

Internship as a criterion for South African educators' registration

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the possible use of internships to support educators with the increase in their administrative, professional workload.

Design/methodology/approach – This research utilised a mixed method approach. Quantitative and qualitative data was gathered. Pragmatism was the research paradigm. Two structured Likert scale questionnaires were used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposefully selected in-service educators from schools.

Findings – The participants in this study indicated that the increase in their administrative workload impacted negatively on their well-being, they were overwhelmed by the amount of documentation they had to compile, they indicated that assessment was difficult, that they did not have time to constantly adapt to changes, that they had limited opportunities for professional development. Educators said they suffered from anxiety, had high stress levels, were moody, physically and emotionally exhausted and considered to leave the profession.

Practical implications – The implementation of an internship model could impact positively on educators' administrative workload. It could lead to a decrease in educators' administrative workload; lower stress levels and increased learner performance. Student educators will have opportunities to experience how a school operates, get feedback on their teaching skills, learn to discipline learners, attend meetings and serve as part of an educational team.

Originality/value – In the light of the findings of this research it seems that the implementation of an internship model would provide opportunities to expose student educators to a real-life work experience and opportunities to work together with experienced educators acting as mentors.

Keywords South Africa, Burnout, Internship, Job demands, Workload, Roles of educators

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Education worldwide is in a stage of transformation. In our country, on the one hand, the South African Schools Act (27/1996) has been paving the way for national transformation across schools. On the other hand, the complexities and challenges of transforming the South African education system affect the management of curriculum implementation. In order to ensure that all South Africans receive flexible lifelong learning, education, and training of a high quality, certain specialised activities and responsibilities are assigned to educators in an equitable manner. Section 4 of The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (South Africa, 1998), specifies the terms and conditions of employment of educators. To compound the workload of educators, the norms and standards of educators in the National Education Policy Act (27 of 1995), stipulate that an educator has to fulfil seven roles. The nature of these roles requires that educators acquire numerous practical, foundational, and reflexive competences. Acquiring these competences results in an increased workload and could, therefore, become a salient stressor that might exhaust employees' mental and physical resources.

Job resources refer to the physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of a job that are functional in achieving goals, reduce job demands and stimulate personal growth, learning and development. Two underlying psychological processes influence job-related strain and motivation. The first process suggests that work overload exhaust employee's mental and physical resources which, leads to low energy levels and health problems. The second process suggests that job resources have motivational potential, and can lead to high



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work engagement and performance. Bakker and Demerouti (2007, p. 309) and Demerouti and Bakker (2011, p. 1) argue that different types of job demands and job resources interact in predicting job-strain. The JD-R model further proposes that job resources particularly influence motivation and work engagement when job demands are high. Research related to the South African education context provides evidence that educators find their increased workload, and its effect on classroom management, frustrating and difficult (Van Tonder, 2012, p. 119). In South Africa, the negative effects of stress are having a considerable impact on educators. Media reports also suggest that low levels of job satisfaction and low morale amongst educators can be associated with low salaries, lack of recognition of experience, lack of training and resources, and increased bureaucracy in the Department of Education (Van Tonder and Fourie, 2015b, p. 65).

The seven roles of educators

The educator will mediate learning in a manner which is sensitive to the diverse needs of learners, including those with barriers to learning; construct learning environments that are appropriately contextualised and inspirational; communicate effectively showing recognition of and respect for the differences of others. In addition, an educator will demonstrate sound knowledge of subject content and various principles, strategies and resources appropriate to teaching in the South African context (South Africa, Department of Education, 2000, p. 13).

According to Potenza (2002), a mediator is somebody who functions between different parties, and facilitates a dialogue, which makes it possible for an idea or feeling to be communicated. This is a critical role an educator plays. It involves setting up a dialogue between the learner and various sources of information, and ensuring that meaningful communication takes place.

As an interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials the educator will understand and interpret learning programmes, design original learning programmes, identify the requirements for a specific context of learning and select and prepare suitable textual and visual resources for learning. The educator will also sequence and pace learning in a manner sensitive to the differing needs of the subject/learning area and learners (South Africa, Department of Education, 2000, p. 13).

Perhaps this is the one role that has been the most misunderstood and abused. It has been used to justify the fact that Curriculum 2005, in its original form, did not go far enough in specifying curriculum requirements on a grade-by-grade basis (Potenza, 2002).

