock can be circumscribed as the experience of a gap between what students have learned in the teacher education programme and the reality that they may face during the first year(s) of teaching. Veenman (1984) captured the essence of reality shock as ‘the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training as a result of the confrontation with the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life.’

Cochran-Smith (2004) agreed when she referred to a critical dissonance between what students learn about teaching and learning at the university and what they already know and continue to learn about them in the schools. Teachers have observed many styles of teaching during their own time at school, and this seems to play an important role in the way beginner teachers construct and reconstruct these beliefs and identities, thus conceptualising the way in which they respond to practical situations they face as beginner teachers. Feiman-

Nemser (2001:1016), however, warned that these beliefs often “mislead prospective teachers into thinking that they know more about teaching than they actually do and make it harder for them to form new ideas and new habits of thought and action,” regardless of training that they had received as part of their pre-service teacher training programs. For some, feelings of isolation, a perceived mismatch between idealistic expectations and classroom reality, as well as lack of support and guidance have been identified as key features of their experience (Kim & Cho, 2014). Another challenge facing beginner teachers involves the reconciling of the pedagogy they have learnt in their university coursework with their lived experience of the realities of teaching. Classroom management and discipline seem to also provide serious challenges to beginner teachers (Arends & Phurutse, 2009; Ünver, 2014). This finding was supported in studies conducted in Australia (Woodcock & Reupert, 2012), Spain (Correa, Martínez-Arbelaiz & Aberasturi-Apraiz, 2015), the United Kingdom (Hobson & Ashby, 2012), and throughout Europe in general (Valenčič Zuljan & Marentič Požarnik, 2014).

Furthermore, Flores (2006) found that the overwhelming duties confronting beginner teachers, especially when they felt a lack of support and guidance, caused them as novices to develop a narrow and individual perspective, accompanied by a shift from a more inductive and student-centred approach to a more deductive and teacher-centred approach. This seems to stand in conflict with what they had been taught in methodology modules at university. This creates another conundrum for beginner teachers to deal with.

In another study, Flores and Day (2006) found that once teacher students had graduated, their first teaching experiences brought about the realisation that teaching was more demanding than the beginner teachers were expecting, that they lacked the knowledge to undertake all the tasks and duties required from them as teachers, and that they often did not feel supported at school. The expectations and challenges with which novice teachers are presented in a school system that is dynamic, unpredictable and full of changeable variables, can tend to isolate them and lead to uncertainty or even resignation (Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Korstjens & Volman, 2014; Schlichte, Yssel & Merbler, 2005).

Various reasons can be proposed to explain resignation early on in their beginner teachers' career. Firstly, they referred to an extensive workload and a lack of support as contributing factor, including their experiences of high stress levels and pressured working environments inside and outside of the classroom. Research by Steyn (2004) provides further evidence that beginner teachers often feel overwhelmed by all that is

expected from them outside of their academic responsibilities.

The second reason for the early attrition of novice teachers is the overwhelming amount of administrative work that has to be done, including being responsible for a register class, financial administrative tasks, keeping a well-organised and up-to-date filing system, and recording and reporting on assessment (Steyn, 2004). Administrative tasks are not confined to the classroom and teaching, but also extend to extra-curricular activities and communication with parents and other stakeholders in the community.

As mentioned earlier, a significantly smaller body of research (Correa et al., 2015; Dicke, Elling, Schmeck & Leutner, 2015; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Veenman, 1984) seems to advocate a proactive approach towards reality shock, i.e. constructing and promoting a praxis to pre-empt the experience of reality shock and the theory-practice divide. Most scholarly articles and research reports deal with the aftermath of the shock that has to be managed by the individual, and possibly the school. Not much literature is available on the possible extended responsibilities of tertiary institutions to better equip beginner teachers for handling the challenges as mentioned by the researchers. Kim and Cho (2014) also voiced this concern in warning that teacher education programmes tend to predominantly orient pre-service teachers pedagogically, theoretically or practically, rather than focusing on emotional and psychological issues.

Shulman and Shulman (2004) suggested shifting the perspective on how and what teachers learn through their follow-up work after reinventing Brown and Campione's (1990) programmes for 'fostering a community of learning.' They suggested a new model for analysing the challenges around teacher learning and development within different communities and contexts:

An accomplished teacher is a member of a professional community who is ready, willing, and able to teach and to learn from his or her teaching experiences. Thus the elements of the theory are: Ready (possessing vision), Willing (having motivation), Able (both knowing and being able 'to do'), Reflective (learning from experience), and communal (acting as a member of a professional community) (Shulman & Shulman, 2004:259).

