

# HOW DOES THE USE OF AN INTENSIVE TRAINING AND PRACTICE (ITAP) PERIOD ENHANCE STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENT EXPERIENCES, WHILST STRENGTHENING THEIR APPLICATION OF THEORY INTO PRACTICE?

REBEKAH GEAR N0368330

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: JULY 2023

**The Research Context**  
KSVB: TSK1, CVB5, CS11

Within the module I lead, Professional and Educational Development 3, there are allocated periods of professional practice or work experience embedded as part of the module design. The commissioned Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) (see Ramaiah and Robinson 2022) report acknowledges that work experience is the most well-evidenced programme, which demonstrates a strong association with better graduate outcomes. Furthermore, it is noted that these experiences are fundamental in closing gaps in student attainment, something to which the NTU Success for All initiative expresses an institutional commitment. Within NTU's participation plan (NTU 2020), there is clear guidance on the expectation that every course must include relevant work experience for all students. However, recent research from Ramaiah and Robinson (2022) claimed that multiple smaller work-experience opportunities appear to be more beneficial. This resonates with how the periods of professional practice have been historically designed and distributed within the module I lead, with a smaller week-long placement, prior to a longer block of 8 weeks.

However, in terms of my professional context, Initial Teacher Training (ITT), we are approaching big changes, commencing September 2024. One significant change is regarding how periods of work experience are conducted. This involves introducing periods of 'Intensive Training and Practice' (ITaP). The core aim of an ITaP is to strengthen the link between evidence and classroom practice (Marshall et al 2023). Their guidance recommends a blend of time in classrooms alongside elements delivered directly by an ITT settings, including approximations of practice that allow trainees to put theory into practice and receive feedback outside of a classroom environment. An ITaP differs from other examples of on-the-job training, due to the intense focus on specific pivotal areas.

This study aims to explore the impact of adapting a week-long period of professional placement, into a formal ITaP structure, set out by the National Institute of Teaching (2023).

**Literature Review**  
KSVB: CVB4

Previously, the ITT Market Review (2021), which was pivotal in instigating national-level policy changes to ITT, concluded that there was a limited number of sources that evidenced the prevalence of professional practice and on-the-job experiences alongside the integration of theory in current UK ITT provider programmes. The review reflected on previous research from Perry et al (2019), which examined the close integration of university and on-the-job in school experiences. They affirmed that learning via practice and in practice is significant and needed to be developed further by ITT providers. Perry et al's (2019) review, presented good practices from international providers, including the Netherlands, who demonstrated a close integration of the university and school-based experiences within their ITT programmes (Burn and Mutton, 2015).

Kugel (1993) previously explored the importance of enabling students to absorb what they are being taught through enabling them to apply this in practice. This notion is routed within the ITaP Model, which aims to synthesise the actions of the student becoming research informed and how this is applied into their professional practice and work experiences (Sahlberg et al. 2014). The vision of the ITaP is to create an experience that builds on carefully sequenced training curricula, with knowledge and competencies that are pinpointed, which are thus then applied in a period of intensive practice.

The National Institute of Teaching (see Marshall et al 2023) devised a five-stage framework to support providers to design an ITaP experience, which was developed from research conducted by Grossman (2018). Grossman (2018) advocates an approach to practice-based teacher training, which identifies "core practices" of teaching and then supports novice teachers in learning how to enact them competently. Consequently, the National Institute of Teaching's (2023) five-stage framework is as follows: introduce, analyse, prepare, enact and reflect. It is their vision that ITT providers carefully select activities that matched each of the five elements, including lectures, assigned readings, lesson observations, instructional rehearsals with mentors, and instructional coaching.

This study will explore how the ITaP five-stage approach is utilised when developing a pilot ITaP for the Professional and Educational Development Stand on the BA Primary in Education course (year 3). It will consider how this approach to professional practice can have an impact on student experiences and their understanding of how to apply theory in practice.

