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ARTICLE



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How everyday classroom experiences in an international teaching internship raise student teachers' awareness of their subjective educational theories

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how 33 student teachers' reflections during 106 'bumpy moments' while in an international student teaching internship reveal their professional beliefs, and how the moments make the student teachers reflect upon their subjective educational theories. Student teachers described four themes of professional beliefs: (1) pedagogical content knowledge, (2) school context, (3) organisational skills and (4) self-reflection. Their reflections highlighted aspects of their subjective educational theories when they perceived they lacked an appropriate practical teaching strategy or they had pedagogical interactions with pupils or supervisors. The student teachers' reflections on pedagogical interactions in a crosscultural context made them aware of moral dimensions in teaching and their own position during normative (inter)actions. The findings of this study indicate that teacher educators should focus on everyday teaching details that occur during bumpy moments in a student's teaching practice to explicate larger concepts such as the student teachers' beliefs.

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Subjective educational theory; bumpy moments; international teaching internship; teachers' beliefs; teachers' reflections

Introduction

The growing emphasis on performance- and evidence-based education suggests that teachers can obtain objective knowledge about 'what works' in the classroom (Biesta 2015, 80; Kelchtermans 2009, 266). However, this notion of objectivity increasingly contradicts the idea that teaching can never be objectified, since it is an unavoidably subjective and moral endeavour (Biesta 2014; Buzzelli and Johnston 2002; Fenstermacher 1990; Hansen 2001). Teaching involves a continuous interplay between an educational system with various sophisticated instruments (e.g. protocols and descriptions of learning outcomes), and a teacher's subjective use of those instruments in their classroom, since standard approaches are rare (Bakker 2016; Biesta 2014, 2017; Kelchtermans 2009). One stakeholder in this interplay is the teacher educator, who struggles to bridge their desire to objectify the student teacher's professionalisation on the one hand, and the student teacher's subjectivity on the other (Korthagen 2017; Martínez et al. 2017; Shapira-



Lishchinsky 2011; Sockett 2006). What is also problematic is the fact that educators can experience difficulty understanding their own subjectivity, which further hinders them in coaching future teachers (Bullough 2011; Sockett and LePage 2002; Willemse, Lunenberg, and Korthagen 2008).

Bakker (2016) describes the subjectivity/objectivity discrepancy in teacher education in terms of 'instrumental and normative professionality'. Instrumental professionality means that student teachers need to be acquainted with the educational system and 'master the knowledge and skills of the professional as presupposed by the system' (Bakker 2016, 13). Simultaneously, a student teacher knows that in the end she or he will always have to make a professional judgement based upon subjective interpretations within this system of knowledge and skills. Bakker (2016) defines this situation as normative professionality, while other authors often refer to this as teachers' subjective educational theories (Kelchtermans 2009; Martínez et al. 2017). Bakker emphasises how instrumental and normative professionality are complementary. However, in practice, the emphasis on performance and evidence-based (student) teacher education increasingly underlines instrumental professionality (Biesta 2014, 2017; Korthagen 2017).

Therefore, teacher educators need more insight about how to explicate or guide subjective aspects of teaching (Biesta 2014; Kelchtermans 2009; Sanger and Osquthorpe 2013; Shapira-Lishchinsky 2011). Situations in which student teachers find themselves confronted with unfamiliar pedagogical practices and their lack of useful teaching strategies can be important experiences for explicating student teachers' subjective educational theories (Kelchtermans 2009; Körkkö, Kyrö-Ämmälä, and Turunen 2016; Levin and He 2008; Martínez et al. 2017). Biesta (2010) proposes that experiences that interrupt a student teacher's practice help them to reflect on their subjective educational theories. This pedagogy of interruption means that the student teacher's existing ways of thinking and acting are no longer taken for granted, or are not necessarily working. These experiences help student teachers to shape their personal voice as moral, individual and responsible beings. Van Manen (1991, 23) describes teachers' personal voices as pedagogical intents 'of who and what we are, and how we actively and reflectively stand in the world'.

This study uses 'bumpy moments' (Romano 2006) during classroom situations in an international student teaching internship to explore how these moments can interrupt or support teachers' enactment of existing professional beliefs. Romano (2006) defines a bumpy moment as: 'moments in teaching that require a teacher to respond immediately and [are] not easily solved (for any number of reasons), [have] importance for the teacher, and [are] perceived to have future implications or an effect on the students in the classroom'. This exploration of bumpy moments can provide insight into student teachers' subjective educational theories (English 2013; Fives and Buehl 2012; Kelchtermans 2009), especially because these theories are also culturally determined (Jang and Kim 2010; Marginson 2014; Tam 2016). During teaching internships, student teachers usually begin to understand the aspects of the mandatory knowledge and skills they were taught that they personally value and believe to be useful for their classroom (Alsup 2006; Biesta 2014; Kelchtermans 2009). Student teachers in international internships are resituated in unfamiliar teaching environments and temporarily exposed to traditions and values of other (school) cultures, which can further enhance their awareness of their existing professional beliefs (English 2013; Montgomery 2010; Pence and Macgillivray 2008).



