

ROLE PARAMETERS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRACTICUM TRIAD:  
TEACHER TRAINING PERSPECTIVES FROM NAMIBIA'S ZAMBEZI REGION

By

**AFRICA ZULU**

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SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR M.W. LUMADI

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## DECLARATION

Student Number: **508-5900-5**

I, **AFRICA ZULU** do hereby declare that **ROLE PARAMETERS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRACTICUM TRIAD: TEACHER TRAINING PERSPECTIVES FROM NAMIBIA'S ZAMBEZI REGION** is my own work and has not been submitted in any form, whatsoever, by myself or anyone else, to this university or any other educational institution for any degree or examination purposes. All the sources have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015

AFRICA ZULU

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate the success of this thesis to my loving family; my wife Ciliaana, my daughter Michelle and sons Marshall, Percival and Brayden who were always there to render me all the support and encouragement to sail through.

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I wish to express my heartfelt and sincere indebtedness to the numerous individuals and institutions who contributed to the accomplishment of this study. Their input had an immense and lasting impact on the success of this research and words fail me in my attempt to sufficiently thank them. Without them, I couldn't have achieved this feat.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BEd [Hon]: Bachelor of Education [Honours Degree]

CBS: Computer-based Studies

CT: Cooperating teacher

DfES: Department for Education and Skills

EPM: Enhanced Partnership Model

HEI: Higher Education Institutions

KMC: Katima Mulilo Campus

NIES: National Institute of Education- Supervisor

OTJ: On-the-job

QTS: Qualified teacher status

SBS: School-based studies

SCM: School coordinating Mentor

SCT: Social Cognitive Theory

SLT: Senior Liaison Officer

ST: Support teacher

TP: Teaching Practice

TT: teacher Trainee or Student teacher

TTA: Teacher Training Agency

UCF: University of Central Florida

UCT: University of Cape Town

UNAM: University of Namibia

UNISA: University of South Africa

US: University supervisor

WBL: Work-based learning

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the varying roles of individual members of the teaching practicum triad, comprising the university supervisor, the student teacher and the school support teacher, during the practicum component of primary teacher education at the University of Namibia's Katima Mulilo Campus. The research sought to establish the perceptions of the school support-teachers, university students and university lecturers about the effectiveness of pre-deployment preparedness of trainee teachers before their attachment to schools for teaching practice and to establish the facets of the school participation within the triad which are most effective in supporting trainee teachers throughout their school based practicum. The practicum partnership matrix, as well the pre-teaching campus-based studies and pre-deployment preparations by the university, were closely examined. Suggestions from practicum schools, trainee teachers and the University of Namibia's Faculty of Education were collated in efforts to develop effective partnership models. This study thus posits a view that school-based teaching practica should provide the pre-service trainee teachers with opportunities to be exposed to the realities of teaching and other related professional activities through the development of sustainable norms and a continuum of realistic practicum partnerships which should take on board all stakeholders.

**Key words:** triad, practicum, support teacher, student teacher, university supervisor

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Background

This study aims at determining the parameters of collaborative roles and overlaps of university supervisors (USs) and support teachers (STs) in the training of pre-service teacher trainees (TTs) during the teaching practicum period. Teacher training at the University of Namibia's Katima Mulilo Campus comprises of alternating campus-based studies and school-based teaching studies premised on the principle that theoretical knowledge is reciprocally impacted with practical work-based experience. However, Korthagen, Lougran, & Russell (2006) point out that a myriad of challenges with this model of professional development invariably arise. Universities in many countries design and implement entire study programmes while school authorities are only engaged in the organisation of the school-based component as well as hosting the TT's. Chalies, Cartaud, Escalie and Durand (2009) note that these programmes are often fragmented. School-based support teachers usually find themselves unable to connect the university-offered theory to the classroom-based experiential learning.

In spite of these challenges, the need for alternating theory sessions with practice-based sessions cannot be over-emphasised. Numerous scholars highlight the need for coordinated school/university partnership models which are capable of enhancing efficacy and building a coherent curriculum, (Haymore, Sandholtz, 2002; Levine, 2006). Research has also revealed that ST's usually become motivated and

more effective when there is a closer partnership and collaboration with US's in mentoring TT's, (MacMahon & MacPhale, 2007).

Collaborative approaches to professional development, in whatever structure or model, are critical to effective practice. In order to attain the objective of producing effective teachers, numerous collaborative models in teacher education have been developed. The introduction of the teaching practicum as a core component in teacher training has added a new dimension to professional development and has brought in a new arena where trainee and novice teachers can learn the art and skills of teaching in the real context of a school (Hill & Brodin, 2004; Kennedy, 2006). The practicum exposes the new teacher to the 'power of experience' and critically moulds student teachers' perception of the teaching and learning processes (Gustafson & Rowel, 1995).

Cohen, Manion, Morison & Wise (2010) argue that effective pre-service teacher training occurs when there is in place a functional collaboration between training institutions and schools. Members of such collaboration should work out a model that sets out each member's roles. Brodie and Irvine (2007) equate teaching practicum to what they term as "work-based learning" [WBL].

Trainee teachers require strict supervisory support and mentoring in order for them to professionally develop. Supervision focusses on matters to do with teaching decisions as they impact on classroom learning outcomes while mentoring, according to Wenger, (1998,) is a process of inducting trainee teachers into the

“community of practice”. Ferman-Nemser (1998) regards mentoring as a process of “collaborative working”. Mentoring, therefore, comprises a process and a partnership meant to foster a caring and supportive nurturing of the novice into a professional practitioner. Support teachers work in collaboration with university-based supervisors to assist trainee teachers to develop learning experiences through observing, counselling, instructing, role modelling and providing feedback.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Successive teacher training programmes in Namibia’s Zambezi Region have often been dogged by a dysfunctional teaching practicum triad of the university- based lecturer, trainee teacher, and school-based mentor; all of whom are faced with dilemmas about their often conflicting roles. Models of partnerships between the university and support schools have not been clearly defined, leaving each member of the practicum triad uncertain of their supposed roles. This uncertainty has had far-reaching repercussions, not only on the phases of the school-based teaching practica, but, to an even larger extent, on the entire Bachelor of Education [Honours] primary teacher training programme offered by the University of Namibia.

## **1.3 Research Aim and Objectives**

**The aim of this inquiry was to;**

Establish role parameters within the student teaching experiences with a view of developing a responsive practicum model;

**The objectives of the study were to;**

- a) Examine the varying roles of individual members of the practicum triad comprising the university, the student teacher and the school during the practicum component of primary teacher education at the University of Namibia.
  
- b) Establish the perceptions of the school principals and mentor-teachers about the effectiveness of pre-deployment preparedness of trainee teachers assigned to their schools.
  
- c) Establish the facets of the school participation in the triad which are most effective in supporting trainee teachers throughout their school based practicum.
  
- d) Examine the pre-teaching campus-based studies and preparations done before trainee teachers are deployed for school-based studies or teaching practice.
  
- e) Collate suggestions from practicum schools, trainee teachers and the University of Namibia's Faculty of Education lecturers in developing an effective partnership model of teaching practica for primary school teacher training in Namibia.

## 1.4 Research Questions

This study was based on the following research questions:

- a) What are the distinct roles of the individual members of the practicum triad during the practicum component of primary teacher education at the University of Namibia?
- b) How do the school support-teachers perceive the preparedness of trainee teachers before receiving them for teaching practica at their schools?
- c) How does the university faculty perceive the preparedness and suitability of schools and teachers for teaching practica?
- d) How do trainee teachers perceive their practicum preparedness before the university dispatches them to schools?
- e) How do trainee teachers perceive their roles, those of their lecturers and support teachers during teaching practica?
- f) What are the facets of the school participation in the triad which are most supportive of the school based practicum?

- g) What are the envisaged roles of each triad member in developing an effective partnership model of teaching practica for primary school teacher training?

### **1.5 Significance/Justification of the study**

This study comes at a time when the University of Namibia's Faculty of Education has recently merged with all of the country's former Colleges of Education, ostensibly as a way to improve the quality of teacher education in Namibia. This was a response to a cabinet resolution which directed that the Basic Education Teachers' Diploma qualifications should be phased out to pave way for an Honours degree as the new basic qualification for all practising teachers in Namibia. To achieve this, the University of Namibia was mandated to take over the training of all school teachers in Namibia. Previously, the university's mandate was only for training secondary school teachers while colleges, under the auspices of The Ministry of Education, trained all primary and some junior secondary school teachers. The merger came along with a host of challenges which included the re-defining and establishment of partnerships with relevant stakeholders in teacher education, selection of placements of teacher trainees and the conflicting role relationships in the teaching practicum (Masule, 2011)

In the absence of a 'critical mass' of previous studies in the literature, the current study, therefore, has the potential to make vital contributions to re-define and expand existing knowledge on triad partnerships in teacher education in Namibia. It

is envisaged that this study will contribute significantly to the body of knowledge related to partnerships between teacher training institutions and support or practicum schools, with particular emphasis on professionally coordinated school based studies and with the view of developing better understanding and more effective ways of administering teaching practica. Hopefully, the study will enable institutional policy makers to re-define, in broader and clearer terms, role parameters among the practicum triad members.

## **1.6 Rationale and Motivation**

This study has been motivated by the researcher's involvement with the unit that oversees teaching practica at the University of Namibia's Katima Mulilo Campus. The researcher has come face to face with school-based teachers and university lecturers working independent of the other during school-based teaching practice phases. This unfortunate scenario, where, proverbially speaking, the right hand has no idea of, or interest in, what the left hand is doing, has rendered the university-school partnership virtually ineffective. On one hand, the university lecturers would expect one thing from student teachers and on the other hand, the support teachers would demand another. In the end, the student is left to make a difficult choice between the university demands against those from the support school.

The researcher's role, as coordinator of the said unit, ideally positions him to investigate the real challenges, needs and contexts influencing the development of an effective partnership model. The researcher is also conveniently placed to easily

network, establish working relationships and easily gain access to all the sections of the research sites and to interact with the participants by virtue of his position as the university's coordinator of school-based practica.

## **1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This section provides a framework for designing a systematic study that addresses the research study's goals, objectives and questions. The section outlines the research paradigm, research approach, selection of participants and methods of data collection. It presents the summary of the research design, activities and the extent of data resulting from these methods.

### **1.7.1 Research paradigm**

Educational research can be underpinned by a positivistic approach, an interpretive approach, a critical theoretical foundation, or a combination of these [mixed methods]. Positivism was coined by French psychologist, Auguste Comte (1798-1857) who believed that scientific knowledge about people could be tapped and used to improve human existence with society running rationally without superstition and religion. This paradigm maintains a scientific rule which says that research should be confined to observable and directly measurable phenomena. This paradigm advocates the use of quantitative methods. Examples of approaches under positivism or quantitative paradigm include surveys, experiments, hypothesis testing and post-positivist.

The interpretive or qualitative paradigm claims either that the positivistic, scientific or quantitative approaches are inadequate to collect, analyse and explain data, or that they are inappropriate to deal with subjects such as that of human behaviour. Qualitative data are seen as much “richer, more vital, as having greater depth and as more likely to present a true picture of a way of life, of people’s experiences, attitudes and beliefs” (Haralambos & Holbron 2008). Examples of approaches under the interpretive or qualitative paradigm include action research, interactionism, phenomenology, ethnography, and existential, naturalistic and humanistic approaches.

Critical theorists embrace approaches to research that aim to be critical of society in order to engender social change. Lee Harvey, as cited in Haralambos & Holbron (2008) explains that “a critical research process involves more than appending critique to an accumulation of ‘fact’ or ‘theory’ gathered via some mechanical process, rather, it denies the objective status of knowledge”. Thus critical scientists believe that knowledge can never be completed, nor does it end, because the world is ever changing. The way society appears to its members can be misleading and that things that are taken for granted should be seen in a different light in order to expose their true values. Once that is done, then it would be possible to use the new knowledge to change society.

The current study is underpinned by an interpretive paradigm which seeks to understand the subjective ambit of human experiences and is informed by the perspectives of symbolic interactionism as developed by Hebert Blumer (1962)

and based on three premises. The first premise posits that people's actions are based on the meanings that they give to objects and events, not just internal or external stimuli. The second premise is that meanings arise from processes of interaction. To an extent, meanings are created, modified and developed through social interaction rather than pre-set or established roles. The third premise is that meanings result out of the interpretive procedures which are employed by actors within the interaction processes.

“By taking the role of the other, actors interpret the meanings and intention of the other. By means of ‘the mechanism of self-interaction’, individuals modify, or change their definition of the situation, rehearse, alternative course of action and consider their possible consequences” (Haralambos & Holbron, 2008).

### **1.7.2 Research approach**

This study is an ethnographic research which is the qualitative study of individuals and groups who represent a particular culture, Springer (2010). A culture is defined as “the acquired behaviours, beliefs, meanings, and values shared by members of the group” (p.386). Ethnographic studies take place in the natural settings and information is gathered through a range of instruments such as participant or non-participant observations, in-depth interviews and content analysis.

Although ethnographic research may be criticised for its supposed lack of ‘focus’, the researcher treats this positively as a reflection of openness to some patterns that do not fit in his preconceived ideas. Rather, this openness provides

considerable flexibility in the way data is collected and also gives space for unexpected results, (Springer, 2010).

The researcher attempts to investigate the university-school-student triad experiences and realities through sustained contact with the triad members in their natural environment in order to produce rich, descriptive data that will help him to understand those experiences. The study seeks to understand this triad by gaining a native perspective from the inside looking around, rather from outside looking inward. This is done by entering the participants' environment to observe events, artefacts, and symbols that define the triad's culture and give it meaning. This involves a sustained engagement with the research participants to the point of data saturation, while all the time using the grounded-theory approach of recursive data examination and documenting observations in field notes in order to ensure credibility of the findings and address distortions, (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **1.7.3 Selection of participants**

McMillan & Schumacher (2010) define a population in research as the entire group of elements or cases that conform to specific criteria and to which the results of the research can be generalised. The group can be individuals, events or objects. This group can also be referred to as the universe or target population. 'Sample' is the term used to define the individuals or group of participants or subjects from whom

the data are collected: those who actually take part in the study. The nature of the sampling procedure determines the type of sampling the researcher chooses.

This research employed non-probability sampling which is predominantly used in qualitative research. This involves the researcher selecting individuals with knowledge of the phenomena under study or cases deemed to be potentially information rich (Mapp, 2008). These are made of support-teachers of eight [8] primary schools around Katima Mulilo, fifty [50] Bachelor of Education students in their second and third year of studies, and ten [10] lecturers from the Faculty of Education. The research sites were the University of Namibia, Katima Mulilo Campus and the eight primary schools.

#### **1.7.4 Methods of data collection**

The primary data collection method in this study will be semi-structured in-depth interviews. Observations will be administered to student teachers on teaching practice. Data will also be collected from documents such as the policy statements, prospectuses and handbooks.

##### **1.7.4.1 Interviews**

Interviews allow participants [interviewers and interviewees] to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. An interview is a flexible data collection instrument which enables the use of multi-sensory channels, such as verbal, non-

verbal (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2012). The interview also allows the focus to settle upon a specific issue which can be further explored in-depth and determines what an issue looks like from another's vantage point. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer poses certain questions but gives room to the interviewee to raise issues and questions as the interview progresses. This allows the researcher the flexibility to make immediate responses to issues raised and ask probing questions (McKernan, 2000).

Interviews explore the support-teachers' experiences with teacher trainees (current and past) who are deployed to their schools by the university. Interview questions were forwarded to participants a week or two in advance to enable them to reflect upon their experiences with trainee teachers and prepare for the scheduled interview. Participants were later provided with the transcripts of the interviews for their verification.

#### **1.7.4.2 Observations**

In order to gain a deep understanding of trainee teachers' perspectives, an observation was undertaken at the participants' designated practicum schools over a fourteen week period of school based studies. To record data from these observations, comprehensive field notes were taken. The researcher adopted a systematic range of approaches to observations such as descriptive, focussed and selective observations. The majority of observations were carried out during the

researchers' visits to practicum schools where field notes of focused observations were documented while student teachers were working individually.

#### **1.7.4.3 Documents**

Being products of a given context, documents are grounded in the real world. Documentation such as university and school policy documents, newspaper, magazine and media articles [including internet], were integrated with data sourced from participants in an effort to fill such gaps as may be left out by these sources. As a conclusion to the data collection phase of the research process, all data were integrated and collated.

### **1.8 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Data collected were analysed by organising, accounting for, and explaining the data, noting patterns and consistencies, at the same time observing similarities or differences between individual narratives.

Each of the transcribed interviews was analysed and followed by the processes of data reduction, data display and then by the drawing and verification of conclusions, (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The interview data reduction phase attempted to organise and simplify the data into manageable parts. This involved employing first-level and second-level coding

techniques (Punch 1998). Kerlinger (1970) as quoted in Cohen, et al (2011: 559) defines coding as “the translation of question responses and respondent information to specific categories from the purpose of analysis. Coding is the ascription of a category label to a piece of data, that is either decided in advance or in response to the data that have been collected”. It is worth noting that the same piece of text can have more than one code assigned to it owing to the contents and richness of such a text.

