

The rookie: Describing a researcher's first semester teaching in a university classroom

Emma Winterhalter, Carley C. Morrison, & Jesse I. Morrison



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
SCHOOL OF HUMAN SCIENCES



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
DEPARTMENT OF
PLANT AND SOIL SCIENCES

Background

- Teaching, Research, Service
- Teaching is teachable, yet universities continue to expect researchers to teach without training (Alsop, 2018).

Literature

- Can students learn from researchers who have not been formally trained to teach?
- What hinders researchers from being effective teachers?
- What perpetuates this cycle?

Self – efficacy (Bandura, 1998)

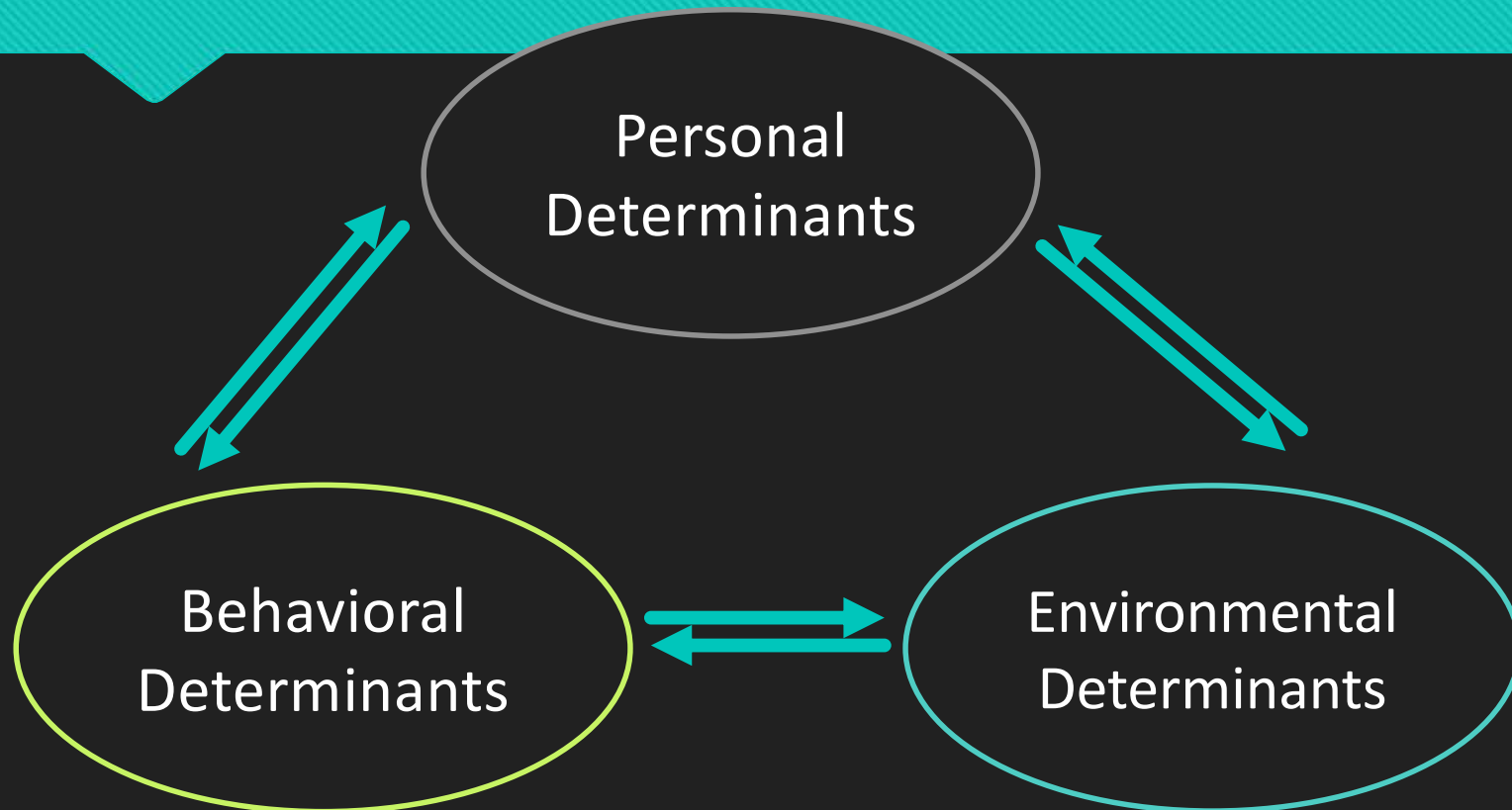
Formal
teacher
training

The diagram consists of three overlapping circles on a black background. The leftmost circle is outlined in light green and contains the text 'Formal teacher training'. The middle circle is outlined in light blue and contains the text 'Self-efficacy'. The rightmost circle is outlined in light gray and contains the text 'Student-centered learning'. All three circles overlap in a central region.