Theoretical framework

Teachers' beliefs

There is a growing body of literature on the role of teachers' beliefs, both in teacher education and teaching in general (e.g. Fives and Buehl 2012; Kagan 1992; Kelchtermans 2009; Pajares 1992; Richardson 2003). Studies on teacher beliefs in the 1980s and 1990s placed beliefs within the context of teacher thinking, especially focusing on understanding potential changes in teachers' cognition and behavior, and describing the knowledge and beliefs underlying changes in their teaching practice (e.g., Guskey 1986; Nespor 1987; Pajares 1992; Shulman 1986). For example, Kagan (1992) defined beliefs as implicit assumptions by which teachers interpret their work, teacher-student interaction, pedagogy or subject matter.

Since then, various studies have provided insight into student teachers' beliefs regarding teaching pedagogy and teaching knowledge (e.g. Kagan 1992; Mishra and Koehler 2006; Tam 2016; Zheng 2009), including classroom decision-making (Pajares 1992), and judgements and routines (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Meirink et al. 2009).

More recent studies underline how beliefs are key in illustrating and understanding the complexity of teachers' teaching purposes, preferences or images of the teacher they want to become, as important aspects of their professional development (Biesta, Priestley, and Robinson 2015; Kelchtermans 2009; Körkkö, Kyrö-Ämmälä, and Turunen 2016; Levin and He 2008; Sanger and Osquthorpe 2013). Therefore, Fives and Buehl (2012) and Zheng (2009) view beliefs as a multidimensional filter for interpreting and sense-making in their work and as frames for defining problems, or guides or standards for action.

This study is based on a similar notion from Kelchtermans (2009), who stated that teachers' beliefs and knowledge constitute their subjective educational theory and how that influences their professional development. According to Kelchtermans (2009), teachers' subjective educational theory, which is influenced by past and present experiences and future expectations, guides their work, makes them reflect on their teaching practice and helps them understand who they are as professionals (see also Biesta, Priestley, and Robinson 2015; Dewey 1938; Van Manen 1994). Kelchtermans (2009) describes how teachers' subjective educational theory and their professional self-understanding together dynamically constitute their personal interpretative framework.

Bumpy moments, teachers' agency and beliefs

One of the ways to understand teachers' professional beliefs is to consider the interplay of teachers' decisions and judgements in their daily teaching practice (Biesta 2015; Biesta and Tedder 2007; Johnson and Reiman 2007; Ruitenberg 2011). Student teachers' beliefs are tested, confirmed and sometimes modified during various subjective interpretations and social interactions in everyday classroom situations. These interpretations and interactions are often new, unique or unpredictable (Martínez et al. 2017; Shapira-Lishchinsky 2011), because there is little time to rationally or morally reflect on what is the appropriate thing to do (Dewey 1938; Van Manen 1994). Biesta, Priestley, and Robinson (2015, 626) describe teacher's agency as something that is understood as an 'emergent phenomenon

of actor-situation transaction' and not as 'a property, capacity or competence – but is something that people do'.

The concept of a bumpy moment (Romano 2006), defined earlier, is used in this study to describe daily classroom situations during an international teaching internship. All teachers experience the necessity of a quick, almost intuitive, response to an issue in their daily teaching practice, ranging from a pupil testing the teacher to a well-prepared PowerPoint presentation that doesn't work (Kelchtermans 2009; Schön 1987; Van Manen 1994). Romano (2006) describes a teacher's tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1966; Tännsjö 2013) as part of experiences wherein 'amidst the continuous classroom activity, teachers often act on such problems intuitively, instincts that are less reflective, yet their actions are still based on what they know or believe'. Several studies have indicated that more attention should be paid to teachers' emotions when trying to understand the role of teachers' beliefs (Fives and Buehl 2012; Fried, Mansfield, and Dobozy 2015).

Reflecting on bumpy moments

For future teachers who want to interpret how their beliefs (sometimes intuitively) play a role within the complexity of their classroom (Fives and Buehl 2012; Polanyi 1966; Zheng 2009), reflecting on their teaching practice is key (Korthagen 2017; Schön 1983). Reflection helps student teachers think, evaluate their experiences or cope with professional challenges (Körkkö, Kyrö-Ämmälä, and Turunen 2016; Korthagen 2010, 2017; Luttenberg, Oolbekkink-Marchand, and Meijer 2018; Schön 1987). Kelchtermans (2009) has emphasised how reflection assists (student) teachers' professional self-understanding and awareness of subjective educational theories. Körkkö, Kyrö-Ämmälä, and Turunen (2016, 199) describe how practicum-related reflection, including discussions with peer students and supervisors, can be especially relevant in understanding subjective aspects of teaching, thus increasing the (student) teacher's awareness of their feelings, beliefs and assumptions.