The first-level coding examined small and discreet parts of the interview and identified the concepts that were mentioned therein. Interview transcripts were thus broken down into sentences or groups of sentences which were examined and assigned descriptive labels. Further simplification of data followed in the second-level coding by examining the first level codes and placing similarly coded units into categories which were assigned a conceptual label for second-level (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Further simplification was done at the third-level coding where similar conceptual categories were clustered and assigned a third –level conceptual label.

The data display phase was employed to map second- level and third-level categories on a chart in a simplified format to provide a visual representation of the relationships among the categories and to enable identification of emergent key themes from each interview. A further chart was drawn to map key themes which emerged from each interview transcript analysis to enable the researcher to make comparisons across cases.

The conclusion drawing and verification phase attempted to establish emerging themes from the analysed interview transcripts and to draw similarities and differences that emerged from the comparisons across cases. The three phases of the Miles & Huberman approach happened concurrently.

At the end of the data collection and analysis processes, feedback from participants was solicited as regard emerging themes. A comparative technique to the phases of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification was used so as to reinforce the findings of the proposed research (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

### **1.8.1 Reliability**

Although it is argued that the term reliability is not applicable to research of a qualitative nature, there is nonetheless need for some kind of check or measure required for qualitative data. Lincoln & Guba (as cited in Cohen et al, 2011) prefer to apply such terms as 'credibility', 'confirmability', 'dependability', 'applicability', 'consistency', 'dependability', 'trustworthiness', 'transferability'. To enhance reliability, many researchers often adopt terms that they deem more appropriate to their concepts of reliability.

In the current study, these aspects of reliability were addressed through a conscious consideration of what Denzin & Lincoln (as cited in Cohen et al, 2011) term 'stability of observations', 'parallel forms' and 'inter-rater reliability'. 'Stability of observation' refers to assessing whether the same observations and interpretations

would be reached if the observation were to be done at a different time and a different place. 'Parallel forms' refer to whether the same observation and interpretations would be reached if attention had been paid to other phenomena. 'Inter-rater reliability' is a consideration of whether a different observer with the same theoretical framework and observing exactly the same phenomena would reach the same interpretation.

### **1.8.2 Validity**

Haralambos et al, (2008) state that data can be valid if such data portray a true picture of what is being investigated. A statement which is valid provides a true measurement, description or explanation of what it purports to measure, describe or explain. The current study employed an interpretive design that follows a hermeneutic cycle whereby what was learnt was informed by what was already known, through studying literature, from experience in the field, and by continuous data framing, analysis and interpretations.

The current inquiry sought to enhance trustworthiness, as a measure of reliability, through various mechanisms such as triangulation and long term involvement with participants. Keeping long term contacts with participants enabled revisiting of perspectives. Triangulation, as conceived by Denzin (1970) is a combination of research methodologies and was used in this study to cross-check the validity of the data. The researcher selected trustworthy evidence for seeking patterns by assessing solicited versus unsolicited data, subtle influences from people around

and the environment, specific against unspecific or vague statements. This involved an awareness of the researcher's assumptions, predispositions and influences.

### **1.8.3 Limitations**

This study was undertaken only at Katima Mulilo Campus, which is just but one of four University of Namibia's five campuses offering primary school teacher training. This had an implication on issues of generalizability of the findings due to the unique nature of some variables at this campus. The replication of this research at a larger scale and more campuses elsewhere would yield a much better generalizability of findings.

This study was largely undertaken in a restricted time frame and with limited financial resources. This is due to the fact that the researcher, at the time of the study, was a full time lecturer and studying on line. Ideally, the research should be spread over a couple of years and data collected from a larger sample in order to provide a more holistic picture of the findings.

### **1.8.4 Ethical considerations**

Permission to carry out the study was sought from the relevant University of Namibia and Ministry of Education authorities and assurance was given that findings of the research would be used appropriately and for the benefit of the wider society. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants whose informed

consent to participate was sought. Further, participants were informed about why they were chosen and that their participation would be voluntary and that they would be at liberty to discontinue with the process should they feel so. In spite of the 'intrusive' nature of qualitative studies (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2006), participants were assured that confidentiality and anonymity of their identities would be respected.

### **1.9 Definition of Key terms**

***Role parameters:*** This term refers to the extent to which each of the members of the practicum triad exercise their roles or responsibilities during the teaching practice phase.

***Practicum:*** this is the phase during teacher training when student-teachers are deployed for experiential attachment in schools where they can learn the ropes of real teaching.

***Triad:*** this term refers to the tripartite arrangement of support teacher, university supervisor and the student teacher.

***Support teacher:*** [used interchangeably with cooperating teacher, mentor teacher] this is the experienced teacher in the partnership schools to which student teachers are attached for experiential learning.

***Partnership:*** the relationship between the university and the cooperating or partnership schools where student teachers are placed for teaching practice.

**Student- teacher:** [used interchangeably with trainee-teacher] this refers to the novice or student who is undergoing training to become a professional teacher.

**University supervisor:** the term refers to the university lecturer who visits the student teachers for supervision and/or assessment during teaching practica.

**Mentorship:** the term refers to the developmental relationship where a skilled person, an expert or an experienced, knowledgeable person guides a less experienced learner or apprentice in a learning process.

**Clinical supervision:** This is a five step process designed to improve teachers' performances by nurturing proper communication between a teacher and a supervisor.

**Cognitive apprenticeship:** is a concept of the process where an experienced master or expert of a skill passes that skill to a novice an apprentice.

**Portfolio:** It is a structured personal record or means of reflection on one's work drawn up and compiled by the student teacher, often according to university or college guidelines.

**Journal:** It is a daily written record of events or undertakings; it is sometimes referred to as a diary.

## **1.10 Chapter Division**

This thesis is structured into six chapters. The first chapter deals with the orientation to the study and outlines the aim of the study, statement of the problem,

objectives of the study, research questions, methodology and the data-gathering and data analyses.

Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature on contemporary trends in pre-service teacher education, practicum models drawn from countries across the globe, and characteristics of the practicum triad. The chapter reviews roles and responsibilities of Higher Education Institutions (HEI's), support schools as well as student teachers during the practicum and provides an overview of the challenges and issues within the practicum triad.

The third chapter focuses on the the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin the study. Concepts, propositions, and definitions to provide a systematic view of phenomena under investigation are provided. In this chapter, an attempt is made to understand similarities and differences among various theories in selecting which theory or combination of theories would be best for this study.

Chapter four discusses qualitative and quantitative research approaches as well as the roles and responsibilities of the researcher. Diverse data collection strategies in qualitative research are discussed. The rationale for selecting such strategies is described in detail, and their characteristics, advantages and disadvantages are fully explained. The chapter discusses issues of reliability of the research design, reliability of data collection strategies, and triangulation. The chapter further deals with ethical and quality considerations.

Chapter 5 deals with the presentation of the collected data. It also focusses on a thorough analysis of the data.

The sixth and final chapter provides the major findings, recommendations and conclusions of the entire inquiry. It highlights the significance of these findings and their contribution to the body of knowledge.

### **1.11 SYNTHESIS**

This chapter outlined the orientation to the study by describing and outlining the aim of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions and definition of important terms and concepts used in the study. The chapter also outlines the methodology employed during the data-gathering phase of the study.

*The next chapter will review relevant literature, including international trends in pre-service teacher education, the purpose of the teaching practicum, practicum models drawn from countries across the globe, and characteristics of the practicum triad*

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature, including international trends in pre-service teacher education, the purpose of the teaching practicum, practicum models drawn from countries across the globe, and characteristics of the practicum triad. The chapter opens with trends in pre-service teacher education and provides a brief overview of the contemporary values that guide the mission and goals for quality teacher education provision. The chapter reviews roles and responsibilities of higher Education Institutions (HEI's), support schools as well as student teachers during the practicum and then proceeds to provide an overview of the challenges and issues within the practicum triad.

#### **2.2 PURPOSE OF THE TEACHING PRACTICUM**

The term practicum is used by many institutions to refer to a requirement where students are exposed to a teaching experience in a school or learning institution where they get an opportunity to interact with real learners. The teaching practicum has traditionally been viewed as central to the development of student teachers' pedagogical skills, initiation into the teaching profession, and as the most effective component of professional preparation for the role of a teacher (Cruickshank & Aramalin, 1986) and (Tannehill & Zakrajsek, 1988). Many teacher educators believe that it is during this experience that trainee teachers begin to develop their teaching skills, beliefs and values (Darden, Darden, Scott & Westfall (2001).

A teaching practicum partnership essentially involves a triad of three critical stakeholder participants: the University Supervisor (US), the school subject Support Teacher (SST) and the student teacher or trainee teacher (ST). The practicum component of teacher training is regarded as the equivalent of work-based learning (WBL) (Brodie & Irving, 2007). Each practicum triad partner plays an equally important role in the whole process and is involved in decision-making about issues of the practicum. They jointly determine their individual roles and responsibilities as well as what to expect from the entire exercise.

The student practicum is critical in teacher education due to many reasons and functions it performs. For example, it is a vital tool for providing a practical exposure to the reality of the world of work. Student teachers can rehearse what they will be doing in the real context of a mainstream institution like a school or college when they eventually take up their teaching assignments. Purdy & Gibson (2012), equate teaching practicum in education to field attachment or internship in medical, legal or engineering professions. The terms “induction” or internship are also applied to describe the practicum experience given to student teachers. Therefore, the terms practicum, teaching practice (TP) or internship essentially mean the same basic idea of deploying the student teachers to natural work stations where they will acquire practical experience. There is a general consensus amongst teacher education scholars that the practicum is a core component of teacher programmes, irrespective of by what nomenclature it is referred by (Beck, 2002; McIntyre, Byrd, & Foxx, 1996; Russell, 2005).

Teaching practicum enables trainee teachers to develop innovative and reflective thinking and equips them with a repertoire of teaching methodologies and strategies. It also strengthens trainee teachers' application of behavioural objectives and trains them in using various teaching aids, choosing and organizing learning activities, and applying remedial interventions to given exit learning outcomes (Murtaza, 2011).

A very important dimension of the practicum is that it encourages interaction between the student teachers and the experienced teachers. This interaction enables the student teachers to develop teaching process insights by observing and sharing ideas with the seasoned experts. Practicum furnishes the student teachers with an opportunity to have model in front of them to follow where they get exposure to professional practices of experts (Zeichner, 2006).

The teaching practicum has traditionally been regarded as pivotal to the development of student teachers' pedagogical skills and to their initiation into the teaching profession. According to Taggart & Wilkinson (1985), student teachers and practising teachers view their practicum experience as the most vital component of their training. Over a couple of years, it has been argued that the practicum should be based on collaboration, student teachers' empowerment, and reflection in order for the student teachers to realize their potential. This position has witnessed a gradual shift from what Rodgers & Keil (2007) call the traditional student supervision triad, where the teacher educators were the sole goal setters, problem solvers, and decision makers, to a more student teacher dominated approach of

enquiry and investigation (Dobbins, 1996). The teaching practicum is also aimed at promoting collaboration, coordination and cohesiveness among student teachers, university supervisor, and school managers. A very important principle of the practicum is the shared commitment to teacher education between the university and schools.

Villiers & Mackisack (2011) propose that highly skilled personnel from both the university and school can be identified to spearhead the practicum in a professional and manageable way. If this responsibility is shared, meaningful partnerships to promote informed and effective positioning of the practicum in teacher education programmes will be developed. They state that trainee and beginning teachers can only 'hit the ground' when they are presented with optimum opportunities to a tangible, genuine, sustained, partnered and educative mentoring process. Tuli & File (2009) observe that incorporating a practicum component in the teacher education programme enables student teachers to understand the socio-cultural, economic and political factors which underpin education. The practicum should therefore be considered as the core component of teacher training that aims at preparing effective teachers.

Teaching competence will forever be rooted in experience and learning to teach demands that one travels deep into the recesses of one's self-awareness. This demand indicates that practicum is a vital component of teacher education and is a vehicle of providing such invaluable experience to the student teachers. An effective practicum ought to be allotted an identifiable part of a teacher education programme where teacher education institutions take the leading role in the

concept development of an effective practicum model. The partnership model should take on board all relevant professional stakeholders and consists of closely integrated university and school components which lead students to develop and demonstrate knowledge-based skills and attitudes which are pivotal to their professional career development.

## **2.3 TRENDS IN TEACHER EDUCATION/MODELS OF TEACHING PRACTICUM**

### ***2.3.1 Singaporean Practicum Model***

The Singaporean teaching practicum is a core component of the country's Initial Teacher Preparation programme and enables student teachers to acquire their initial teaching experiences and competencies. The main purpose of the practicum is to prepare student teachers for the realities of the world of teaching by providing them with a clear understanding of school contexts.

Student teachers are guided, through systematic observations, mentoring and supervision by their School Coordinating Mentors (SCMs), Cooperating Teachers (CTs) and NIE Supervisors (NIES). During the entire practicum, the students actively participate in, and are involved with all aspects of the school's programmes. Through such exposures, they will be able to link theory to practice, and to learn the skills necessary for effective teaching in a range of classroom situations. Beyond that, according to Smith & Lev-Ari (2005) and Schulman (1987), the practicum offers the environment and opportunity for trainee- teachers to develop their professional competence as well as to acquire and develop their content knowledge of teachers. In addition, students will learn soft skills such as working collegially with

other staff members, independent problem-solving, and appropriate professional values and attitudes (Ramsden, 1992). Through the practicum, student teachers are also enabled to acquire important attributes that would shape their professional lives, as well as self-control and inter-personal skills (Eraut, 1988, cited in Yan & He, 2009).

Singapore's NIE adopted *The Enhanced Partnership Model* to enhance collaboration and present an opportunity for experiencing common values and goals for teacher education and research, while leaving space for each one's specific roles, perspectives, experiences, expertise and knowledge and beliefs. The NIE – Schools partnership model acknowledges the *theory-practice gap* as the major shortcoming in teacher education. The Enhanced Partnership Model enables schools to play a larger and more active part in practicum, school attachments and other collaborative programmes that facilitate professional development in an effort to bridge the gap between campus-based learning and real school teaching.

Singapore's NIE teacher education model is characterised by university -based courses and a school-based practicum. The practicum partnership that NIE shares with schools and all other collaborating stakeholders helps student teachers to make effective transitions from being university students to becoming classroom teachers.

# Enhanced Partnership Model

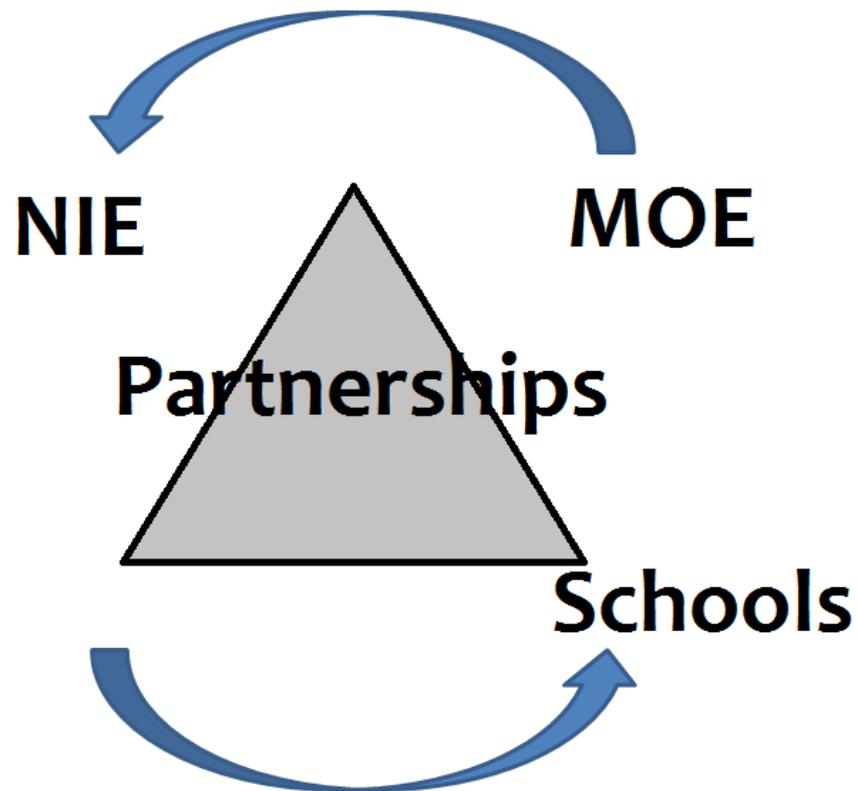


Fig.1

*Courtesy: "TE21: A Teacher Education Model for the 21st Century"*

Student teachers are mentored by NIES, SCMs and CTs during practicum and are provided with instructional support which involves assistance in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary successful classroom teaching. Student teachers are also offered psychological support to build on their sense of self-confidence, feelings of effectiveness, positive self-esteem, enhanced self-reliance, and ability to handle stress related to this transition.

