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Codes of ethics and conduct for teaching practice: A policy framework for South Africa

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The absence of official codes of ethics and conduct for teaching practice at many traditional South African universities is of great concern. With this sequential explanatory, triangulation, mixed-method study we aimed to provide a valuable framework for universities developing and implementing these codes. In this study, quantitative content analysis, quantitative surveys, and qualitative interviews revealed that many universities did not have codes specific to teaching practice but rather applied codes that were created for the broader university context. Furthermore, where codes for teaching practice do exist, these are often not official university policies, not available to the public, and feature elements that vary across universities. Consequently, ethical dilemmas experienced during teaching practice are not addressed in these codes. Pre-service teachers in this study were found to be unaware of these codes and their content and were thus unprepared for ethical risk that may occur in teaching practice. The lack of codes of ethics and conduct, and awareness thereof, pose potential risks to various stakeholders in teaching practice. This led to the development of guidelines for a policy framework that addressed what should form part of the codes and how to improve awareness thereof. It is recommended that universities include a separate code of ethics and code of conduct in the teaching practice handbook to increase pre-service teachers' awareness of values and morals expected of them and guide their behaviour during teaching practice.

Keywords: applied ethics; code of conduct; code of ethics; memorandum of understanding; policy framework; pre-service teacher preparation; teaching practice

Introduction

Goodlad (1996:233) points out that “[t]eaching is a profession laden with risk and responsibility that requires a great deal from those who enter it.” This statement emphasises the importance of preparing pre-service teachers (PSTs) for the ethical dilemmas they will likely face in teaching environment. The issue of unethical behaviour linked to teaching is accentuated by other researchers who affirm that, in some instances, in-service teachers and PSTs are guilty of unethical behaviour (Anangisyse, 2011:9; Foulger, Ewbank, Kay, Popp & Carter, 2009:2). As PSTs temporarily enter the teaching profession during their teaching practice (TP), due consideration needs to be given to preparing them for and guiding them through ethical dilemmas that occur during TP. In research studies conducted in Tanzania, Australia and the United States of America (USA) (Anangisyse, 2011; Boon, 2011; Warnick & Silverman, 2011) it was found that initial teacher education (ITE), including Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degrees at universities do not place enough emphasis on ethics. Even though ethics can be integrated throughout the ITE curriculum (Anangisyse, 2011), the teaching of ethics seems to be a rare occurrence (Warnick & Silverman, 2011).

To answer the main research question, What guidelines need to be considered for the development of a policy framework for ethics in teaching practice?, we first investigated several sub-questions. With the sub-questions we aimed to determine what currently existed and what needed to be included in ethics policies for TP to create a guideline for the development of a comprehensive policy framework. The sub-question, Which ethical dilemmas do pre-service teachers encounter during teaching practice?, was investigated in this research. Furthermore, we aspired to uncover how PSTs and other stakeholders in TP are prepared to prevent and handle these ethical dilemmas by asking the following questions: How do pre-service teachers perceive ethical dilemmas during teaching practice? and How do teaching practice coordinators perceive the role of codes of ethics and codes of conduct for pre-service teachers? We also enquired about the existing ethical guidelines and protocols for TP as an extensive internet search revealed few existing ethics policies. This dearth of ethics policies for PSTs is of grave concern as teaching is beset with ethical dilemmas (Warnick & Silverman, 2011) and it is difficult to take disciplinary action without established guiding policies (Foulger et al., 2009). We, therefore, asked the following sub-questions: What is the current status of codes of ethics and codes of conduct regarding pre-service teacher teaching practice at universities in South Africa?; What procedures are put in place to guide pre-service teachers when they encounter ethical dilemmas during teaching practice?; and “If these procedures exist, are they elucidated in the ethics policies of the universities?” Consequently, to answer the main question, we aimed to propose the guidelines necessary for the development of a policy framework for

ethics in TP to guide South African universities in establishing effective codes of ethics (CoE) and codes of conduct (CoC) for TP as part of their policies. Existing policies from international universities were scrutinised to identify good practices for inclusion. We thought that a policy framework for ethics in TP at South African universities could be consulted widely.

In this article applied ethics is discussed as the underlying theory of the study. This is followed by a review of literature focusing on ethics related to TP. The sequential explanatory, triangulation mixed-method design that was used to perform the research in four phases is discussed next, followed by the ethical considerations. The findings and discussion are presented by considering the main aspects identified in the guidelines for the development of a policy framework for ethics in TP. This is followed by the study's conclusion and recommendations.

Theoretical Framework

Applied ethics was used as the underlying theory of the study and indicates a link between theory and practice, confronts scenarios that were not previously regarded as moral dilemmas, and addresses controversial moral dilemmas (Fossa, 2017). As seen in Figure 1, it further refers to the interaction between ethical theories and ethical practice within the profession (Collste, 2012) by setting the principles (e.g., in a code of ethics and conduct) that teachers are expected to consider and reflect on when making decisions involving their experiences in a school (Collste, 2012:18; Fossa, 2017). Applied ethics is the process in which persons reflect on their decisions to justify their own decisions or behaviour (Collste, 2012). The advantages of applied ethics include that it aims to justify ethical behaviour or decisions in specific contexts and encourages reflection to choose the theory and methods that lead to the most desirable outcome within a specific context (Collste, 2012:18).

