

Investigating the Management of Practice Teaching Visits for 3rd Year Level Student Teachers by Limpopo University Supervisors: A Perspective of Student Teachers

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Abstract

The study aims at investigating the perspective of student teachers on how Limpopo University supervisors manage practice teaching visits for 3rd year student teachers. The research question guiding the study is : to what extent is practice teaching visits for 3rd year student teachers taken seriously by both student teachers themselves and the University supervisors?. The research methods employed to emerge with data germane to the study were document analysis and an interviewing technique. Out of the population of 586 3rd year student teachers, 41 were conveniently sampled. Three of the extra-ordinary findings which the research inquiry unearthed are that 3rd level year student teachers are immensely scared of practice teaching since it forces them to deliver lessons in the presence of supervisors. They also harbour an idea that practice teaching should be cancelled for the 3rd years until they do a final year. University supervisors lament an inadequate time allotted for practice teaching with huge numbers to supervise twice. As part of the conclusion, the researcher regards it to be advisable that further studies around this issue of practice teaching for the 3rd level year student teachers be undertaken. This is in acknowledgement and recognition of the enigma and its uniqueness. Commencing with intensive and extensive practice teaching at the 1st level of study could familiarise student teachers to it quite early.

Keywords: practice teaching, University supervisor, student teacher, manage

1. Introduction and Background

The pre-requisite for a student teacher to graduate into a fully-fledged teacher is to partake in practice teaching. There appears to be a general feeling of discomfort and uneasiness when the moment for practice teaching dawns. Aspirant teachers are uncomfortable to deliver lessons in the presence of University supervisors and they express revulsion against that because of the assessor factor having a bearing on the evolution of the classroom environment where the behaviour of learners change from usual to unusual. That disturbance of the classroom ecology earns a bad name for practice teaching which is equated with torture, intimidation, nervousness and humiliation. Student teachers enjoy only the company of learners alone and the assessor presence perturbs the relationship between the student teacher and her learners. The mood evolves into a tense one to the detriment of good teaching and learning (Chen, Gavin, Brown, Hattie & Millward, 2012:938).

The how part of managing practice teaching contributes to its notoriety. This is comprehensible putting oneself in the position of student teachers. What though has to receive attention is the alertness of University supervisors to reform as a way of freeing practice teaching from negative publicity. Practice teaching deserves more acceptability from all stakeholders associated with it. Achieving that stands to benefit it massively. Despite teaching practice being a scare to student teachers, however, the New Teacher Education Act no.67 of 2008 accentuates its essentiality. For instance 32 weeks are set aside for practice teaching for all the aspirant teachers prior to their graduation as fully-fledged teachers possessing a four year University teaching qualification. Hence this study aims at sharing suggestions aimed at enhancing the management of practice teaching visits for the 3rd year level student teachers by the University supervisors (Luik, Voltri, Taimalu & Kalk, 2011:167).

2. Literature Review

The review of literature on teaching practice is replete with articles that shed light on how it is comprehended. For instance Vescio, Ross, and Adams (2008:87) caution that practice teaching has to be dual in the sense of the professional development of the teacher candidate and the enhancement of learner-learning. This emphasises that practice teaching has to benefit both the teacher trainee as well as learners on whom it is directed. The review of literature indicates that the black society of South Africa is facing a bleak future in the area of producing competent and productive teachers. This is based on the observation of how African 3rd year level student teaches resent practice teaching. Literature study confirms that this can be explained in terms of lack of more information on its value. Ramphele (2011:21) reminds that practice teaching offers participants an opportunity to fine-tune and perfect student teachers' teaching skills. Bernstein & McCarthy (2011:8) concede that failing to embrace practice teaching by student teachers could spread into other institutions if not timeously curbed. Some of the current researches tend to largely ascribe resistance to practice teaching to ill-preparedness by students prior to their deployment to schools. The review of literature is not explicitly clarifying the contradictory behaviour of current student teachers who would love to be crowned teachers having not readily gone through the rigours of becoming a model vibrant 21st century teacher (Marishane, Botha & du Plessis, 2011:54, Lippit, 1989: 48 & Nxumalo, 2001:18). Cunningham & Gresso (1993:45) and Coetzee, van Wyk & Wydeman, (2008:164) are perplexed about the kind of students populating the Higher education sector. This is in view of the 3rd level year level student teachers being inconvenienced by the University supervisors inside the classroom.