All matters pertaining to the practicum learning experiences and performance of trainee teachers in the school are dealt with by SCM's in close liaison with the NIES. These are also members of the practicum assessment panel which I chaired by the School Principal. The panel decides on final assessment marks awarded to student teachers at the end of the Practicum. They also induct student teachers and, in addition, work on cases of "weak" students who require more monitoring and supervision.

The roles of the CT's include helping the student teachers acquaint themselves with the school set-up and explaining and confirming which part or parts of the syllabus are to be covered by the student teacher. They also work very closely with the School Coordinating Mentor (SCM) in inculcating the requisite teaching skills and professional ethics of the student teacher. They as well alert the SCM if a student teacher is not performing as expected and they then develop ways to assist the student teacher. CT's coach, monitor and mentor the student teacher through demonstrations, pre and post-observation discussions. Periodical progress conferences are held by the CT, NIE supervisor, NIE and school supervision liaison officer, SCM and the student teacher to discuss progress and improvement strategies.

### ***2.3.2 A Norwegian Practicum model***

Theoretical knowledge about educational assessment and hands-on experience form an indispensable part of the Norwegian University of Bergen, teaching practicum model. This model emphasizes that the competence of assessment of all the parties involved in the teaching practicum is central to the quality of teacher education. It follows, therefore, that the school-based and university-based teacher

educators and the student teachers are empowered in assessment. All the parties are engaged in collaborative action research projects on matters related to assessment of student teachers' teaching practicum. Through these research projects, campus-based and school-based teacher educators personally experience how assessment can be applied for students' professional development. By participating in action research projects, trainee teachers experience learning-oriented assessment and they as well acquire invaluable assessment knowledge which they will use in their own teaching later.

***The Norwegian model consists of the following seven steps.***

**Step 1:** Joint practicum triad workshop (school-based teacher educators, campus-based teacher educators, and student teachers focusing on the basic knowledge and understanding of assessment paradigms, including: assessment terminology, criteria for quality assessment, assessment and learning, ethical issues in assessment, assessment instruments, assessment criteria, and communities of practice and action research.

**Step 2:** The students are introduced to the relevance of WBL to teacher education. The triad holds a focused discussion of the complex relationship between performance of teaching, competencies for teaching, and critical reflection. Discussion of the aims and purpose of the teaching practicum as outlined in the documents of Norwegian steering framework is held. All parties are required to have a shared understanding of the role of the teaching practicum in the teacher

education program and use common assessment terminology in order to strengthen the construct validity of the assessment.

**Step 3:** Based on information introduced in Step 1, triad members discuss the assessment tools to be used for the specific practicum aims. They also discuss when the assessment should take place, deciding on processes of formative assessment, and how to design the components of summative assessment.

**Step 4:** Members discuss the assessment criteria by developing assessment rubrics to be used with various assessment tools. At this stage members are trained in the application of rubrics to create a standard understanding of descriptors thereby strengthening the reliability of the assessment.

**Step 5:** The triad delegates the responsibilities for formative and summative assessment. The school-based teacher educators are predominantly assigned the formative assessment process, while the campus-based teacher educators are assigned the summative process. Throughout the whole assessment process, the students are central informants. Respect for each other's role and expertise is crucial. The student teachers are encouraged to articulate and document their reflections and make them accessible to the teacher educators for assessment purposes. The school-based teacher educator's expertise is the practical teaching within specific schools, while the campus-based teacher educators usually impart the theoretical body of knowledge to the students.

**Step 6:** Members discuss when summative assessment is to be undertaken. Common ground is created through a moderation process which is essential in the model. During this process, an acceptable final summative assessment is sought by all parties. This is aimed at minimizing subjective assessment, given that participants engage in the process with different focuses.

**Step 7:** The triad undertakes action research by examining the effectiveness of the model. They aim for a constant improvement of the model by documenting the learning process and the continuous reflection of the triad members. The model shares common features with WBL models, which raise questions about when changes occur, what has been learnt, the value of learning, steps to be taken in future planning of goals, and designing routes to achieve those goals (Brodie & Irving, 2007).

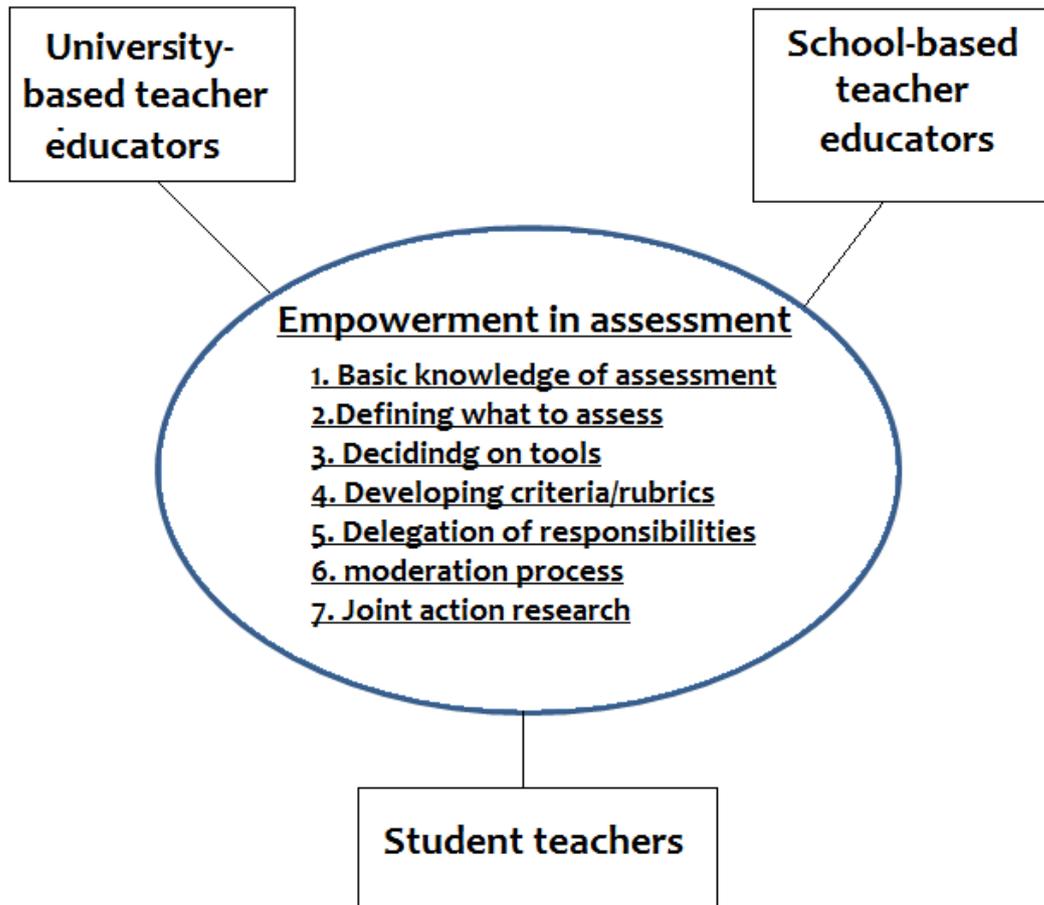


Fig. 2

Courtesy: University of Bergen, Norway

The Norwegian practicum model was introduced with the purpose of ensuring high quality assessment of the teaching practicum by empowering all the parties in the triad (university-based and school-based teacher educators as well as the student teachers). It can be assumed that the model is universally relevant, given the current international discussions on what entails good teaching and acceptable standards for teachers. The Norwegian model is significant on account of its situated nature, with its recognized need to reach a common understanding of the basic teaching competences which vary in different school contexts (e.g., Korthagen, 2004; Stotsky, 2006). A major strength of the Norwegian model is its

ability to reinforce the development of reflective competence as a future tool for professional growth for teacher educators and students (Day, 1999, 2004; Dewey, 1933; Korthagen & Wubbels, 2001; Schön, 1987).

This practicum model presents a true partnership between school-based and university-based teacher educators and student teachers. The core of a true partnership lies in the knowledge that members with a shared objective need to join forces in order to achieve it. Individual members would not individually achieve it (Barnett, Hall, Berg, & Camarena, 1999). In this model, there is a deliberate intention to equally spread the responsibility to achieve the desired goal. Multiple challenges abound when implementing this practicum model. Firstly, university-based educators often feel reluctant to spread the final assessment responsibility to the school-based educators, which leads to a negative sense of inequality in the partnership. This results in unintended tension caused by a condescending attitude by the university staff (Ariav & Smith, 2006).

Secondly, its implementation requires time, a thing which is not in surplus to school-based teacher educators and which university staff feel is spent at the expense of research, meaning less promotion opportunities. Time is not only required during the initial implementation, but after that, it is also a major factor in sustaining the model. The implementation needs to be repeated when new partners join the triad. A semi-version of the model could be developed for use with new student teachers, which is probably the group that changes most frequently.

Thirdly, it is often difficult to accept the fact that there is not one or best method to assess a trainee teacher's performance during the practicum. Different contexts might require different assessment approaches. Therefore, the model is ideal as a guiding tool but not a fixed model for all practicum assessments. All practicum partners need to be empowered and engage in a dialogue in order to fine-tune their assessment processes.

### ***2.3.3 A Bahraini Practicum model***

The Bahrain school-based Teaching Practicum, which is an integral component of the Bachelor of Education programme of Bahrain Teachers College, is designed to expose teacher trainees to the real world of work, as well as to enable the students to practically realise their acquired theoretical knowledge. The teaching practicum stages are meant to have incremental complexity, each stage demanding more than the preceding one. Student teachers move from teaching small groups towards taking charge of a full class and assuming more responsibilities.

The Bahraini model of teaching practicum starts with an orientation to the teaching profession for students. This comprises a two-week field-work experience, with the first week in a primary/ intermediate school and the other week in an intermediate/secondary school. The intention for this is to orientate new student teachers to the innovative teaching in contemporary education. They are presented with opportunities to observe seasoned classroom practitioners in at their work in the classrooms. The students will assess their own aptitude for the teaching profession as well as reflect on personal commitment to teaching.

Student teachers undergo a thirty-day practical experience stint at the end of the year when they are presented with opportunities to observe their cooperating teachers, to teach and to reflect on the roles and responsibilities of a teacher. They are also presented with an opportunity to help in lesson planning and preparation, management of learners and doing guided small group teaching.

Student teachers meet on campus weekly in seminars to discuss and reflect on their practicum experience. They identify and consider an issue as a focus for professional action. They are also assigned specifically designed tasks which will form the collection of artefacts as they build their electronic portfolios. Portfolios are documentary evidence of their professional growth.

The second stage of the Bahraini practicum comprises twenty-five days of professional exposure aimed at inducting student teachers into independent teaching. The focus is on planning, assessing and evaluating learner performance and progress, effectiveness of school programmes. At this stage, student teachers begin to plan and prepare for and manage their own lessons independently, but being able to consult with their cooperating teachers. Weekly seminars continue but the focus is now on matters related to designing, implementing and evaluating learning experiences. Reflective practice and research continue and specific tasks form part of their electronic portfolios.

The third stage of the practicum extends the students' knowledge and skills base to empower them to effectively decide on teaching practices and learner-centred

approaches for primary school learners. It emphasises the promotion of learner interaction, independent thinking and enquiry during the forty-day experience. Student teachers' involvement in the broader life of the school extends further. Student teachers' weekly seminars continue and at this stage, focus is on emergent cases associated with the promotion of learner-centred education, learning outside the school walls and opportunities for life-long learning. Artefacts collected through specifically designed tasks form part of student teachers' electronic portfolios.

The fourth and final stage of this Bahraini practicum model is the culmination of student teachers' professional training. The students consolidate the key competencies of a primary school teacher. This practicum stage runs for fifteen weeks and provides enough time for student teachers to discover the extensive dimensions of a teacher's life and other responsibilities beyond classroom teaching. Students' weekly debriefing seminars continue and the focus is on various aspects of the functions of beginning teachers. Professional growth and competence are evidenced through the successful completion of specifically designed tasks documented in students' electronic portfolios.

Throughout the practicum, the university-based supervisor visits and observes the student teacher many times. The university-based supervisor works very closely with the student teacher to make the student's professional experience both satisfying and rewarding. The student can contact the university supervisor on both scheduled and unscheduled visits to discuss the student's problems or concerns.

### ***2.3.4 An English Practicum model***

The British Government adopted a practicum model in 1992 which prescribed integration through a partnership between higher education institutions [HEI] and schools where schools would also share the responsibility of the planning and management of teacher training programmes, selecting, training and assessing students (DFE, 1992). This positioned schools at the core of Initial Teacher Education.

Successive British governments have aggressively promoted schools to provide a 'lead', rather than simply a joint role, in Initial Teacher Education. This includes a number of programmes leading to the award of qualified teacher status [QTS] through mainly school-based training schemes (DfES 2001, TTA & DfES, 2002). Other schemes to give schools a more prominent or leading role in initial teacher education were designed, such as Partnership Development Schools, Partnership Promotion schools and Training Schools. The key aims of such schemes included strengthening of the role of the practicum or school based element.

It emerged from studies of initial teacher training by Furlong et al (2000) in England that two types of partnership, namely complementary and collaborative are the preferred models. The complementary model is where each partner undertakes a distinct and separate role, but which provides appropriate experience for the student teacher when added together. The collaborative one is where the skills and expertise from both school teacher-educator and university lecturer are merged

together in all aspects. Smith et al (2006) analysed partnership models including collaborative, HEI-based, and complementary and HEI –led and concluded that 'truly collaborative' partnerships are 'unachievable'. They assert that this is basically due to attitudes of school staff and non-availability of the requisite resources to implement it. In addition, it is a substantially very expensive practicum model than other models, both for schools and universities.

The current English model of partnership has no evidence of equality and has proved challenging in a number of aspects including;

- Management or operational cost of the partnership for the HEI and schools
- Schools having the choice to be part of the partnership or not at all
- The extent of involvement by practising teachers in schools
- How to effectively monitor and control quality by schools and HEI
- Reconciling the different schools and HEIs organisational structure and roles

School-based provision is subjected to considerable scrutiny as ensure high quality assurance procedures. All students are assigned to a trained mentor and are placed in school selected according to university criteria. Mentors supervise and assess student teachers' progress and they are then moderated by a University based educator. The university tutor is generally assisted by a team of mentors. Mentors are meant to ensure high standards.

Every partnership school has a Senior Liaison Tutor (SLT) who is a senior teacher who liaises with the HEI, coordinates the initial teacher education process, and provides support to students and their mentors. The Senior Liaison Tutor (SLT) also co-coordinates and oversees the practicum experience and assessment of student teachers. The SLT performs a key function within the programme of ensuring that the student teachers' practicum experience is appropriate and of high quality and for ensuring that the terms of the partnership agreement are fulfilled.

### ***2.3.5 An American Practicum model***

One of the American practicum models, as represented by the University of Central Florida in what they term clinical internship, demonstrates a positive and professional partnership between faculty, administrators, collaborating teachers, and interns in consistent and meaningful professional growth. Interns receive rigorous and effective mentoring and coaching to acquire the invaluable skills they will require to function independently when they graduate.

Interns are expected to go through various stages of participation and experience, including coursework and exposure to real classroom work. At the initial stage of classroom exposure, interns go through field experiences associated with specific programmes where they acquire skills and techniques of collaborating with other professionals. They observe teaching and work with diverse populations of children and adults in contemporary society.

The teacher preparation internship experience is a semester long full-time on-the-job (OTJ) student teaching stint. At this stage, students have already decided that they are committing to the teaching profession. Interns are deployed in schools where they work on a schedule of a full-time teacher for a full semester. Emphasis at this stage is placed on time and classroom management, long term, intermediate and daily planning based on planned instruction. University coordinators supervise the interns in collaboration with collaborating teachers.

The intern is expected to follow procedures, policies and guidelines of the school in which they are placed. The university coordinator will develop and evaluate the intern's teaching skills, in collaboration with the mentor teacher. Professional growth of the intern can only occur through consistent mentoring and communication, including reflections on effective teaching practice. An effective and influential criterion of an intern's development is the constructive feedback provided by the collaborating teacher and the university coordinator.

The interns on the UCF model of clinical practice are consistently supervised and observed through formal and informal strategies. University coordinators also facilitate seminars for interns on various topics related to their internship. Internship is both a concept and a process designed to improve teaching performance. The desired outcome of clinical supervision is to develop responsible teachers who are committed to self-improvement through self-correction, help from others, and through reflection on practice.

Effective clinical supervision enables pre-service teachers to:

- receive objective and constructive feedback on their teaching;
- analyse and articulate their educational philosophies;
- reflect on their actual performance [against their expected performance]
- examine their philosophies and other assumptions, theories, and research about teaching; and
- institute appropriate changes, where necessary, in their educational beliefs.

UCF follows Goldhammer's (1969) model for clinical supervision which includes the following five stages:

- **Pre-observation Conference;** for providing a conceptual framework and planning the objectives of the lesson, procedures, criteria for evaluation, etc.
- **Observation;** the supervisor carries out the observation as per framework in phase 1.
- **Analysis;** Data generated from the observation is sorted with the aim of assisting teachers participate in evaluating their teaching.
- **The post-observation/supervision conference;** for analysing and discussing the lesson, addressing concerns, and developing an action plan for intern performance to be enhanced, maintained, or improved.