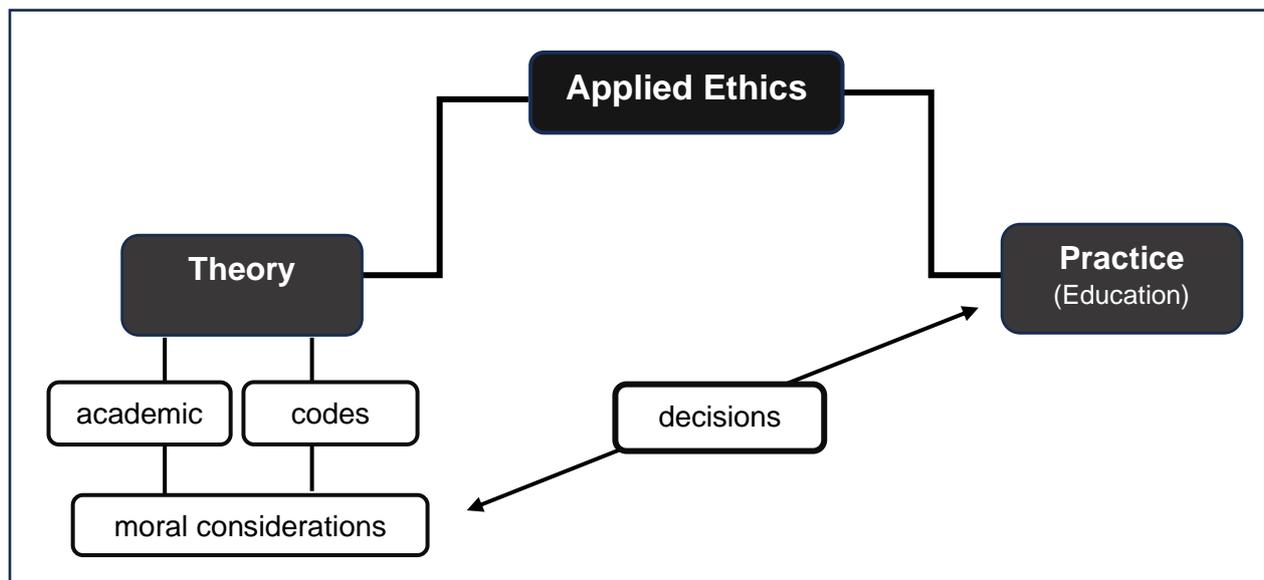


Figure 1 Applied ethics bridge

Applied ethics matters must be moral in nature (Snedegar, n.d.). Many dilemmas that occur during TP are also regarded as moral issues by society. These include, among others, victimisation, unfair treatment of learners and corporal punishment (Van Nuland, 2009:79). Applied ethics is concerned with the application of moral procedures and can be used to lead PSTs regarding moral behaviour they are expected to exhibit during TP (Fossa, 2017). Applied ethics stems from normative ethics. It is often nestled in deontological, or duty-based, ethics associated with Immanuel Kant, which emphasises that people will respect and follow rules (Johnson & Cureton, 2016). Thus, the application of a CoE or CoC can

assist in solving ethical dilemmas in TP. Deontology seeks to make ethics more practical by connecting morality and laws; yet ethics cannot be simplified to deontology (a set of rules) or laws that can be obeyed in a mechanical manner (Finkler & De Negreiros, 2018:41).

The aim with this study was to establish a policy framework that will motivate universities to create a CoE and/or a CoC for TP in particular. The CoE or CoC should guide ethical decision-making of PSTs rather than dictate the optimum course of action. This is in line with the theory of applied ethics, which is founded on the premise that a CoE unique to TP should assist in dealing with ethical dilemmas that PSTs encounter during TP.

It has long been believed that educators hold certain values expected by the profession and will act according to these values. It is, however, our belief that formal guidelines are needed to attend to the ethical dilemmas in TP and eliminate uncertainty when action is needed. Certain dilemmas that PSTs experience during their TP might originally be disregarded as professional standards, rather than ethical dilemmas. However, issues related to physical presentation such as tattoos, hairstyles, or clothing, often linked to their religion or culture, can become ethical dilemmas. It could be frowned upon and regarded as cultural intolerance and religious discrimination when PSTs are reprimanded and dismissed from TP due to these issues. The argument can be made that the physical presentation of the PST does not necessarily change the quality of their teaching and the clash of the school's and student's personal values may deprive a student from learning. It may also set the wrong example to learners on how to treat people who differ from them. These experiences of PST will thus need to be considered in theory to change the codes.

Literature Review

Ethical dilemmas in teaching practice

According to Boon (2011:76) "quality" teachers are individuals who ground their teaching in values and beliefs that lead to caring, positive teacher-student relationships, and these are rooted in trust and the high standards of professional ethics. In teacher education, we strive towards the training of "quality teachers" and one of the issues that these teachers will have to face is that of ethical dilemmas. An ethical dilemma is defined as "a situation of making a choice between two or more alternatives. An agent is in unpleasant and difficult situation because he/she often needs to make a choice between ethical and unethical alternatives, and when it comes to the ethical alternatives, he/she should choose the best one" (Figar & Đorđević, 2016:345). For the purposes of this study ethical dilemmas are defined as difficulties that pre-service teachers experience when they have to behave or make decisions rooted in the values of the profession (aspiration), and that are in the best interest of the learners, university, and society (obligation). While it seems logical to accept that PSTs will experience the same ethical dilemmas that in-service teachers experience, it should be acknowledged that they experience additional dilemmas due to the unique nature of being PSTs rather than full-fledged teachers. One such dilemma concerns a lack of mentorship and supervision from mentor-teachers (MTs) often encountered by PSTs (PrimTEd, 2019). PSTs face an array of dilemmas and many studies have highlighted them. These identified dilemmas include: the lack of competence of PSTs; unfair

treatment of learners (Woody, 2008); bullying between PSTs and MTs; lack of lesson preparation of PSTs; unfair assessment of learners; an obligation to teach sensitive curriculum content (Boon, 2011); and adherence to contrasting values held by PSTs and schools (McDonough, 2015). Moreover, relationships with TP stakeholders are another major ethical concern for PSTs. These include inappropriate relationships between PSTs and learners or between PSTs and in-service teachers; sexual harassment of PSTs by in-service teachers, or of learners or MTs by PSTs; cultural intolerance of PSTs; and PSTs' personal conduct in public spaces (Boon, 2011; Woody, 2008). These are just some of the ethical dilemmas that have been identified in the past.

Ethics policies for teaching practice

Certain international universities reveal guiding ethics policies that are specific to TP; for example, Western Sydney University (2016) has the policy documents a *Code of Conduct*, *Academic Misconduct* and *Non-academic Misconduct* for their PSTs. CoEs from international universities and teacher regulatory bodies, which include PSTs, highlight the core values expected of the teachers or PSTs, which are typically centred around integrity, respect, and responsibility (Victorian Institute of Teaching [VIT], 2016) and include "professional, ethical and legal protocols" (Western Sydney University, 2016:16). CoCs appear to include *professional conduct*, referring to relationships with learners, parents or caregivers, and colleagues; *personal conduct*; and *professional competence*, referring to the subject, pedagogical and didactical knowledge, assessment, and reflection practices (VIT, 2016). In their CoCs certain universities require of PSTs to adhere to national policies while doing TP. Students are required to sign the national CoE and/or CoC binding them to the same rules as in-service teachers (Southern Cross University, 2018; Western Sydney University, 2016). These CoEs and CoCs intend to prevent unethical behaviour, while also providing guidance when an ethical dilemma occurs. The codes also typically stipulate the protocol for reporting ethical dilemmas during TP (University of Canberra, 2018).

These codes, however, would be of no use if PSTs and other stakeholders in TP, such as the MTs and principals, who are expected to abide by them are unaware of them (Warnick & Silverman, 2011). International universities aim to ensure that their PSTs are aware of these codes by setting prerequisites for TP, such as requiring PSTs to complete ethics training or sign the CoE and/or CoC (Southern Cross University, 2018; Western Sydney University, 2016). It has been noted in a meeting with representatives from the University of Johannesburg, the University of Pretoria, the

University of South Africa and the Tshwane University of Technology, that although many universities include guidelines for TP in their course content, PSTs do not necessarily take note of these guidelines (BRIDGE, 2019).