Tok (2010:4143) reminds that learner-behaviour-management by the teacher candidate during practice teaching is of utmost significance. This serves to advise that a student teacher has to be in charge in the classroom as a prerequisite to develop herself professionally and to maximise classroom learning. For this to happen, assessor support to student teachers is indispensable. The review of literature attests the contribution of the University supervisors in scaring student teachers against practice teaching although it is no deliberate practice to bring into disrepute the concept of teaching practice. A solution lies in student teachers being deconditioned and then re-conditioned to accept teaching practice freely and voluntarily. University supervisors need to portray an attractive picture of teaching practice. This can safely be done through managing and handling practice teaching differently and with the sole purpose of having it being warmly embraced by all aspirant teachers unconditionally and unreservedly. Literature study depicts that largely 3rd level year student teachers who are not comfortable about being assessed as early as at the third level, may be those whom teaching may have been their second or even third choice when first applying to attend at the University. This is to imply that such student teachers may not be possessing an innate desire of becoming distinguished 21st century teachers. The review of literature confirms that when practice teaching commences in earnest as early as in first year of study, such student teachers are likely to be greatly inconvenienced. There is no doubt that getting the University supervisors to change could have a huge impact around the negativity enjoyed by practice teaching. Makhanya (2013:24) contends that teacher candidates who express reservations about practice teaching do so due to self-scaremongering habit. This indirectly depicts such a conduct by University students to be a community-defying-behaviour (Orford, 2013:18). Under normal circumstances it could be secondary school learners who may resist partaking in programmes such as practice teaching. When such a behaviour is witnessed with University students it can at best be described outlandish. The review of literature abundantly points out that practice teaching has many benefits for student teachers amongst which is affording them an opportunity to string together sentences in their subject specialisation (Mangcy, 2013:20). This signifies that practice teaching is no aimless and ritualistic exercise for aspirant teachers. It is an integral part and parcel of the University programme. That is why Olivier (2012:27) emphasises that in the education universe, the concept student teacher has evolved to mean an impartor of knowledge.

The review of literature has shown that anyone who aspires to reach the top of an underestimated profession like teaching, practice teaching serves a pre-condition for that to take place (Clarke, 2013:12). Literature study further demonstrates that getting the image of practice teaching to improve, has to be a task for all involved in the mandate of training and developing teachers. The profession of teaching gets paralysed as long as practice teaching is viewed negatively. Literature review depicts that to be entrenched by the adversaries of the teaching profession some of whom are aspirant teachers. Cantrell (2013:11) advises that the significance of practice teaching should never be allowed to be trivialised through allowing the wish and aspiration of student teachers to be assessed when in their fourth year of study other than at their third and other preceding levels of study. Kramer (2013:11) reminds that practice teaching is too crucial to be denigrated and that all colleagues involved in it at universities should regard it to be an essential programme of teacher training to the level of developing a need to unite behind it. Such a move could involve advocating for the commencement of practice teaching as early as with the first entering students who have chosen teaching as their career. Practice teaching offers an opportunity to student teachers for an excellent teaching which is considered the basis

for enhancing learner learning and achieving school effectiveness (Chen, Gavin, Brown, Hattie and Millward, 2012:940).