- **Post-conference Analysis [Analysis of the analysis];** to evaluate way(s) needed for providing assistance to the intern and for the observer to evaluate his/her own performance during the conference.

### ***2.3.6 Teaching practicum [A South African model]***

At South Africa's University of Cape Town, student teachers are expected to experience diversity in classrooms by teaching at differently resourced schools during their first and second teaching practica. They are expected to fully comply with the requirements of both the university and the cooperating practicum school. During this period, students are regarded as full time but unpaid members of staff. They are, however, exempted from all other school functions during the school day. Students have to satisfy assessment requirements of the university-appointed teaching practice supervisors, the cooperating practicum schools where they are placed, and a visiting external examiner.

Students normally undergo three phases of teaching practice in three different schools:

- The first phase is an unsupervised two week observation period done before registration.
- The second phase, (TP1), spans over the first four or five weeks of the second school term.

- The third phase (TP2) runs for six weeks during the third school term.

Mentor teachers complete a *confidential* report for each student at the end of TP which is then submitted to the university. Students are not shown the report. An external examiner visits schools, rather than individual student teachers, during TP2 to assess the quality and standard of supervision and students' teaching in general. The reports are submitted to the Teaching Practice committee on which the external examiner sits as a moderator during the finalisation of the TP marks.

Students are expected to keep a confidential teaching practice journal which tracks their professional growth and to encourage them to reflect on school experience during the two teaching practice phases. This journal can be used as a record of evidence at the end in the school experience essay and should be made available only to their supervisors. The journal ends with an honest and comprehensive evaluation, summary and retrospection of the practicum experience from the student's own perspective. This is in addition to the weekly entries made by the students. Submission of the journal is an assessment requirement, failure of which will mean the programme to be rendered not completed.

Students also need to keep a TP portfolio which may contain lesson plans, copies of material used, handed-out notes, assessments, photographs or videos of themselves and learners, among other artefacts. The portfolio constitutes important evidence of the teaching practice experience and would be invaluable in answering

questions that may be raised concerning a student's TP evaluation. The UCT TP portfolio is separate from the journal and does not need to be submitted.

The UCT model emphasises peer interaction when student teachers share and work together for mutual professional growth. To this end, students are encouraged to do co-teaching to supplement, and not to completely replace, individual teaching.

University supervisors and mentor teachers assess TP students using four outcomes which are:

### **1: Planning and organization**

Students are expected to;

- Plan balanced, appropriate lessons and tasks systematically and imaginatively
- Identify and interpret learner interests, vary teaching styles and learning needs

### **2: Communication skills**

Students are expected to;

- Relate and talk to students in a mature, respectful way, without condescension
- Motivate students to want to learn
- Respond to the needs of individual students as well as the needs of the class as a whole

- Be sensitive to students by gaining an understanding of the societal and classroom influences that affect their learning

### **3: Conducting lessons confidently**

Students are expected to;

- Implement theories and models of learning when teaching
- Teach correct and appropriate subject content
- Assess learning in ways that reflect theories and models of learning

### **4: Self-assessment and Reflection**

Students are expected to;

- Evaluate their personal learning and their teaching
- Make informed decisions and judgements
- Critically reflect on their teaching
- Keep a journal as evidence of professional growth.

#### ***2.3.7 The Namibian Practicum model***

The essence of the University of Namibia's partnership model, according to the university's School Based Studies Manual for Primary phases of the Bachelor of Education [Honours] programme (2014), is to support the professional development

of teachers according to the philosophy of teacher education. During partnership meetings, the School Based Studies [SBS] Committee outlines the partners' roles and responsibilities during the practicum.

The university teacher educator is expected to meet student teachers, the associate teacher and the support teachers during the first visit of SBS. The university teacher educator is also expected to convene pre- and post-observation conferences with the student teachers and support teachers and to keep records of school visits. They are expected to assess students and complete a Lesson Evaluation form for every student teacher that they visit. She/he refers all the problem-cases of student teachers or those who perform below standard to the office of the SBS Coordinator.

The School Principal appoints an associate teacher, and ensures that the SBS Partnership concept is implemented in a mutually beneficial way. She/he oversees the placement of student teachers under well-qualified and experienced support teachers, who are deemed cooperative and willing to be partners. She/he ensures that all partner members are aware of policies and procedures that have an influence on the SBS programme, and that all documentary artefacts such as the Principal's confirmation Form and Attendance Register are in place as requested by the university.

The Associate Teacher coordinates all SBS-related activities in the school and regularly liaises with the University SBS Coordinator. She/he appoints

appropriately qualified and experienced support teachers under whom to place student teachers at the school. Support teachers are the key players in the partnership and are expected to assist the student teacher to learn from practice by regularly giving professional guidance and constructive feedback, enabling the student teacher to identify areas for improvement and professional growth. Student teachers acquire theoretical knowledge during campus-based studies (CBS), but they acquire real teaching skills during SBS, under the watchful tutelage of support teachers.

Support teachers are expected to;

- Induct students and give immediate assurance and a sense of availability
- assist student teachers to plan and prepare for lessons,
- support and mentor on various issues related to the teaching profession
- provide appropriate teaching-related challenges for the student teacher

Phase 1 of UNAM's practicum model allows student teachers to observe experienced teachers at work for a four-week period during their second year. At this level, students are only allowed to teach only two lessons, just to have a 'feel' of handling a class of learners.

In their third year, in Phase 2, students are deployed to schools for a six week teaching practicum and are expected to teach a minimum of sixty lessons [an average of two per day].

During these two phases, the students are expected to complete university assigned and assessed task focussing on their observations and teaching experiences.

In their final year, students are sent out for their final practicum stage; Phase 3 for a twelve week period.

## **2.4 ROLES OF UNIVERSITIES/HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE PRACTICUM**

It is critical for teaching practitioners to possess an appreciable body of theoretical knowledge that empowers them to understand, explain, justify and, when need arises, modify pedagogical elements. It is traditionally the university's responsibility to arrange student placements, select cooperating teachers, assign university supervisors, schedule lecturer-student conferences, deal with students' special cases, and carry out assessments (Tannehill & Goc-Karp, 1992). This process of supervision helped student teachers to progress from their current skill levels to suitably higher levels that would enable them to efficiently function as professional teachers (Metzler, 1990).

Sienty (1997) bemoans that the university-based component of teacher education programme is limited to a couple of visits to the schools by university supervisors, limited interaction between the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher. According to Sienty, university supervisors virtually have no involvement with the placement of student teachers, as this activity is usually conducted by the school. The university supervisor's function is to visit the school, observe the student, talk with the student teacher and the cooperating school teacher, and finally, assess the student teacher. They only communicate at length when there is a problem with a student's behaviour or performance. This demonstrates that school teachers and university supervisors operate somewhat independent of one another.

## **2.5 COLLABORATING TEACHERS' ROLES DURING THE PRACTICUM**

In the whole process of the practicum, the roles of the collaborating teachers are pivotal as they guide the student teachers, inducting them into the art of teaching. The fundamental expectations are that collaborating teachers should provide emotional and professional support, promote peer interactions among student teachers and encourage flexibility in teaching methodologies and content, as well as provide them with essential feedback (Beck, 2002). To be able to provide this support, the CTs themselves also need extensive orientation, sensitization, and training. Such orientation and training are crucial, as the role of the CT is central to the success of the practicum (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006; Zeichner, 1996). In an analysis of student teacher perceptions of cooperating teachers' effectiveness, Brunelle, Tousignant & Pieron (1981) concluded that some student teachers are greatly discouraged and dissatisfied by not receiving adequate

feedback or for receiving feedback that is too negative, too general, too delayed, or for not receiving any advice. Student teachers appreciate receiving abundant, immediate and specific feedback.

Zeichner & Gore (1990) explain that an important function of the collaborating teachers is to assist student teachers in linking the practicum to theoretical underpinning and to provide student teachers with a solid foundation for independent thinking. This is crucial socialization process which enables student teachers to make their philosophies and beliefs explicit, and to reflect on the implications of putting such philosophies and beliefs into practice. Teachers need to have sound content knowledge of their subjects and be able to effectively apply this knowledge in the classroom. This knowledge base should be clearly evident to the student teachers.

Collaborating teachers' roles also include mentoring student teachers. Renshaw (2008:11) defines mentoring as a development process that encompasses some elements of counselling, coaching, and facilitating. These elements are meant to enable knowledge sharing and encourage personal development.

“It has a longer-term focus [than coaching] designed to foster personal growth and to help an individual place their creative, personal and professional development in a wider cultural, social and educational context (Why am I doing what I do? How do I perceive my identity? In what ways does this impact on my professional life and work? Where am I going? What determines my long-term goals?)”.

Van Kessel (2006) concurs and explains that a mentor has a closer and broader personal relationship with the mentee as compared to a coach's commitment to the individual.

In a study on teaching partnerships, Akhtar, Majeed & Murtaza (2013) observed that student teachers model and follow the lead of their collaborating teachers and that student teachers benefit immensely in having supportive and well prepared model teachers. Encouragement and positive reinforcement made the students feel wanted and some students pointed out that they did not feel upset by constructive criticism because of such support and guidance which involve mutual learning and friendship. One important purpose of a collaborating teacher is to assist student teachers to build their professional identities by encouraging them to think more deeply about their own practice and by talking about the students' personal beliefs and philosophies.

Trends in teacher training reveal that cooperating teachers' roles in the teaching practicum are vital and indispensable. Specifically, their roles and tasks include settling the student teacher and preparing the learners for the student teacher's adoption of her/his responsibilities, in addition to;

- Introducing the student teacher to other members of staff, and making him/her feel welcome as a co-teacher.
- Assisting the student teacher to prepare for classroom teaching as well as to manage the learning environment.

- Confirming the student teacher's teaching allocations and timetables and review these whenever deemed appropriate.
- Monitoring, advising, mentoring, guiding and coaching the student teacher through pre and post-lesson observation conferences, demonstrations and discussions.
- Liaising with the university supervisor in developing the professional skills and attitude of the student teacher and providing regular written feedback on student's performance.
- Alerting the University Supervisor if Student Teacher is not performing well and develop strategies to assist the latter.
- Meeting with the university supervisor on a periodical basis to discuss student teacher's progress and devise assistive strategies.

## **2.6 Student Teachers' self-assessment and reflection during the practicum**

Boud & Falchikov (2007), note that the use of self-assessment as a form of assessment in higher education and professional courses has been on the rise. However, the numerous studies done on self-assessment have been predominantly focusing on the extent of honesty and accuracy of how students grade themselves, rather than on their acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

Self-assessment concentrates on the student's own learning so as to understand how to subsequently apply the newly acquired knowledge and also develops a greater responsibility and autonomy in learning than the traditional forms (Lew, Alwis & Schmidt, 2010).

New trends in preparing student teachers for professional practice puts to the fore the concept of what Schon (1987) refers to as 'learning in action' and 'reflection on action' and presents the students with a sense of 'self-reflection'. Within the Practicum triad, it is the student teacher who wields the key to the inner chamber where reflection really takes place. It is only the student who knows about the reflective processes which he/she is going through.

Dewey (1933) regard reflective thinking as an intense and open-minded self-assessment process applied to make informed decisions as well as to evaluate the results. Lee (2005) points out that the central objective of reflective teacher education is the development of teachers' skills in decision making on instructional methods and improvement strategies of their teaching in order to have a positive effect on learners. Student teachers need to engage in reflective practice in order to sustain professional growth after leaving the training program. Reflective practice empowers student teachers to recognize when learning is actually taking place, of what value is the learning, and the requirements for future learning (Brodie & Irving, 2007).

The role of reflective practice and self-assessment can be summed up simply as "encouraging us to take responsibility for ourselves, our learning and for our own

actions. It encourages continuing personal and professional development, discourages blame and encourages creativity, problem solving and continuing aspirations to raise quality and standards” (Hafford-Letchfield, Leonard, Begum & Chick, 2007:171)

### **2.6.1 The Teaching Practicum Portfolio**

Although teaching portfolios were initially designed for the purpose of professional accountability as a requirement for promotion or in job applications, they have now assumed a phenomenally wider use across the world as a valuable tool for teacher education. This is largely because they promote professional development and reflection as well as provide more reliable evidence for evaluation (Stone, 1998). Portfolios are a compilation of students’ work which demonstrates their knowledge and skills in teaching (Wolfe, 1995). They serve as evidence of the student teacher’s professional development and achievements over a specific time. Portfolios can contain a large variety of materials and artefacts such as subjects taught, individual’s goal statements and teaching philosophy, pictures, audio/videotapes of lessons taught, letters of recommendation, lesson plans, writing samples, individual case studies, student evaluations, student papers with teacher comments, successes stories and any engagement in professional development activities.

In a study conducted by Dutt-Doner & Gilman (1998) a portfolio offered the following benefits’ as perceived by student teachers:

- It presents more accurate reflection of student learning than tests.
- It enhances knowledge about teaching and the teaching profession.
- It promotes skills in organization and development.
- It enhances personal skills, self-confidence and professionalism.
- It helps improve relationships with peers and supervisors.
- It can be used in job searches and interviews.
- It can be used as reference and knowledge base for the teaching profession.

Technically defined, a portfolio should be unique to its particular creator, but Mayo & Rakow (1996), Rakow(1999) argue that a student teacher's portfolio is more effective when it is evaluated using a standard scoring rubric and qualitatively assessed, not only by university supervisors, but also by collaborating teachers in the school context. Doolittle (1994) Carr (1998), Fischer & King (1995) agree and suggest the use of rubrics in setting standards for assessment portfolios to render the evaluation of portfolios more reliable and valid and less problematic. Despite demanding lots of time and work for both university supervisors and cooperating teachers, portfolios have greater potential of providing rich information than the traditional assessment methods (Long & Stansbury, 1994).

Building up an effective portfolio requires certain strategies. Barry & Shannon (1997) recommend the following six strategies:

- **Early communication.** All parties involved need to understand the purpose of the portfolio, its target audience, and the evaluation criteria well in advance
- **Limited number of components.** The components of the portfolio should only be limited to those that serve an appropriate and useful purpose.
- **Evaluation Criteria for portfolio.** Specific criteria are needed for the evaluation of each component of the portfolio.
- **Self-reflection and self-assessment.** Encourage self-reflection and self-assessment throughout the professional education process.
- **Adequate time for portfolio development.** The development of the portfolio should begin timely during the student's training period.
- **Adequate preparation for portfolio development.** Portfolio development training should be integrated in the teacher education programme.

Paper based portfolios are fast getting out and the new world-wide trend is that student teachers are encouraged to use new technology through the development of professional **e-portfolios** or **multimedia portfolios**. Digital portfolios provide professionally presented and readily accessible work and the process of developing them reflects the academic maturity of the student teacher (Smith, Harris & Sammons, 2001).

**Video recording** lessons in sessions is a strategy which offers student teachers an opportunity for reflections using a moving picture of their instruction, their

interactions with learners, and their learners' interactions among themselves. Creating and viewing teaching videos and then addressing issues about the lessons can be effective in encouraging reflection and refining their practice (Hoover, 1994). The video record can be analysed by individuals, in small groups, or by some or all of the practicum triad. The video can as well be viewed at a later time and gives the student teacher an opportunity for private and more intense self-reflection (Nolan & Hoover, 2004).

**Peer assessments** allow students to engage in discussion and share experiences with their peers. The environment gives room for student teachers to elicit responses from their equal peers instead of offering solutions. Students can freely brainstorm and reach mutually acceptable solutions. This is a more informal assessment but certainly a valuable one. Students find it beneficial to collaborate in peer groups when developing their portfolios (Borko et al., 1997).

Holly (1989) suggests maintaining a **journal** as a way for student teachers to examine particular teaching contexts, to record questions, to confirm or disaffirm hypotheses, or to clarify ideas about reaching decisions about improving practice. Writing a professional journal records the events and feelings taking place during teaching processes (Weasmer & Woods, 1997). Interactive journaling provides a comfortable arena for communication and informal assessment (Weasmer & Woods, 1997). Sharing journals with peers or professional supervisors gives the student teacher deeper insights into their personal teaching efficacy. Peers offer reciprocal, sincere and less threatening feedback during student teaching

experiences as they engage in frank discussions about their teaching practices (Weasmer & Woods, 1997).

The University of Namibia's School Based Studies- SBS Manual (2014) sets out responsibilities and duties which the student teachers are expected to adhere to at all times. Among the most notable are that the students ought to demonstrate a sense of initiative by finding ways to contribute to the classroom and to the school as a whole, to collect and organise teaching materials for portfolio development in addition to bearing the responsibility of all teaching commitments as assigned by the support teacher and university supervisor or SBS Coordinator. Student teachers are also expected to participate in all school activities and co- and extra- curricular duties as directed by the school through the support teacher. They are also expected to actively participate in the triad conferences with the support teacher and the university supervisor. In addition to the portfolio, they are expected to have an SBS file which should always be accessible to the university supervisors and/or support teachers.