Luttenberg, Oolbekkink, and Meijer's (2018, 77–78) typology of reflections is used here to understand how student teachers reflect on their professional beliefs at stake during bumpy moments. This typology is based on traditions described by Coldron and Smith (1999). Luttenberg, Oolbekkink-Marchand, and Meijer (2018) define their typology as a heuristic framework with four forms of reflection, including the conditions for possible courses of reflection. The authors describe how the four types of reflections are based on key aspects in teacher professionalism: knowledge, autonomy and responsibility (Luttenberg, Oolbekkink-Marchand, and Meijer 2018). The typology (Figure 1) includes two dimensions that underlie the four reflection domains and make a distinction between theory and practice (justification-application dimension), and objective and subjective knowledge within education (knowledge-value dimension).

Luttenberg, Oolbekkink-Marchand, and Meijer's (2018) model was originally designed for reflections during action research. The reflections domains and the underlying dimensions are useful for understanding how student teachers' reflections can raise their awareness of professional beliefs. The four domains of reflection (see Table 1) are interconnected and should not be viewed separately. That means that the direction of each reflection is uncertain and distinct. Luttenberg, Oolbekkink-Marchand, and Meijer (2018) acknowledge that in the end, it is the student teacher who makes a choice on how to

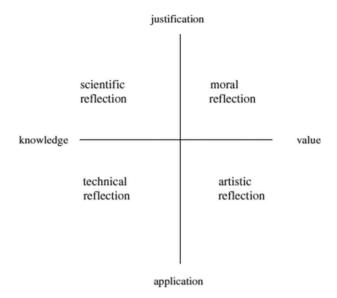


Figure 1. Dimensions and domains of reflection (Luttenberg, Oolbekkink-Marchand, and Meijer 2018).

Table 1. Four types of reflections and descriptions.*

| Type of reflection Description | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Type of reflection | Description | |
| Scientific reflection | Generalisable insights and knowledge (e.g. result of theories or scientific research activities) with an aim to understand what is true | |
| Technical reflection | The means, knowledge or skills to achieve a certain goal with an aim to understand what is effective and efficient | |
| Artistic reflection | The teacher's (personal) significance and autonomy that in real experiences within teaching practice aim to understand what is good | |
| Moral reflection | General values and the teacher's responsibility to manage these values in their teaching practice with an aim to understand what is just | |

^{*}Based on typology of Luttenberg, Oolbekkink-Marchand, and Meijer (2018).

reflect, which makes the model useful for our examination of student teachers' subjective educational theories.

The first aim of this study is to explore how student teachers' reflections on bumpy moments in an international teaching internship reveal significant professional beliefs. Second, we want to understand how the type of reflection the student teachers use to describe their bumpy moments provides insight into their subjective educational theories.

Methodology

Participants

Seventy-two alumni who had attended a Dutch teacher education programme from 2011–14 were asked to participate in the study. A total of 33 alumni agreed to participate. Their teaching disciplines included: History (n = 12), Geography (n = 3), Life Orientation (n = 2), Social Studies (n = 1), Arts (n = 2), English (n = 6), French (n = 1), Spanish (n = 1),

Biology (n=3), Chemistry (n=1) and Computer Science (n=1). This particular teacher education programme was selected because it specifically focuses on international education and includes an international internship. An important aim of the programme is to combine various aspects of pedagogical content knowledge with teaching competencies, such as cross-cultural awareness and reflection, and research. In the teacher education programme, students develop their teaching skills through the English language and learn to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of other cultures. Students conduct two teaching internships: one at an international or bilingual school in the Netherlands and one at a secondary school abroad. Our study focuses on the second, international internship when students are abroad for three months in schools in the UK, Norway, Poland, St. Martin (Caribbean), United States and South Africa. Participants usually taught at those schools in groups of two or three as interns.

Data sources

The student teachers wrote several reflections during their stay abroad in their teacher training programme, using the ALACT reflection method (Action – Looking back – Awareness of essential aspects – Creating alternative methods of action – Trial) (Korthagen et al. 2001). The ALACT model (Figure 2) requires students to describe their actions and reflections in hindsight, or as reflection on action (Schön 1987). The ALACT model is designed to help student teachers develop their personal theories about teaching and learning and focuses on student teachers' actual concerns and experiences. In phase 2 and 3 of this model, the reflection focuses on the rational aspects with a role in phase 1, and emotional and motivational aspects (Korthagen 2017). This design was suitable for our analysis of the participants' beliefs, agency and subjective aspects of teaching. In phase 4, the reflection becomes the start of (future) reflection for action (Schön 1987).

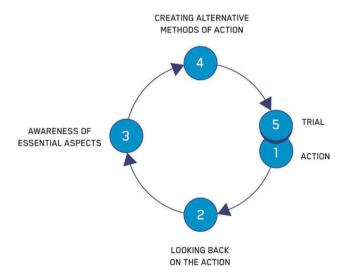


Figure 2. The ALACT model (Korthagen et al 2001).