As per literature study, resisting practice teaching is an authentic problem that deserves fixing to avert it from spiralling out of control (Du Preez, 2013:11). This signifies that Schools of Education at Universities have to flex their muscles to render obsolete unpleasant tendencies of compromising practice teaching by student teachers (Fabricius, 2013:13). The reality is that permitting them to derail the practice teaching programme through expression of reservations for presenting lessons in the presence of University assessors is no different to licensing student teachers to implode the teaching practice programme. The review of literature emphasises the connectedness of resenting practice teaching by the University student teachers and their under-preparedness to carry out genuine practice teaching project. A strain could ensue between the University supervisors and student teachers whose thinking prescribes to them that practice teaching is not urgent and could always be done in the students final year of study. Orford (2013:18) laments that feelings of discomfort and uneasiness against practice teaching are not irrevocable. A remedy for the discussed state of affairs rests on finding a way to understand what is happening and why University student teachers develop a serious resentment against practice teaching. The review of literature concludes with a reminder that resisting practice teaching could be a manifestation of student teachers who landed in teaching because of failure to qualify in other careers they were more passionate about. Alternatively, resentment could be a test of the kind of leadership manning and managing practice teaching programmes in Universities (Mangu 2013:20). To sum up practice teaching has to aim at highly accomplished performance by learners and professional betterment of the student teacher. Saeed Shahid & Atha Hussain (2011:1735) articulate that the display of non-professional attitude of not cooperating by practice teaching assessors earns a bad name for the teaching practice process. The researchers fully agree with the expressed statement. In a South African context, the status of practice teaching in institutions of Higher learning that train and prepare teachers, is in a deplorable state notwithstanding the paucity of studies for practice teaching in the eyes of the teacher-candidates. Such a state of affairs, is being aggravated by the fact that teaching as a profession normally attracts aspirant teachers who did not succeed elsewhere and then take teaching as their last resort. As such, it is not entirely stunning when the mention of the concept "practice teaching" becomes an immense scare to student teachers. Having to present a lesson in the presence of the University assessor appears to be something South African aspirant teachers of various hues are just not ready to endure (Luik, Voltri, Taimalu & Kak, 2011:166).

3. Research Focus

3.1 The research problem

Literature study provides evidence confirming that the management of practice teaching visits for the 3rd level year student teachers has not being satisfactory. This is based on the perspective of student teachers themselves (Clarke, 2013:12 & Makhanya, 2013:25). This begs the question as to that which the University supervisors are doing bad in the process of managing practice visits for 3rd level year student teachers to amass general dissatisfaction (Orford, 2013:18). The other concern raised in literature (Kramer, 2013:11) relates to the consistent failure by the University assessors to make arrangements with teacher-candidates prior to visiting schools to assess them. This is a major concern if one considers the adage: proper planning prevents poor performance. The relevance of the adage lies in the point that where a student teacher is caught with her pants down meaning not ready to deliver a classroom lesson in the presence of a University supervisor, and be forced to do so, the likelihood of underperforming is high. Where possible, student teachers have to know in advance about lessons to be delivered. This explains why in this study, student teachers lament impromptu visitation by University supervisors which is equated with unprofessionalism and trampling down on student teachers' rights and then elicits resentment.

Recognising that the existing studies investigated the management of practice teaching visits for completing student teachers in general, like that of (Maruma, Modiba, Gwaindepi & Musara 2013) amongst others, in this study, the researchers under the guidance of the prevailing reviewed and discussed literature, deemed it fit to concentrate their study to strictly investigating the perspective of the 3rd level year student teachers. That was necessitated by the gap noticed by the researchers on lack of studies that solely captured the views of the 3rd year level student teachers as regards the management of practice teaching visits to schools by the University supervisors.

4. Aim and Objectives of the Study

To contribute to the attempts of producing University-teacher graduates who largely excel and are productive in delivering the classroom lessons in the presence of another professional adult. To attain this aim, the following objectives were

developed:

- To assess the spread of the 3rd year level student teachers' dissatisfaction on the management of their practice teaching visits.
- To investigate the cause of this 3rd level year student teachers' lamentation of the management of their practice teaching visits.
- To share suggestions to enhance the management of practice teaching visits for the 3rd year level student teachers by the University supervisors.