Leadership skills that educators should display include managing learning in the classroom, carrying out classroom administrative activities efficiently and participating in school decision-making structures. These competences will be performed in ways which are democratic, which support learners and colleagues and which demonstrate responsiveness to changing circumstances and needs (South Africa, Department of Education, 2000, p. 13).

“As a scholar, researchers and lifelong learner an educator is expected to pursue his/her own on-going personal, academic, occupational and professional growth” (South Africa, Department of Education, 2000, p. 13).

The community, citizenship and pastoral role requires that the educator will practise and promote a critical, committed and ethical attitude towards developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards other. The educator will uphold the constitution and promote democratic values and practices in schools and society. Within the school, the educator will demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators (South Africa, Department of Education, 2000, p. 13).

Assessment is an essential feature of the teaching and learning process, and should be integrated on a continuous basis.

As an assessor, educators need to understand the various purposes of assessment, including identifying the needs of their learners, planning learning programmes, tracking learner progress, diagnosing problems and helping learners to improve their work, judging the effectiveness of the learning programme and assessing their own teaching. Educators are expected to design and manage both formative and summative assessment and keep detailed and diagnostic records of learner performance (Potenza, 2002).

Finally, the role of learning area/subject specialist, according to the norms and standards document, requires being well-grounded in the knowledge, skills, values, principles, methods and procedures relevant to the field of teaching. It means that educators should know different approaches to teaching and learning and how these may be used in ways that are appropriate to the learners and their context (South Africa, Department of Education, 2000, p. 13).

According to Potenza (2002), these roles are all part of the “nuts and bolts” of teaching. Yet, by renewing the commitment to carry out these roles to the best of their ability, educators can begin to restore some of the professionalism to teaching currently lacking in many schools.

An evaluation of the different roles that educators have to fulfil clearly indicates that the roles involve a number of core duties that impact on their workload. The amount of paperwork has a negative effect on the execution of and time available for classroom instruction (Vinjevoldt, 2009; Chisholm and Wildeman, 2013, p. 89). Furthermore, the behaviour of learners sometimes affects the execution of administrative duties. According to the researchers' experience, educators find it difficult to complete registers, compile work reports, and record marks when learners misbehave or do not attend classes. Maintaining good order in the classroom is one of the most difficult duties educators are faced with. This duty has become more difficult over the past few decades as young people's attitudes towards those in authoritative positions have changed dramatically (Mouton *et al.*, 2013, p. 31; Murphy, 2006).

The Chisholm *et al.* (2005) report on South African educators' workload (p. 206) emphasises that the majority of educators in South Africa experience multiple, complex, and constantly changing requirements regarding teaching and learning, marked on the whole by large classes with diverse teaching and learning needs as well as an unbearable increase in workload. The low levels of support from the Department of Education regarding the manner in which the recording and reporting of learner performance should be documented, often leads to educators' distress/anxiety when executing their administrative activities (Abbas and Roger, 2013; Herrington and Summers, 2014; Khan *et al.*, 2014, p. 20; Samela-Aro and Upadyaya, 2014, p. 137; Yorimitsu *et al.*, 2014). Educators are overwhelmed by the various prescribed ways of compiling documentation as this absorbs a lot of teaching time (Chisholm, *et al.*, 2005, p. 206; Van Tonder, 2008, p. 154). In the researchers' opinion, educators experience pressure from all stakeholders, especially from the Department of Education and parents, to be very accurate in the recording process. The recording of learner performance is a continuous process, which means that educators spend a lot of time on this administrative duty, leading to a decrease in teaching time, and an increase in workload. The reporting of learner performance leads to distress when executing administrative activities (Ingvarson *et al.*, 2005, p. 192; Van Tonder, 2008, p. 154).

With larger classes, reporting learner performance becomes more difficult. Educators do not have the time to administer these reports during school hours, which means that they have to do it after school hours. This might overlap with their extra-curricular activities, and might lead to less time with their families. Extra-curricular activities also require administration. For example, educators who are coaches of sport teams have to plan and organise sport tours and league games. This might lead to less teaching and spare time.