#### *Ready – 'the vision'*

Vision can be defined as the ability to think about or plan the future with imagination or wisdom. In the context of teacher-training, student teachers need to be guided towards having a realistic and dynamic vision for their first year(s) of teaching. This vision needs to be tested, reflected upon and deepened in order to ensure readiness (Shulman & Shulman, 2004). Pre-service teachers need to, during their pre-graduate training, become skilled

enough to recognise opportunities to conceptualise and expand their vision for their teaching careers. In this way, schools can become an environment where change and transformation are invited and the beginner teacher will feel that his or her vision and actions will be supported and sustained.

The experience of reality shock can act as a direct threat and challenge to the vision of beginner teachers. In practice they might be confronted with different contexts than what they might have imagined or have experienced during their Work Integrated Learning sessions.

#### *Willing – ‘the change’*

Whether the vision of a beginner teacher is embraced or threatened, it is crucial that such a teacher be open to personal and professional development and change through courses, workshops, conversations with peers and other stakeholders (Shulman & Shulman, 2004). The source of the motivation to change must be scrutinised, and novice teachers must explore the reason for their willingness to adapt, or the reasons for their lack of willingness. Should a beginner teacher not be motivated to change and adapt to meet expectations, this could lead to conflict or create further challenges in the process of induction and becoming a valued member of staff. In line with the locus of control of the beginner teacher, an internal willingness to adapt and change will result in resilience and commitment, while an external motivation for change that is driven by incentives or pressure from colleagues or superiors might lead to lack of commitment to live out the changes that have been made.

#### *Able – the ‘doing’*

A beginner teacher ought to be well taught in the pedagogies as well as methodologies needed to become an accomplished teacher in his or her chosen subject field. Shulman and Shulman (2004) listed the following elements that form the base for such effective teaching:

- disciplinary content/interdisciplinary knowledge;
- curriculum understanding;
- pedagogical content knowledge;
- classroom management and organisation;
- classroom assessment;
- accomplishing community in the classroom, the school, and the larger community; and
- understanding learners intellectually, socially, culturally and personally in a developmental perspective (Shulman & Shulman, 2004:262)

On completion of a tertiary teaching qualification, it is assumed that beginner teachers will be able to complete all the abovementioned tasks inside the classroom, as well as on all other levels. Most of the participants in this study reported feeling satisfied with the level of preparation that they had received at their various tertiary institutions regarding the academic content and pedagogical

content knowledge of their chosen subject fields. Many participants reported that lesson-planning skills and subject content knowledge had been the most valuable things that they had learned during their pre-service teacher training. These teachers were therefore comfortable with the responsibility of tasks related to disciplinary content, curriculum understanding, and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman & Shulman, 2004).

The other elements do, however, seem to present challenges to some beginner teachers and might relate to issues that they did not feel adequately trained to manage. The skills for classroom management and interaction with and within the various communities in the classroom, the school and the larger community proved to provide some beginner teachers with challenges and create conflict and stress in their lives.

The vision and motivation of a beginner teacher is not always easily visible or even accessible to other people, but their ability to complete required tasks, teach lessons and manage their classes and their students is open to critique and public scrutiny. These actions will often then expose and accentuate the vulnerability of the beginner teacher. A variety of skills is required to meet the demands in terms of classroom management, discipline, diversity and motivation of learners and the effective use of technology. It is also crucial to note that motivation is often the guiding element for commitment and change.

#### *Reflection – the ‘observations’ of the current context*

Students in pre-service teaching programmes at universities in South Africa are expected to complete 24 weeks of compulsory Work Integrated Learning experience through their four years of pre-graduate studies. During these sessions at different schools they are exposed to the realities of teaching and learning and invited to become involved in the day-to-day activities at the school. The question must, however, be asked whether the students are encouraged to critically reflect on more than what the Work Integrated Learning modules expect from them. Are they inclined to be self-reflective enough to identify areas where they would need greater development or more exposure before entering the profession as a full-time teacher? Do the tertiary institutions on the one hand, and the schools where students complete their Work Integrated Learning experiences on the other, work towards creating a realistic impression of the life of a teacher? Or might the experiences that students have during these sessions in some way contribute to the experience of reality shock once they start their careers?