5. Sample and Its Description

Out of the population of 429 3rd level year student teachers deployed in schools, ten public secondary schools each with four student teachers were sampled. Kumar (2005) as cited in Lehlaha (2011:27 & Babbie,1992:220) maintains that a relatively small number of participants selected, can provide the researcher with an adequate high degree of probability and true reflection of the sampling population. Convenient purposeful sampling was resorted to in this study. This was in view of the nature of the problem under study, namely, establishing the extent to which practice teaching visits for the 3rd level year student teachers was taken seriously by student teachers and University supervisors. In addition, such a sampling type was perfectly found to be in line with research paradigm and data construction technique for the study. In each secondary school, four respondents were interviewed. The researcher made use of convenient purposeful sampling to select ten secondary schools around the Capricorn District. In each sampled school a total number of four 3rd year level student teachers were interviewed. There was a good balance of the gender in the sense that overall, 20 females and 20 males became respondents. An individual interview with each of respondent lasted for thirty minutes, with responses being tape recorded and notes made as part of the field notes. Interviews were conducted at each school after normal business hours. It has been less strenuous for the researcher to construct data from the identified respondents, because of the available interview schedule. The investigators concluded the process of data construction when convinced that the aim and objectives of the study have been achieved and that the data generated from the interviews were saturated (Creswell,2010:143). Document analysis served as one of the research methods. This was possible because analysis of documents is an important component of any study since it is the main gateway to the relevant body of knowledge, and it precisely served such a purpose (Mouton,1996:119).

6. Research Design and Methods

The phenomenological approach underscores this study. It was selected based on the aim and objectives of the study together with the study's research problem. Phenomenology as a theoretical perspective enabled the investigators to make an in-depth understanding about the manner in which practice teaching visits for 3rd level year student teachers is managed by the University's supervisors in the perspective of the affected student teachers. This facilitated the generation of fresh insight on the problem under study. Phenomenology was selected to better illuminate the views of student teachers regarding practice teaching. An in-depth interviews as well as document analysis as data construction methods were utilised within the sampled secondary schools. Respondents were subjected to an in-depth personal interviewing regarding the management of practice teaching visits of the 3rd level year student teachers by the University supervisors. The developed interview schedule was piloted with some schools, where student teachers were doing practice teaching. Such schools were not part of the research sample. The aim of piloting was to identify weaknesses and ambiguities in the interview schedule in order to remedy them timeously. Document analysis as partnered with in-depth interviews helped immensely to corroborate and triangulate the secured data from the research respondents and to build an argument (Higgs and Smith,2010:73).

7. Data Analysis

Given the nature of the research problem and the kind of data the investigators emerged with, content analysis was selected to analyse the constructed raw data. Data analysis was never handled as an independent and separate stage, apart from all other research steps. Data analysis involved sorting and constructing information into categories, formatting the information into a story, creating themes out of the data and actually writing the phenomenological text. Data analysed was generated for a specific purpose, derived from the particular methodologies, looked at from a particular perspective and discussed from a particular point of view (Maykut and Morehouse,1999:127). Data analysed was the one constructed in relation to the management of practice teaching visits of the 3rd level year student teachers by the

University supervisors in the eyes of those student teachers. Analysis entailed capturing, coding and formatting into themes. An inductive approach to analysing responses from the research respondents was undertaken to allow patterns, themes and categories to emerge rather than being imposed prior to data generation and analysis. Responses that were similar were grouped together into categories which were subsequently utilised for the discussion of the study's findings. The identification of themes provided depth to the insight about the individual views of student teachers pertaining to what is actually happening with regard to the management of practice teaching visits for the 3rd level year student teachers by the University's supervisors according to how student teachers view them. Codes that were similar were aggregated together to form a major idea from the data (Creswell,2010:60). Researchers analysed data utilising the constant comparative method. This is an approach which complements content analysis in the sense of first requiring that as the first step, all the tape recorded data be transcribed and typed verbatim. Then copies of transcripts are made to be used in data analysis. Data pages were coded to their sources, in this case views of student teachers involved in practice teaching visits as managed by the University Supervisors. Ultimately, the investigators emerged with themes and categories and applied them to author the findings of the study (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993:163, Leedy, 1993:87 and Nieuwenhuis, 2007:101).