The above scenario clearly reflects the intensity of educators' workload as postulated by Larson (1980, p. 131), Apple (1986), Abbas and Roger (2013), Herrington and

Summers (2014), Khan, *et al.* (2014, p. 20), Samela-Aro and Upadyaya (2014, p. 137), and Yorimitsu *et al.* (2014) in the following ways:

- (1) Intensification leads to reduced time for relaxation during the working day, including “no time at all” for lunch.
- (2) Intensification leads to lack of time to re-tool one’s skills and keep up with one’s field.
- (3) Intensification creates chronic and persistent overload (as compared with the temporary overload that is sometimes experienced with meeting deadlines). This reduces room for personal discretion, inhibits involvement and control over longer-term planning, and fosters dependency on externally produced materials and expertise.
- (4) Intensification leads to reductions in the quality of service as corners are cut to save time.
- (5) Intensification leads to enforced diversification of expertise and responsibility to cover personnel shortages, which can, in turn create, excessive dependency on outside expertise, and further reductions in the quality of service.
- (6) Intensification creates and reinforces limited preparation time.
- (7) Intensification is voluntarily supported by many educators and misrecognised as professionalism.

Literature makes it evident that the execution of administrative and professional duties become increasingly complex and difficult for South African educators. In the researchers’ opinion, educators are overwhelmed by the unbearable increase in their administrative workload. When educators have to perform administrative and professional duties without the required support, it can affect teaching and learning negatively (Van der Westhuizen, 2002, p. 694; Bubb and Earley, 2004, p. 129). Estelle Morris, Secretary of State in the UK, stated that a tired teacher is not an effective teacher (Khan *et al.*, 2014, p. 20). Tired teachers cannot focus on what is most important – teaching.

Given the background scenario, the researchers explored the possible use of internships to support educators with their increased workload.

The use of internships to alleviate educators’ workload

Despite the crucial role of educators in fostering, among other things, the cognitive well-being of learners, addressing educator stress that emanates from an increasing workload remains a daunting challenge.

A possible solution to support and relieve South African educators of their administrative duties could be to implement an administrative learnership, an apprenticeship, or an internship model.

Learnerships are mostly described as work-based education and training programmes that contain elements of theoretical training and practical experience, which contribute to a qualification that is registered (FASSET, 2004, p. 3; Schüssier, 2006, p. 3). Learnerships are a practical way of improving skills levels by exposing young graduates to the real demands of the daily work situation and the case of student educators, practical teaching in the classroom (Schüssier, 2006, p. 3). The learnership approach fits into a model of educator education, which is predominantly school-based. School-based educator education itself rests on the notion of experiential learning or situated learning, which is viewed as a powerful learning tool to provide student educators with hands-on experience. Through learnerships, students can make sense of what they are learning because while they are at the school they can experience theory in practice (Mawoyo and Robinson, 2005, p. 109).

In the South African education context, De Jager *et al.* (2002, p. 21) describe learnership as a particular model of workplace training, providing a route to a nationally recognised qualification that relates to an occupation, and consists of a structured learning component and practical work experience. A learnership differs from the conventional models of educator education in South Africa in its structure and mode of delivery. Conventionally, student educators go to a school for teaching practice over a scheduled period ranging from four to ten weeks per year. The typical model of a learnership suggests that student educators spend between one- and two-thirds of their weekly programme time in a school, getting practical guidance on how to become the best educator possible (ETDP-SETA, 2002, pp. 3-4). The students are guided by an educator who acts as a mentor at the school. The mentor is appointed on the basis of experience and expertise in the phase or subject/learning area in which he/she mentors the student educator (ETDP-SETA, 2002, pp. 3-4).

The student educator is employed by the school, and is registered as a student with an accredited education provider. The accredited education provider has to make sure that the student educator's work-based learning component is assessed (ETDP-SETA, 2002, pp. 3-4; De Jager *et al.*, 2002, p. 21).

A learnership is the rite of passage that transforms novices into experts, and it is a means of communicating information that cannot be easily communicated by conventional means. Schüssier (2006, p. 3) summarises learnerships follows:

- Learnerships place the focus on the "how" of the Skills Development Act and are nationally recognised programmes.
- Learnerships are designed for all levels of the National Qualification Framework (NQF).
- Learnerships are outcomes-based.
- Learnerships include theory and practice.
- Learnerships have on-going value assessments, which means monitoring takes place at different stages of the training programme to ensure that learners have completed the tasks set for them during the learning process. This is different from earlier apprenticeship models, where testing was only done at the end of the programme.
- Anyone aged between 16 and 60 can join a learnership.
- Government funds and attractive tax benefits are available for learnerships.
- Learnerships enable a learner to acquire a broader experience.