## **2.7 Some issues within the practicum partnership triad**

The success of the teaching practicum is largely dependent on the quality of relationship among the triad of the support teacher, university supervisor and the student teacher (Graham, 2006). The triad's level of communication, their understanding of objectives, and quality assessment of student achievements are major criteria for a successful practicum. Jones & Sparks (1996) observe that the

challenge that schools have is that universities rarely provide cooperating teachers with requisite training or adequate information to effectively perform their roles of ensuring a positive and progressive practicum experience for the student teacher

Caplow (1968), states that, in triad theory, when two people establish a dyad, the coming on board of a third person interrupts and upsets the relational smooth functioning of the dyad. A triad is essentially hierarchal, where members can form factional alliances or coalitions resulting in jealousy among members. They can create a shift in power. At times cooperating teachers withdraw their interaction with the student teacher during occasional visits by the university supervisor. This could be a result of some inferiority or subordinate complex that the cooperating teacher may have in the triad (Caplow, 1968). Cooperating teachers are often not part to decisions about the practicum; rather the university typically makes usually unilateral decisions about many issues ranging from the duration of student teaching, the requirements of planning and written work, to the final assessment of the student (Glickman & Bey, 1990).

A worrying challenge, as Ariav & Smith, (2005) observe, is that universities feel reluctant to share the responsibility of assessing students with schools or to offer trust to the cooperating teacher's content knowledge. Collaborative supervision stems from the trust and care members of the triad feel for one another. The triad partnership thrives on relational sharing of roles and responsibilities for the benefit and professional development of the student teacher. It recognizes and respects each individual member's unique strengths. The unwritten organogram of the practicum triad places student teachers at the bottom of the decision-making

structure, while the university supervisor is at the top. The cooperating teacher exercises some degree of power over the student teacher but remains below the level of the university supervisor (Griffin, 1989).

Ocansey (1989) observed that some cooperating teachers criticise university supervisors as being out of sync with the reality in schools. Such claims reflect the tensions between university supervisors who are the main or even sole assessors of student teachers, and cooperating teachers, whose is usually not involved in assessment processes. Cooperating teachers claim that they are better positioned to know what the student teacher goes through than the supervising teacher. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that university supervisors ought to learn more about current conditions in schools, perhaps by spending more time in schools teaching or observing, thereby gaining classroom experience after being away from school level teaching for many years (Richardson-Koehler,1988). This tension is enough reason to suggest the development of alternative practicum models (Veal & Rickard, 1998).

Rex (1989) laments the situation where student teachers do not have the slightest idea that they are receiving unfair treatment and, more so, where they are powerless to do anything about it if they notice some shortcomings in the way they are treated. In some cases, cooperating teachers try to mediate between the student teacher and the university supervisor in the face of an unwarranted amount of criticism from the university supervisor (Veal & Rickard, 1998). He recognized

that most cooperating teachers prefer to be assigned only “perfect” student teachers, ones who are trouble free and who need very little or no supervision.

Nolan & Hoover, (2004) explain that a true collaborative partnership between university-based and school-based teacher educators requires respect for one another’s expertise, shared goals and knowledge, and collective involvement in decision-making. During teaching practicum, pre-service teachers learn to teach by means of the personal experience they get in the field (Britzman, 2003). During the practicum, student teachers learn to put pedagogical theory into practice, and to fully appreciate the professional dimensions and demands of the realities of day-to-day teaching (Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005). Student teacher’s practicum experiences in the schools effectively mould their conception of real school contexts, and their attitudes towards their work and towards their own learners.

The “gap” between the realities of school based teaching and university based courses becomes evident from the initial teaching practicum session (Smith & Lev-Ari, op. cit.). It is paramount, therefore, that student teachers need to be encouraged and motivated to draw their practice on theoretical premises. Notwithstanding, this assertion does not imply that practical processes have to be subordinated of theoretical processes. Ideally, practice ought to be grounded on theoretical premises.

## 2.8 SYNTHESIS

In this chapter, a wide range of literature related to the purpose and models of the school based teaching practicum and contemporary trends in teacher education was analysed. Various models of teaching practicum from selected countries covering the major continents were dealt with. Student teachers can only be effectively supported if enabling and supportive settings in the practicum are created. This demands respect for, and confidence in, all the elements which are pivotal in guiding teacher training in both the school and the university settings.

Within the models that were discussed, the various roles and responsibilities of the schools and the university were examined. Although most models are fundamentally the same, some decisive variations do exist. Different terms are used in different countries to refer to student teachers, support teachers or visiting university lecturer. A collaborative practicum partnership requires rich school and university modelling and critical reflection and one of the most effective instruments that foster effective self-assessment and self-reflection is the students' portfolio. While approaches to folio development may vary, the value of the students' portfolio cannot be overemphasized.

Some worrying issues pertaining to the practicum in initial teacher education have often been raised. These issues range from the sheer lack of trust and respect for other members of the partnership triad to a total absence of any code of partnership convergence. Such are the issues that need redress as efforts to design an appropriate partnership model for Namibia are undertaken.

*The next chapter will focus on the the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin this study. Explanations will be made of the concepts, propositions, and definitions to provide a systematic view of phenomena. This will be done by noting relations between variables, with the aim of predicting or explaining the phenomena. An attempt will be made to understand similarities and differences among various theories resulting in selecting which theory or combination of theories would best suit this study.*

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

A theory, as defined by Kerlinger (1970), is a combination of interrelated concepts, propositions, and definitions that attempt to provide a systematic view of phenomena by noting relations between variables, with the aim of predicting or explaining the phenomena. Put differently, a theory brings together different interwoven variables as it attempts to explain what the theory is all about. Generally, theories based on empirical or scientific evidence are more valid than opinion-based theories. Understanding similarities and differences among various theories results in a better and informed decision on selecting which theory or combination of theories would suit one's study.

This study was underpinned by a combination of constructivist and behaviourist approaches as it sought to unravel the complex nature of learning. Learning is one of the most important activities in which humans engage in and numerous theories of learning have been developed by different scholars. Since time immemorial, philosophical and psychological scholars have sought to unravel the nature of learning, how it occurs, and how an individual can influence the learning of another through teaching or other educational endeavours. Theories of learning provide different perspectives on the complex phenomenon of learning and complement one another in their ability to explain different types of learning situations. In many cases, these theories are specifically relevant to different types of learning but are

not necessarily incompatible with one another. Theories of learning are central to the educational processes (Bergh & Theron, 2006).

### **3.2 Cognitive Apprenticeship**

Constructivist theorists have developed a cognitive apprenticeship learning theory which is defined as a process through which a more experienced person ( an expert) assists a less experienced one (a novice or trainee) by way of demonstration, support, and examples. Proponents of this theory hold that experts of a trade or skill often fail to openly engage in the vital implicit processes involved when they perform complex operations when teaching trainees. In order to overcome these deficiencies, cognitive apprenticeship brings these complex operations tacitly into the open to allow the novice to observe, enact and practice these skills, with the help of the expert (Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1987). Bandura (1997) posits that for this model to be effective, the student needs to have the motivation to learn and be attentive. Equally importantly, the student should be able to proficiently reproduce the acquired skill.

Based on the cognitive apprenticeship theory, Collins et al (1987) advanced six teaching methods which they claimed helps students achieve cognitive and metacognitive strategies to use, manage, and discover knowledge. Central to cognitive apprenticeship are modelling, coaching and scaffolding which help with cognitive and metacognitive development. Articulation and reflection are two more strategies that were developed to enlighten students with awareness of problem-solving and execution skills similar to those of the expert. Finally, there is

exploration which is a strategy that helps to guide the student to be independent and able to identify and solve problems within their own domain.

Cognitive theorists such as Godden & Baddeley (1975) maintain that the context within which learning takes place is critical. The cognitive apprenticeship model is developed from learning in context which is based on theories of situated cognition. Collins, Duguid, and Brown (1989) argue that cognitive apprenticeship is less effective when concepts are taught out of their contexts. It can be said that situations can co-produce knowledge through activity. It can, therefore, be further argued that learning and cognition are fundamentally situated and that in cognitive apprenticeships, the skill being taught is modelled in real-world contexts (Brown, J. S., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. 1989).

Anderson, (1983) states that by using strategies such as modelling and coaching, cognitive apprenticeship effectively supports the three levels of skill acquisition: the cognitive level, the associative level, and the autonomous level. At the cognitive level, students develop declarative understanding of the skill. At the associative level, associations among the critical elements involved in acquiring the skill at the cognitive level are reinforced while misinterpretations or mistakes are detected and eliminated. Finally at the autonomous stage, the acquired skill is honed and perfected until it is performed at an expert level.

Cognitive apprenticeships allow the experts to model their students' behaviours in real-world situations with cognitive modelling. The masters or experts explain

precisely what they are thinking and doing as they 'model' the skill, while the student strives to identify relevant behaviour on which to develop a conceptual model of the processes involved. Modelling occurs when the expert, usually a teacher, demonstrates a task explicitly so that novices, usually a student, can learn and develop a conceptual model of the assignment at hand. The student then imitates those behaviours while the expert observes and provides coaching. Coaching involves experts who observe a student or novice performing a task and then give feedback and suggestions on how to improve the novice's performance to that of an expert's. The expert structures and supervises the novice's tasks to assist in the novice's development accordingly. Coaching presents vital assistance at this critical level just beyond what the students could accomplish independently. Vygotsky (1978) referred to this as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

### **3.3 Vygotsky's social development theory**

Vygotsky used this term to clarify variations of task accomplishments between a student and an expert. The shared understanding of ZPD shows the difference between what students can accomplish independently and what they can only accomplish with the assistance of experts in a given assignment. Vygotsky labelled this gap as 'Zone' which he claimed to be crucial since it requires masters or experts to intervene in order to enhance the cognitive development of a beginner by uplifting them to a higher level of proficiency. The 'zone' can be filled by applying 'scaffolding'. Scaffolding enables teachers or trainers to access ZPD (Shaffer & Kipp, 2010). Scaffolding processes can take place in any social situation, whether

formal or non-formal. For example, young children acquire culturally acceptable social norms, values or skills through 'scaffolding' from their parents. Similarly, learning opportunities can be availed in various contexts by people with rich expertise. Support will be rendered through 'guided participation' with the assistance of the expert who shows the correct direction in a socially acceptable manner. The act of putting into place strategies and methods to support the student's learning is termed 'instructional scaffolding'. Such support includes teaching, student and teacher activities, and group work. The master or expert may need to perform parts of the task which the student is not yet able to execute. The teacher is, therefore, required to have the skill to assess the student's abilities at that stage (Shaffer & Kipp, 2010).

Vygotsky's theory, however, can be criticized for overlooking students' responsibilities for their own cognitive development. Guided participation can be applied to refer to the apprenticeship training process at the workplaces, which are not formal learning places. However, it is at workplaces where we find experts with rich work experiences guiding or teaching the trainee or novice workers. Thus, apprentices are expected to learn the ropes of their trade by imitating seasoned and model workers at the workplaces (Shaffer & Kipp, 2010). Similarly, student teachers can learn from seasoned educational practitioners

According to Collins et al (1987), articulation is a strategy that includes any method of enabling students to express their knowledge, reasoning, or problem-solving skills. There are three types of articulation which are inquiry teaching, thinking

aloud, and critical student role. Through the inquiry teaching type, a teacher possesses a series of questions that allow the students to refine their learned knowledge as well as develop explicit conceptual models. Students are able to articulate their thoughts while solving problems by thinking aloud. Students assume a critical role to monitor others in cooperative activities as well as draw conclusions based on their problem-solving activities (Collins & Stevens, 1982).

By reflection, students can compare their own problem-solving skills with those of their master or of their peers, (Collins, et al, 1987). One technique of reflecting could be by examining their past performances and those of their teacher or master, and by highlighting similarities and differences. The ultimate aim of reflection is for novices to critically look back at their own performances with the aim and will to understand and improve their behaviour to that of an expert. By exploration, students are given room to solve problems on their own and by teaching them exploration strategies. The master or teacher exposes students to strategies of how to explore, research, and develop hypotheses. The master or teacher gradually withdraws their support and scaffolding. Exploration gives room for the student to devise interesting and challenging problems within their domain and then take the initiative to solve these problems.

Vygotsky strongly believes that an individual's cognitive development is a product of their continuous social interaction. He argues that through social interaction, people can use language as a tool to enhance their cognitive development. They use this tool to express their thoughts, feelings or experiences (Bernstein, Penner, Clarke-Stewart & Roy, 2006).

Vygotsky is the architect of the socio-cultural theory which suggests that social interaction paves way to continuous, step-by-step changes in learners' thought and behaviour which can vary greatly from one culture to another (Woolfolk, 1998). This theory of learning explains the inherent connection between cognitive development and guidance by other people through the concept of 'Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).' In this theory, Vygotsky suggests that a learner's development depends on his/her interaction with people as well as on the cultural tools which are provided to enable them to create their own world-view. These cultural tools can be passed from one person to another through imitative learning, where an individual imitates or copies another. Another way a learner develops is through instructional learning, where instructions from the teacher are remembered and then used for self-regulation. Thirdly, cultural tools can be passed through collaborative learning, where some peers try to understand each other through collaboration when they learn a new skill (Tomasello, et al., 1993). Vygotsky's theory combines the social environment and cognition where students acquire certain ways of thinking and behaving. They do that by interacting with a more knowledgeable person. This social interaction leads to continuous changes in a child's behaviours which would vary from one culture to another (Berk, 1994).

### **3.4 Situated Learning and Community of Practice**

Situated learning, simply defined, is learning that takes place in the same context where it is applied and firmly fixed within a particular social and physical setting. Therefore, learning should not be regarded simply as the transmission of abstract knowledge from one person to another (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Situated learning was developed by Lave & Wenger as a model of learning in a community of practice which allows student to learn by socialization, visualization, and imitation. When learning begins with problem-solving situations, people would explore real life situations for solutions to the problems. This is when learning begins (Hung, D. 2002). Hung emphasized that learning is social and that students who gravitate to communities with common interests usually benefit from those with more knowledge than them. When people experience real-life situations, they become motivated to learn. Examples from Lave & Wenger (1991) about situated learning resonate particularly for adult education. For instance, adult learners discover, mould, and express their own knowledge through situated learning within a community of practice. The learning which is firmly fixed in rich contexts enables adult learners to reflect on their actions, and to discuss problems and issues with fellow members of a learning community (Kimble & Hildreth, 2008).

Situated learning presents novices with opportunities to best apply new concepts related to specific contexts of their practice. While theoretical knowledge may lay the foundation, the skills and experiences developed through authentic practice lead to more effective learning. (Richardson, W. (2010))”

Willis & Cifuentes (2005) assert that teaching ought to be situated in a real context that resembles the classroom to enrich their learning process by presenting realistic experiences. Learners process information by hearing, visualizing, reasoning and reflecting. Therefore, they learn much better by having models and by imitation.

According to Richardson (2010), when students start their after-school professional lives, they will often be asked to work collaboratively with peers from other parts of the world. They will need to use the skills they have learned throughout their educational career in their professional careers. It is paramount that they are able to effectively utilize these skills in their work situations. Through situated learning, students will be able to equip themselves with the requisite skills and also be able to utilise such skills. Situated learning equips students with experience through performing tasks in certain ways that prepare them to become productive in their lives after graduation. Halverson (2009) agrees and adds that almost all work-related skills can be acquired through situated learning or simulations which can create engaging environments which are ideal for problem solving. Effective learning occurs when students perform a common function in a social learning setting where each stakeholder experiences the positive effects of ongoing learning.

Lave & Wenger (2007) argue that communities of practice exist everywhere. Generally, people get involved in communities of practice at home, school, work, or in sports. Communities of practice refer to people who engage in acts of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour. Communities of practice are made up of groups of people who share a common concern or a liking for something which they do by interacting regularly (Lave & Wenger, 2007)

Lave & Wenger (2007) outline three elements which distinguish a community of practice from all other communities:

**The domain:** A community of practice is a network of connections between people who have an identity which is defined by a common domain of interest and commitment.

**The community:** Members build relationships that enable them to learn from each other and engage in activities and discussions in pursuit of their shared interest in their domain.

**The practice:** Members develop a shared repertoire of resources and engage in shared practice.

### **3.5 Social Cognitive Theory**

Social Cognitive Theory is premised on the notion that people learn by observing other people in a reciprocal triadic relationship consisting of environment, behaviour and cognition. The acquired behaviours can be pivotal to one's personality. For example, any behaviour which is observed is capable of changing a person's way of thinking (cognition). The environment in which a person grows up in may influence that person's later behaviours (Bandura, 1977; 1986). Five core concepts make up SCT framework. These are observational learning/modelling, outcome expectations, self-efficacy, goal setting and self-regulation and they are briefly explained below.

- **Outcome Expectations.** Outcome expectations are students' beliefs about what is likely to follow as a result of a particular behaviour. These beliefs form through students' previous experiences and vicariously by observation

of others. Outcome expectations help shape the decisions people make about which behaviours to exhibit or to suppress.