8. Results

8.1 Disturbance of classroom ecology

One of the findings is that the presence of a University supervisor in a classroom was viewed to be disturbing the classroom ecology. This is being supported by the student teacher 1 of school A who states that "other learners did want to participate but not in front of the University supervisor". Student teacher 2 of the same school adds that "learners had a pressure of participating and thought that maybe the assessor was marking them off, which was not the case". Student teacher 3 of the same institution remarks that "learners were afraid to misbehave because of the visitor. They were thinking that their freedom of expression was violated because they were unable to give bad comments during the lesson the way, they were used to". Student teacher 4 of school A concludes that "learners thought that supervisors disturbed them to ask some of the questions that they might have asked in his absence". On the above finding, Thabi (2013:23) comments that it is incomprehensible that assessors in the classroom be accused of disrupting the classroom setting when it is the current tertiary education sector that dispirits and thwarts the dreams of student teachers to the level of resenting practice teaching. This sums up resistance of practice teaching to be a harbinger of disillusionment, dejection and anger by the current University student teachers. Fry (2013:19) reminds that it is only student teachers with housed fear in themselves, who think in a box and who are likely to view an assessor as an intruder in the classroom. The whole situation points out to one thing which is that the education of a democratic South Africa does not talk to the country as the University student teachers of today aspire (Machoana,2013:19).

8.2 An opportunity to revitalises the learning mood

Despite reservations about teaching practice, some research respondents were viewing it to be availing an opportunity to revitalise the learning mood. For instance, student teacher 1 of school B contends that "the presence of a stranger, namely, the University supervisor in the class made learners to be attentive and taking their studies seriously". Student teacher 2 of the same school reports that "the determination to learn by learners was greatly enhanced by the supervisor's presence". The same view is held by student teacher 3 of the same institution who argued that "allowing supervisors to address learners prior to the period ending the lesson, brought a new learning mood in the classroom". All these views are shared by student teacher 4 of school B who avows that "if the University supervisors were to visit schools weekly, the tone of learning in schools was going to change tremendously". Kaschula (2013:12) concurs when declaring that encouraging practice teaching is about putting learners first in the teaching and learning site. Kadalie (2013: 12) advises that having student teachers who identify themselves with practice teaching and its usefulness for learners, epitomises a reality that it is not everything doom and gloom as regards tertiary education sector.

8.3 Compromising the intentions of practice teaching in education

Student teacher 1 of school C mentions that "University supervisors who just drop in schools to assess without prior arrangements were greatest inconveniences". This is supported by student teacher 2 of the same institution who reasons that "University supervisors who overstayed in the classrooms when the teaching period was over became a burden to

student teachers". Student teacher 3 of the same institution complains that "we should be told on what is expected of us during the teaching practice, more especially to those it will be their first time being assessed". Student teacher 4 of school C asserts that "University supervisors who did not honour their assessment appointment with student teachers, demonstrated little commitment to practice teaching and thus sacrificed its value". Dyer (2013:13) cautions that to have practice teaching gaining traction, University supervisors have to evolve and begin to be more compassionate about student teachers to be assessed. This signifies that University assessors ought not be part of the problems besetting practice teaching, but a solution thereof (Memela,2013:29).