Preparing pre-service teachers for ethics in teaching practice

Currently, the practices employed by certain universities to prepare PSTs for ethics in TP include an orientation of TP documents before the onset of TP (Anangisye, 2011; Boon, 2011) or the integration of the study of ethics into the curriculum (Moswela & Gobagoba, 2014). Studies by Boon (2011) in Australia, and Moswela and Gobagoba (2014) in Botswana, however, revealed that lecturers, school TP coordinators and especially PSTs confirmed a need for ethics to be presented as a standalone subject in ITE. They argue that PSTs are underprepared for ethics in TP and that a standalone subject can enhance teacher discipline and respect in the profession. Furthermore, in interviews with education lecturers in a study of five South African universities, participants explained that ethics can be included in the daily activities on campus (e.g. on time submission of assignments and integrity in assessments) to foster a culture of ethical behaviour, preparing them for future teaching (Rusznayak, 2018). As for requiring of PSTs to sign a CoC for TP, which includes disciplinary procedures, is common at universities internationally (Walters, Heilbronn & Daly, 2018); the absence of codes specific for TP at certain South African universities is of concern (Kriel, 2021:270). Another practice is to require PSTs to sign the national CoE or CoC for teaching (University of Fort Hare, 2021). However, in South Africa, PSTs are not included in the Code of Professional Ethics (SACE, 2021) and only final-year PSTs are occasionally, and provisionally, registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE, 2020), even though PSTs participate in TP from their first year of studying education onward.

Methodology

Research Design

A sequential explanatory, triangulation mixed-method design was constructed for this research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) to allow us to collect data in multiple phases, employing content analysis, surveys and interviews before merging the results.

Quantitative content analysis (Neuman, 2014) was performed on the ethics policy documents that South African universities make available online. This phase aimed to establish which codes and protocols are publicly available and served to guide the ethical behaviour and decision-making of PSTs during TP. The websites of the 21 public South

African universities offering various B.Ed. degrees were scoured for ethics policies related to TP. Each university was assigned a different alphabet letter to distinguish them. A number was then added to the letter to distinguish the various universities within a specific province. Since this step of the research was contingent on universities having a fully functional website, universities without a functional website at the time of the study were eliminated. This resulted in 18 universities for the research. As we focused on producing a framework catering specifically for Foundation Phase PSTs, all universities who do not offer Foundation Phase Education were removed from the sample. Finally, 14 universities remained in the sample. A word search was performed on each website, document repositories were scrutinised if available to the public, and the Education Faculty portal was inspected to locate ethics policies or TP documentation. The data were recorded on a predetermined checklist (Neuman, 2014) and then transferred to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to undergo descriptive statistical analysis (Yawe & Mubazi, 2015). Tables were drawn up to identify the frequencies of the various codes, ethical expectations, and protocols retrievable from university websites.

In the second quantitative phase of this study, two surveys were administered. The first was sent to 237 PSTs at a specific university. The second was sent to teaching practice coordinators (TPCs). The sample of the content analysis was retained; however, the survey was only sent to the 12 South African universities who granted ethical clearance for this research. Once the quantitative phases were completed, the qualitative, face-to-face interviews took place.

We used the *Survey of pre-service teacher experiences of ethics in teaching practice* as a participant selection tool (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) to identify PSTs who experienced ethical dilemmas during previous TP sessions. The survey was divided into section A, which collected biographical data and section B, which was used to determine which PSTs had previously experienced ethical dilemmas during TP, how PSTs were prepared to handle potential ethical dilemmas, and the support they had received when an ethical dilemma did arise. The survey included supplementary questions to gain more insight into the ethical practices regarding TP at the specific university. Fifty-five PSTs voluntarily completed the Google Form survey. These PSTs were assigned a pseudonym consisting of the letters "PST" and a number from 1 to 55 in the order in which the survey was completed. Once this survey had been analysed, the data were used to purposively select nine PSTs, who had experienced an ethical dilemma during a TP period to participate in follow-up interviews (Creswell &

Plano Clark, 2007). The pseudonyms of the previous phase were used to allow comparison between the data sets.

The *Teaching practice coordinator knowledge of ethics for teaching practice survey* was sent to TPCs at 12 South African universities who granted ethical clearance. This survey was used primarily to confirm and collate the results of the content analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). All the TPCs who participated in the survey were invited to a follow-up interview, however TPCs from only three universities agreed to participate in the follow-up interviews. The TPCs were assigned pseudonyms linked to the alphabet letters and numbers assigned to the universities they represented. At university A3 one TPC completed the survey and two additional TPCs (TPC A3.1, TPC A3.2 and TPC A3.3) attended the interview. Section A again collected biographical data, while the aim with section B was to check the results of the content analysis. Section C, which contained open-ended questions, probed the use of ethics policies and protocols at universities.

The survey data from sections A and B were analysed using descriptive statistics in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Yawe & Mubazi, 2015), and the qualitative open-ended questions in section C were analysed by means of thematic analysis (Ayress, 2008), employing structural coding to analyse each question separately (Saldaña, 2013).

Verbatim transcriptions were made of the interview recordings and returned to the participants for confirmation of accuracy (Preissle, Glover-Kudon, Rohan, Boehm & DeGroff, 2015). The transcriptions were analysed using thematic analysis (Saldaña, 2013). Each transcript was themed separately in the first cycle of coding prior to theme mapping to categorise the data and achieve focused coding in the second cycle of coding (Saldaña, 2013). Finally, focused coding revealed four overarching themes. PST interviews were analysed first. The overarching themes of TPC interviews were kept similar to the PST interviews, to ease the triangulation of data.

Triangulation

After all the data were analysed, it was interpreted by linking the findings of the various data sets in the discussion (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). Firstly, the data from the PST and TPC databases were combined with the content analysis to determine whether PSTs or TPCs were aware of ethics policies or guidelines not available online. Secondly, the data from the PST survey and PST interviews were compared. This allowed us to get in-depth reasons and explanations for the statement made in the surveys. Furthermore, it allowed us to identify changes in PSTs opinions. Thirdly, data from the TPC survey and TPC interviews were

compared. This allowed us to find explanations for the closed-ended question responses and gain more insight into the statements that the TPCs had made in the open-ended section of their surveys. It also enabled us to look for discrepancies. Finally, we combined PST and TPC datasets. The information we acquired during the merging of the datasets was used to create a policy framework for ethics in TP.