Self-efficacy

Student-
centered
learning

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986)



Our research

To describe the phenomenon of the classroom teaching experience for an instructor with no formal teacher training over the course of one semester.

Methods



- Phenomenological (Creswell, 1998)
 - Bracketing (Gearing, 2004)
- Semi-structured reflective journaling (Reflective Teaching, 2018)

Data Analysis

1. Read-through of instructor's journal
2. Identify themes
3. Apply themes to objective of study
4. Themes compared to students' journal entries

(Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015)

Confidence in teaching ability and knowledge of topic

“I felt really spaced out on the first day of class...maybe too much coffee. Maybe nerves. Maybe all of it.” (I, W1)

“[I was feeling] absolutely drained. Maybe because the subjects [were] starting to get out of my knowledge base” (I, W9)

Students reported being “interested in what [I was] teaching” (S19, W1) that I was “well prepared” (S29, W1), “knowledgeable” (S28, W1), and “doing a great job” (S7, W2).

Dedication to providing a quality learning experience

“This is the first week of class and I’m doing my best to be the kind of teacher I would like to have.” (I, W1)

“Truth be told, I feel like I can only teach one way...the way I know how to. That’s a [bad] way to look at it, but sometimes I feel that way.” (I, W3)

“Trying to take away some information I could use with production. Was pretty engaged with what was going on I felt like. When we discuss things in class I feel like [Instructor] picks very strange things to focus on. We need more info on...things we can take home and use farming. Not the university typical ‘theories’ we get.” (S12, W6)

Dedication to providing a quality learning experience

Monday was an awesome lecture. The students really considered the broader world of grain crops...how a single change in government policy can affect ag in the US and in Miss. (I, W6).

"I stayed in the classroom...between class and lab. I got to have a great conversation with a few students while [working] through a calculation problem. Then as the students returned to class, we began discussing [topics]...it was awesome. these students [were] great" (I, W6).

"Today we watched a short clip...[that] talked about how sorghum would impact American agriculture. I feel that it is important to know about what is going on in today's world and be aware of how it could impact us. Not many teachers will show you these things but I think it should be in every class" (S4, W9).

Planning and time commitment

"I am taking too long to cover the material", and all of a sudden, we were a whole week behind schedule... after only two weeks in class (I, W2).

"I had an off-day on Monday, nothing seemed to come out like I planned...but I got the lesson out, and nobody fell asleep, so I consider that a success, I guess" (I, W3).

By week nine, "I [felt] absolutely drained. Maybe because the subjects [were] starting to get out of my knowledge base...which have required a lot of prep and study for me" (I, W9).

"The tests are extremely unfair, asked questions we didn't cover and just very vague topics. He doesn't explain things well and we need [the previous instructor] to teach this class...[Instructor] has NO... experience and covers topics from freshman level [classes]. Very disappointed in this class." (S12, W5)

Building rapport with student

"I just hope these kids know that I want them to succeed out there, and make a positive difference. Maybe." (I, W3)

I [had] a really good relationship with the students, and they [responded] pretty well to lecture, so I hope my situation [as a new instructor didn't throw] them off or [make] them check out. I [got] lots of questions from my students, which might mean [they were] interested, or they might just like it when I [went] off on a tangent (I, W9).

"He connects, doesn't act like a teacher in a good way." (S27, W1)

When it was all said and done...

- Thankful for the opportunity , but...
- PROUD of students
- 5% increase in salary = 70% increase in workload

So what?

- Professional Development – Faculty
- Training / Support – Graduate Students
- Research

- Bandura, A. (1998). Personal and collective efficacy in human adaptation and change. *Advances in psychological science, 1*, 51-71.
- Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. *American Psychologist, 44*(9), 1175.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2015). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (Vol. 9). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Gearing, R. (2004) 'Bracketing in Research: A Typology', *Qualitative Health Research 14*(10): 1429–52.
- Reflective Teaching. (2018). Yale Center for Teaching and Learning. Retrieved September 10, 2018 from <https://ctl.yale.edu/ReflectiveTeaching>

Thanks



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
SCHOOL OF HUMAN SCIENCES



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
DEPARTMENT OF
PLANT AND SOIL SCIENCES