FASSET (2004, p. 3) defines apprenticeship as time-based learning usually associated with trades, which includes both practical and theoretical components. According to Coy (1989), in educator development, when the student educator is learning from the mentor, he/she will be accessing professional knowledge and skills from an expert. This can be defined as some form of apprenticeship, not in the anachronistic sense of an apprentice being contracted to a master for a long period of time, but in the sense of imparting specialised knowledge to a new generation of practitioners. Vorwerk (2002, p. 3) identifies two major areas of difference between learnerships and apprenticeships in the South African context. Learnerships tend to be more flexible because of the way in which qualifications in South Africa are now being constructed. First, learnerships focus only on one level of the NQF and require 1200 national hours of learning to achieve the requisite number of credits. This could be achieved in 6-12 months, vs three years for typical apprenticeships. Second, the new, more relevant qualifications currently being constructed, particularly in the technical area, also provide more focussed sets of skills than the typically blue-collar trades (apprenticeships).

Vorwerk (2002, p. 3) concludes that in the South African context, a learnership system involves much more than the old apprenticeship system and that some of the early

learnerships registered by the Department of Labour are at the level of degrees and other professional qualifications. Apprenticeships themselves will, in time, be transformed into learnerships (Vorwerk, 2002, p. 3).

Higher Education institutions face diverse challenges in their effort to deliver the best possible educational experience to their students (Domask, 2007, p. 53). In the researchers' opinion, Government expect universities to provide "work ready" educators who have the professional skills and knowledge necessary to deliver quality services in schools.

Dodge and McKeough (2003, p. 45) define internship as an undertaking with a focus on the provision of real-world experience to those whose pre-occupation has been with formal learning, or to those who are not familiar with a particular body of work. Internship programmes offer an educational function as they expose interns to real-life situations and information that is simply not available in a classroom setting (Gabris and Mitchel, 1989, p. 484).

Internship refers to "a person in a temporary" position working with the emphasis on "on-the-job training". In the context of this study, it would mean that student educators complete their studies and start with an internship where they perform administrative activities on behalf of in-service educators at schools. The intention, therefore, is not that the student educator (intern) will perform the teaching role of the educator. This could enable educators to focus on their core duty, namely teaching.

Knemeyer and Murphy (2001, p. 135) describe internships as all work programmes that are designed to supplement a student's academic coursework. Verner *et al.* (2001, p. 30) define the internship as a triangular relationship entered into by three parties, namely the student, the university, and the sponsoring organisation/school. All three parties collaborate to define the internship relationship in terms of the expectations of each party as well as the duration, and the assessment criteria. This offers each party the potential to benefit from this unique educational opportunity (Surujlal and Singh, 2010, p. 118).

Internships can provide a win-win solution for students, education institutions, and employers/educators (Domask, 2007, p. 53). Many universities in Australia provide internship opportunities across faculties. Often, educator education faculties use internships as assessable components of their final practical evaluation. However, the universities of Sydney and Western Sydney (Clarke *et al.*, 2001) prefer to conduct their internships free of constraining assessment, and clinical supervision roles and point out the unnecessary stress as well as tension caused by allocating grades or pre-service educator performance ratings to interns.

According to the researchers, learnership, apprenticeship and internship have similarities, as all include practical and theoretical components. Apprenticeship, as time-based learning, usually associated with trades and learnerships, is work-based learning. With learnerships, the student educator is employed by the school and registered to study with an accredited education provider. The accredited education provider has to make sure that the student educator's work-based component is assessed. A learnership differs from the conventional models of educator education in South Africa in its structure and mode of delivery. Most universities in South Africa make use of the same conventional method, but some universities refer to it as practical teaching and others refer to it as work-integrated learning (WIL). Presently, most South African universities follow a lecture-centric and WIL approach that combines classroom education inside the university and experiential learning in real-work settings. The WIL approach aims to equip student educators to be competent and well prepared to practice as educators. The researchers recommend that the WIL approach should be taken a step further by implementing an administrative internship that will provide support for educators. This support focusses primarily on the administrative activities that student educators perform during their internship on behalf of educators.

There is evidence that a small group of schools in South Africa implement their own internship/learnership models where they employ student educators to assist educators

with certain tasks to reduce educators' workload, but most of these student educators teach and perform the same roles educators have to fulfil (Van Tonder, 2012, p. 7). The researchers are, therefore, of the opinion that these schools follow a learnership approach, rather than an internship approach.

Internships are used to assist final year undergraduates in education to make a smooth transition from being a student to being an educator. According to Davies (2012), there are numerous benefits in implementing a student teaching internship. Two of the most important benefits are the classroom teaching experience, and the chance to work together with experienced educators who act as mentors. According to Billet (2001, p. 19), the increasing importance of practical work experience gained through internships cannot be overemphasised since, in recent times, there has been significant reliance on acquiring practical skills in the workplace. Internships are provided within many organisations in order to induct neophytes into diverse professions and careers (Matters, 2002), such as Law, Health, Psychology, Medicine, Chartered Accounting, and increasingly, in Education.