8.4 Lack of visitation uniformity

Student 1 of school D reveals that "I think we should all be assessed twice because this will help us to identify our weaknesses and improve on them". Student teacher 2 of the same institution comments that "what most student teachers did not grasp is the purpose of the second visit while others have not been assessed even once". Student teacher 3 of school D advises that "all supervisors should use a structured method of assessment as we feel that we are not assessed equitably". Student teacher 4 reminds that "supervisors who hurry us up and down upon arriving in schools were making life difficult for us in those schools". Memela (2013:29) appeals that sugar-coating challenges surrounding teaching practice such as the absence of common implementable visitation guidelines would not aid in improving teaching practice from the core. This suggests that at the moment the University supervisors deserve a flak for the resistance experienced and witnessed around practice teaching by the student teachers (Vera,2013:29).

8.5 The difficulty of removing practice teaching stigma

Student teacher 1 of school E contends that "if already serving teachers are afraid of teaching when their colleagues are there, who are we not to feel uneasy in the midst of the University supervisor". Student teacher 2 of the same institution agrees when stating that "the scary attitude of the University supervisors aggravates things in terms of feeling uneasy about being assessed". Student teacher 3 of school E recounts that "under- preparedness of student teachers before being deployed to schools makes them somehow continue to detest practice teaching". Student teacher 4 of school E affirms when mentioning that "it is a century old problem that the concept practice teaching is associated with intimidation and cruelty". Tlhabi (2013:23) laments that the stigma around practice teaching was easy to entrench because student teachers are easily deceived because they are quick to hope. This is confirmed by the Du Preez (2013:11) when appealing that University student teachers be assisted to prevail under the circumstances of having a proclivity of resisting practice teaching due to the old baggage the process continues to fight against.

8.6 The rigidity and tightness of practice teaching

One of the findings is that practice teaching programme is tight. That is why student teacher 1 of school F advises that "increasing the duration of the practice teaching from 4 weeks to 8 could be beneficial". This is supported by student teacher 2 of the same school when reminding that "give us enough time to adjust to schools at least full two weeks before school visits for assessment commence". Student teacher 3 of the same school suggests that "practice teaching duration be extended to 1 month and 2 weeks to have time to get to know learners well and to prepare them". Student teacher 4 of school F advises that "more University supervisors should participate in practice teaching to have two student teachers being assessed by one supervisor in a day not how it is currently done". Although Kgomo (2013:13) is not disputing the tightness of the teaching practice programme, he however, reminds that teacher candidates ought not use apartheid as an excuse for fearing to be assessed as part of practice teaching. The same point is implicitly expressed by Manuel (2013:25) when emphasising that student teachers have to be reminded that their involvement in practice teaching is part of pursuit of freedom from ignorance, from suppression and freedom from fear.

8.7 Inadequate preparation of student teachers

One of the findings relates to inadequate preparation of student teachers. This was found to be worsening the matter as confirmed by student teacher one of school G when announcing that "student teachers don't know what to expect from the University supervisors except relying on guessing and predicting if not from information by fellow student teachers". Student teacher 2 of the same school accedes when reasoning that "I think we should be told on what is expected from us during teaching practice, more especially to those who it will be their first time being assessed". Student teacher 3 of

the same school states that “we should be equipped with more information and guidance on how to teach not just go to school and start telling learners lies in class claiming to know and understand what one is teaching learners”. Student teacher 4 of the same institution mentions that “a one day workshop for all the third year level student teachers may help much before we are released to schools for practice teaching purposes”. Walford (2013:3) recounts that when aspirant teachers express reservations about commencing teaching practice at the 3rd year level on the basis of being under-prepared, then the University has a major problem in its hands. Mtshali (2013: 7) concurs in stating that there is no doubt that student teachers who resist practice teaching paralyse teaching and become instant adversaries of professionalism in teaching.