This study uses the reflection logs which the participants wrote during their teacher training programme, and which were kept in the programme records. Most participants wrote a monthly reflection, while some reflected more often during their international teaching experiences. At the end of each reflection, student teachers described their interaction and collaboration with fellow student teachers from the teacher training programme and their local school supervisor.

Data analysis

This study used a multiple case-study design (Miles and Huberman 1994) to explore the bumpy moments of the 33 participants. Data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Inquiry (IPA) (Smith, Flower, and Larkin 2009). The IPA research approach is based upon three theoretical underpinnings: phenomenology, hermeneutics and ideography. The researcher engages in a double hermeneutic circle while 'trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of what is happening to them' (Smith, Flower, and Larkin 2009, 3). IPA studies usually include a small number of participants and are often designed as case studies.

An important starting point for our analysis was that each reflection was significant for the participant, in principle. The student teachers had written their reflections because of a specific problem, challenge or concern. In this stage of the analysis, the participant had already determined what a significant experience was. The individual participants' reflection logs were analysed through close reading (Smith, Flower, and Larkin 2009, 82–84). Significant meaningful text fragments and important utterances were selected to identify the type of situation the participant considered significant and its context.

In the second round, we examined and compared (Boeije 2010) the participants' agency during each bumpy moment to determine whether or not a professional belief was at stake and if there was a potential normative action. Reflections wherein the participant clearly described a specific response, immediate action or emotion in their bumpy moment were distinguished from those who had not done so in order to identify teacher agency. We also identified whether or not the participants described emotions, because we expected that emotions would show the student teachers' concern about a professional belief (e.g. Fives and Buehl 2012; Fried, Mansfield, and Dobozy 2015). We distinguished positive, negative and mixed emotions, e.g. when participants described negative emotions as 'I was feeling disappointed', or 'this bothers me'.

Significant experiences that described both teacher agency and a professional belief were provisionally coded in an inductive way (Miles and Huberman 1994). The codes were both descriptive (summarising the beliefs or related knowledge addressed in the fragment) and interpretative (analysing personal or professional perspectives the participants believed were important during their experience). Next, we categorised the remaining bumpy moments in themes of professional beliefs and did another round of close reading to identify whether or not the participants assigned the bumpy moment's significance to the cross-cultural context (Smith, Flower, and Larkin 2009, 91–92).

In the final round of analysis, we interpreted the type of reflection based on the participants' descriptions of bumpy moments. We deductively used Luttenberg, Oolbekkink-Marchand, and Meijer's (2018) typology of reflections (scientific, technical,

artistic and moral reflections, see Figure 1), to analyse the student teachers' meaningmaking of the bumpy moments during their international internship.

Results

Student teachers' professional beliefs during bumpy moments

In 106 bumpy moments, the 33 student teachers described a professional belief that was significant during their international teaching internships. The student teachers described four themes of professional beliefs (see Table 1): (1) pedagogical content knowledge, (2) school context, (3) organisational skills and (4) self-reflection. All bumpy moments included a problem or challenge that increased the participants' awareness of a professional belief they found important when under pressure. This motivated them to attempt to cope with the bumpy moment. Professional beliefs related to pedagogical content knowledge (in 89 bumpy moments) were prevalent. We found that in the participants' descriptions, agency and emotions were complementary. Either emotions influenced how the student teachers responded during a bumpy moment, or successful and failed attempts to address the bumpy moments triggered other emotions. In situations when participants expressed a negative emotion, they described how they felt uncertain, or not in control. Mixed emotions were present during ambiguous situations that seemed problematic at first, but worked out after a specific response.

Student teachers' reflections

The types of reflections (scientific, technical, artistic and moral) the student teachers used in their descriptions of bumpy moments gave insight into their subjective educational theories. The student teachers' beliefs about their subjective educational theories fell into four main themes: pedagogical content knowledge, school context, organisational skills and self-reflection. In Table 2, we highlight the student teachers' beliefs according to theme, type of belief based on reflections on bumpy moments and frequency of belief.

Reflecting on professional beliefs regarding pedagogical content knowledge

In the 89 reflections on pedagogical content knowledge, the student teachers generally reflected on tension between theories they had been taught in their Dutch teacher training institute, and their personal and practical considerations of how to use their knowledge and skills in a cross-cultural context. The main exceptions were the participants' reflections on pedagogical tact or care for students that also described a moral domain (see Figure 1). The bumpy moments also seem to be caused by the fact that they were new and relatively inexperienced teachers.