Consequently, no evidence could be found that an internship could alleviate the workload of educators. This links directly to the purpose of this research, namely to employ the merits of an internship model in order to simultaneously enhance the training of pre-service educators as well as to provide support for in-service educators.

The researchers are of the opinion that the Relieve Educators Administrative Demands (READ) model focussing on the use of internships to alleviate educator workload, could be implemented (Van Tonder and Fourie, 2015a, p. 119):

- the READ model combines the strengths from different models, which could provide a stronger basis for yielding success;
- the READ model proposes a clear course of action as well as an anticipation of outcomes, as advocated by the adaptive management model (Van Tonder and Fourie, 2015a, p. 119);
- the READ model recognises that in order to change the way learning environments are perceived and managed, there should be a shift in the boundaries of the thinking genre of educational managers (Van Tonder and Fourie, 2015a, p. 119);
- the READ model focusses on goal-orientated activities, which are in harmony with organisational policy to increase organisational performance (Van Tonder and Fourie, 2015a, p. 119);
- the READ model links organisational and individual values reflexively (Van Tonder and Fourie, 2015a, p. 119);
- the READ model argues for the effective management of strategies, systems, and structures to support staff skills and values in the execution of duties (Van Tonder and Fourie, 2015a, p. 119);
- the READ model promotes social support among all stakeholders, which is regarded as an important factor in work engagement and work commitment (Van Tonder and Fourie, 2015a, p. 119); and
- the READ model supports continuous evaluation and improvement of the model to keep the model sustainable (Van Tonder and Fourie, 2015a, p. 119).

Theoretical framework of the research

This research is built on the theoretical framework of the job demands-resources model (JD-R) and aims to extend the understanding of job demands related to the teaching profession. In addition, the research focus is on exploring the merits of the READ model, as

an internship model, to alleviate job-related stress and job demands. In support of the JD-R model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007, p. 309) and the Dual-process model (Bakker *et al.*, 2003, p. 393) this research aims to highlight the fact that teaching has its own risk factors associated with job-related stress and job demands (Bakker and Demerouti, 2012). The lack of available resources to achieve goals, reduce job demands, and stimulate personal growth and development, might affect well-being at work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2012). These resources could *inter alia* refer to salary, career opportunities, job security, supportive team climate, role clarity, and participation in decision-making, autonomy, and performance feedback (Demerouti and Bakker, 2011, p. 1). Job demands can be high in order to provide a challenge, but resources are required to reduce stress and buffer the impact of strain, burnout, and motivation related to job demands (Demerouti and Bakker, 2011, p. 1), all of which influence the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

General aim

The general aim of this pilot study is to unlock the potential for educator training and support by implementing the READ model, and exploring the merits of the READ model to relieve South African in-service educators from various professional and administrative activities as part of their job demands, and to enhance the educator training of pre-service educators.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the pilot study are to:

- investigate the increase in job demands and resources of educators at an educational institution;
- implement the READ model and explore its merits in respect of its potential to unlock job demand support for educators; and
- investigate the merits of the READ model regarding the training of pre-service educators (interns).

Research method

Research design

Pragmatism has been considered the best philosophical foundation for justifying the combination of mixed-methods research. Pragmatists believe that the truth is “what works” best for understanding a particular research problem (Creswell and Clark, 2011, p. 41). It is not based in a duality between reality independent of the mind or within the mind. Thus, in mixed-methods research, researchers use both quantitative and qualitative data because they work to provide the best understanding of the research problem. In this research, the researchers have decided on pragmatism as the research paradigm, because of the research design of an explanatory mixed method so as to explore different assumptions through utilising qualitative data to assist in the clarification of quantitative data collection and analysis.

Participants

The participants of this pilot study comprised educators ($n = 6$) from an ex-model C school in the Further Education and Training band in the Sedibeng East District (D7) of the Gauteng Province. The pilot was heterogeneous in terms of gender, age, teaching experience, and culture. The participants for the pilot study will be representative of the participants for the final study.

The intern ($n = 1$) was a fourth-year bed student who has completed a number of teaching practice sessions, and has an idea of educators' job demands in addition to having a thorough knowledge of the specific subject field. The intern specifically assisted a group of in-service educators with job demands within a specific subject area.

