

# Investigating the Teaching Practice Framework in the Departments of Primary Education in Greece: A Sociological Approach

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## Abstract

The aim of this research is to analyze and compare the Teaching Practice (TP) in the Departments of Primary Education (DPE) in Greece, in terms of objectives, structure and evaluation. The data for this research was drawn from the Study Guides of nine Departments that we examined in Greece, and they were analyzed using the technique of document analysis. The analysis utilized B. Bernstein's theoretical framework. The analysis of the data revealed that the TP framework is differentiated across the Departments in terms of time demarcation and student evaluation. These differentiations illustrate the differences in the Departments' philosophy and organization. Nevertheless, the chief aim of all the Departments is to familiarize future teachers with their duties and responsibilities, an aim which is achieved through the gradual introduction of the trainees into the school field.

**Keywords:** teaching practice, department of education, curriculum, document analysis

## 1. Introduction

Teaching Practice (TP) is an integral part of future teachers' studies. According to the Greek and international literature, it aims to fully prepare teacher trainees to enter the demanding field of education and to ready them for their future professional development, by assisting in their personal and professional growth. The teacher trainees cultivate skills and abilities, regarding the design, implementation and evaluation of their teaching, as well as regarding the general duties of a teacher. They come to understand the role of the teacher and they learn to act autonomously and take initiatives (Kampeza, 2013; Lavonen et al., 2019). What's more, TP integrates the students into the school community and helps them understand the relationships that develop within it, thus easing their smooth professional socialization into the school field (Aglazor, 2017; Avgitidou & Sidiropoulou, 2020; Cohen, Hoz, & Kaplan, 2013).

An additional, important aim of the TP, mentioned in scientific dialogue, is to adequately link theory to practice (Aglazor, 2017; Ampartzaki, Oikonomidis, & Chlapana, 2013; Fridaki, 2013). The students have already encountered a set of theoretical knowledge on the field, through their university courses, before they enter the school space. During TP they endeavor to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice, and to reflect on and renegotiate it (Chrisafidis, 2013; Fridaki, 2013; Lavonen et al., 2019; Mpoufi & Kafousi, 1995). In this way, future teachers are expected to be in a position to select the appropriate pedagogical practices, as well as the appropriate content of transmitted knowledge in the school classroom (Lavonen et al., 2019; Oikonomidis, 2011). To achieve this, TP should be directly and inseparably linked to the rest of the university lessons. Otherwise, it is seen as a separate part of the university education that circumvents the theoretical knowledge that the trainee teachers have acquired (Avgitidou, 2014; Mpoufi & Kafousi, 1995; Zeichner, 2010).

Two parameters are highlighted in the international literature which influences the achievement of the previously mentioned goals:

- a) The point at which TP starts, and its duration. The time when TP starts seems to influence its effectiveness. TP that begins earlier during the future teachers' university education, appears to function more beneficially in shaping them professionally (Eret-Orhan, Ok, & Capa-Aydin, 2018; Oikonomidis, 2011). Regarding the duration of TP, Chrisafidis (2013) stresses that in order for it to achieve its aims, the students should spend at least 3 to 4 weeks in the school space.

- b) The way mentors are selected, in other words, the teachers who take on the guidance of the students during their stay in the school, and the relationship they develop with the trainees (Aglazor, 2017; Crisp et al., 2018; Fridaki, 2013).

As far as the structure of TP is concerned, Grossman et al., (2009) claim that for it to be complete, it should comprise three stages: representations, decompositions and approximations. The representations stage is related to lesson observation and examination of the teaching techniques utilized. Decompositions refer to recognition of the structural components of the teaching practices and techniques through the design and implementation of micro-teaching. Finally, approximation refers to the full taking on of the responsibilities of a teacher and the implementation of independent teaching (Ampartzaki, Oikonomidis, & Chlapana, 2013; Aglazor, 2017; Chrisafidis, 2013; Grossman et al., 2009).

However, the existence of common assumptions regarding the structure of TP doesn't imply the existence of a common legislative framework for its structure in all the Departments of Education in each country, despite the fact that in some countries, general aims are defined by the Ministry of Education (Lavonen et al., 2019; Ure, 2009). Consequently, each Department of Education adopts a different structure for TP according to its philosophy, aims and the staff it has (Oikonomidis, 2013). From data in the international and Greek literature, we observed differentiations in the way TP is approached (Goh & Matthews, 2011; Kampeza, 2013; Van Nuland, 2011; Walsh & Elmslie, 2005; Wilson & L'Anson, 2006).