Teaching strategies

The student teachers described 52 bumpy moments wherein they reflected on beliefs regarding teaching strategies, and touched upon the scientific, technical and artistic domains of reflection (Figure 1). The scientific and technical domains of the student teachers' reflections were dominant when they described bumpy moments wherein



Table 2. Themes and types of beliefs based on the student teachers' reflections during bumpy moments of an international teaching internship.

| Theme of belief | Types of belief b | iency of elief <i>N</i>)* |
|--|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Pedagogical content knowledge I believ | e is important: | - |
| 1.1. Teaching strategies | teach student-centred activities | (22) |
| 3 3 | differentiate as a teacher | (20) |
| | be able to design lessons without books | (6) |
| | • teach Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) | (3) |
| | have sufficient content knowledge as a teacher | (1) |
| 1.2. Classroom management | have skills as a classroom manager | (26) |
| 1.3. Pedagogical care for students | teach culturally sensitive subjects | (4) |
| | show empathy towards students | (2) |
| | help students to be successful | (1) |
| | motivate my students | (1) |
| | know my students | (1) |
| | be polite towards students | (1) |
| | teach my subject (history) for shaping pupils' lives | (1) |
| 2. School context I believe is important: | | |
| 2.1. School culture | apply school rules in a correct way | (1) |
| 2.2. Interactions with a local school supervisor | have full responsibility as a beginning teacher from the school supervisor | e (2) |
| | learn from your school supervisor as a future teacher | (1) |
| | find my own teaching style | (2) |
| 3. Organisational skills I believe are impor | tant: | |
| 3.1 Time management | • have better time management in my teaching practice | (9) |
| 3.2 Organise extra-curricular activities | be able to organise extra-curricular activities | (1) |
| • | . J | . , |
| 4. Self-reflection I believe is important: | | |

^{*}total N = 106.

they encountered problems using student-centred activities, differentiating their lessons or using Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in their international teaching internship. When the student reflected on their actions, they frequently described how existing knowledge and skills from their teacher training programme functioned as a frame of reference during their attempts to cope with a bumpy situation. The sociocultural differences in teaching strategies and classroom management within the international internship schools challenged their frame of reference, which enhanced the artistic domain of their reflection. At this point, the participants had to make personal interpretations on how to use their existing knowledge and skills.

The cross-cultural context was most influential during the participants' reflections on bumpy moments when using CLIL. Participants' awareness of their beliefs about the importance of teaching CLIL can be partially derived from the fact that CLIL was emphasised in their teacher training preparation with the focus on bilingual or international education. Teaching by CLIL is an educational approach whereby a foreign or second language (for the pupils) is used to teach both the language and subject content, such as history and geography. In practice, this meant that all the Dutch student teachers had to teach their subjects in English during their internships, except those who taught Spanish and French.

A student teacher who taught Polish pupils described it as follows:

It took me an awful lot of time to prepare my lessons for the Polish pupils. I had to translate their [Polish] textbook [into English] word for word and in the end I was spending more time on translating the book than coming up with interesting learning activities. Furthermore, the language barrier made the lesson even more problematic. When I asked the pupils a question during my lessons I rarely got a response from them. ... The pupils were just too insecure about their English language skills and were uncomfortable to speak out loud in English.

In six bumpy moments, the student teachers described teaching in schools in the UK, St. Martin and Poland where it is common to teach without books. During those bumpy moments, the student teachers were confronted with a lack of expertise from their Dutch training and existing educational theories (scientific domain of reflection). The situation forced them to design their own teaching materials or work with materials from colleagues and made the student teachers reconsider their existing belief that a teacher should work (mostly) with books. The artistic domain of reflection was key, since the student teachers reflected on their perspective on teaching without books, how to improvise, or whether they could adapt to this unfamiliar situation or not.

One of the student teachers in St. Martin stated:

I am also stressed about the curriculum of arts. As ever, there is none. ... Why is there never just a book about art history that I can work from? ... There is no curriculum and I have to come up with a lot myself.... The fact that there is no method or materials for the Caribbean exam is a problem of the school and it started to become mine... I feel like I have to reinvent the wheel.

In this reflection, the participant mentioned the importance of the consequences of the situation.

I just accepted that I will have to deal with the situation and make everything myself and decided to see it as a challenge and a way in which I really can try out everything I want.

In another bumpy moment, a student teacher (History) taught democratic systems in Southern Africa at her South African internship school. The student teacher's reflection focused on the fact that she thought her content knowledge, as a teacher, was insufficient (scientific domain of reflection).

During the lesson pupils came up with many examples when discussing case studies and pros and cons of a democratic system. At one point a pupil asked whether Botswana and Mozambique were democratic countries as well. In addition they asked a few things about the political system in South Africa.

She described how she quietly checked with her school supervisor, and her realisation was practical, so it did not describe a pedagogical interaction or moral aspect in teaching (artistic and moral domains of reflection), which was something that might have been expected.

I either need to prepare more intensively on such broad topics or explain to pupils that I have been studying cases in Europe mainly.

Classroom management

In 26 bumpy moments, the student teachers reflected on beliefs related to classroom management, and described mostly scientific and technical domains of reflection. The student teachers' reflections on classroom management showed how the classroom context could be more important than their cross-cultural context for making them aware of this aspect of their subjective educational theories. Most of these bumpy moments are common for beginning teachers and can occur in any classroom.

For example, a student teacher taught Life Orientation in a strict South African girls' school and reflected on the following bumpy moment, which took place during two lessons.