Arends and Phurutse (2009) reported that 63% of the participants they interviewed across five provinces of South Africa felt that the practical experience that they had gained throughout their

tertiary education had been most beneficial in preparing them for the realities of teaching. The study did however also show significant findings that beginner teachers did not value the strong theoretical foundations of their training. They also did not consider an understanding of educational theory and practice of assessment crucial for being an effective teacher (Arends & Phurutse, 2009).

### Research Methodology

A qualitative study was done since it allowed the researchers to step into the journeys that others undertake; it allowed them to step into their worlds and to understand their lived experiences. This approach is informed by acknowledging the situatedness within specific historical, social and economic realities of space/time and context (Mahlomaholo, 2009). Analysing teacher narratives, and narrative inquiry itself, offers beginner teachers a means to gain individualised perspectives and narratives of beginner teachers regarding the challenges faced in their first year(s) of teaching, and as a critical reflection on their perceptions on the success of the teaching programmes of a South African university in adequately preparing them for the emotional reality of teaching.

A hermeneutical narrative research design was furthermore applied, because it offers the tools for embracing the experiences of beginner teachers and fosters an interpretivist phenomenological approach as a research paradigm. Hermeneutics, in addition to the social construction discourse, thus provides the vehicle with which the phenomenon of reality shock in beginner teachers and addressing these issues in pre-service teaching programmes can be explored, explained and understood. The research process is divided into four categories, namely engaging with the participants (through semi-structured interviews), exploring and analysing the data, coding the themes (in order to identify themes) and understanding (where the findings are discussed and recommendations are made).

### Selection of Participants and Data Gathering

The 100 participants in this study were chosen through purposive sampling and selected after a voluntary request for participation.

For the purpose of this study a beginner teacher was defined as

- being a full-time teacher at a pre-selected school in one of four provinces in South Africa;
- having been a teacher for three years or less; and
- having obtained a professional teaching qualification from an accredited tertiary institution in South Africa.

### Aims of the Study

This study aimed to explore the nature and scope of reality shock in beginner teachers. The objectives

include describing beginner teachers' understanding of the challenges and needs they face, and determining strategies that can contribute to the prevention of reality shock amongst them. Furthermore, this study aimed to validate the experiences of beginner teachers with the suggested 'ready, willing and able' model, conceptualised by Shulman and Shulman (2004).

Narrative inquiry offers beginner teachers a means to gain individualised perspectives and narratives of beginner teachers regarding the challenges faced in their first year(s) of teaching, and provides a critical reflection on their perceptions on the success of the teaching programmes of a South African university in adequately preparing them for the emotional reality of teaching.

### Data Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were conducted and transcribed, after which a discourse analysis was performed and themes were identified and used to inform the researchers on the experiences of reality shock that beginner teachers reported. The discourse analysis of the themes pointed out the correlations between the results from this study and the 'ready, willing and able' model, suggested by Shulman and Shulman (2004).

### Ethical Clearance

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education Studies of the North West University and attention was paid to issues such as anonymity and confidentiality. Participants had the option of using pseudonyms to protect their own identity and to ensure privacy.

### Trustworthiness

Credibility and trustworthiness of the data were insured through triangulation and cross-referencing by coding the transcriptions of a few participants to ensure the authenticity and relevance of themes.

### Discussion

In the research reported in this article, the Shulman and Shulman (2004) model was utilised as a theoretical lens through which to view the experiences of South African beginner teachers in order to critically reflect upon their experiences during their first year(s) of teaching and to draw conclusions that could provide insight into the challenges they face. It is furthermore used below as a guideline to suggest the promotion of a pedagogy of self-care for students at tertiary institutions that will offer a platform for future beginner teachers to empower themselves for the emotional reality they will face as full-time teachers. In this manner the local knowledge and lived experience of individuals are embraced and celebrated. Evidence will be supplied to support the surmise that the teaching of knowledge and skills at

tertiary level might currently be compartmentalised in the minds of beginner teachers and not transcend university-work environment borders and hence be irrelevant to the different contexts of their first year(s) of teaching. This, it will be argued, might be the root cause of reality shock for novice teachers. The research reported below revolved around the question as to how much of beginner teachers' pre-service learning on academic and emotional level actually translates in practice into their being ready, willing and able once they accept a full-time teaching position.

#### Ready – 'The Vision'

Some participants in this study found themselves doubting their vision as they were attempting to deal with the reality shock they experienced. They found themselves wondering whether they had made the correct career choice and were meant to be teachers. It was clear from the remarks of many of the participants in this study that they observed a clear correlation between their vision and their sense of having a calling to teach. A distinct discrepancy was observed between the social construction of teaching and vision that some participants had of what they thought teaching would be, and the realities they experienced. One participant concurred with this statement, when she stated that "it was a shock to realise that teaching was not what I thought it would be [...] or even what some of my lecturers lead me to believe it would be." Some participants also questioned the perceptions that Work Integrated Learning sessions create in student teachers and how these experiences correlated or differed from their experiences once they entered the profession.