The first differentiation is related to the length of time the students spend in the school field. While some Departments choose a longer stay within the school field, others choose multiple visits of short duration (Ulvik & Smith, 2011; Ure, 2009; Van Nuland, 2011). In addition, differentiations were noticed in terms of when TP begins, since sometimes it begins during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, at the same time as the initial compulsory courses, and at other times during the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year of study (Ampartzaki, Oikonomidis, & Chlapana, 2013; Goh & Matthews, 2011).

Significant differences are also observed in the stages that TP follows within the various Departments. Some curricula follow the “*observation – micro-teaching – teaching*” schema, others are based on the alternation of observation and teaching and in some the students remain at the level of micro-teaching, without taking on a full timetable of teaching. Moreover, some of the curricula also include compulsory laboratory work at the university aimed at helping the students reflect on their teaching practice (Van Nuland, 2011; Wilson & L'Anson, 2006).

As far as the link with the other courses on the curriculum is concerned, TP is often directly linked to the courses on didactics (Walsh & Elmslie, 2005; Zeichner, 2010). However, it is not uncommon for TP to appear in the Study Guide as an autonomous compulsory part of the studies (Kampeza, 2013). Similarly, differentiation is observed in the means and methods used for student assessment. These vary, with characteristic examples being reports completed by the students, grading scales and oral or written feedback provided by those responsible for supervising students' action (Van Nuland, 2011).

From a study of the international and Greek literature, it was discovered that investigation of the goals and structure of TP in the Departments of Primary Education (DPE) is limited since most research focuses on secondary and pre-school education. In addition, in the Greek space, a lack of comparative research on the operation of TP within the DPE was observed. Related studies mainly focus on the teaching practices applied by students during the TP and the psychological effects of the TP on student-teachers.

Therefore, this is the first research that aims to conduct a comparative study of TP implemented in the Greek DPEs to locate convergences and divergences in the goals, structure and operation of TP, as well as to investigate the position it occupies within the DPEs' curriculum.

The paper begins with a presentation of the concepts from Basil Bernstein's theoretical framework that are utilized in the research. This is followed by a chapter introducing the research questions and methodology. The research results are then presented and analyzed. The paper closes with the chapter containing the discussion and conclusions.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

In our paper, we have used B. Bernstein's theory to approach and analyze our data sociologically. This theory provides a conceptual structure that is characterized by diagnostic, descriptive, analytic, and transferable ease of use (Morais, 2001). Framing our study, we used the concepts of the theory to explore and analyse the communicative framework of the TP and the rules according to which knowledge is shaped and individuals act within it. To be more precise, we utilised the concepts of pedagogical code, framing, pedagogical practice, recontextualization, instructional rules (sequence, pacing and evaluation) and recognition and realization rules to approach and analyze our data.

*Code*, a fundamental concept in B. Bernstein's theoretical framework, is a regulative principle, silently taken up by the individuals, which selects and unifies the appropriate meanings in each context, as well as the forms of their realization and the contexts of their emergence (Bernstein, 1989, p. 55). The codes regulate what and how of communication and social relationships and determine the social practices that develop in each context (Solomon, 1989, p. 22). In each form of pedagogical communication, the pedagogical code determines the distinct forms and social frameworks of the pedagogical discourse and the corresponding pedagogical practices, since it is the fundamental regulative principle that shapes curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation. Pedagogical discourse is the regulative principle according to which knowledge and skills from various scientific fields are selected, organized, reorganized and transmitted. From this perspective, during TP, students are required to become familiar with the official pedagogical code and to develop their pedagogical practices within it. The turns the pedagogical code takes during the TP are shaped by the values of classification and framing, two critical concepts in Bernstein's (1989) theory.

While *classification* refers to the degree to which the borders between categories (individuals, discourses, spaces) are preserved, the concept of *framing*, which we used during our analysis of the communicative framework that shapes TP, concerns the communicative relationships that develop within it. It is linked to the concept of social control and refers to the control the subjects have over the organization and timeline of knowledge, the pacing of its acquisition and the evaluation criteria. The existence of strong framing (F++ or F+), means that the subjects, in this case the trainee teachers, have a limited ability to choose, while weak framing (F-- or F-) reveals the existence of greater autonomy (Bernstein, 1989, 2000).