- **Perceived Self-efficacy**. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is an influential concept within SCT and reflects a student's self-belief about whether they can successfully perform a particular task or not. Great self-efficacy is associated with equally great confidence and high motivation which ultimately result in high achievement in academic contexts. Interventions designed to increase self-efficacy in students have proven very effective (Pajares, 1996).
- **Goal Setting**. Goal setting is a vital process within SCT. Goals represent anticipated, desired, or preferred outcomes and they exemplify the agency view of the SCT which states that people do not only learn, but they also use forethought to envision the future, identify desired outcomes, and generate plans of action. Goals act as prerequisites for self-regulation as they provide benchmarks against which to judge achievement. (Bandura, 1986; Schunk, 1990)
- **Self-regulation**. Self-regulation is dependent on goal setting because students are considered to manage their thoughts and actions in order to achieve certain outcomes. Self-regulation is also dependent on modelling, self-efficacy and other processes. Only when students have set goals and feel efficacious about achieving them will they need self-regulation. (Schunk, 2001; Zimmerman, 2000).

### **3.6 Synthesis**

In conducting this research, the researcher took into consideration the various learning theories, including those that emphasize the role of environmental influences on learning. Within this framework, the student learns through a variety of ways and in a wide range of environmental settings. Through this theoretical concept, the student's learning is shaped by the influences of, among others, mentors, lecturers, peers and community leaders to socialize him/her appropriately.

Theories that deal with environmental influences on learning are quite ideal and helpful in the research of teaching practicum due to the fact that teaching practicum takes place in particular environmental settings. Specifically, it takes place at authentic workplaces- the school. At real workplaces, the expert (mentor teacher, support teacher, etc.) is the person best positioned to share occupational experiences with trainees and novices. In such a setting, teaching practicum can be structured to effectively facilitate the transfer of skills, knowledge and attitudes (Rusch & Chadsey, 1998).

Vygotsky's theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) has implications for the teaching practicum where novices strive to improve their own skills to the level that of their mentors. Through guided participation, trainee teachers can undergo the teaching practicum process at the workplaces. Bandura's theory of imitation provides value to both environmental and cognitive aspects of trainee teachers' development (Bergh & Theron, 2006). Trainees have the opportunity to imitate their mentors as they seek to sharpen their own teaching skills. Through Bandura's

theory of observation, a novice or student teacher imitates an experienced mentor in the teaching profession at a school. The nature of learning in the teaching practicum requires that the trainee observes the skills of the mentor, supervising university lecturer or school principal. During this process, the student teacher does not passively absorb all he/she observes or hears. This argument goes in line with constructivists' views on learning.

According to the constructivist view of learning, knowledge can be constructed by the students as they attempt to make sense of the environment they are in. It follows, therefore that students are not simply passive recipients of knowledge, but they can also construct knowledge. For this reason, the student teacher is expected to be engaged actively in meaningful learning activities at the practicum schools. Students are expected to solve real challenges that require them to apply the skills and knowledge they acquired from their university in their field. The architects of the theory of situated learning, Lave & Wenger (1991), argue that engaging in practice is the fundamental condition for effective of learning. In light of this, the teaching practicum requires the trainee/student teacher to learn from workplaces where the actual occupational skill practices take place. They learn the skills of their profession more by performing real work assignments. The tasks enable them to apply their theoretical learning.

Before a trainee teacher is effectively deployed to the classroom for teaching practicum, he or she needs to be inducted by the school-based mentor and the university supervisor within a community of practice. These will share with the trainee teacher the requisite cognitive background and associated intentions to the

setting which the student will construct during the actual teaching and through discourse. This will constitute the important periods for “explanation” (Wittgenstein, 1996) and that for “critical debate” (Williams, 1999). At this stage of crucial debate, the trainee teacher begins to question their university supervisor or mentor teacher about whether the student is following the correct “rules of the trade”. The lecturer teaches the student by numerous examples of the rules that have been agreed to by consensus within the “community” and which should be adhered to by all members of the “community”. All this is done with the objectives of enabling the trainee teacher to appreciate and understand the rules of teaching in their own practicum sessions.

It is paramount that the first steps are fully monitored for conformity by the community because as novices, the student teachers are unable to associate the shared intention of conforming to rules of practice (Nelson, 2008). Trainee teachers will progressively succeed in intentionally adhering to the rules of practice through repeatedly abiding by the same rules in a broad variety of contexts and they will gradually learn to appreciate the significance of these rules (Berducci, 2004). The professional development of the student teachers is arguably mainly as a result of participation in the practices and language of the community (Rogoff, Matusov, & White, 1996).

Partnerships within the practicum triad will be conceptualised within Bandura’s postulates of ‘community of practice’ where members adhere to mutually agreed parameters. School-based teaching practica provide student teachers with opportunities to be exposed to the realities of teaching and other related

professional activities. This is the only opportunity that student teachers have to put the theories that they learnt in their lectures into practice, as they get into contact with real teaching life situations (Ogono & Basmus, 2006).

*The next chapter will present a broad discussion of the research study's goals, objectives and questions. An outline the research paradigm, research approach, selection of participants and methods of data collection will also be dealt with. The chapter will also focus on the role of the researcher in data generation.*

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a framework for a systematic study that addresses the research study's goals, objectives and questions. The chapter outlines the research paradigm, a summary of the research design, the researcher's study perspective, and selection of participants, data collection and data analysis. Also described are issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations. The study specifically focusses on the perspectives of support teachers, student teachers and university supervisors as regard their individual as well as collective roles during the teaching practicum.

#### **4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design is a plan, strategy, and structure of carrying out a research project. It summarises the different procedures which a researcher employs to collect, analyse and interpret data. Creswell & Clark, (2007) emphasise that the importance of a research design rests in its ability to guide the decisions and the methods that a researcher employs as he/she carries out their study. It explains the logic of interpretation that was used for the research findings.

##### **4.2.1 Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research often aims at studying socially constructed truths of existence and their characteristics into discrete variables (Creswell (2003). Social

constructivist strive to uncover and interpret meanings of the experiences of their research participants, bearing in mind that experiences are participants' constructed world views rather than those of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Mertens (1998) argues that the methods applied in the qualitative paradigm place to the fore the assumption that social construction of the reality can be achieved only through interaction between the researcher and participants. It is, therefore, the researcher's responsibility to try to interpret how individuals or groups in a social setting construct their world (Merriam, 2009). This study elects to employ the qualitative approach; an inductive strategy based on theories that emerge from the collected and analysed data and not on preconceived or predetermined notions.

Qualitative research lays emphasis on enhanced comprehension of human experience and behaviour. This study draws from the observation that qualitative research largely bases knowledge assertions on constructivist perspectives on diversified individual or collective experiences, (Creswell, 2003). Views and perspectives in this enquiry were obtained from all the practicum triad members, as key informants, in the researcher's quest to get an in-depth understanding of what they perceive to be their respective roles during the teaching practicum. The chosen research design could not be isolated from the researcher's paradigmatic perspective of research, defined by Mason (2002), as the interplay of meta-theoretical underpinnings, the research question/s, methodology, and ontological and epistemological assumptions. In light of the existence of multiple realities, research questions are rendered to be flexible and they change and revolve as the research process develops (Mertens, 1998).

This study focussed on the role parameters of the main players within the teaching practicum triad and as such it resorted within the qualitative interpretive paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:2). The study explored and sought to understand the lived experiences and practices of student teachers, support teachers and university supervisors in an effort to record and interpret their voices. Constructivists maintain that people are active architects of their own social realities and that the researcher can deduce these by interacting with them. People's experiences can be considered to be situated co-constructions of social realities within and against the backdrop of a political and social context (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). Participants' experiences and subjective perceptions, views and feelings were explored as mediated by the study subjects' everyday interplay with the "reality" of their lived experiences. People's experience of the world is a result of both the real physical world and of the manner in which they exclusively advance their experiences (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999; Jackson & Klobas, 2008). The researcher took every precaution to ensure that the study participants were not subjected to an intrusive research methodology but one that would enable him to select, narrate and interpret the triad members' understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the practicum.

The researcher dealt with power issues by moulding a working and lasting relationship with the research participants, and by building and maintaining trust through interactive conversations, among other strategies (Charmaz, 2000). Cognisant of the nature of multiple realities or truths in qualitative research, (Daiute & Fine, 2003:64) the researcher, therefore, makes no claim to represent an inscrutable or privileged reality or truth in this study.

How research subjects perceive to be the basic constituents of social reality or phenomenon, or what they think reality is (the ontology) influences how they think about what they can understand about it (Schwandt, 2000). One of the basic tenets of this paradigm is that reality is socially constructed. The implication therefore, is that reality and world perceptions will constantly evolve because reality is not singularly objective, but that there are multiple subjective realities (Mertens, 1998; Robson, 2002). Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011:33) define ontology as “the nature of reality or of a phenomenon: politics and interests shape multiple beliefs and values, as these beliefs and values are socially constructed, privileging some view of reality and under-representing others.”

On the other hand, how researchers get to know these multiple world views or realities (epistemology) is “influenced by the communities of practice who define what counts as acceptable ways of knowing, and affecting the relationship between the researcher and the communities of who are being researched, such as that partnerships are formed that are based on equality of power and esteem” Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011) The fundamental epistemological assumption of the social constructivist paradigm is that knowledge is socially constructed by the research participants and that the role of the researcher is to unravel the complex experience from the view point of the participants (Mertens, 1998). It is from this perspective that in this study, the researcher adopts this interactive mode of data collection (Mertens, 1998).

In an attempt to understand and interpret the experiences of the study participants, the researcher considered that each triad member’s experiences were through a

unique prism of realities. People create complex personal and social worlds for themselves which are perfectly real and valid (O’Kane, 2000). They create and live in their own ever- evolving world, in which meanings can be diverse, shifting and are always being re-interpreted (Mason, 2002). The epistemological focus of this study is, therefore, based on the relativity, plurality and subjectivity of the nature of knowledge, which the researcher and the study participants co-create (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

#### **4.2.2 Qualitative Research Approach**

The main thrust of this study was to interrogate the perceptions of practicum triad members pertaining to their individual or collective roles during the teaching practicum. Given the nature of such a study, the qualitative approach was selected as the most appropriate. Qualitative studies, according to Barrett (2007), strive to understand phenomena by studying events, actions, talk and interactions. Qualitative studies emphasize the importance of understanding variables in their natural setting. Denzin & Lincoln (2003) explain that qualitative research locates the observer in the real world in a situated activity. Such activities include researching people’s lives, behaviours, stories, as well as social interactions and organisational dynamics. Qualitative researchers mainly employ four major methods of data gathering namely, observations, interviews, text and/or document analyses, and focus group discussions (Silverman 2006).

According to Fasse & Kolodner (2000), qualitative research methods are catalytic in a deep understanding of an educational setting hence its popularity as a method of

choice in studying pedagogical practices. Woods (1983) supports the assertion that qualitative approach is quite appropriate for educational research on account of the active nature of the classroom teaching and learning, and the resultant emergence of behavioural change that education entails. A particular advantage of qualitative research is its potential to provide rich textual descriptions of how individuals experience particular issues, including their often contradictory opinions, behaviours and beliefs (Anderson, 2006).

The concept qualitative research is understood differently by different people (Strauss & Corbin 2008). Webb & Glensne (1992) view qualitative research as becoming aware of or involving an observed issue through willingness or a desire to see and understand new perspectives about life and human activity. Alvesson (2009) regards qualitative research as consisting of a series of interpretive practices that help to make the world visible. Bogdan & Biklen (2006:2) view the term qualitative research as an overarching concept covering several research strategies that have common characteristics. Qualitative research is exploratory in nature and can enable the researcher to collect data and understand the phenomenon as it unfolds. The shared characteristic of qualitative research is its ability to reconstruct and interpret the experiences of the individuals under study (Marshall & Rossman 2010). As similarly stated by Hitchcock & Hughes (1995), qualitative approaches enable researchers to experience, first hand, the world they are investigating by participating in that world through a focus upon what individual actors say and do.

Ary, Jacobs & Razaview (2009:476) describe qualitative research as an approach to inquiry in search for an understanding of human and social issues from the

perspective of the research subjects in their particular social setting. They do this by focusing on a phenomenon for some length of time; the researcher becomes immersed in the world of the people under study and gradually gets to be known as well as earns their trust (McMillan & Schumacher 2011).

The literal deductive meaning of qualitative research emphasises rather on quality than on quantity. The qualitative research approach is deemed to be more appropriate for this study because the researcher explores the perspectives, experiences and behaviours of the research subjects with whom he interacts. Qualitative methods of research produce findings arrived at by means other than statistical procedures or any other means based on quantification. Mothata, Mda & Pretorius (2000), state that qualitative research is a research method used to gather and present information in words rather than in numbers. McMillan & Schumacher (2011) and Bazely (2007) concur and explain that the qualitative methodologies are characterised principally as verbal when dealing with data. The qualitative approach is most ideal in situations where detailed information and an in-depth understanding of a process or experience in a non-numeric form are sought.

In qualitative research approaches, extensive data are gathered through non-manipulative interaction with research participants in their natural settings on a number of variables over extended time periods. Yin (2009) and De Vos (2005) argue that qualitative research data is mainly verbal in nature since the nature of this type of study empowers the researcher to concentrate on people's social actions, the qualities of their behaviour, their thoughts and perceptions. In a broad sense, qualitative research is an instrument designed for the contextual

understanding of phenomena and presents facts in verbal narration (McMillan & Schumacher 2011). Qualitative research can thus be regarded as interpretive, pragmatic, and grounded in human experiences with the verbal word as central to the research approach, (Marshall & Rossman 2010).

Qualitative researchers have no standard approach to research. Instead, there are multiple perspectives by different researchers, and each of these perspectives has equal truth or validity (Leedy & Ormrod 2005). Qualitative researchers recognise the multi-dimensional and multi-layered nature of issues under study; hence they try to portray the issue in its multifaceted form, but they rarely make any effort to simplify what they observe (Leedy Ormrod, 2005). Thus many qualitative researchers contend that the ultimate truth is not singular, but multiple truths can be discovered about a phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod 2005).

Qualitative research approaches are unique methodologies which seek to understand reality from a specific vantage point. In light of the subjectivity of qualitative research, the researcher constructs knowledge from the interactions and deliberations with the participants. Bogdan & Biklen (2006), observe that researchers strive to free themselves from preconceptions or from their own perspectives about what they will likely find on the research setting. Marshall and Rossman (2010) indicate that a research design is the researcher's blue print of how they intend to execute the research which, in qualitative research, is like a loose schedule. Van Eeden & Terre Blanch (2000) explain that qualitative research designs attempt to foster a sense of trust and empathy between the researcher and his subjects.

### **4.2.3 Choice of qualitative methodology**

Leedy (2006) argues that the choice of research methodology for a particular enquiry ought to always take cognisance of the nature of the data that will be collected in attempting to understand the phenomenon. The nature of the enquiry is, therefore, the determinant of the research methodology to be adopted, and not vice-versa. Researchers often have to choose from qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods of enquiry.

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative research design is preferred on account of its inherent characteristics, which present the researcher with rich descriptions and in- depth information and a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study. Central to qualitative research is the search for meaning, experience and understanding, all of which give the researcher an opportunity for interaction with his research subjects. Qualitative research enables the researcher to explore the phenomenon under study as understood by the subjects, using their own frame of reference (Bogdan & Biklen 2006). The rationale/significance of electing the qualitative research approach and the procedures to be implemented in this study are discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

McMillan & Schumacher (2011) assert that qualitative research resorts more in a naturalistic -phenomenological philosophy which claims that there are multiple, socially constructed realities. The selection of qualitative methods is mainly influenced by the researcher's research skills and theoretical lens, the research problem, the extent of uncertainty within the phenomenon, and academic politics.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005), state that qualitative research is “true to life” since it is situated within natural contexts. Everything that is done or said by research participants is potentially the clue to understanding the phenomenon under investigation; therefore, nothing should be regarded as mundane (Bogdan & Biklen 2006).

This study adopted an ethnographic approach, which is the qualitative study of individuals and groups who represent a particular culture, (Springer, 2010). The study took place in the natural settings and information was gathered through a range of instruments such as observations, in-depth interviews and document analysis. The researcher investigated the university-school-student triad experiences and realities through sustained contact with the triad members; student teachers, support teachers and university lecturers in their natural environment in order to produce rich, descriptive data that helped him to understand those experiences.

### **4.3 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

McMillan & Schumacher (2011), state that qualitative researchers typically adopt an emergent design – enabling them to make decisions about the data gathering strategies as the study progresses. The emergent research design has room for flexibility because concepts, insights and understanding can be constructed from the data patterns. The concepts or theories emerging from data enable the

researcher to explain the specific phenomenon under investigation. Qualitative research approaches allow great flexibility in the research processes and methods.