An ITaP takes a laser-focused look at key aspects of teaching to make the link between the theory and practice in a short time, with live feedback to help trainees develop rapidly in foundational areas that the rest of their practice can then be built upon (The National Institute of Teaching 2023)

**The Question**

KSVB: CS3, CVB4, TSS4

Reflective and interrogative practice (Agee 2009)

Questions emerge from problems (Andrews 2003)

Curiosity should drive the research (White 2013)

Generate useful knowledge (Biesta, Filippakou, Wainwright and Aldridge 2019)

Develop from passion (Agee 2009)

As the current module leader for the Professional and Educational Development 3 module, it is my ambition to create the best possible experiences for our students. Having previously explored inclusive practice discourses, and with consideration of the NTU's (2020) participation plan, I decided to devise a study that would explore how I could enhance the placement experiences, already within the module programme. This is in line with national agendas and the shift towards the application of an ITaP approach in ITT.



**The ITaP structure and overview**

**The professional learning focus: "high-quality talk and teacher questioning supports pupil understanding"**

(establishing the value of talk and classroom dialogue, space for discussion, prompts and structures)

**CCF links: Learn that...**

- 4.7 High-quality classroom talk can support pupils to articulate key ideas, consolidate understanding and extend their vocabulary.
- 4.6 Questioning is an essential tool for teachers; questions can be used for many purposes, including to check pupils' prior knowledge, assess understanding and break down problems.
- 5.3 Adapting teaching in a responsive way, including by providing targeted support to pupils who are struggling, is likely to increase pupil success.

**CCF links: Learn how to...**

**Stimulate pupil thinking and check for understanding, by:**

- 4m Receiving clear, consistent and effective mentoring in how to provide scaffolds for pupil talk to increase the focus and rigour of dialogue.
- And - following expert input - by taking opportunities to practise, receive feedback and improve at:
- 4o Including a range of types of questions in class discussions to extend and challenge pupils (e.g. by modelling new vocabulary or asking pupils to justify answers).
- 4p Providing appropriate wait time between question and response where more developed responses are required.
- Provide opportunity for all pupils to experience success, by:
- 5e Observing how expert colleagues adapt lessons, whilst maintaining high expectations for all, so that all pupils have the opportunity to meet expectations and deconstructing this approach.

Taken from the ITE Core Content Framework (CCF) Twiselton et al (2019)

**Autumn 2023-24 Plan: before/during/after Enrichment week ITaP placement period:**

Reference to The National Institute of Teaching (2023) five-stage framework

Taught input in sessions focusing on specific CCF areas above, context in-school English, Mathematics and science

1. (**Introduce**) initial exploration of the theory, aspect, evidence base (lecture, seminar, subject teaching sessions, readings)
2. (**Analyse**) observation and expert discussion (video materials, expert deconstruction, expert modelling, guest lecture demonstration)
3. (**Prepare**) construction (lesson planning, and trialling of trainee's first attempt (deliberate practice, role-plays, rehearsals, peer-teaching), expert discussion)
4. (**Enact**) trainee's attempt in-school/setting with class (co-planning with mentor, team/solo teaching)
5. (**Assess**) expert feedback and individual target setting (discussion with mentor, self-reflection).

**Research Project Timeline**

**Phase 1: Introduce & Analyse Teaching Weeks 10-14**

University Curriculum and Pedagogical Studies 3 Module teaching in English, Mathematics and Science featuring a focus on high-quality talk (see CCF links)

**Phase 2: Prepare, Enact & Assess Teaching Week 15**

During the ITaP placement week there will be: Observation of lesson(s) - focus on developing classroom talk, prepare to teach a lesson (one of Eng/ma/sci) - focus on developing classroom talk, expert feedback and discussion with a mentor to support self-reflection

**Phase 3: Evaluation & Evidence Gathering (see Research Methods) Teaching Week 16-20**

Questionnaires will be distributed to students to enable their perspectives and experiences of the ITaP to be gathered and reviewed. On receipt of questionnaire feedback, a thematic analysis will be conducted and a series of questions will be formed in support of follow-up semi-structured interview schedule.