I have noticed on a few occasions that there are girls, especially 'high achievers', who do not really care for Life Orientation, as it is fairly un-academic and easy to get a decent grade. They would quickly rush through their exercises and then start doing homework for Math or Biology without asking permission ... The next lesson the same girl did it again. When I asked her for her work, I saw that it was really sloppy, no serious effort, and that she just wrote on the back of another notebook.

She addressed the situation with the pupil and reflected on the type of classroom management she prefers.

For my personal development, I want to be better in my classroom management. Being drilled with rules, some of the girls have a very smart way of politely wiggling their way through the rules. Because they are generally well behaved and positive, it is difficult to determine when to put my foot down. I want to find a positive way to enforce my rules, and determine for myself small punishments for girls who do not participate or disrespect me or other pupils.

Pedagogical care for students

The participants' reflections on pedagogical care for students were the only reflections under the theme of pedagogical content knowledge that also referred to a moral domain of reflection. Pedagogical interactions with pupils made the participants aware of qualities they believed were important for their pupils, themselves or their subject, and thus placed their reflections in the knowledge-value dimension. They described how motivating students or helping students to be successful were important notions, but were also challenging to achieve (artistic domain of reflection).

For example, being a culturally sensitive teacher is complex and difficult to include in one's teaching practice in a pragmatic way. Cultural sensitivity not only requires knowledge and skills, but also requires a certain pedagogical attitude and degree of empathy. This means that the student teachers could only attempt to do what they thought was right for their pupils (moral domain of reflection), and this often made them reflect on their position as a teacher as well. The student teachers' descriptions showed that they apparently could not make use of previous teaching experiences or pedagogical content knowledge from their teacher training programme (technical and scientific domains of reflection) to address these bumpy moments, which problematised the moment. We highlight two examples: one was pragmatic and one made the teacher reflect on the type of teacher she wanted to become.

A student teacher who taught English described a bumpy moment when teaching a culturally sensitive topic in South Africa. She used examples of good and bad condom adverts as part of a lesson series on advertising.

One of the examples of bad advertising was an advert for condoms saying: '19 out of 20 don't break!' I expected this advert to cause some consternation or laughter but the girls kept totally quiet and looked quite confused ... After I had explained what the advert was for, they still did

not get why this was an example of bad advertising. One girl even said: 'But if we just wait until we are married, we don't need any contraception. So why do they even advertise it? Is that why it's a bad advert?' I was quite overwhelmed by this comment and I didn't really know what to say at first ... In the end, after a lot of other explaining ('what exactly is contraception ma'am'), I managed to explain why the advert was an example of bad advertising.

In another bumpy moment, a student teacher teaching History described a lesson on the American civil rights movement and Rosa Parks in a South African classroom.

I decided to give this class a little bit more historical context ... Years earlier there had been a 15 year old girl who had done the same thing Rosa Parks had done, but the NAACP [US National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] made a conscious decision to discontinue the case when they found out she was pregnant as they did not want to take the risk of sending her to court while her credibility was compromised due to her pregnancy. I knew that this story might be a risky as it is a 'touchy' subject, because the school is extremely conservative [and] based on Christian values, and anything referring to do with sex or pregnancy is kind of frowned upon.

The fact that the student teacher spoke about this topic was immediately spread around the school without her knowledge. When she had to teach the same lesson later that day, one of her pupils warned her about its sensitivity. She decided to refrain from mentioning the pregnant NAACP member in the second lesson. However, she was dissatisfied and reflected on the matter with her supervisor.

The more I think about it, the more I am reminded how important it is to stick to your beliefs, and in this case I am happy that I decided to teach the way I did during the first lesson. I think I went about it in a professional manner, and that the story will benefit the learners.

Reflecting on professional beliefs regarding the school context

In six bumpy moments, participants' reflections described professional beliefs highlighting situations wherein the student teacher had to cope with school rules or struggled with interactions with a school supervisor. Again, participants could not fall back on previous, similar interactions, because they were relatively new experiences, thus explicating a theory-practice gap.

School culture

In one bumpy moment, a student teacher had to monitor a test (surveillance), and struggled with rules for assessments in the St. Martin school culture. The experience was context-independent.

The test was supposed to take 90 minutes. After 30 minutes the first students finished already and wanted to leave the classroom. On the rules and regulation that were laying on my desk it said they were not allowed to leave and that they had to stay and study for upcoming exams with the books they were supposed to bring ... Therefore I stopped the students that were leaving the room and told them to take their seats and study. They seemed kind of surprised and reacted giggly, [since] they had not brought any books.

Her reflection describes her uncertainty in an unfamiliar school culture, and her inexperience in surveillance.



Looking back on the action, I feel like I was not sure what to do. The rules and regulations were on my table, but how does this usually go? Why are the rules like this? Are all teachers so strict on this? I had no clue! ... The essential aspect of this incident was that I was not prepared enough. Maybe I underestimated the surveillance.