Focusing more on the regulation of individuals' action within the communicative framework, the *pedagogical practices* comprise, according to Bernstein (1985, 1990), a "cultural transmitter", a human creation for the production and reproduction of culture that determines *what* contents are transmitted each time in the school institution and *how* their transmission takes place. The pedagogical practices are shaped through the combination of certain rules, such as the instructional rules. Depending on the values of classification and framing and on whether they are explicit or not, Bernstein distinguishes pedagogical practices into *visible* and *invisible* practices.

The *instructional rules* are linked to the processes of transmission and acquisition of knowledge and include the rules of *sequencing, pacing and criteria*. The sequencing rules regulate the transmission time of scientific knowledge and shape a sequence. The rules of pacing, in turn, refer to the pace at which progress, which has been defined by the rules of sequencing, must be made by the subjects, in this case the trainee teachers. Valid acquisition of knowledge on the part of the students is determined by the rules of criteria. The rules of criteria determine the standards that the student is required to acquire and implement in his/her own practices. The criteria may be explicit and specific or implicit, multiple and ambiguous (Bernstein, 1989).

A key part in the knowledge shaping process plays the concept of *recontextualization*. This concept describes and interprets the process for the selection and transfer of knowledge from the field of its production to the field of its transmission, namely the spaces of formal, informal and unofficial education (Bernstein, 1989). It is an important process, not solely limited to the reshaping of knowledge. It is a "special kind of relationship" between knowledge and the individuals involved, the space and the time, the framework and the individuals' performances within it. The design and execution of the TP comprise the final stage of a series of recontextualizations leading up to the formation of the official pedagogical discourse of the curricula that the future teachers follow (Sakkoulis, Asimaki, & Vergidis, 2018).

Finally, during the TP students navigate utilizing the *recognition and realization rules*. The *recognition rules* shape the means of distinguishing a context and recognizing its special/distinct features, while the *realization rules* (active and passive) define the acceptable processes within a context to take. The *rules of passive realization* permit the selection of appropriate concepts/justifications in the framework of the pedagogical practice, while the *rules of active realization* permit the production of texts that are required for the implementation of particular pedagogical practices in the classroom (Bernstein, 2000). During TP the students in the Department of Educations are required to possess the rules of recognition and realization, in order to organize and implement their effective TP – teaching instruction.

### 3. Method

In order to achieve the aim of the research, the following two research questions were formulated:

- 1) How is the goal-setting, structure and operation of TPs set out in the Study Guides of the DPEs in Greece?
- 2) Are similarities or differences observed in the context of TPs in the DPEs in Greece?

To select a suitable method for the investigation of the phenomenon, we took into account Prior's view (2003, p.

60) that “a university is in its documents rather than in its buildings”. Hence, we chose to focus on official written documents from the Greek DPEs that allow us to investigate the official discourse that is dominant within the University Institutions, regarding TP. In Greece, all teachers who wish to teach in primary education need to acquire a degree from a DPE at a public university, according to the relevant legislation. The DPEs operating in Greece at the time the study was conducted were nine (9) and all of them were included in the sample. Although all 9 DPEs are parts of public Greek universities, each one follows a different curriculum shaped by the General Assembly of each Department.

From the documents related to TP available from the DPEs, the Study Guides were chosen as being appropriate for the achievement of the research purpose. This choice was based on the fact that the Study Guides are included on the DPEs’ official webpages, address the students of each Department, have the approval of its General Assembly and reflect its aims and positions. In addition, to facilitate the examination and comparison of the framework of TPs in all the DPEs in Greece, we chose to restrict the Study Guides in the sample to one academic year (2016-2017).

Consequently, based on the above inclusion criteria, the research documents were made up of the DPE Study Guides from the following (9) Greek Universities for the academic year 2016-2017:

University of Patras	UP (Note 1)
University of Ioannina	UI
University of Western Macedonia	UWM
University of Crete	UC
University of the Aegean	UA
University of Thessaly	UT
Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki	AUT
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens	NKUA
Democritus University of Thrace	DUT

The Study Guides were retrieved from the official websites of the DPEs in Greece. The technique of document analysis was chosen as a suitable method for processing the documents in the sample and answering the research questions. According to Bowen (2009, p. 27), document analysis is “a systematic process of examining and evaluating documents – as much in printed as in electronic form”.