The study sought to understand the practicum triad by gaining a native perspective from the inside looking around, rather from outside looking inward. This was done by entering the participants' environment, the schools, to observe events, artefacts, and symbols that defined the triad's culture and gave it meaning. This involved a sustained engagement with the research participants to the point of data saturation, while all the time using the grounded-theory approach of recursive data examination while documenting observations in field notes in order to ensure credibility of the findings and address distortions, (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Qualitative research methodologies are more holistic and emergent with particular focus on designs, research instruments and interpretations which develop and are continually modified throughout the investigation (Leedy & Ormrod 2005). Ethnographers socially interact with participants and they record data in a range of contexts (McMillan & Schumacher 2011). The researcher open-mindedly enters the research site and constructs the picture as data are collected and analysed.

#### **4.3.1 Interviews**

The primary data collection methods in this study were semi-structured in-depth interviews, observations and document analysis of policy statements, prospectuses and handbooks. The researcher posed semi-structured open-ended questions, with occasional requests for clarifications to allow their views to unfold. Support teachers

and university supervisors were primarily interviewed to solicit their perspective about their roles and responsibilities during the student teaching practicum. The interviews were conducted at conveniently chosen locations which offered participants' comfort and privacy during the entire course of the interview. All the university supervisors preferred to have the interviews in their own offices which proved to be conducive. Support teachers preferred to have the interviews at various locations within their own schools. Interviews stretched over different durations from approximately one hour to two hours. The time frames were reasonably long enough to go through all the research questions.

Interview schedules were prepared for this enquiry. Rossman & Rallis (1998) explain that a researcher sets topics or categories to focus on but remains at liberty to pursue topics that the research subjects raise. The initial questions posed to the subjects within each target group would be the same, albeit with minor variations as each interview progresses. Participants assented to the researcher's request for possible follow-up consultations, if need be, during the analysis process for clarification and/or additional information.

Interviews allow interviewers and their interviewees to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they perceive their own situations. An interview is a flexible data collection instrument which enables the use of verbal and non-verbal channels, (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2012). Interviews also allow the focus to be on specific issues which can be explored further and they can also determine what an issue looks like from another's vantage

point. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer poses certain questions but gives room to the interviewee to raise issues and questions as the interview progresses. This allows the researcher the flexibility to make immediate responses about issues raised and ask probing questions (McKernan, 2000).

Interviews enabled the researcher to explore the support teachers' experiences with student teachers under their tutelage. Interview questions were forwarded to participants a week or two in advance to enable them to reflect upon their experiences with student teachers and prepare for the scheduled interview. Participants were later provided with the transcripts of the interviews for their verification.

#### **4.3.2 Focus group interviews**

Newby (2010) defines a focus group discussion as “a session led by one or more researchers which involves probing groups of respondents using a question, discussion or stimulus/ response format”. He further states that a focus group discussion can be a very useful data collection tool for obtaining insights from participants.

Notwithstanding the numerous benefits of focus group discussion, normally maintaining strict confidentiality often proves to be a challenge in focus group discussions. Newby (op.cit) argues that in spite of the confidentiality pledges undertaken by the participants, not every member of the focus group might subscribe to the same standard of ethical discipline. It is, therefore, for the

researcher to reinforce the confidentiality code, even to the extent of compelling the participants to sign non-disclosure pacts. Focus group discussions were administered at an early stage in this inquiry to achieve a collective perspective as well as establish the stability of participants' opinions. Focus group discussions proved vital in exploring and probing for deeper significance of participants' responses.

### **4.3.3 Observations**

An observation is a systematic process of noting the behavioural patterns of research subjects. It can be defined as the process which researchers adopt to link their theoretical assumptions with reality (Mouton & Marais, 1990). Observations present primary or first-hand encounters with participants and allow for holistic interpretations of the phenomena under investigation. In conjunction with interviews and document analyses, observations also serve to triangulate or substantiate findings (Smit, 2003).

In this study, lesson evaluations and schedules for co- and extracurricular duties were also used to guide and inform observation instruments. The basic assumption was that the practicum triad is faced with challenges hinged on role conflicts and vague role parameters. Evans (2003) argues that observational research findings have strong validity due to the depth of information the researcher is able to collect in connection with particular behaviours under inquiry. The present study adopted a structured observation approach in which a pre-set observation checklist was used. Potential challenges related to subjective interpretations and personal researcher

influences were addressed by strictly adhering to the observational checklist focus with a fair degree of consistency.

#### **4.3.4 Document Analysis**

Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as an educational data gathering technique which uses a diversity of written data materials, insights and judgements. Document analysis can enhance the strength of qualitative research efforts when combined with other data collection strategies. Teaching practicum policy and other documents are vital sources of data. Marshall & Rossman (1999) view the analysis of documents as unobtrusive approaches which richly portray the participants' values and beliefs. School Based Studies manual containing practicum requirements and guidelines, university and ministerial policy documents, observation and evaluation forms, were readily available for analysis.

Robson (2002) explains that using documents in qualitative research presents a number of both advantages and disadvantages. The outlined merits, which the current researcher takes advantage of, include that documents encourage the researcher to exercise creativity and ingenuity and that they provide an unobtrusive and non-reactive environment, with the researcher not required to be in any direct contact with individuals. Documents are ideal as they can readily "provide cross-validation of other methods used to support or disconfirm them" (Robson (2002).

Being products of a given context, documents are grounded in the real world. Documentation such as university and school policy documents, newspaper,

magazine and media articles were integrated with data sourced from participants in an effort to fill such gaps which may have been left out by the other sources. As a conclusion to the data collection phase of the research process, all data were integrated and collated.

#### **4.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

##### **4.4.1 Research participants and the sampling procedure**

Curtis, et al, (2000) explain that the drawing of samples in qualitative research is based on purposive or theoretical sampling criteria and not on theories of the statistical probability of selection. He further explains that samples are manageably small, are thoroughly studied, and that they typically draw extensive amounts of data. Generally, in qualitative research, a small distinct group of participants is studied in order to understand some phenomenon in depth (Hoberg, 1999). McMillan & Schumacher (2011) concur and state that qualitative researchers do in-depth studies of small samples of people who are nested in their own context.

McMillan & Schumacher (2010) define a population in research as the entire group of elements or cases that conform to specific criteria and to which the results of the research can be generalised. The group can be individuals, events or objects. This group can also be referred to as the universe or target population. 'Sample' is the term used to define the individuals or group of participants or subjects from whom

the data are collected: those who actually take part in the study. The nature of the sampling procedure determines the type of sampling the researcher chooses.

This research employed non-probability sampling which is predominantly used in qualitative research. This involved the researcher selecting individuals with knowledge of the phenomena under study or cases deemed to be potentially information rich (Mapp, 2008).

These were made of:

- ❖ Sixteen [16] Support teachers from eight [8] primary schools around Katima Mulilo, (two support teachers from each school)
- ❖ Fifty [50] Bachelor of Education student teachers in their second and third year, and
- ❖ Ten [10] lecturers from the Faculty of Education. The research sites were the University of Namibia, Katima Mulilo Campus and the eight primary schools.

The participating triad members comprising the university supervisor [US], student teacher [TT] and support teacher [ST] were selected based on their involvement in the teaching practicum during the period. This selection satisfies the requirements of criterion sampling as all the participants fell under the pre-determined standards. Criterion-based sampling demands that the researcher establishes the necessary criteria which guide the investigation and to select a sample that matches the set criteria (Goetz & Le Compte, 1984). The set criteria for this study were that the participants were required to be current student teachers, support teachers or

university supervisors actively involved in teaching practicum in Namibia's Zambezi Region.

All participating members were requested to assent to be a part of this inquiry. Only the university lecturers involved in teaching practice at Katima Mulilo Campus were invited to participate. None of the university supervisors declined the invitation to take part in interviews. Support teachers in schools were invited to take part through an invitation letter delivered by the researcher. Only those school teachers who were assigned to support practicum students were invited and their consent sought.

By virtue of his official responsibility as the Coordinator of School Based Studies at Katima Mulilo Campus, the researcher already had an up-to-date list of all the student teachers currently doing their teaching practica as well as their placements in support schools involved.

#### **4.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

Bogdan & Biklen (2006), define data analysis as a systematic process when the researcher searches and arranges the interview transcripts. Marshall & Rossman (2010) indicate that data analysis is about how to recover, manage and organise data orderly to ensure and enable easy retrieval. Strauss & Corbin (2008) argue that the processes of data collection and data analysis are tightly intertwined, and must be carried out alternatively since data analysis informs the sampling of data. During data analysis the researcher formulates potential explanations and searches

for potential patterns through a thorough examination of data throughout the process.

According to Bazeley (2009) as soon as data are collected, close reading and interpretation should be the starting points for analysis. Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) set out the steps in analysing data as; getting to know the data, focusing the analysis and categorising the data. The researcher organises the raw data logically in order to examine them holistically, as well as to find how the interpretation can be communicated. In order to help understand the phenomenon and present the new discoveries in a rich way, the researcher makes use of his field notes, direct quotations and other artefacts gathered during data collection phase.

Hatch (2002) presents a list of refined steps of data analysis in the form which many researchers have adopted as guidelines to enable them to make sense of which information should to include in the data analysis phase:

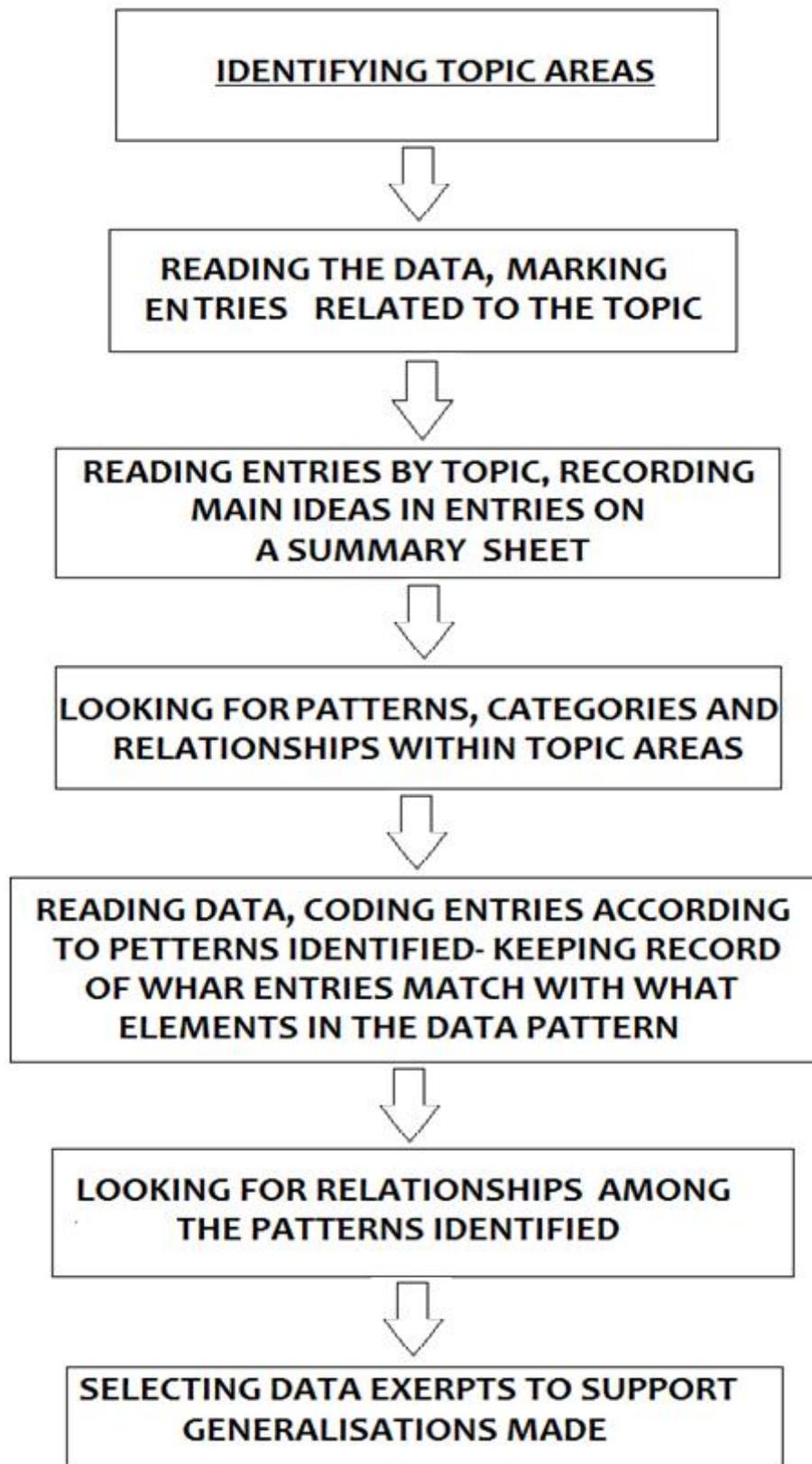


Fig. 3

Adapted from Hatch (2002:56)

#### **4.5.1 Analysis of the collected data**

In this study, transcripts were analysed in order to establish the perceptions of student teachers, support teachers and university supervisors vis-a-vis role parameters within the teaching practicum triad in Namibia's Zambezi Region. Data collected was analysed by organising, accounting for, and noting patterns and consistencies, at the same time observing similarities or differences among individual narratives. Each of the transcribed interviews was analysed and was followed by the processes of data reduction, data display and then by the drawing and verification of conclusions, (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The interview data reduction phase attempted to organise and simplify the data into manageable parts. This involved employing first-level and second-level coding techniques (Punch 1998). Kerlinger (1970) as quoted in Cohen, et al (2011) define coding as "the translation of question responses and respondent information to specific categories from the purpose of analysis".

The first-level coding examined small and discreet parts of the interview and identified the concepts that were mentioned therein. Interview transcripts were broken down into sentences or groups of sentences which were examined and assigned descriptive labels. Further simplification of data followed in the second-level coding by examining the first level codes and placing similarly coded units into categories which were assigned a conceptual label for the second-level (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Further simplification was done at the third-level coding where

similar conceptual categories were clustered and assigned a third –level conceptual label.

The data display phase was employed to map second- level and third-level categories on a chart in a simplified format to provide a visual representation of the relationships among the categories and to enable identification of emergent key themes from each interview. A further chart was drawn to map key themes which emerged from each interview transcript analysis to enable the researcher to make comparisons across cases.

Emerging themes were drawn and verified from the analysed interview transcripts and similarities and differences which emerged from the comparisons across cases were also drawn. At the end of the data collection and analysis processes, feedback from participants was solicited as regarded the emerging themes. A comparative technique to the phases of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification was used so as to reinforce the findings of the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## **4.5.2 Trustworthiness of the Research Findings**

### **4.5.2.1 Reliability and Validity**

Although some may argue that the term ‘reliability’ should not apply to qualitative research, there should be, nonetheless, some form of validation of qualitative data. Enhancing reliability requires a full description of the research process, so that,

given the same procedures in a compatible context, another independent researcher may replicate the findings (Schumacher & McMillan; 2011). Heckroodt (2002) concurs and explains that reliability should address whether two researchers independently studying the same situation or participants will reach the same findings. Lincoln & Guba (as cited in Cohen et al, 2011) prefer to apply such terms as 'credibility', 'confirmability', 'dependability', 'applicability', 'consistency', 'dependability', 'trustworthiness', 'transferability'. To enhance reliability, many researchers often adopt terms that they deem to be more appropriate to their concepts of reliability. Mc Millan & Schumacher (2011) define reliability in qualitative research as the consistency of the researcher in terms of data analysis, interactive approach and interpretation of participants' experiences.

In this study, reliability was enhanced by multiple factors including the research design, choice of research sites and contexts, the description of the researcher's role, and the strategies used for data collection and analysis. The researcher addressed aspects of reliability through a conscious consideration of what Denzin & Lincoln (as cited in Cohen et al, 2011) term 'stability of observations', 'parallel forms' and 'inter-rater reliability'. 'Stability of observation' refers to assessing whether the same observations and interpretations would be reached if the observation had been done at a different time and a different place. 'Parallel forms' refer to whether the same observation and interpretations would be reached if attention had been paid to other phenomena. 'Inter-rater reliability' is a consideration of whether a different observer with the same theoretical framework and observing exactly the same phenomena would reach the same interpretation.

McMillan & Schumacher (2011) perceive validity as the approximate descriptions or explanations of observed experiences or phenomena to what reality or trust is and the extent to which these descriptions are accurate. Neuman (2009) regards validity as the link between data and a construct since a researcher's analysis of data is taken to accurately represent that social world. In qualitative research validity is a progressive process which leads to the social change desired by the research. The present researcher makes an effort to achieve this through carefully listening to the participants as well as accurately presenting their views, and not his own feelings about the issues under research.

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Olsen (2007) argues that combining research data types, known as triangulation, helps to validate the claims that might arise from a research study. Mertens (1998) states that triangulation is a strategy of checking information collected from different

sources or by using different methods for consistency of evidence. The need for triangulation in qualitative research is to enhance the credibility and validity of the research results (Patton 2002:187). In this study, triangulation was applied by using multiple data collection methods such as interviews, observations and document analyses. The researcher combined these multiple methods and empirical materials in order to prevent intrinsic biases and the challenges that might arise from using a single method in this study. The researcher made use of voice recorders and other diverse data gathering and analysis methods in his quest to ensure valid and reliable findings. The validity and reliability of the findings are established whenever they draw the same or similar conclusions.