Ethical Matters

We applied for ethical clearance from all universities we aimed to include, after obtaining an ethical clearance certificate (EFEC 1-12/2019) from the university where the project was registered. We then applied for ethical clearance from the 14 universities with functional websites, offering a B.Ed. Foundation Phase degree, which we aimed to include. However, only 12 provided written ethical clearance. Each participant had to sign an informed consent form before they participated. All transcriptions were made using pseudonyms and personal information was removed from all data sets.

Findings and Discussion

The main goal with this research was to pinpoint various guidelines that South African universities and TP stakeholders could consult when developing policies for ethics in TP. With this in mind, all data were viewed through the lens of applied ethics, rooted in deontological ethics and anchored the findings of this study. This allowed us to provide policies and make various stakeholders of TP aware of these policies. Knowledge of these policies (including a code of conduct that stipulates acceptable behaviour) can motivate the PSTs to start thinking about their behaviour and decisions when they encounter possible ethical dilemmas. The guidelines could also be used internationally by adapting it to represent the stakeholders of other countries and including guidelines that cover the specific dilemmas that PSTs at those universities report. In the following section we discuss the various components included in the proposed policy framework for ethics in TP. Firstly, we discuss the stakeholders who should be involved in ethics policy development for TP. In the South African context, the university, school, and education stakeholders including the South African Council for Educators (SACE), the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the provincial education departments (in this case the Western Cape Education Department) were identified as key stakeholders. When the datasets were merged, seven broad categories were identified for inclusion in the guidelines for ethical behaviour and conduct during TP. These categories are discussed in the following section from broad guiding documents to more specific guidelines under the headings, Policies regarding ethics in education (including

the national ethics policies), a CoE, CoC, TP handbook and mentor-teacher guide, memoranda of understanding (MoU), and ethics training (PST and MT) (cf. Figure 2). Essential relationships between these categories were identified and discussed. Direct quotations are provided to support the

categories. Each TPC was assigned the pseudonym TPC and the code (letter and number) assigned in the content analysis to the university to which they were affiliated. PSTs received a pseudonym comprising the acronym PST and a number as recorded in the survey response spreadsheet.

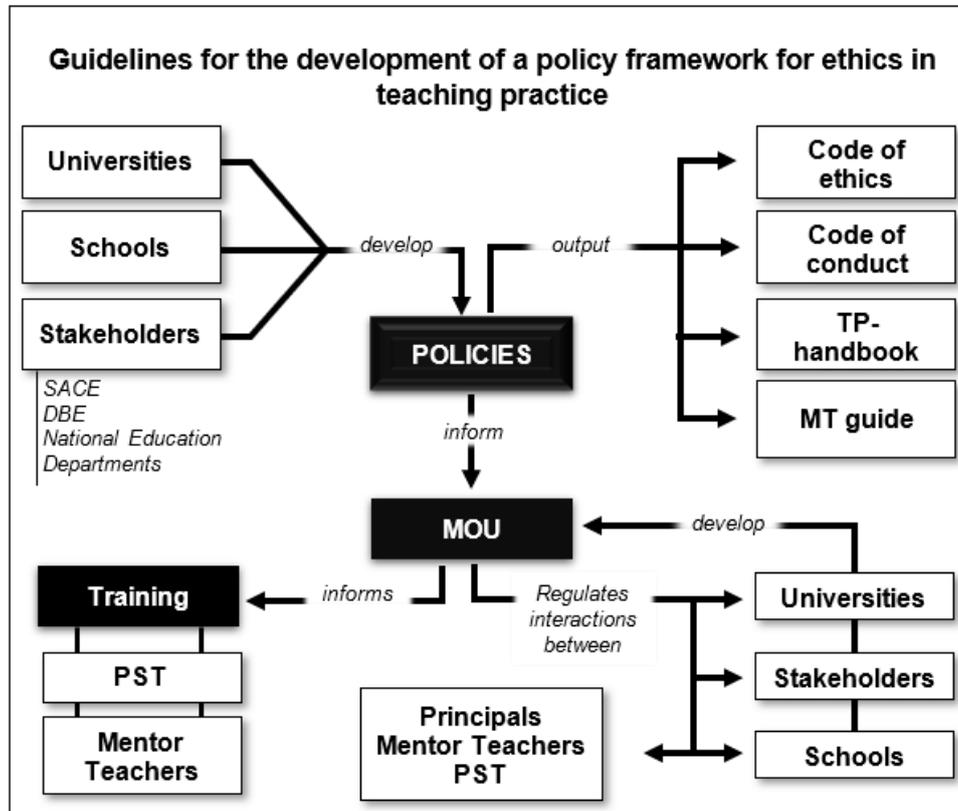


Figure 2 Guidelines for the development of a policy framework for ethics in teaching practice

Stakeholders in Teaching Practice

As seen in Figure 2, primary stakeholders include universities (staff and students), schools (principals, MTs and other staff) and national stakeholders (such as SACE, DBE, and provincial education departments). TPC surveys and interviews confirmed that each identified stakeholder could contribute to the policies that form part of the policy framework for ethics in TP: *“The DBE should provide protocols in collaboration with SACE for codes of conduct/ethics for teaching practice...”* (TPC A3.1).

In the PST survey, PSTs unanimously agreed that the DBE could be involved in policy development and implementation, as well as training of PSTs on these ethics policies for TP.

And I think the Department of Basic Education has a role in developing such code of conduct (PST21). Ethics workshops should be presented in cooperation with the DBE (PST53).

Policies regarding Ethics in Teaching Practice

Figure 3 represents the results of the content analysis of the ethics policies available online. Only two of the 14 universities in the sample had multiple ethics policies and protocols on the predetermined checklist. The PST survey also revealed that PSTs believed there were not enough ethics policies and protocols at the university, or if they did exist, participants were unaware of them: *“No. Students are not aware of the necessary steps that should be taken whenever they face a dilemma during their teaching practice”* (PST23).