Document analysis is the predominant method of our research, as it allows for the in-depth extraction of information on the phenomenon under examination (Gross, 2018; Prior, 2003). It makes it possible to go beyond the structural features of the text, such as the syntax, into the deeper meaning, examining the text not as a receptacle of content, but as a creator of reality (Bowen, 2009; Prior, 2003).

The procedure that was followed during the analysis of the Study Guides from the Greek DPE was inductive, in the sense that the themes were formulated through the data and not imposed on them in advance. More specifically, the analysis followed two (2) stages: the initial codification of the documents with the theme as the unit of analysis, and the formulation of categories (Bowen, 2009; Gross, 2018). During the initial codification, excerpts were identified within the Study Guides which referred to the goal setting, operation and structure of TP during the undergraduate education of Primary School teachers and a first codification of their content was carried out. We should point out that information referring to TPs, which received NSRF (National Strategic Reference Framework) funding, that were conducted at some of the DPEs we examined was left out. TP through NSRF was excluded from the research as it went beyond the institution of the school, including TP positions in a range of private bodies related to education and pedagogy. In addition, TP of this type is not directed at the entire student population and consequently, it would not provide a representative picture of the operation of TP in the DPEs in Greece.

Then, during the second stage of the analysis, extending the initial codification through the comparison and grouping of selected excerpts, three (3) mutually exclusive and representative categories were gradually formulated:

- 1) The official pedagogical code and the goal of the TP

- 2) The rules of sequencing and pacing during the implementation of the TP
- 3) The rules of criteria that dominate in the TP

Throughout the document analysis process, we sought to examine the documents within their linguistic and cultural context, which in this case are DPEs within the context of Greek state tertiary education. The purpose and the audience of the Departments where the Study Guides were formulated, were also taken into consideration (O'Leary, 2017).

#### 4. Presentation and Analysis of Results

The findings that emerged from the document analysis are presented below, separated into individual categories.

##### 4.1 *The Official Code and the Goal of the TP*

Studying the goals that each DPE sets and the desired results of TP, we discovered convergences and divergences. The following 6 groups of goals were located across all the Departments:

- 1) *Practising teaching duties*: The first group is related to the students' familiarity with the role of the teacher and their taking on of the relevant duties. This group includes goals related to the ability to adequately plan and effectively organize teaching and to the ability to correctly evaluate both the pupils and the instruction. Moreover, these are goals linked to the effective management of the teaching content as determined in the Study Guides, as well as to the ability to manage differentiated (culturally, socially and cognitively) pupil populations. Hence, it appears that in the context of the first group of goals, the future teachers are called on to become familiar with the official pedagogical code of the school and proceed to realizations that are desirable within it.
- 2) *From theory to practice*: Linking theoretical knowledge, from the official pedagogical discourse as this is produced and/or reproduced within the DPEs, to the pedagogical practices implemented within the school classroom is the subject of the second group of goals. The students will proceed to the final recontextualization of the official knowledge during the TP, an important skill to acquire for their teaching career.
- 3) *Integration into the school community*: The third group of goals identified in the Study Guides of the Departments we examined refers to the students' familiarity with their work environment and daily school life. These goals are linked to the future teachers' smooth induction into the school community and their understanding of the habits and rules that govern it. Students practise the acquisition of the rules of recognition of the field, an essential element for the effective organization and implementation of the pedagogical practices that they will adopt.
- 4) *The reflective teacher*: The fourth group of goals refers to the formation of reflective teachers. TP seeks to shape teachers who will be in a position to contemplate on the teaching process and the educational outcomes and self-evaluate so as to improve their action. The acquisition of the criteria rules in TP occurs through the trainees' actions and interactions within the school space.
- 5) *Encouragement of innovation*: Innovative and alternative action on the part of the students is also a goal of TP. In particular, it aims to encourage the adoption of alternative teaching methods (e.g. project method or the use of ICT in teaching), which don't often appear in established teaching practices. In this particular group of goals, it appears that the students are urged to go beyond established assumptions and official norms and to act at the 'extremes' of the official code.
- 6) *Teaching training*: The sixth group of goals is related to the students' teaching training, 'equipping' them in other words, with suitable and essential knowledge, so that it is possible for them to take on the teaching of pupils within the school environment. The acquisition of the rules of active and passive realization is an important element of the initial training of future teachers and is considered an essential prerequisite for the effective implementation of the teaching work.