8.8 Lack of openness and transparency by assessors.

Student teacher 1 of school H complains that “the University supervisors ought not impose their assessment dates to student teachers, instead negotiate and agree with them”. Student teacher 2 of the same school requests that “student teachers should be informed about who their assessors would be before leaving for practice teaching”. Student teacher 3 of school H advises that prior to the start of practice teaching, there should be a gathering where the University supervisors reveal their modus operandi during their practice teaching visitation to schools”. Student teacher 4 of school H supports what by emphasising that “University supervisors who just drop in schools without a shared visitation programme with student teachers, act autocratically in a democratic country”. Spaul (2013:19) advises that although the majority of student teachers in historically disadvantaged institutions come from the resource poor homes and dysfunctional families, that does not mean that University supervisors should take them for granted as regards consultations prior to conducting assessments. Being transparent with them is part of transforming the educational landscape of the country. Makhanya (2013:25) stresses that practice teaching avails an opportunity to student teachers to sharpen their teaching skills apart from socialising with learners.

8.9 Lack of self-trust by student teachers.

Student teacher 1 of school I discloses that “I was nervous and wondering if I will present the lesson in a tactful manner”. Student teacher 2 of the same institution agrees when stating that “panic attacked me immediately I saw the University supervisor pitching up at my school for assessment”. Student teacher 3 shares that “I used to think about what would happen when my University supervisor comes to assess me, what if learners misbehave in front of the assessor”. Student teacher 4 of school I discloses that “I had to build a good relationship so that they could not disappoint me in front of the University supervisor”. Makhanya (2013:25) notes that there is a need to confront this massive sense of hopelessness among the student teachers. Fry (2013:19) avows that resisting practice teaching is somehow the prejudice of a society in which schools exist and around which student teachers are born and bred. Kadalie (2013:12) reminds that lack of self-trust drives University student teachers into imposing their degradation on the University programmes.

8.10 Practice teaching as a scare

Student teacher 1 of school J reveals that “I never had a night sleep until the first assessment took place. The period was nightmarish for me”. Student teacher 2 of school J states that “ things were difficult, I did not know what to expect and the feeling was so bad”. Student teacher 3 of school J divulges that “the thought of someone watching my lesson created uneasiness in me. I never had peace of mind until it was over”. Student teacher 4 of school J mentions that “I was like a prisoner, I was never free until that moment of being assessed twice had arrived and past”. Manual (2013:25) articulates that when University student teachers who chose teaching to be their career run away from practice teaching, confirms that something is profoundly wrong with the way we live today. Langa (2013:46) articulates that through resenting the delivery of lessons in the midst of assessors, student teachers handle the issue of their future in a damaging manner. Honwane (2013:12) succinctly proclaims that despite teaching practice being a scare for myriad aspirant teachers, even serving teachers are uneasy to be observed in the classroom. At its current status, the University practice teaching deserves full blown revisiting. This is necessitated and precipitated by the general outcry about it. This is a worldwide trend. The world over, the University teaching practice is greatly inadequate structurally, in terms of content and in relation to its operationalization or roll out. It is just not living up to the expectation of myriad student teachers, something which has to constitute the worrying factor for all Universities of the world that are involved in teacher preparation especially for the 21st century learners (Lewis, Kim & Bey,2011:225).