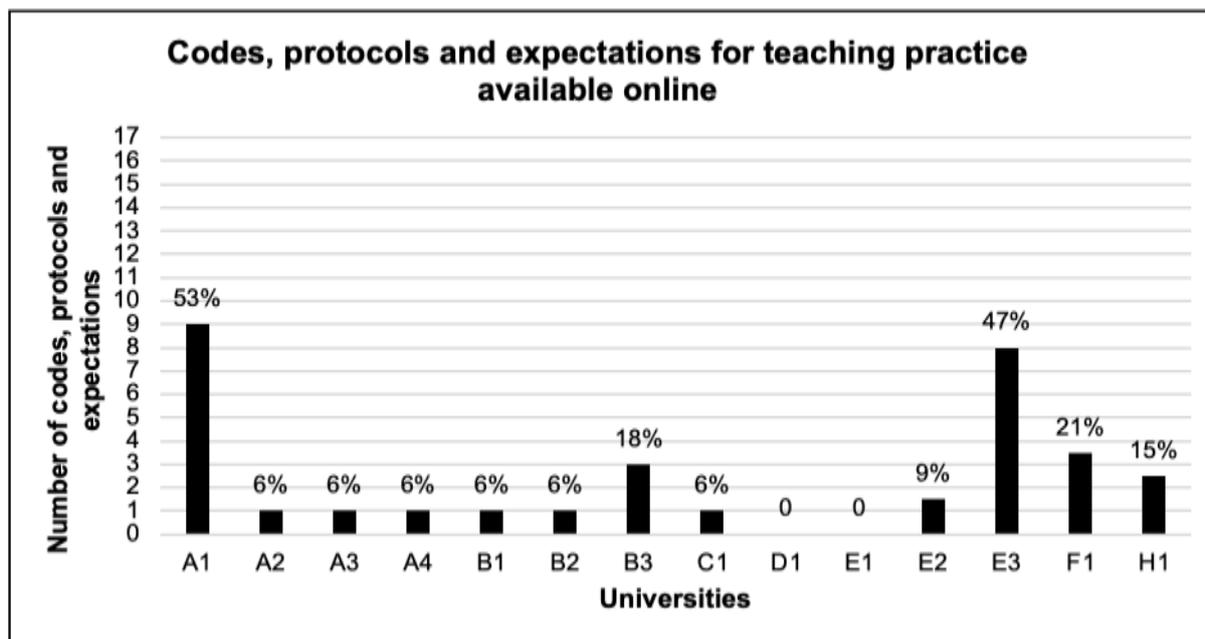


Figure 3 Policy documents, protocols, and expectations available online

PST interviews and surveys revealed that various PSTs perceived that they were not allowed to report ethical dilemmas, but this may be due to their lack of awareness of existing reporting protocols. While one PST indicated that a lecturer told them to ethical dilemmas to themselves, others were not sure where the idea had originated.

We as students have no idea what the ethical protocol is or when something should be seen as a [sic] ethical dilemma (PST3).

I did not know we were allowed to, if I could say it like this, that's how I felt, like I said, I got the idea that I was not allowed to talk about what happened at a school (PST9).

The TPCs revealed varying opinions of whether the university represented by each TPC had sufficient ethics policies and protocols. They also stressed the importance of constantly developing these policies, as new dilemmas arise.

No, I am not aware of any, at the moment HoD [Head of Department] handle any ethical dilemmas that might occur during teaching practice (TPC A4).

Yes, you always feel that you have enough in place but you have to constantly review and update what you have in place (TPC E2).

As various South African universities do not use the same policies, this finding could be expected. The fact that the TPC from university E3, which the content analysis and survey confirmed had multiple ethics policies and protocols in place (cf. Table 1), felt that the university still did not have adequate policies and protocols, confirms the need for improvement of these policies and protocols. Responses in the PST and TPC interviews suggested that university ethics policies, school ethics policies and national ethics policies could form part of a framework that guides ethical behaviour during TP.

Needs to be more aligned with the SACE professional conduct document (TPC F1).

I am sure the DBE has a document about it, but I think it would be wise to study a similar document as well as the practical teaching guide... (PST17).

Criteria	A2		A3		A4		B3		D1		E2		E3		F1		H1	
	CA	S																
Content analysis/survey concerning their knowledge and expertise.																		
18) Expectations of pre-service teachers towards the law.	X	✓	X	-	X	✓	X	✓	X	-	X	✓	✓	✓	X	-	X	X
19) Values expected of pre-service teachers.	X	✓	X	-	X	✓	X	✓	X	-	X	✓	X	✓	X	-	X	✓

Code	Content analysis (CA)	TPC survey (S)
✓	Was found online.	TPC agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
-	Was found as a sub-section of another policy.	TPC somewhat agreed with the statement.
x	Was not found online.	TPC disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

The ideal is to have a separate CoE and CoC to emphasise the importance of each code (Campbell, 2000). Braxton and Bayer (2004) affirm the importance of having these codes approved by the Faculty Board to enhance legitimacy and minimise difficulties when codes are enforced. TPCs argued that the legitimacy of codes may be enhanced even more if various South African universities collaborated to enhance standardisation, as PSTs from various universities completed TP at the same schools: “*It would help if there were a single document, to prevent students from feeling like outsiders when PSTs from other universities are at the school where they do their TP*” (TPC A4).

TPCs and PSTs recommended a regular review of these policies. TPCs further stressed the need for all stakeholders to sign ethics policies to ease execution thereof: “*... but now we realise that now we have to formalise it and make sure that they (PSTs and MTs) sign the document, and they commit themselves*” (TPC H1).

It was suggested during PST interviews and the TPC survey and interviews that the CoE and CoC for TP be aligned with the existing national policies of the DBE and SACE for the teaching profession.

I am sure the DBE has a document about it (code of ethics), but I think it would be wise to study a similar document as well as the practical teaching guide that we get that stipulates how you must behave at the school and then discuss that according to a dilemma that is raised. (PST17)

The DBE should provide protocols in collaboration with SACE for codes of conduct/ethics for teaching practice to ensure that Higher Education Institutions operate in these lines, it also provides guidance on a national level to ensure standards are aligned (TPC A3.1).

PSTs further suggested that the DBE could act as an authority, following up on policy breaches and providing a platform where PSTs and MTs can share and discuss their ethical dilemmas to inform future policies: “*Of [sic] a problem is found it is important for the DBE to follow up on these problems as it is a great possibility that these may occur on the future*” (PST17).

Although all stakeholders should be involved in the development of ethics policies for TP, the universities should be centrally situated in the development of these policies as they are responsible for the training and behavioural regulation of their PSTs.

Policies will have little value if stakeholders are unaware of them (Warnick & Silverman, 2011). While the closed-ended section of the TPC survey revealed that PSTs were mostly aware of ethics policies for TP (cf. Table 1), the open-ended section, in contrast, indicated that PSTs were unaware of them, and that the protocols within the policies were not specific enough: “*The ethical*

protocols are there but pre-service teachers should be made more aware of them and adhere to these protocols when on teaching practice” (TPC A2).

All stakeholders involved in TP should be made aware of all the relevant policies through ethics training. According to both samples, an online portal can ease the distribution of policy documents and consequently raise awareness thereof.

Inform students better - get policies in place and place on a platform for easy access (TPC D1).

And if you can't attend the training, you must at least be provided with a mentor guide (TPC A4).

Code of ethics to portray expected values and morals

As seen in Table 1, the TPC survey revealed that many universities had a CoE and CoC for the Education Faculty, and for TP. These results varied substantially in the findings of the content analysis, which revealed that none of the universities appeared to have existing CoEs specific for TP and only one had a CoE for the Education Faculty which was sub-section of the CoC. The possible reason for the lack of official CoEs for TP is that these codes often do not form part of the official university policies as explained in the TPC survey and interviews: “*At present it is not in a ... policy document. It's not very visible there, it basically is activity by activity. The information is, presented to students as guidelines*” (TPC A3.2).