The findings related to the goals set by each DPE are presented collectively in the table below. The circle (•) symbolizes the inclusion of a particular goal within the Study Guides, while the dash (-) denotes its absence.

Table 1. The goals of TP in the department of educations of Greece

	UP	UI	UWM	UC	UA	UT	AUT	NKUA	DUT
Practicing teaching duties	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
From theory to practice	-	•	•	-	•	•	•	•	•
Integration into the school community	-	•	•	•	•	•	-	-	•
The reflective teacher	-	-	•	•	-	•	•	•	•
Encouraging Innovation	-	•	-	•	•	•	-	•	-
Teaching training	•	•	•	-	-	-	-	-	-

In Table 1 we can see that the common goal of TP in all the Greek DPEs, is to familiarize the future teachers with the duties that they will be required to take on within the school classrooms. It seeks to offer them adequate practice in issues of design and implementation of teaching, as well as assessment. Consequently, familiarizing the students with the official pedagogical code, and facilitating their acquisition of the rules of criteria and realization are common goals in all the Departments.

An interesting finding is also the fact that in only three (3) DPEs (UWM, AUT, DUT) is the ability of the students to teach socially, culturally and cognitively differentiated groups of pupils successfully mentioned as a desirable outcome. The weakness of initial education to prepare the students for differentiated school environments is a discovery made in other studies as well (Kesidou, 2019; Xenofontos, 2016) and the reason for this weakness lies in the inadequate acquisition of the rules of recognition during their studies.

The second group of goals which is set by seven (7) of the nine (9) DPEs is the linking of theoretical knowledge to the pedagogical practices implemented. Consequently, the main concern is that the students can successfully apply the official pedagogical discourse with which they have been equipped during their studies in the school space. Its recontextualization begins at the start of the studies and is completed in the design and implementation of TP. Then, in six (6) of the nine (9) DPEs, the integration of the students into the daily life of the school community and their shaping as reflective teachers is set as a goal. Here, it is observed that the TP seeks to shape teaching staff who will adapt easily to the operation and the norms that exist within the school community while maintaining the capacity for reflection and professional development.

In addition, in the Study Guides of five (5) of the DPEs, the adoption of innovative actions by the trainees appears as a goal, in the sense of utilizing alternative forms of teaching. However, only one (1) DPE (UA) sets the students' use of ICT during the planning and implementation of their teaching as a goal. Finally, the group of goals related to the adequate teaching training of the students, at a level of knowledge, during TP, appears in just three (3) Study Guides.

The goals set by each Department during TPs carry great weight as they determine both the practices for their implementation as well as the extent of the trainees' involvement in the process. In addition, they influence the course of the TP, pre-determining the final outcome, in other words, the identity of the new teachers that each DPE shapes. What's more, the orientation and goal setting of each Department defines which lessons TP will be linked to, if any, and the position it will occupy within the curriculum.

In the majority of Greek DPEs (7 out of 9 Departments), TP is organized as a part of the didactics courses. Consequently, the successful completion of the TP is a prerequisite for the completion of the didactics courses it is linked to. As we discovered, TP is chiefly linked to the teaching of the so-called 'core' subjects. In particular, in seven (7) of the nine (9) DPEs, TP was linked to the teaching of Modern Greek Language and Mathematics and in four (4) of them, TP was linked to the teaching of the Natural Sciences and History. However, in one (1) of the Departments, the implementation of TP is linked to the teaching of 'secondary' subjects, such as Arts, Music, Environmental Studies, Religious Education and Physical Education, while two (2) DPEs included TP in courses related to the use of ICT and the application of alternative forms of teaching.

In three (3) of the nine (9) curricula that were examined, TP is linked to courses of pedagogical content, such as the 'Application of Pedagogical Theories during Teaching and Evaluation'. The linking of TP to didactics courses or pedagogical ones reveals the adoption of different directions by the DPEs. The Departments that choose the pedagogical direction place emphasis on the acquisition of classroom management skills and skills related to managing differentiated pupil populations by students, while the link with the didactics of subjects reveals weight being given to the teaching methods applied and the acquisition of technical knowledge on the part of the trainees.