Interacting with the school supervisor

Five bumpy moments were caused by the school supervisor's attitude or intervention, which made the student teachers reflect on their position as a new teacher (artistic and moral domains of reflection). Socio-cultural differences in what the student teachers expected from their international school supervisor were key in those reflections. In two bumpy moments, the student teachers' reflections made them aware that they believed that having full responsibility as a beginning teacher was the best way to learn to become a teacher. A student teacher interning in the UK described how her supervisor intervened when a pupil was misbehaving.

This was something that I had already addressed the lesson before and thought was just something one-off, but apparently it wasn't. At this point, I could not complete my action (I wanted to send him out because he had been too rude to stay in the classroom), because my mentor decided to intervene and send him out instead.

The participant felt her supervisor's behaviour kept her from being a good teacher.

This was one of the first times that I had a student really be rude to me, which I must say was not a pleasant feeling. This incident made me realise, and not for the first time, that my mentor does not give me freedom when it comes to dealing with my students. Whether it's in the case of a student's misbehaving or when a student asks me to speak to them outside, she will always step in or take over which I am not afraid to say really gets on my nerves.

Reflecting on professional beliefs regarding organisational skills

During 10 bumpy moments, the student teachers reflected on various aspects of organisational skills. Participants did not use discourse indicating that cultural aspects played a significant role during those bumpy moments. Rather, organisational skills appeared to be a context-independent challenge for them. Most bumpy situations resulted in pragmatic reflections wherein the student teachers described planning issues (scientific and technical domains of reflection). Although the participants' reflections described little awareness of the bumpy moment's meaning for their teaching practice, the moment's value resided in the fact that the experience created a misbalance in work and private time. This resulted in their desire to be better at planning and organising. One bumpy moment addressed the practical difficulties of organising an extra-curricular activity.

Time management

In nine bumpy situations, participants described situations wherein they struggled with time management. They felt they lacked the time for preparing lessons or writing tests, or lagged behind in joint teaching with colleagues. Participants' reflections generally varied in their descriptions of planning ahead, using student-centred activities to speed up their planning, and not knowing how to handle a time situation (technical and artistic domains of reflection).

One example of an exemplary reflection of a student teacher teaching History in Wales was:

I tried to jam everything I did with one class into the lessons I had with another class, which meant I was rushing through the assignments and lectures. I could see some of the students had a hard time keeping up and I couldn't answer their questions the way I would have liked to

As in most of the other reflections related to this type of belief, the bumpy moment resulted in a desire to gain more control of planning.

For my final week I am not going to rush anymore. It just stresses the students out and makes the lessons less enjoyable for both them and me. I'm going to properly and realistically plan what I want to do next week.

Reflecting on type of self-reflection

One participant described a bumpy moment wherein a reflective state of mind was not helpful for her or her students. Although the student teacher was trained in reflecting (scientific and technical domains of reflection), she struggled with using the moment in a positive way (artistic domain of reflection), which was good for her and the students (moral domain of reflection).

One of the ways in which I make it far harder on myself than I should, is the way how I am reflecting on my own lessons. It seems like I am not satisfied with my lessons and reflect on them in a very negative way, although, I rationally know that it is not that bad at all.

The participant reflected on the future (artistic and moral domains of reflection) implications of the moment for her and her pupils:

I should internalise that it is impossible to connect to every student, to stimulate and motivate every student and to expect fireworks every lesson ... I guess (or hope) that it is more about the fuzziness I have in my own mind about my own boundaries.

Discussion and conclusion

In this study, we explored how student teachers' reflections during 106 bumpy moments (Romano 2006) in an international teaching internship made them aware of their professional beliefs (Fives and Buehl 2012), and how this awareness made the student teachers reflect upon their subjective educational theories (Kelchtermans 2009). The majority of the student teachers' recorded bumpy moments illustrated Bakker's (2016) description of a teacher who is continuously moving between instrumental and normative professional aspects within the classroom. Although the international context was not as influential as our initial assumption, the student teachers' reflections provided various examples of bumpy moments within a cross-cultural context that explicated aspects of their subjective educational theories (Kelchtermans 2009; Martínez et al. 2017). In all the bumpy moments wherein the student teachers reflected on their professional beliefs, they described

personal interpretations (Kelchtermans 2009), and normative actions (or judgements) on how to use their existing (instrumental) knowledge or skills within the cross-cultural context (Bakker 2016; Sanger and Osguthorpe 2013).