Research instrument

Quantitative. In order to explore the merits of the READ model, two structured, researcher-developed, Likert scale questionnaires were used. The first questionnaire determined in-service educator perceptions regarding current workload; job demands; the support given by the Department of Education; the potential of internships to unlock job demand support for educators to alleviate workload; and the impact of workload on professional and personal well-being.

The second questionnaire investigated in-service educator perceptions regarding the merits of the READ model and how pre-service educators (interns) influenced their workload after the pilot study.

Qualitative. Semi-structured open-ended interviews were conducted with purposefully selected and willing in-service educators from the pilot institution. Semi-structured, open-ended interview was conducted with the intern, who provided support to in-service educators. Interview data was collected until the researchers achieved data saturation. The main purpose of the interviews was to explore the in-service participants' experiences in terms of relieving workload demands, and the perspectives of the intern regarding internship and educator training.

Data analysis

In this section, the empirical findings of the pilot study are reported and interpreted.

In the figures below, the data are presented on a scale that ranges between 1 and 6, where 1 indicates: "to a great extent" and 6 "to a little extent".

Research question 1

Before the implementation of the internship model.

RQ1a. To what extent has your workload increased during the past two years?

After the implementation of the internship model.

RQ1b. To what extent has your workload decreased after the implementation of the internship model?

According to the data presented in Figure 1, educators experienced a significant decrease in their workload as a result of the implementation of the internship model.

Research question 2

Before the implementation of the internship model.

RQ2a. To what extent has your workload increased during the past two years with regards to planning, preparation, teaching time, assessment, class management, pastoral care, administrative tasks, photo copying, stock taking, registers, and filling?

After the implementation of the internship model.

RQ2b. To what extent has your workload decreased after the implementation of the internship model?

The data presented above reveals that educators experienced a considerable decrease in their workload after the implementation of the internship model (Figure 2).

Figure 1.
Workload before and after implementation of internship model

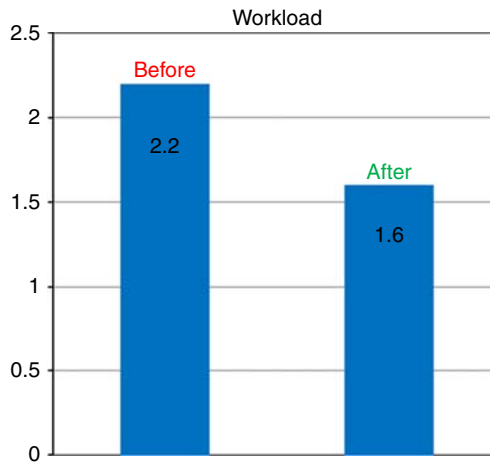
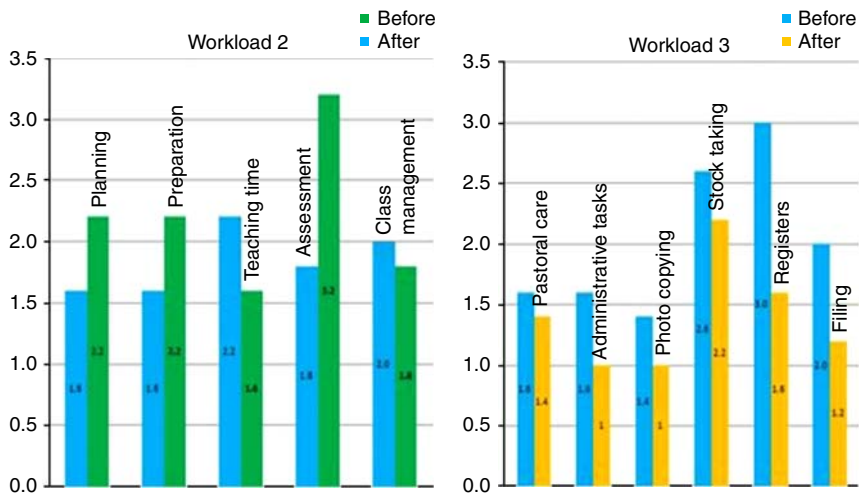


Figure 2.
Educators experience before and after implementation of internship model



Research question 3

Before the implementation of the internship model.

RQ3a. To what extent do you think an intern could help to alleviate your workload with regards to planning, preparation, teaching time, marking, compiling of tests and exams, classroom management, recording, administrative tasks, photo copying, stock taking, registers, and filling?

After the implementation of the internship model.