Literature (Davids, 2016) highlights the importance of a CoE, as acting in the best interest of a learner sometimes requires a teacher or PST to behave outside the CoC. In such cases, they must be guided by values and morals of ethical behaviour, which could be instilled by employing a CoE (Forster, 2012). The core values included in the CoE should be determined by the university, although it is normally centred around respect, integrity, and responsibility (Forster, 2012; VIT, 2016; Woody, 2008). PSTs suggested the following values to be included in a CoE for TP: dedication, respect, patience, empathy, conscientiousness, consistency, hard work, and roles and responsibilities of an educator in alignment with national policy, and respectable attitude.

Code of conduct to guide pre-service teachers' behaviour

As seen in Table 2, question 5, the closed-ended section of the survey revealed that PSTs from university A4 received a CoC for TP from the university before the onset of TP. Question 7 shows that one PST claimed that the school where she performed TP provided a CoC. Many (41 of the 55) PSTs acknowledged that their MTs also signed the CoC. It is interesting to note that the content analysis did not uncover any online version of a CoC for TP for university A4 (cf. Table 1). From the follow-up interview it was deduced that the

CoC that PSTs signed was used to prepare them for ethics in TP: “We read and sign it and that is that.

So, I think addressing it in depth will help a lot” (PST17).

Table 2 Pre-service teacher survey closed ended questions

Question	Yes (n)	Yes (%)	No (n)	No (%)	No answer
1) Have you participated in teaching practice during your studies?	55	100	0	0	0
2) Did you receive training in ethics from your university?	46	84	9	16.3	0
3) If you answered yes in question 2, was the ethics training presented as a standalone subject, or integrated with another subject?	7= standalone 37 = integrated	13 67	0	0	11 (20%)
4) Does your university have a code of ethics for teaching practice, of which you are aware?	55	100	0	0	0
5) Does your university have a code of conduct for teaching practice that you are aware of?	55	100	0	0	0
6) Did you as a student sign a code of conduct/code of ethics before participating in teaching practice?	54	98	1	1.8	0
7) If you answered yes in question 4, who presented the code that you had to sign.	53 = university 1 = school 1 = other	96 2 2	0	0	0
8) Did your mentor-teacher sign a code of conduct/code of ethics before you started your teaching practice?	41	75	14	25.4	0
9) Did you ever experience an ethical dilemma while conducting teaching practice?	8	15	47	85	0
10) Were you aware of the protocol you had to follow when you experienced the dilemma (where and how to report it)?	6 5	11 56	6 3	11 33	43 (78%) 1 (11%)
11) How would you classify the ethical dilemma that you experienced?					
12) Give a brief explanation of the dilemma you encountered.					
13) Did you receive guidance and support from your university to handle the dilemma?	1 1	2 11	8 8	15 89	46 (84%) 0
14) Was the ethical dilemma resolved?	2 2	4 22	7 7	18 78	46 (84%) 0

The practice of signing a CoC, however, contradicts what the TPCs survey revealed and the deduction is made that the practice of signing a CoC is not followed by certain South African universities: “No, students have not been asked to sign a code of conduct. Or the SACE code of conduct” (TPC A3.2).

Various participants called for more specific guidelines to ensure that PSTs knew exactly what to do in each case. However, TPC A3.3 cautioned against this practice: “I think the challenge is because our context is so varied, so you could say okay if these guidelines around the, a flow diagram about what to do should this happen and who to contact and so on” (TPC A3.3).

In the PST interview phase of this study personal and professional conduct; relationships with learners, in-service teachers, parents and

caregivers; the relationship with the university, a protocol for reporting; as well as mentor-teacher conduct were identified as categories to be included in a CoC for TP. These categories were similar to The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct from Australia (VIT, 2016) and were grouped into three overarching categories: personal conduct, professional conduct, and protocol for reporting.

As reflected in Figure 4, the most common ethical dilemmas experienced by PSTs during TP could be linked to laws being broken. Other dilemmas that PSTs from university A4 experienced were due to their personal values being different from those of the school, and school policies and practices that they regarded as unethical.

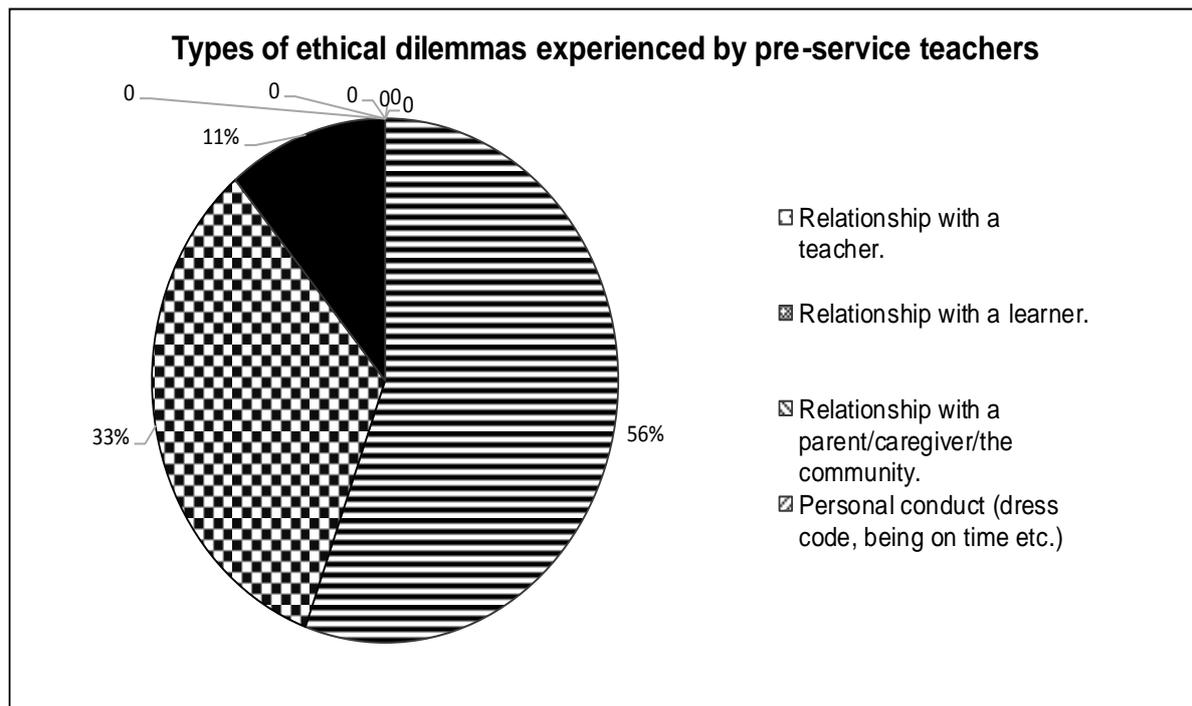


Figure 4 Types of ethical dilemmas experienced by pre-service teachers

One aspect that was uncovered in the PST interviews phase, alluded to the fact that senior management at schools often made comments towards the female PSTs that were either inappropriate or made the PST feel uncomfortable. Guidance on how to deal with this was also considered for inclusion in the personal conduct section of the framework. These comments are shown below:

... the principal made inappropriate comments towards the female students (TPC A4).