It is observed that in four (4) of the nine (9) DPEs examined, TP, apart from being linked to other courses in the Study Guide, consists an independent section, in the sense that it appears as a separate course in the curriculum,

which is assessed and receives teaching credits (ECTs) independent of the rest. Finally, in one (1) of the Departments in the sample, TP is not related to any instructional or pedagogical course and occupies a separate space within the curriculum.

#### 4.2 The Rules of Sequencing and Pacing During the Implementation of the TP

Examining the Study Guides of the DPEs regarding the year of study when TP begins, we discovered inhomogeneity. The way TP is distributed across the four years of study in the university Departments and the position it occupies within the curriculum are the choice and decision of the administrative bodies of each Department.

In the DPEs examined, the beginning year of TP varies from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of studies. In most DPEs, TP begins in the 3<sup>rd</sup> (5 Departments: UP, UV, UA, UT, DUT), or the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study (3 Departments: UI, UWM, NKUA). Although, in only one DPEs, TP begins during the first term of study (1 Department: AUT).

Although TP begins during different years of study, namely the rules of sequencing vary, having differing starting points, all the DPEs follow a common course of development in their TP. Consequently, they have similar pacing (Bernstein, 2000). In particular, all TPs start with an introductory period that facilitates the adaptation of the students to the school space, a period when the students observe teaching in the school classrooms. This teaching is carried out either by the class teacher, or students of a later or the same year of study. At this stage, it is also common for the students to watch video-recorded teaching sessions. Teaching observation is accompanied by lectures within the university space or by laboratories, which are conducted by the professors responsible for the course, or by teachers on secondment, and aim to smoothly link lived experience and theoretical knowledge.

After the adjustment period, the students gradually take on teaching duties. In this stage, the students prepare and carry out instructions on particular teaching subjects. These attempts are often followed by laboratory sessions or feedback meetings within the university departments. Finally, in the third stage, the students take on full responsibility for the design and implementation of the teaching of all the teaching subjects on the school timetable.

The course of development of the TP that was previously analyzed is common for all the DPEs examined, with small differentiations. The differences between the Departments can be narrowed down to four points:

- The number of students who implement teaching within the school classroom: In some Departments, teaching is differentiated and is implemented as a collaboration between two or three students, while in other Departments it is individual.
- The sequence of stages in the course of the TP: In some of the DPEs the three stages are separate, and one follows the other, while in some others the first stage (observations) continues throughout the implementation of the TP.
- The way in which the third stage is implemented in the different TP programmes: In some of the researched DPEs the students take on the teaching of a full timetable for a series of successive days, while in others they teach only on certain days of the week.
- The duration of the observation and teaching in TP: In Table 2 an average duration of observations and instruction during the TP by DPEs, in school days, is presented. To calculate the duration of the observation and teaching during the students' TP, one school day was calculated to be made up, on average, of 6 teaching hours.

Table 2. Total duration of observation and teaching, in days, during TP in the DPE in Greece

	UP	UI	UWM	UC	UA	UT	AUT	NKUA	DUT
Observation	38	17	13	2	12	1	53	20	6
Teaching	13.5	11	9	5.5	4	16	29	38	5.5

As we discovered in the data in Table 2, the differentiation in the number of days of observation and teaching is significant. Depending on the Department, the observation days may vary from 1 to 53, while the teaching days from 4 to 38. Moreover, differentiation is found in the ratio of observation to teaching days within each TP program. In most DPEs (6 Departments) there are more observation than teaching days. In fact, in 2 Departments (UP, UA), there are almost three times more observation days than teaching days. In certain DPEs however (3 Departments), there are many more teaching days than observation days.

The differentiations we highlighted, together with each program's differing goals, bear witness to the existence of a different philosophy and approach in each DPE. In particular, although a common view was observed to a certain extent in terms of the rules of pacing in the organization of TP, the differentiations in the sequencing of TP, its internal structure and content are significant (Bernstein, 2000).