We found that the participants' reflections on bumpy moments highlighted aspects of their subjective educational theories when student teachers perceived they lacked practical teaching strategies (Kelchtermans 2009; Körkkö, Kyrö-Ämmälä, and Turunen 2016; Levin and He 2008) and during pedagogical interactions (Biesta 2010; Van Manen 1991). The bumpy moments showed how the student teachers predominantly reflected on practical, everyday issues and concerns, which made them aware of existing professional knowledge or skills they believed to be important (English 2013; Kelchtermans 2009; Körkkö, Kyrö-Ämmälä, and Turunen 2016; Levin and He 2008). The cross-cultural context was influential when it made the student teachers reflect on their lack of practical teaching strategies, especially regarding pedagogical content knowledge as taught in their Dutch teacher training programme (Shulman 1986), and its meaning for their subjective educational theories (Kelchtermans 2009; Martínez et al. 2017). Common teaching problems, e.g. student-centred activities or classroom management, were perceived as challenging especially when student teachers were in an unfamiliar international teaching context where knowledge and skills from their teacher education had failed, or they perceived they lacked experience, or both. The majority of their reflections therefore described the technical and artistic domains of reflection (Luttenberg, Oolbekkink-Marchand, and Meijer 2018), which highly influenced the bumpy moment's pragmatic nature and thus emphasised their normative actions as a problem-solving scenario (Dewey 1938).

The student teachers' reflections on pedagogical interactions (Van Manen 1991) with pupils or local supervisors showed how their international teaching internship also functioned as an example of pedagogy of interruption (Biesta 2010; English 2013). The specific value of pedagogical interactions in a cross-cultural context resided in the fact that they not only raised an awareness of existing knowledge and beliefs, but also increased awareness of the moral dimensions (Luttenberg, Oolbekkink-Marchand, and Meijer 2018; Sanger and Osguthorpe 2013). Student teachers' reflections on teaching in a culturally sensitive way proved to be particularly significant by highlighting their justification of a moral concern during their (normative) actions to do what was right (Bakker 2016; Luttenberg, Oolbekkink-Marchand, and Meijer 2018; Tännsjö 2013). Those situations required pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact (Van Manen 1991), and these skills can help student teachers find their personal voice as a normative professional (Bakker 2016; Biesta 2010). Those bumpy moments showed that moral dimensions of teaching are not a quality or competence the student teacher has, but instead exist in action and interaction with others during specific situations, in this case during an international teaching experience (Biesta, Priestley, and Robinson 2015; Dewey 1922; Tännsjö 2013).

Implications for teacher educators and limitations of this study

Teacher educators still struggle with explicating and positioning student teachers' subjective educational theories and other moral teaching dimensions in teacher training programmes and in their praxis (Bakker 2016; Bullough 2011; Fenstermacher and Richardson 2010; Meijer, Korthagen, and Vasalos 2009; Sanger and Osquthorpe 2013; Shapira-Lishchinsky 2011; Willemse, Lunenberg, and Korthagen 2008). For educators interested in the student teachers' subjective educational theories, the value of bumpy moments in an international teaching context resides in the fact that they can reveal student teachers' professional beliefs (e.g. Fives and Buehl 2012). The findings of this study show that teacher educators should focus on common, small teaching details that occur during bumpy moments in the student teachers' daily teaching practice, to understand and explicate larger concepts such as the student teachers' beliefs and other moral dimensions of teaching (Bullough 2011; Fives and Buehl 2012; Romano 2006; Sanger and Osquthorpe 2013).

The bumpy moments in this study gave momentary insight into student teachers' subjective educational theories that show that they are not one-dimensional constructs that can be easily measured (Biesta 2014). Therefore, teacher educators and school coaches need to have an active role in helping student teachers become aware of examples of their subjective educational theories. Educators who are interested in subjective dimensions in teaching should not only play an active role in preparing beginning teachers to become reflective practitioners, but also take the role of a learning facilitator or coach, not only during international teaching experiences, but in also other, similar challenging teaching experiences (Meijer 2011; Rodgers and Raider-Roth 2006; Vande Berg, Paige, and Hemming Lou 2012). Educators should actively guide students to consciously look for subjective or moral dimensions of teaching in reflections. This study shows that by paying attention to bumpy moments and students' personal judgements, the personal significance of everyday teaching situations becomes apparent and gives students insight into how they make normative decisions every day. Thus, educators should focus more on actual experiences such as bumpy moments, instead of focusing only on professional learning outcomes (Biesta 2014; English 2013; Kelchtermans 2009; Romano 2006; Sanger and Osquthorpe 2013).

This study's pragmatic approach emphasises understanding beliefs as a frame for defining a problem and serves as a guide or standard for action, rather than serving only as a filter for interpretation (Fives and Buehl 2012). A thick description (Geertz 1973) is needed for a richer understanding of student teachers' subjective educational theories, which should also include other perspectives and stakeholders, such as those of local supervisors. By using Luttenberg, Oolbekkink-Marchand, and Meijer's (2018) reflection typology, student teachers' descriptions of the daily classroom practice can move beyond a pragmatic nature (Romano 2006). Future studies investigating (student) teachers' beliefs and moral dimensions in teaching should consider an ecological approach (Biesta, Priestley, and Robinson 2015) and include teachers' biographies and previous teaching experiences (Dewey 1938; Kelchtermans 2009; Sanger and Osguthorpe 2013), as well as the student teachers' tacit knowledge (Fives and Buehl 2012, 490; Haidt 2013; Polanyi 1966; Tännsjö 2013; Van Manen 1994).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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