Is was clear from the data that many beginner teachers experienced themselves as being ready to embrace a career in teaching and thought that their lecturers and tertiary institution classified them as being ready. The school that appointed them and specifically the interview panel had also found them to be ready. Yet, once they started teaching, they often quickly felt that they might have never been ready in the first place.

Some participants wondered whether this lack of readiness was a personal state, or merely indicated that they were not ready for the contextual realities of the school to which they were appointed. This lack of readiness placed strain on their vision as they started to doubt the compatibility of their own vision with that of the school. Doubting the shared vision and ideology might increase the beginner teacher's experience of reality shock. Another participant commented, "[U]niversity taught me the academic content. It did not teach me how to work with learners, how situations were going to affect me and how to handle these things without becoming negative about teaching."

#### Willing – 'The Change'

One participant expressed, "I was simply thrown in the deep end," while another expressed her frustration, noting that "in less than a year I had to switch from being a creative English teacher to a rigid accounting teacher." Major changes were expected from both these beginner teachers and the importance of senior management or mentors at the school to uphold their motivation and commitment through support during these trying times was crucial.

Motivation is often the guiding element for commitment and change and many beginner teachers have found their commitment being questioned should they not be willing to change and adapt to the ethos and methods of the school where they are employed. A participant reported that he had been so excited about using new learner-centred strategies for teaching and learning, but his new colleagues expected him to keep to old teacher-centred 'chalk-and-talk' ways of doing. Other participants reported being willing to take on all new responsibilities that were expected from them, but that they felt overwhelmed. Two participants captured the heart of these feelings of being overwhelmed and stretched:

It is always an issue of quality versus quantity. And in my life, quantity is currently in the driving seat. Some nights I come home and just want to lie down and cry, because I have so much that needs to be done in so little time. I do not like leaving things till the last minute. This makes the emotional part of teaching much harder.

#### Able – The 'Doing'

Many participants in this study found themselves to be lacking these skills, or sometimes being unable to translate what they had been taught at university into effective ways of addressing these needs. One participant captured the essence of their experiences in saying, 'I have the theory. But now it feels as if that knowledge does not translate to effective teaching practices in my classroom.' Another beginner teacher concurred in stating, 'I have to use my knowledge to teach myself new skills that I have never had the chance to practice.'

The analysed data in this study further clearly indicated that participants experienced classroom management and lack of basic knowledge of psychology as major challenges to their ability to create and sustain meaningful relationships with their students. This situation is often even more complex in the multicultural South African educational landscape. One participant stated that "it is still challenging to work with learners from different backgrounds, cultural differences, racial differences and different religions while trying to really connect with all children."

Steyn (2004:83) proposed that support programmes for novice educators ought to include support and guidance in the following aspects:

matters relating to the school, staff-related matters, teaching and the curriculum of the school, learner-related matters, educator-parent relationships, as well as physical and financial resources and administration. In this manner, some issues could be addressed before proving to be a problem to students once they stand in full-time teaching positions.

This suggestion is also echoed in the recommendation in studies by Reeves and Robinson (2014) and Steyn (2004), where they predicted that if student teachers will learn skills crucial to the effective management of a classroom, they will also learn how to handle the extensive workload and administrative tasks that will be expected from them.

Dewar, Kennedy, Staig and Cox (2003) reported that almost all of the secondary beginning teachers in their study listed administrative tasks and paperwork as overwhelming. This finding was echoed by Grudnoff and Tuck (2003), who also reported that they felt overwhelmed and highly stressed and overloaded by administrative tasks when they first started teaching. Dicke et al. (2015) also referred to the need for support in time management for beginner teachers.

#### Reflection – The ‘Observations’

The participants in this study had mixed reactions regarding the success of the Work Integrated Learning programme in preparing them for the academic and emotional realities of teaching. “WIL gives you a glance of the surface of what goes on at the school” and “during Work Integrated Learning you often feel like a boarder in someone else’s classroom,” were typical responses. Another participant noted that Work Integrated Learning had definitely confirmed her passion for teaching and that she could not wait to have her own classroom and make a difference in the lives of the children that she would teach.