#### 4.3 The Rules of Criteria That Predominate During the TP

The process for the assessment of TP is an important factor, as it determines the weight assigned to it on the undergraduate programs, while at the same time it has an effect on the attitude and action of the students during its implementation. Studying how the various stages of TP in the Greek DPEs are evaluated, we discovered three main trends:

- TP is a pre-requisite for the successful completion of certain courses, but the students' performance in it isn't evaluated,
- TP is indirectly evaluated through the teaching plans that are submitted, the observation sheets, as well as through essays where the students present the difficulties they faced or the teaching approach they adopted, and
- In some cases, teaching is assessed directly. The evaluation takes place either through self-assessment by the students or through evaluation by others. The latter is carried out either by their mentors, namely the teachers of the classes in which they teach, or by the seconded teachers and the university teaching staff who observe some of their teaching hours.

In Table 3 the means of assessment of the university courses related to the students' TP in the DPEs in Greece are presented. For each university, all the evaluation methods used at the various stages of TP are presented. The use of each means as a factor in students' assessment is symbolized with a dot (•), while a dash symbolizes its non-use.

Table 3. Forms of evaluation of TP at the DPE in Greece

	UP	UI	UWM	UC	UA	UT	AUT	NKUA	DUT
Examinations	•	•	•	-	•	-	•	•	-
Term papers	•	-	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Work plan and teaching material	•	•	•	•	•	•	-	•	•
Self-evaluation	•	-	•	•	-	•	-	•	•
Evaluation by others	•	-	•	-	-	•	-	-	•

Analyzing Table 3 we observe that in the majority of the Departments, indirect means of evaluation of TP are preferred. This is achieved with the use of essays as a means of evaluating the students, as well as their experiences in the school field (8 Departments). In addition, the observation sheets from the teaching observations and students' lesson plans, together with the teaching material used for the instruction that the students carried out are collected and assessed (8 Departments). As far as the direct assessment of students' instruction, a tendency is noted towards the implementation of self-assessment (6 Departments) rather than evaluation by others (4 Departments).

Consequently, looking at the entire picture regarding the evaluation of TP at the DPEs, we can see that in three (3) of the nine (9) Departments, either indirect, or no evaluation of TP is chosen. The remaining Departments combine indirect and direct evaluation of TP, with only four (4) Departments implementing evaluation of the students' performance by others during the exercise of their teaching responsibilities.

Based on the data, in Table 3 we formed Table 4, where the framing values and the pedagogical practice adopted by each DPE are set out. We discover that according to the rules of criteria adopted in each Department, the Visible Pedagogical Practice predominates, while in only two Departments is an Invisible Pedagogy predominant.

Table 4. Framing values and pedagogical practices in the TP of each DPE

	UP	UI	UWM	UC	UA	UT	AUT	NKUA	DUT
Framing Values	F++	F-	F++	F+	F+	F+	F-	F+	F+
Pedagogical Practice	VPP	IPP	VPP	VPP	VPP	VPP	IPP	VPP	VPP

*Note.* F++: Very Strong Framing, F+: Strong Framing, F-: Weak Framing, F--: Very Weak Framing; IPP: Invisible Pedagogical Practice, VPP: Visible Pedagogical Practice



## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this research was to conduct a comparative study of the TP, as this appears in the curricula of Greek DPEs, and to pinpoint convergences and divergences in its goals, structure and operation.

The first research question focused on the shaping of the goals, the operation and the structure of the TP in Greek DPEs. From the data we collected we discover that the main goal of TP is to equip the students with skills that are essential for taking on their duties as teachers, for their smooth entry into the school community and their reflection on their teaching work. In addition, weight is placed on the students' ability to 'translate' the theory they have been taught in their initial training into practice within the school field. This finding is in agreement with the findings of research by Aglazor (2017) and Chrisafidis (2013), in which the importance as well as the difficulty of achieving this particular goal was highlighted.

The goals put forward by each DPE for TP are directly linked to the function of and position held by the TP within each curriculum. In most cases, TP is linked to courses that refer to the didactics of school subjects, aiming at ensuring the direct translation of theoretical knowledge into practice. The linking of TP with courses on didactics is common in the international space too (Walsh & Elmslie, 2005). Furthermore, the linking of TP with lessons of pedagogical content bears witness to a focus on the action and behavior of the teachers within the school space.