... student teacher was asked to leave because... the way which he is presenting himself wasn't in alignment with what the senior manager in the school felt that he should look like (TPC A3.3).

Professional conduct refers to effective subject knowledge and competent didactical skills for teaching as well as maintaining professional relationships (Boon, 2011; VIT, 2016). As seen in the following quotations these aspects could be included as sub-sections of professional conduct.

... do professional task promptly ... students' self-organisation... you have to do your lesson plans. You have to teach. You have to manage a class (TPC H1).

Remember they have to build a relationship, but it should be a working relationship ... This is what you should expect from their teacher, uh your mentor-teacher, this is how you have to relate to them (TPC H1).

We expected to find that ethical dilemmas in TP would be reported. However, PST and TPC interview data reveal that the lack of awareness of the official protocols was a significant reason for the insufficient reporting by PSTs and MTs,

highlighting the need for the reporting protocols and disciplinary procedures to be stipulated in the CoC: *"There are no clear indications of the steps that need to be followed to report ethical dilemmas in the teaching practice handbook or other documents"* (TPC A4).

PST interviews revealed fear of reporting, being unaware of their duty to report ethical dilemmas, and a perception that the university staff discourages reporting of ethical dilemmas as additional reasons for not reporting ethical dilemmas.

And I also don't know who this teacher knows and who she's gonna [sic] talk to ... and that can also kind of like make my future ... (PST26).

I am under the impression that you are not allowed to talk about what happened at your school (PST9).

PSTs suggested that a dedicated contact person at the university might enhance their reporting behaviour: *"... someone you can go to talk to that can help you and tell you: 'okay this is the next steps that you need to take'"* (PST9).

As seen in a previous quotation, one TPC suggested the inclusion of a flow diagram in the ethics policies, providing step-by-step guidance on whom to contact for reporting. Another suggestion was to create an online portal for easier and quicker reporting systems to improve the flow of a complaints to all relevant parties, while simultaneously enhancing record keeping: *"I would say online would be easier and faster"* (PST9).

These protocols could also be highlighted in the MoU between the principal, MT and PST.

The development of a teaching practice handbook

The PSTs and TPCs in their interviews highly recommended that a TP handbook be supplied by the university: *"I do feel they should still give the document, but it must be thoroughly discussed with the students"* (PST11).

MTs should also have access to this TP handbook before the onset of TP to ensure that they are fully aware of the expectations of the PST to be mentored: *"There's [sic] letter so that they all have to be on the same page ..."* (TPC H1).

The notes from the content analysis revealed that a TP handbook already existed at certain South African universities. The data suggest that a TP handbook could include academic, curricular, extra-curricular and ethical expectations of PSTs during TP. The latter can be achieved by including the CoE and CoC, as well as the MoU, or links to these, in the TP handbook.

... what you may wear, what is expected of you. It was the little things such as not using your phone or laptop during classes, being on time, being involved in extra-curricular activities, adapting to the plans of the teachers instead of telling her what to do. (PST27)

Space should be provided for the PST, principal, and MT to sign the codes and MoU included in the TP handbook, binding themselves to the expectations and entering into an agreement before the onset of TP: *"Yes, students and schools should be made to sign ethical protocols to ensure that everyone understands and adhere to these protocols"* (TPC B3).

PSTs should be expected to familiarise themselves with this content before they attend TP.

Mentor-teacher guide providing guidelines on values, behaviour and expectations of the mentor

The university could supply all MTs with a mentor-teacher guide (MT guide); however, PSTs should also have access to the MT guide to enhance transparency: *"Once a student comes to the school... they present the mentor-teacher and the principal with a booklet ... that also then has a letter to the mentor-teacher explaining ... the mentor-teacher to interact with the student"* (TPC A3.2).

Transparency in expectations between PSTs and MTs can be achieved by making all policies available on an online portal. The MT guide could include guidelines on supervision, mentoring, evaluation of PSTs, a CoC for MTs, and an MoU for all. As indicated in the quotes below, where TPCs reported that PSTs experienced ethical dilemmas during their TP, the CoC for MTs could include guidelines regarding PSTs acting as a substitute teacher and how to handle racism.

During teaching practice, some of the teachers would, will leave them with the class whereas the students are supposed to learn from, from their mentors from the experienced class teachers (TPC

H1).

And often there has been also racial incidences as well, which is related to the hair issue (TPC A3.2).

Other matters that could be included are related to sexual harassment, religion, physical assault, corporal punishment, verbal assault, duty of care, teaching and learning, power relationships, reporting of ethical dilemmas, as well as bribes and gifts.

Memorandum of understanding to formalise teaching practice partnerships

The PST and TPC surveys revealed that not all universities required of the PSTs and MTs to sign a code of conduct. Furthermore, during PST interviews it was reported that MTs were sometimes not aware of what was expected of them as mentors nor what the PST was expected and allowed to do during TP. Signing an MoU may facilitate the formalisation of partnerships between stakeholders in TP. The MoU should raise awareness with all parties of the various policies that they were expected to abide by. This could enhance ethical behaviour and relationships during TP. The MoU should be informed by the various ethics policies discussed under the policy sub-heading.

University, stakeholders and schools

Although TP forms part of the minimum requirements for ITE (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2015), TP is dependent on the willingness of schools to host and mentor PSTs. A mutual agreement is necessary to protect all stakeholders and ensure that TP remains above board and contributes to PST training: *"To formalise our communication and partnership with the schools around us so that like you said earlier, uhm clarity between the University and the school itself"* (TPC A3.2).

Principal, mentor-teacher and pre-service teacher

As many ethical dilemmas seem to arise from the relationships between the PSTs and principals or MTs, an MoU between these parties was recommended, particularly by TPCs. The aim of an MoU could be to guide the ethical behaviour of PSTs, principals and MTs, to ensure mutual respect: *"... at least an understanding, whether it's an MoU between the university's institution and the school, and then funnelling it down between the mentor and the mentee ..."* (TPC A3.3).