Many studies, however, suggest that practical education programmes, such as Work Integrated Learning, need to be restructured and adjusted to allow student teachers to gain more experience before entering the classroom (Reeves & Robinson, 2014). As a motivation for the proposed changes, they reported that Work Integrated Learning does not offer enough time for student teachers to learn all that they need to ease their transition from theory to practice.

It was clear from the interviews conducted for this study that, regardless of the length of time they spent on Work Integrated Learning experiences, participants had all still experienced a varying degree of reality shock, and that this experience had led to more or less self-reflection about their current situation and their future in education. One participant remarked:

Somebody should have warned me that a teacher needs a strong heart. You are constantly being overwhelmed with emotion – a hungry child, a child without shoes, parents having difficulties, a child struggling to learn. Everything evokes emotion ...

Another agreed with these challenges in saying, “On paper I am qualified to teach, but doing it every day is quite a different story.” It is irrefutable that beginner teachers experience a myriad of mixed emotions every day they show up for work. Promoting self-reflection and shared reflection with colleagues can assist these novices in working through their experiences and feeling empowered and equipped for the days to come. Reeves and Robinson (2014) argued that reflection through critical thinking and action research can aid beginner teachers in developing the skills to improve their own teaching practice and identify alternative, more sufficient teaching methods.

In 1984, Veenman listed classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students’ work, relationships with parents, organisation of class work, insufficient and/or inadequate teaching materials and supplies, and dealing with the problems of individual students as issues with which beginner teachers struggle. More than thirty years later, our results, as well as other literature mentioned in this article, confirm the relevance of these issues when talking to the space of beginner teacher experiences.

More than half of the participants interviewed in this study, listed classroom management, administrative tasks and time management as the greatest challenges they face every day. Getting to know their learners, seeing children improve and ‘a simple thank you’ were listed as some of the greatest sources of joy experienced by beginner teachers. Although the majority of participants strongly felt that their tertiary institution had not adequately prepared them for the emotional realities they faced in their first year(s) of teaching and the accompanying reality shock that most beginner teachers experience, it was clear that most of the participants felt ready, willing and able to accept the challenge of being a teacher in the complex South African educational landscape.

#### Recommendations

The question can thus be asked as to whether the content of teaching programmes at tertiary institutions mainly focuses on the creation of visions with regards to subject content and pedagogical knowledge, or whether sufficient attention is paid to encouraging critical self-reflection and the development of skills necessary for adaptation and resilience ought to a personal vision be threatened. The exploration of the locus of control of student teachers can assist in empowering them to embrace such challenges. If,

for example, students have an external locus of control, they will look towards external role-players for validation of their calling and vision. Equipping them with an internal locus of control will activate resilience and empower beginner teachers to adapt their vision to embrace the opportunities that might arise after the reality shock has subsided. Being able to adjust, adapt and be resilient is, however, dependent on the willingness of students to critically reflect upon their own motivation for change.

In this manner beginner pre-graduate programmes and Work Integrated Learning sessions will be aimed at reaching a balance between two broad categories of beginner teacher support, namely “instruction-related pedagogical support,” which includes assisting the beginner teacher with the knowledge, skills and strategies necessary to be successful in the classroom and school and, secondly, emotional support, aimed at fostering emotional health and a pedagogy of self-care. The model, suggested by Shulman and Shulman (2004), encapsulates all these areas through exploring the vision, motivation, ability and reflection of student teachers.

In this way they can become effective teachers, who have been prepared for and have learned through the experience of reality shock, rather than be overwhelmed and disillusioned thereby. Such teachers will then thrive, rather than just survive, or even resign. These words from one of the participants summarise this reality of a thriving beginner teacher:

Nothing can prepare you. It is physically and emotionally taxing ... but you become teaching fit. Everybody has good days and bad days ... but there are always those days when you realise that **there is nowhere else that you would rather be.**

### Conclusion

Struggling with being able to accomplish all that is expected from them on a pedagogical, methodological, psychological and emotional level, can challenge the readiness, vision and motivation of beginner teachers, impact their performance and lead to increased experience of reality shock. Beginner teachers need to be empowered with a proactive approach towards addressing these issues that have already started during their pre-service training and which continue at the school in which they are employed in their first teaching position. Fostering an attitude of critical analysis and self-reflection can empower beginner teachers to handle unpredictable situations, as well as adapt and learn from experience and manage their experience of reality shock and stress during their first year(s) of teaching. The solution might be a shared responsibility that is guided by a commitment towards interdependence and inter-activeness within the system, amongst all its role-players.

### Note

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