

## **An Assessment of Student Teachers' Experiences of Work-integrated Learning at a South African Institution of Higher Learning**

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**ABSTRACT** The purpose of this study was to assess teachers' experiences of six months' work-integrated learning (WIL), as a component of teaching practice, as well as the impact of other situational variables associated with work-integrated learning on teaching efficacy. The study is grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and Roberts' Theory of Experiential Learning. The targeted population for this case study was pre-service teachers at University of Technology in the Free State Province of the Republic of South Africa. The sample consisted of 51 fourth-year B.Ed (FET) students enrolled in four different programmes. There were 25 male and 26 female students in the sample. The students had just completed their six months WIL. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was designed and used to collect data from the respondents. Participation was voluntary and all the students who did not go for work-integrated learning because of not meeting the requirements were excluded from the study. The findings indicated that three year of study at the University of Technology sufficiently prepared the student teachers for the demands of WIL. The increased length of WIL had a positive effect on them as they felt that their skills in lesson preparation together with those of assessment were enhanced. Student teachers interacted with and related to their mentors in a positive way and their classroom management skills were enhanced as they attempted to handle disruptive learners effectively. On the whole, the teacher trainees felt that they had made a positive contribution to their host schools. Work-integrated learning has therefore proven to be a valuable component of teacher preparation in this study.