Training stakeholders on ethics in teaching practice

PST surveys and interviews revealed that PSTs often felt unprepared for ethics in TP. PST and TPC interviews also indicated that MTs were often unaware of what was expected of them regarding the mentoring of students. Ethics training for all TP stakeholders needs to be considered in the

framework for ethics in TP as none of the policies or protocols will have value if TP stakeholders are not aware of them.

Pre-service teacher training

Universities are responsible for the training of their PSTs. The lack of TPC awareness of whether or how ethics are currently presented, highlights the absence of fruitful transparency between academic and administrative departments that work with TP. TPCs and PSTs recommended that training include raising ethical awareness and reasoning among PSTs; training them in ethics theory, ethics policies, laws and national ethics policies; pedagogy and didactic training; and debating values of the CoE with PSTs. These training needs were echoed by the following PSTs' statements:

What are my rights if I acted unethically? What are my responsibilities? How can I protect myself if I did not act ethically, or if I did act ethically towards a teacher or parent or whatever? (PST11)

... we would have known whom to go to, how to report it and what steps to follow when something like that happened, if it was addressed (PST53).

... it is just something we are taught. 'This is the values you should have' 'These are the principles you should have' ... It should rather be a discussion between the students and the lecturers where we can give our opinion. (PST17)

PSTs recommended that ethics training takes place by means of ethics case studies where previous ethical dilemmas experienced by PSTs are solved by applying ethical policies for TP. PSTs also suggested ethics workshops and providing a TP handbook before the start of TP to guide them. Other recommendations were that ethics training be included as a standalone subject and that ethics be integrated in all aspects of teacher training through matters such as punctuality and addressing lecturers with formality. Some PSTs even suggested that completion the ethics module should be a prerequisite for being allowed to do TP.

If you physically have to follow the steps, you will remember it better (PST53).

Especially in the fourth year it should be a standalone subject. I do not think 4 weeks before teaching practice each year will be enough to cover all the content (PST11).

TPC surveys revealed that PSTs at South African universities were, at least to an extent, made aware of ethics policies for TP before they attended TP, but they seldom signed a CoE or CoC. While the data in Table 1 reveals that TPCs generally believed that PSTs were aware of what was expected of them regarding ethics in TP, Table 2 shows that five of the nine PSTs from university A4 who have experienced ethical dilemmas were not aware of the reporting protocols that they were expected to follow when ethical dilemmas occurred during TP. An additional six participants who were not expected to continue with the survey also indicated that they were not aware of the protocols.

As portrayed in Figure 3, the contrast found in the available policies, protocols and expectations at various universities provided a possible explanation. As seen in Table 1, a few TPCs indicated that PSTs lacked awareness regarding relationships with staff and parents, caregivers, and the community; personal ethical conduct; and laws related to teaching. In general, the content analysis confirmed a dearth of policies, protocols, and expectations available online.

Another recommendation was to involve the DBE and SACE in ethics training to compel PSTs to adhere to the rules. Participants suggested that this training should include critical engagement with all ethics policies discussed in the sub-sections on policies and a memorandum of understanding, as well as national ethics policies, provided by stakeholders.

We do spend time looking at what are those national sort of policy guidelines that are there around ethics and code of conduct, and then it's funnelled down to the University ... So, there's like the broader macro that they understand that you are part of this profession in the code and the ethical guidelines comes from SACE. (TPC A3.3)

Mentor-teacher training

The participants affirmed that poor mentorship and bad examples set by MTs were two main reasons why PSTs experienced ethical dilemmas during TP. PSTs and TPCs suggested that MTs could receive training on expected ethical behaviour, how to be effective mentors, and how to supervise and evaluate PSTs during TP. PSTs argue that MT training could include critical engagement with the content discussed in the MT guide. PSTs and TPCs suggested that stakeholders in TP collaborated with the university to present compulsory training, and TPCs suggested that the training be SACE-accredited and linked to continuous professional development (CPTD) points, sometimes referred to by teachers as CPD points.

And even up to now our curriculum does not have a mentoring curriculum ... Some of them are working on the experience that, when I was a student, this is what the teacher was doing you know ... So, the Department of Education, even if they can't do it themselves, they can say to universities: 'We are giving you this amount of money to train our teachers on mentoring.' (TPC H1)

You motivate the mentor-teachers to attend these trainings by giving the CPD points (TPC A4).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was guided by the question of what guidelines needed to be considered for the development of a policy framework for ethics in TP. Furthermore, we aimed to reveal what ethical policies for TP currently existed and which ethical dilemmas PSTs encountered during TP. Finally, we attempted to explore PSTs' and other stakeholders'

assessments of their preparation to deal with these ethical quandaries. In this article, we present guidelines that universities can use to create a framework for ethics in TP in order to meet the needs of their PSTs. In the following section we describe the recommendations that should be included in the guidelines.

It is recommended that universities consider establishing a CoE for TP to guide PSTs regarding the values and morals expected of them during TP and to guide them when they need to make difficult ethical decisions and the CoC does not present the best outcome for the learners. A CoC is recommended to provide specific guidelines to PSTs on how they are expected to behave during TP. A TP handbook could also be included in the framework to ensure that all PSTs are aware of what is expected of them during the TP period – not only regarding ethical decision-making and behaviour, but also regarding academic, curricular and extra-curricular expectations. It is also recommended that an MT guide could be provided to all MTs to inform them of what is expected of them during the TP period in terms of supervision, mentoring, evaluation of PSTs and their own conduct. This MT guide could include a CoC specific for MTs. Finally, it is recommended to include an MoU between the university, TP stakeholders and the school, as well as an MoU between the principal, MT and PST in the framework for ethics for TP. The aim of an MoU should be to formalise the partnerships between TP stakeholders and direct the ethical behaviour of all stakeholders during TP.

This research also revealed the importance of including ethics training for PSTs and MTs in the framework for ethics in TP, to encourage ethical behaviour during TP. The training for all parties should involve the orientation of ethics policies, such as the CoE and CoC for TP, to ensure that all parties know what is expected of them regarding ethical behaviour during TP. Additional training should also be considered to heighten the general ethical awareness of PSTs as well as develop MTs' ethical supervision and mentoring skills.

We did not include in-service teachers, the DBE or SACE in this research. Consequently, the guidelines for the development of a policy framework for ethics in TP do not currently reflect the needs and expectations of all stakeholders in TP. It is recommended that a follow-up study be done to include these role players. Furthermore, not all South African universities participated in all the phases of the research, and the representation of the various universities decreased through the phases. In a follow-up study it should be attempt to include the TPCs and PSTs of all South African universities.

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Authors' Contributions

CK: Conceptualisation of the article, original draft, methodology, data collection and analysis. CL: conceptualisation of the framework, supervision, review and editing. CMK: conceptualisation of framework, supervision, review and editing. All authors reviewed the final article.

Notes

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