9. Concluding Remarks

The review of literature and the phenomenological approach played a pivotal role in talking to the results of the study. Furthermore, the two also provided the better context within which the entire study had to be located and comprehended. Student teachers viewed the presence of University supervisors in their classrooms to be disturbing their classroom ecologies. The researchers suggest a remedy as appealing to learners to persist to behave and act as they are used to and to forget about the presence of the "intruder" whose focus is on the student teacher not on learners. As regards viewing the presence of the University supervisors to be an opportunity to revitalise the learning mood, the investigators suggest that every time the University supervisors are in schools, they should be cajoled and persuaded into addressing learners and encouraging them to take their studies seriously. The challenge of the intentions of practice teaching being compromised by the University supervisors could be remedied through appealing to student teachers and assessors to remain professional when at school and to operate according to the values and ethos of teaching and practice teaching. Lack of visitation uniformity by University supervisors, could be overcome if prior to the commencement of practice teaching, all university assessors come together to discuss and agree on a uniform way of assessing student teachers. Difficulty on the removal of practice teaching stigma, lies in bringing teacher mentors on board when planning and rolling out practice teaching programme so that they help in de-stigmatising the practice teaching exercise. This is necessary because much as it takes a village to raise a child, it equally takes the collaboration of University assessors and teacher mentors to produce a fellow teacher. Student teachers are likely to feel at ease in the presence of the teacher mentor than in the midst of the University supervisor. This is ascribed to the existing narrow knowledge gap between the student teacher and the former which could be put to good use to advance the teacher-candidate (Lewis, Kim and Bey, 2011:230). University supervisors have to be patient and polite with student teachers at all times.

Rigidity and tightness of the practice teaching programme could be settled through revealing to student teachers about the number of weeks set aside for them to perform practice teaching, according to Act no. 67 Of 2008 which is the New Teacher Education Act. The solution to inadequate preparation of student teachers, lies in ascertaining that the tradition and practice of deploying student teachers to schools prior to taking them through the documentations of practice teaching is rescinded and discontinued forthwith. They must also be encouraged to self-research in this regard for them to be innovative and well prepared. In that way, they will be following Mandela's footsteps. He started Umkhonto we Sizwe without being a soldier first. When assigned the duty of starting this he said: "I began the only way I knew how, by reading and talking to experts" Mandela (1995: 42). He succeeded by reading widely to find out the fundamental principles for starting a revolution. He read writings like the following: the report of Blas Roca, Commando by Deneys Rerts, work by and about Che Guevara, Mao Tse Tung, Fidel Castro and many more. As Umkhonto we Sizwe was successful, so can student teachers be. Lack of openness and transparency by assessors, could be remedied by incessantly reminding the University supervisors that South Africa operates under a new dispensation which dictates that there always be consultation and discussions on issues that directly affect people, in this instance referring to student teachers. So, the principle has to be nothing about the student teachers without their prior involvement.

Lack of self-trust by student teachers, could be addressed through support and guidance of student teachers from when they first choose teaching as their career until they exit at the 4th level year. As regards taking practice teaching to be a real scare by the student teachers, the remedy lies in getting the University supervisors to stop being attitudinal and intimidating against student teachers who still have to undergo practice teaching. Utilization of an experienced and seasoned former teachers whose task would be to comfort and chaperone student teachers about practice teaching challenges still to be faced in various schools, could go a long way to have student teachers feeling cared for and at easy every-time the concept of practice teaching is being mentioned. The summarised research results are sounding a clarion call to the University supervisors that successful assessment of student teachers commences with the improvement of the management of practice teaching visits for the 3rd level year student teachers during practice teaching. The researchers conclude by advising that further studies deserve to be undertaken on the management of practice teaching visits for the 3rd level year student teachers by the Limpopo University's supervisors and beyond in order to ultimately improve the practice in this regard. The trend the world over about student teachers is that they more or less go through similar experiences though under divergent and diverse conditions and to different degrees. On the basis of the above, the wider implications of this study for practice teaching in general would be that the concept of "practice teaching" as expected to be embraced and espoused by all teacher-candidates, should no longer be taken for granted by institutions of Higher learning charged with the responsibility of producing teachers. The manner of planning, organising, leading, control and evaluation of practice teaching in this century deserves to be revisited and re-looked. The ultimate goal of doing that would be to ameliorate the frustrations of teacher -candidates in every corner of the globe concerning how practice teaching unfolds and how it is being conceptualised. In addition, highlighting and exposing the challenges of

practice teaching as seen in the eyes of the student teachers themselves, serve as a viable and sustainable point of departure for surmounting the experienced bottlenecks associated with practice teaching (Luik, Voltri, Taimalu and Kalk, 2011:1).

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