RQ3b. To what extent has the appointment of the intern alleviated your workload?

The data represented in Figure 3 makes it evident that educators experienced a decrease in most of their administrative tasks. The data indicates an increase in the administration workload of tests and exams. The reason for this is that the intern was placed shortly after

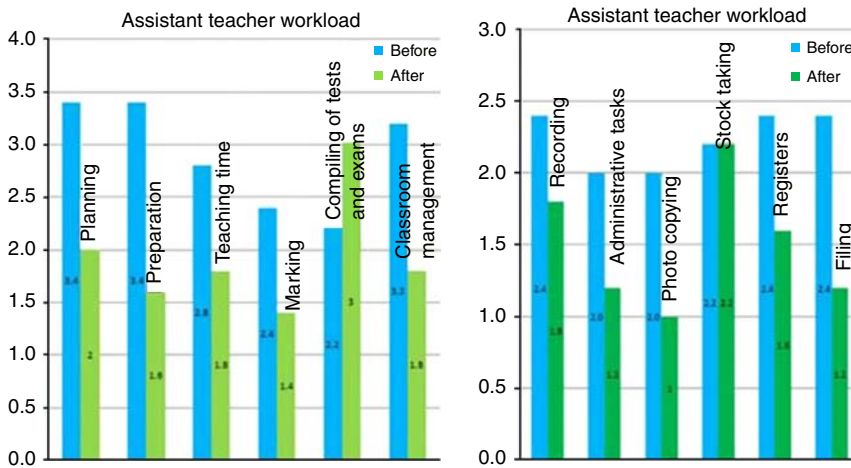


Figure 3.
Effect of internship
on educators
administrative tasks

examinations were completed. The data indicating no decrease in the workload involved in stock taking is due to the fact that the specific subject where the intern provided administrative support has very little stock taking to do.

Research question 4

Before the implementation of the internship model.

RQ4a. To what extent do you think the Department of Education should play a role in the implementation of an internship model?

After the implementation of the internship model.

RQ4b. To what extent do you think that an internship model should be implemented?

According to the data presented in Figure 4, all the respondents felt that the implementation of an internship model could alleviate their workload. The data indicates that internships could be a solution to decrease educators' administrative workload. The implementation of an internship model could lead to a situation where more teaching and learning time will be available.

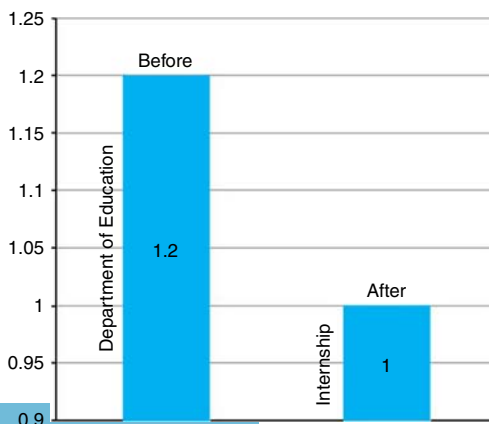


Figure 4.
Role of Department
of Education
and importance
to implement the
internship model

Administrative tasks and needs lack structure. Often times these tasks are not planned in advance, which makes the completion thereof difficult, and this leads to a backlog that causes unwanted stress to reach deadlines. I also experienced that the combination of teaching and completing administrative activities results in a heavy work load. This heavy work load means that one of the two will be neglected, and in most cases the admin is left for a long time, which leads to deadlines not being met, and neglecting teaching duties because you have to catch up on the admin. I have realised that many teachers do not know what administrative activities should be completed regularly, and they are also unsure of how to implement it correctly. I have come to realise that even though I did not teach as an intern, the quantity of administrative activities were a lot for me to handle, therefore, I can understand that teachers feel overwhelmed. Many days I felt hopeless and frustrated because I was unsure with which activities to start with. I have to prioritise to get things done. An internship programme helps prepare aspiring teachers for their future in education.

The main benefit to teachers is that they have more time available to teach and plan properly for lessons. If they have no administrative tasks, the time spent on those would be available for teachers to plan unique and structured lessons, instead of simply turning to handbooks. This, in turn, will lead to an improvement in our education system and the levels of learner proficiency. Another benefit would be that teachers will feel less drained and tired, which will improve their morale and attitude to teaching as a profession. Graduates get a head start in their teaching careers.