Method	References	Advantages	Disadvantages	Justify rejection/selection
Questionnaire	Denscombe (2017)		Imbalances can occur when response rate is low	I will use a mixture of Likert Scales and written responses to gather initial feedback on students' perceptions and experiences of the ITaP period. This will overcome the issue of making this easily accessible whilst ensuring I gain a good understanding of impact, in preparation for the thematic analysis, which will support the construction of the semi-structured interview schedule. As the questionnaires will be anonymous, students will be asked to create a unique 'code word' for their questionnaire response, meaning should they wish to withdraw, their response will be uniquely traceable. Students will be emailed a link directly during Week 16, and will be allocated time in during the teaching timetable (as part of an asynchronous task) to complete it, should they wish to.
	Tymms (2017)	Use multiple choice scale such as a Likert scale, to make it accessible	Understanding you get is limited	
Semi-Structured Interviews	Denscombe (2017)	Opinions and feelings are explored in a structured and controlled way		I will use the data collected from the initial online questionnaire (conducted through a thematic analysis) to inform a semi-structured interview schedule. I will explore in greater detail the students' experiences of the ITaP, and whether it was more impactful to their practice, in particular the application of theory into practice, in comparison to previous placement experiences. Questions within the interview schedule will be structured carefully to make sure it is not time-consuming and will be shared in advance with the students. I will consider how my relationship with the participants may impact their responses and keep questions open-ended to let the participants lead the conversation. I will aim to conduct 8 semi-structured interviews, some with beneficiary group students, which equates to 10% of the cohort.
	Mears (2017)	Opportunity for the researcher to follow up with further questions	Consider the researcher and participants relationship	
	Kara (2017)	Can consider observational elements	Time consuming	

Figure 1: Strengths and Weaknesses of different methods

**Outcomes and Conclusions (TBC)**  
KSVB: CVB4, TSS4

It is anticipated that the structure of the ITaP will benefit students' application of theory into practice. The intensive focus on 'High-Quality Talk' will ensure theory attention is drawn specifically to the impact of their on children's learning following exploration of the theory in taught university sessions, which will be previously introduced in the build-up to the session. It is hoped that the final stage of the ITaP, 'Assess' where expert colleagues support reflective professional dialogues around their practice and experience will help students affirm the impact of their in-school experiences (Enact). Finally, it would be the aim that the ITaP would help trainees develop rapidly in foundational areas that the rest of their practice could then be later built upon (The National Institute of Teaching 2023).

I aim to share this research proposal with my course team so the implementation of this project can be considered to measure the impact of this pilot ITaP in real-time during the Autumn Term 2023.

**KSVB Links: CS3, CS4, CS6, CS11, CK2, TSK1, TSS4, CVB4, CVB5**

**Research Design & Methodology**

**Therapeutic-practitioner based research, addressing a problem in a particular context**

**Empirical-grounded on observation**

**Applied-conducted for an advancement of knowledge**

**Theoretical-grounded on theory but seeking to test and build upon**

**Idiographic-to describe and understand the individuals and context**

**Original- with the aim to add to the knowledge and understanding of that field**

**My Research Methodology (Coe 2017)**

**Consent**

I will work within the idea of informed consent which is a traditional notion of ethical conduct in research (Jones 2011).

**Choice**

I will deliberate the choices that I make (Denscombe 2017), including the selection of the participants and how my data collection methods will meet their individual requirements and experiences of the research.

**Role**

I will consider how being the researcher, and fully involved, will not remove power imbalances (Kara 2015). I must reflect on the role I play outside of the research, as I am the module leader, lecturer, and placement lead in the research context (Hammersley and Traianou 2012).

**Anonymity**

Participants will remain anonymous within the study with all data collected stored on an encrypted file on Nottingham Trent Universities OneDrive system.

**Ethics**

I will ensure that all participants are fully informed, will not remove power imbalances (Kara 2015). I must reflect on the role I play outside of the research, as I am the module leader, lecturer, and placement lead in the research context (Hammersley and Traianou 2012).

**Consent**

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