The position of TP within each Department and its part in the formation of future teachers is reflected in the structural elements of TP too. More specifically, the goals and function of TP within the Departments' curricula is directly linked to the sequencing criteria, the pacing and the rules of criteria that frame TP. The main elements that are adjusted in relation to the goals of TP in each Department are the duration of the time spent by the student trainees within the school and the ratio of time spent on observation to that which is devoted to teaching. The direction each Department follows in terms of pacing, internal articulation and the content of the TP, as was highlighted above, in combination with the different goals of each program, bear witness to the existence of a different philosophy and approach in each DPE (Lavonen et al., 2019).

The second research question concerned the similarities and differences that were observed between the framework and position of TP in the nine examined Greek DPEs. According to the analysis of the content of the Departments' Study Guides, intense differentiation is observed in terms of the year when TP commences and its duration in the curricula of the various DPEs. TP, in the majority of Departments, begins after the first half of the students' undergraduate studies. However, the international scientific community stresses the favorable outcomes of timely – early commencement of TP for the trainees (Eret-Orhan, Ok, & Capa-Aydin, 2018; Oikonomidis, 2011).

Differences were also found in the criteria rules according to which the students were assessed in the context of the courses linked with the TP. Indirect evaluation of the students' performance is mainly chosen, while in the cases where direct evaluation is applied, self-evaluation is preferred. As we discovered, according to the rules of criteria that are adopted in each Department, a Visible Pedagogical Practice dominates (Bernstein, 2000). Evaluation by others, as a means of assessing the teaching work of the students during TP, is probably avoided because of the dissonance that is identified by research between the university professors and the mentors regarding the evaluation criteria. The differing approach of these two fundamental components of the TP may make difficult the implementation of a mutually accepted structure of assessment by others (Plessis et al., 2010).

Despite the differentiations in the data above, the programs seem to converge in terms of the rules of pacing, namely the course of development of the TP. More specifically, in all the DPEs, TP follows a gradual course of introduction to and taking on of teaching duties by the students. It is concluded consequently that the three stages of observation, analysis and application that are proposed by Grossman et al (2009) for the implementation of a complete TP are implemented by all the DPEs in Greece. TP begins gradually with entry into the school field and the observation of practicing teachers. This is followed by the assumption of teaching duties conducting hour-long instructions and finally, the students take on the responsibility of teaching the whole timetable.

To sum up, TP in Greece doesn't focus on strengthening the students' knowledge, but on the development of useful skills for entry into and effective action within the school. The ultimate goal is the formation of a teacher who respects the rules of the school community and is able to effectively carry out his/her work, aiming at the same time at the continuing improvement of his action (Kampeza, 2013; Lavonen et al., 2019). During TP, future teachers internalize the official school code and practice the skill of developing actions within it (Bernstein, 2000).

The goals set by each DPE in terms of TP, together with its structure and function in the shaping of future teachers outline the approach adopted by each Department. According to Karras and Wolhuter (2012), cases of reduced emphasis on TP result in an intense concentration on the students' theoretical competence and hence,

non-cultivation of their practical skills. The most effective approach to this matter seems to be the development of curricula where theoretical education, as well as practical application, is adequately represented.

We observe that the autonomy of the DPEs regarding the formation and placement of TP within the curriculum results in significant differentiations between Departments. These differences are a result of the Departments' different philosophies and the different composition of the teaching staff, creating a mix of different attitudes and beliefs (Oikonomidis, 2013). However, through a careful reading of the Departments' Study Guides, the influence of operational factors of the university in the structure and function of TP is highlighted. Such factors are the different budgets available to each Department, the number of seconded teachers, as well as the ease of ensuring the cooperation of schools in the wider area.

In conclusion, "academic freedom" is responsible for the different composition of TP in each DPE and consequently the different training the students who are preparing within it receive (Oikonomidis, 2013). Bearing in mind the significant influence TP has in the shaping of teachers and their adjustment within the school space, it becomes clear that the emerging question regarding the position of the TP within the DPEs in Greece is a matter of especial and weighty importance. The need for the improvement and more adequate preparation of future teachers means it requires continual renegotiation. Extending the present research, it would be of value to carry out a comparison of the framework of TP in the DPEs in Greece with institutions abroad, as well as to investigate the reality of TP implementation in Greece.

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## Note

Note 1. The DPE at the University of Patras, according to Law 4610/2019, (Article 36, 2, section 2.aa), was merged with the Department of Social Work at the TEI of Western Greece and was renamed Department of Educational Sciences and Social Work.

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