As an intern, I gained a lot of knowledge and skills that will help me to better understand why administrative tasks are important, and how to complete them effectively. My presence would give teachers more time to act as mentors to student-teachers and younger teachers to guide them to better understand how teaching in schools differs from what you learn at university. In addition, you will have opportunities to see how a school operates, get feedback on your teaching skills, and learn how to discipline, attend teacher meetings, and serve as part of an educational team. I believe that any student will benefit from a fifth year of study, which will be an internship, because it will allow the student to see what is expected of them beyond just teaching. This will insure that when the students start working after the internship, feel lost and overwhelmed, and that they are better equipped to deal with the demand of teaching. You will learn the finer details of teaching from your mentor, including ways to improve your teaching, how to maintain classroom discipline, how to plan successfully, and how to deal with students with different abilities or learning problems. It will also allow students to bring practical experience to the theory that they are taught at university, which will allow them to be better organised and well-structured teachers. The internship will also reduce the stress that a first year teacher experiences because it will provide them with an opportunity to learn and grow, instead of being thrown into the deep end where you are expected to know what to do and how to do it. It will also help first year teachers to gain confidence in their abilities and not to feel worthless in their profession. After doing this internship I strongly feel that students need this opportunity. In six weeks I am amazed by the professional progression and change I have experienced. It brings you to a different level of cognitive function, which only a practical experience, such as an internship, can give you. This most definitely added value to my choice of profession and added value to my career. The best part of this experience was that I actually learned something practical that will better my profession. At university we have a lot of Professional Studies Modules but none of them really integrated with my teaching career as this internship has. I have gained so much personal value because of this, and would recommend it to anyone who is serious about their profession.

Conclusion

In order to ensure that all South Africans receive flexible, lifelong learning, education and training of a high quality, certain specialised activities and responsibilities are assigned to educators in an equitable manner. The participants in this pilot research study indicated that the increase in their administrative workload has a negative impact on their professional well-being. According to the participants, they are overwhelmed by the various

prescribed ways of compiling documentation as well as assessment policy requirements that are difficult to achieve (Van Tonder, 2008, p. 154). Educators are expected to design and manage both formative and summative assessment and keep detailed and diagnostic records of learner performance (Potenza, 2002). With larger classes, reporting learner performance becomes more difficult. The reporting of learner performance leads to distress when executing administrative activities (Ingvarson *et al.*, 2005, p. 192).

The participants also argued that they do not have sufficient time to constantly adapt to on-going changes and that they cannot perform their pastoral role because of a lack of experience. In this regard, educators indicated that they have limited opportunities for professional development.

Extra-curricular activities also require administration. Educators who are coaches of sport teams have to plan and organise sport tours and league games. This might lead to less teaching and spare time. The above scenario clearly reflects the intensity of educators' workload as postulated by Larson (1980, p. 131).

The data obtained from this pilot research study clearly indicates that educators' administrative workload has a negative impact on their personal well-being.

According to the educators, they suffer from anxiety attacks; their stress levels are high; they are moody; they are physically and emotionally exhausted; and often consider to leave the profession. They also stated that they feel guilty to relax; they sometimes have suicidal ideas; their time with their families is limited; and in some cases there is conflict in marriages. Estelle Morris, Secretary of State in the UK, stated that a tired teacher is not an effective teacher (Khan, *et al.*, 2014, p. 20). Tired teachers cannot focus on what is most important, namely teaching.

In South Africa, the negative effects of stress are having a considerable impact on educators. Media reports also suggest that low levels of job satisfaction and low morale amongst educators can be associated with low salaries; a lack of recognition of experience; a lack of training and resources; and increased bureaucracy in the Department of Education (Van Tonder and Fourie, 2015b, p. 65).

Many universities in Australia provide internship opportunities across faculties. Often, educator education faculties use internships as assessable components of their final practical evaluation. However, the universities of Sydney and Western Sydney prefer to conduct their internships free of constraining assessment and clinical supervision roles, and point out the unnecessary stress and tension caused by allocating grades or pre-service educator performance ratings to interns (Clarke *et al.*, 2001).

The researchers are of the opinion that the implementation of an internship model could positively impact educators' administrative workload, and as a result, their personal well-being.

In the light of the findings of this pilot research study, it seems that the implementation of an internship model would provide an opportunity to expose student educators to a real-life work experience, and an opportunity to work together with experienced educators who act as mentors.

It could also lead to a decrease in educators' administrative workload; lower stress levels; and an increase learner performance. In addition, student educators will have an opportunity to experience how a school operates in order to get feedback on their teaching skills; learn how to discipline learners; to attend meetings; and to serve as part of an educational team.

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