Haralambos et al, (2008) state that data can be valid if such data portray a true picture of what is being investigated. A statement which is valid provides a true measurement, description or explanation of what it purports to measure, describe or explain. The current study sought to enhance trustworthiness, as a measure of reliability, through various mechanisms such as triangulation and long term involvement with participants. Keeping long term contacts with participants enabled revisiting of perspectives. Triangulation, as conceived by Denzin (1970) is a combination of research methodologies and was used in this study to cross-check the validity of the data. The researcher selected trustworthy evidence for seeking patterns by assessing solicited versus unsolicited data, subtle influences from people around and the environment, specific against unspecific or vague statements. This involved an awareness of the researcher's assumptions, predispositions and influences.

#### **4.5.2.2 Ethical considerations**

Newby (2010) defines ethics as a “branch of philosophy that deals with what is right and wrong, good and bad. In a research context, ethics is concerned with rights and protection of respondents and of researchers, the misuse of data and accuracy, honour and responsibility in reporting results”. Reynolds (1979) (as cited in Robson, 2002) defines ethics as conforming to rules of conduct or abiding by a code of principles. Mertens (1998) explains the need for ethical guidelines in research processes because they insulate researchers against any potential atrocities and to guard against other harmful, yet less obvious effects of research.

The researcher made this study as transparent as possible by maintaining a close relationship with the participants. The objectives and purpose of the study, practical aspects of the research, time investment and usage of voice recorder, as well as possible inconveniences, the envisaged use of the results, were clearly made known to the participants (Schurink, 1998). All the participants were provided with the option of declining to participate in the study or to withdraw at any time if they felt uncomfortable. The researcher undertook to uphold his responsibility to guard and to protect the participants’ rights, privacy and integrity by honouring all his pledges and commitments throughout the research inquiry (Shaughnessey & Zechmeister, 1997).

Permission to carry out the study was secured from the relevant University of Namibia and Ministry of Education authorities with assurance that findings of the

research will be used appropriately and for the benefit of the wider society. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants whose informed consent to participate was sought. Further, participants were informed about why they were chosen and that their participation had to be voluntary and that they were at liberty to discontinue with the process should if they felt so. In light of the 'intrusive' nature of qualitative studies (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2006), participants were assured that confidentiality and anonymity of their identities would be respected.

#### **4.6 SYNTHESIS**

Chapter four presented a broad discussion of the roles and responsibilities of the researcher as well as the qualitative research approach. Diverse data collection strategies in qualitative research were discussed and these included participant observations, interviews, document analyses and focus group discussions. The rationale for using focus group discussions, interviews, observations and document analyses were described in detail, and their characteristics, advantages and disadvantages were fully explained. A brief discussion of quantitative research design, sampling strategies, selection of participants, data collection approaches, as well as data analysis, formed the structure of this chapter. In the present study, issues such as reliability of the research design, reliability of data collection strategies, and triangulation have been explained and discussed in detail. The chapter further dealt with ethical and quality considerations.

Qualitative research often deals with socially constructed truths which social constructivists strive to uncover and interpret, remembering that these constructions

are actually participants' world views and not of the researcher (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). The significance of a research design is its ability to direct the decisions and the strategies that a researcher uses in their study, (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The choice of research methodology for a particular enquiry always takes into consideration the nature of the data related to the phenomenon which is, therefore, the determinant of the research methodology to be adopted (Leedy (2006). The objectives and all technicalities of the study such as time investment, voice recording, as well as possible inconveniences and the envisaged of the results were made known to the participants (Schurink, 1998). All the participants were informed of the option of declining to participate in the study or to withdraw at any time if they felt uncomfortable.

*The next chapter will deal with the presentation of the data gathered as well as the analysis of the major findings. All the data collected were arranged and organised into specific categories required to find answers to the research questions.*

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapter presented a discussion of the qualitative research process that was adopted in this research, data generation methods and the researcher's role. The methods of data collection in qualitative research discussed were interviews, participant observation and focus group discussions. The chapter also presented a detailed explanation of the rationale for using the said processes, their characteristics as well as their merits and demerits. Participant observation was proved to be particularly useful for getting a deep understanding of the participants' physical, social, cultural and economic situations. Chapter four also discussed the design of the current study, the selection of participants, data collection; presentation, analysis, as well as issues of reliability and validity. Chapter four further discussed issues of reliability and validity as well as ethics pertaining to participants' confidentiality.

This penultimate chapter deals with the presentation of the data gathered as well as the analysis of the major findings. All the data collected were arranged and organised into specific categories required to find answers to the research questions. Patterns and themes that emerged from the data categories were matched with the conceptual framework and research questions for the purposes of analysis, interpretation and the drawing of inferences. The chapter presents the findings and conclusions in line with the stated research questions.

The researcher sought permission to interview the participants at venues that were convenient to them and to carry out focus group discussions. The participants were enlightened about the purpose of the interviews and observations. It was also explained to them that confidentiality and anonymity of information and their identities was a priority. It was also made abundantly clear to the participants that they had the right to withdraw their participation if need be. The participants were made to feel at ease during the interviews. In order to illustrate and emphasize the themes and categories, some of the statements and remarks by the participants are quoted verbatim.

## **5.2 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **5.2.1. How do trainee teachers perceive their roles, those of their lecturers and support teachers during teaching practica?**

Student teachers' responses and narratives made it clearly evident that they had already developed some perceptions about the different triad members' roles and responsibilities during their practicum experience. They commented and generally concurred on nearly all their accounts concerning the roles and responsibilities that university supervisors [US's], support teachers [ST's] and student teachers [TT's] play during the practicum.

Student teachers' were generally more than keen to explain and qualify the specific circumstances behind their responses. Student teachers fully understood that

lesson planning and preparation start well ahead of the actual classroom teaching. Poor or lack of planning is a sure catalyst for a disastrous lesson. More often than not, student teachers attribute classroom disorganization or lack of continuity to poor preparation. Student teachers were equally aware that no two lessons are alike; therefore each lesson demanded its own preparations.

*We cannot run away from preparation. If you do not sufficiently prepare, you are going to perform dismally. Taking time every evening to research and prepare your lesson plans pays off during the actual presentation of your lesson. When it is now time for class, you will feel confident as you stroll into the classroom with everything in place, (Student teacher, Chendo).*

*We prepare our lesson plans for the following day in the evening of the previous day. Many factors that may affect the lesson's outcome are at play, such as the type of learners you have in that class, the time of day, how well you were prepared and many more, (Student teacher, Samupwa).*

*Classroom situations are never the same. We should give some consideration for the individual differences because every situation is different, every class is different, (Student teacher, Simonda)*

In response to the question on practicum assessment criteria, all student teachers revealed that they had been observed by a supervisor as part of summative assessment. Slightly less than half of the students experienced formative support towards summative assessment in the form of a teaching portfolio and self-evaluation.

They noted the ability of student teachers to accurately pinpoint areas for improvement as imperative. The student teachers indicated that in addition to

correctly identifying their teaching deficient areas, their roles included devising improvement strategies before their next student teaching observation. They felt more at ease and less threatened when reflecting on their own shortfalls or deficiencies and suggesting areas for improvement. When asked to reflect on their own performance during the observed lesson, they highly inflated their performance in the mistaken belief that the university supervisor would be influenced when awarding them their final grade. Even when their performances were obviously dismal, student teachers would gloss over their shortfalls and grade themselves very highly.

*One of the most important roles that I play during my own practical teaching experience is that of assessment. I have to be honest in self-evaluation and my support teacher or university supervisor can easily see through my lies if I try to gloss over what was obviously a disastrous lesson. Self-reflection is an area that is also assessed and if I am not critical of what went wrong, things may go against me and affect my final grade, (Student, Simwanza).*

*It is my role or responsibility as a student teacher to present a critical self-evaluation. Self-evaluation is a tool that gives you an opportunity to gauge your own growth and development as a teacher. You can analyse what went well during your lesson or what did not go well. You can identify all the aspects that need improvement in future lessons. You can then make a conscious effort to correct all those things. I am sure he support teacher or university supervisor can give you credit for being able to identify you own mistakes, (Student, Kabuku).*

Nchindo (student) lamented the frustrating delays that they experienced before post lesson conferences were conducted, which sometimes came after some days or even weeks. This made it very difficult, if not impossible, to recall all the details of the lesson in question. This delay, therefore, denied them the opportunity to make meaningful self-reflection and get effective feedback. The student felt that their US's

should pay them early visits during the practicum phases and not wait for the final days when there is little or no time to make improvements.

*You know how frustrating it is to teach what you think was the best lesson of your life but you go for days without getting any feedback, let alone your grade from the lecturer. Such things can even happen even if the lesson you taught was the last before break or before lunch. The supervisor will always find an explanation why the post lesson discussion has to be done at a later date. It would be understandable if he/she was having another lesson after mine. Some lecturers seem to hate this conference. You know, students deserve to have their feedback immediately after the lesson when everything that went on during the lesson is still fresh in their minds, (Student, Chendo).*

A couple of student teachers strongly criticised those supervisors who were rarely punctual for their appointments. Some would show up when lessons were already under way. This deprived the students their right to have a fair and all-round assessment of their entire lessons.

Some student teachers emphasised that working on their weaknesses by implementing their supervisors' constructive criticisms and suggestions helps them to improve in subsequent observations. However, some student teachers indicated that a few of their university supervisors always seemed to be in a hurry to get through the whole process and that they apparently lacked enough time for extended visits. They indicated that some of the post lesson conferences were hurried or were too short for any meaningful feedback. Fortunately, most university supervisors went an extra mile to ensure that their students got a constructive feedback. Some even sacrificed their lunch time or an hour or two after formal hours to confer with their students and provide them with feedback.

*My university supervisors took the time after assessment and dedicated up to an hour to discuss my lesson with me. We would touch on quite a wide range of aspects from my preparation, lesson presentation, teaching media, communication and appearance. These feedbacks are very useful because they give us some direction as we try to improve. I was very impressed with these discussions, (student teacher, Chombo)*

The majority of students indicated that they preferred to be notified and warned in advance about the date and time of the university supervisor's pending visit. When supervisors made such appointments, it then becomes incumbent upon them to be on time. Student teachers noted that late supervisors are likely to miss what could be the best part of the student's lesson. Some students still felt aggrieved even when supervisors justified their late coming with an explanation that student teachers should always expect and be prepared for such eventualities, including any unforeseen interruptions. Students felt short-changed by such behaviours from supervisors.

*During my Phase 2 last year, I felt hurt when my supervisor did not show up when they said they would be there. After calling them or sending an sms, they would give me what I think is a lame excuse that they were caught up with another student at a different school and that they would visit me at another time. This year in Phase 3, I was quite impressed because my supervisor came right on schedule. In fact he arrived 10 to 15 minutes before the start of my lesson. This gave me enough time to shake off some nervous feeling of uneasiness, (Student, Simonda)*

*I have a mixed feeling about getting a notification or not. On one hand it can be a good thing to know when they are coming because you can psychologically prepare yourself for their visit. On the other hand it can be a bad thing because some supervisors do not honour their appointments for various reasons. If they do not show up, you are forced to hold your class at ransom. This means that the learners will get that best part of the lesson only when the supervisor shows up, (Student teacher, Ntesa)*

Chendo (student) was impressed with his university supervisor who would ask if a particular day was an ideal day to visit. He appreciated that the supervisor would give him the opportunity to suggest the most appropriate time to be observed. He believed that this boosted his self-confidence and psychologically prepares him for the observation.

Students Mahoto, Mwala and Chizabulyo indicated that they did not mind whether they were pre-informed or not about when their supervisors planned to visit them. They argued that if the students knew about when their supervisors would be coming, they would naturally enhance their teaching performance, hence providing a deceptively superior quality performance which could be a far cry from their regular performances. Student Mwala explained that supervisors would get an honest and more credible picture of the student teacher's everyday performance when the visits were unannounced.

*My Phase 2 supervisor asked me what day I would want her to visit and I indicated to her that she could come whenever she wanted to. The same happened during Phase 3 when my new supervisor called me so that I should give him my timetable, which I did. After a day he sent me back the time table after plotting the periods that he would come for assessment. In my opinion, this encourages students to redirect all their energy towards these lessons only, at the expense of the other lessons which are not going to be assessed. I think being unaware of which lessons are to be assessed keeps us always on our toes, (Student teacher, Mahoto).*

Berrio and Sisamu (students) were against being told in advance when their university supervisors intended to visit them for assessment.

*Some university supervisors do not bother to show up on the appointed time; they make you to wait for them for ever. All the while, the learners are all*

*held up because you want to demonstrate to the supervisor the best part of your lesson, (Student teacher, Puteho)*

During focus group discussions, some student teachers explained that the presence of university supervisors in their classes presented a negligible difference in the way and manner in which they handled their lessons. Others indicated that they felt significantly intimidated by the supervisors' presence which made them nervous.

Quite a number of student teachers indicated that the observation instrument was vague and at times convoluted. They felt that the wording on the documents was rather too winding when, in fact, the message could be said in fewer and clearer words. Comments from Mabengano and Lyamine [TT's] were to the effect that there were even some supervisors who found the documents difficult to understand as evidenced by their starkly different interpretations and applications thereof.

### **5.2.2 Recording lessons**

Most student teachers regarded video recording of their lessons as a positive and vital developmental tool for their teaching. Playing back the recorded lessons offered them the opportunity to self-evaluate and vividly reflect on their lessons' weak and strong points. This is in concordance with Nolan & Hoover's (2004) explanation that recorded lessons are a source of concentrated, in-depth and uninterrupted evidence of the interactions with learners as well as learners' interactions with each other. Watching their own teaching behaviour provides them

with a basis for improvement and growth. They may as well refine their teaching styles and methods. However some of the students pointed at the technical challenges of setting up the recording equipment and the resultant distractive effects on the learners. When learners realise that they are being observed, let alone recorded, they tend to change their behaviour.

*Recording one's lessons is one of the most effective strategies for reflection because you can sit and watch your performance over and over again. You can see some things that you cannot practically see during the actual presentation. It works perfectly well if you use a list of specific aspects that we were to look at during our video, (Student teacher, Chendo).*

*Watching your-self teaching on video is like seeing someone else teaching. You have an advantage of watching without being restricted to a single dimensional view that you always have. A video recording offers you multi-dimensional views where you can watch your learners, yourself, and the surroundings. You can replay certain sections many times. This gives you the opportunity to think about various alternative ways in which you could present your lesson, (Student teacher, Linda).*

*Video recording my lessons offers me the opportunity for critical self - reflection, I can see if I was covering all corners of my class or if I was concentrating on a few sections. After that realisation, I can take corrective measures for future lessons. I can also trace my movements and see if I was always giving my back to my learners and giving them room for mischief, or if I was unnecessarily pacing up and down. I can also pick some irritating mannerisms which you otherwise cannot pick, (Student teacher, Tomola).*

### **5.2.3 Portfolio Development**

Almost all the students mentioned portfolio development as one of their major roles during teaching practice. However, some could not give plausible justifications for having a portfolio, in addition to the School Based Studies file. This is despite the fact that the two files have technically different purposes.

According to UNAM's guide to portfolio development, a portfolio is: 'a collection of materials that depict the nature and quality of teaching and students' learning'. In short a portfolio is as collection of something of value, worth or importance. A teaching portfolio describes and documents multiple aspects of your teaching ability. A portfolio sets to answer about:

- How one teaches
- What they teach
- Why they teach what they teach and
- What evidence is there that learning is taking place.

The process of portfolio development involves students in collecting items or artefacts which they wish to include in their portfolio, selecting items/artefacts from those collected. In selecting items for in the portfolio, students are urged to bear in mind that the items selected for inclusion should be accompanied with a clear identification of contextual explanation, and reflective commentaries that examine the learning which is documented in the portfolio. They should place the items /artefacts which they have selected in the file. For example, they need to select only few lesson plans from the many lesson plans which they produced. The rest will remain filed in the SBS file for record keeping.

The portfolio file serves the following:

1. It is personal, professional and academic development, change, and the process of that change.
2. It makes it easier for self-assessment, i.e. evaluating themselves, their assignments, beliefs, values and practice.

Finally, students have to reflect on each of the selected items/artefacts. The process involves the following three levels of reflection:

1. What the students actually did: (teaching, reading, listening and discussing, presentation, writing)
2. What the students think of what they did, (their learning experiences, the strengths and weaknesses)
3. What they conclude from the learning (what would you like to do about it as a result of learning experiences).

Some students admitted that it proved quite problematic when they procrastinated and started to develop their portfolios during the final weeks of their SBS period. This presented them with undue pressure and stress since they were forced to work in retrospect. This task was coupled with other competing demands from the university.

*We were given the submission due date for our portfolios before we went out for SBS. It was only during the second last week of our SBS that I started putting my portfolio together. I had collected all the materials and items that were required but they were not properly arranged in the portfolio file. I realised that I had made a mistake of not beginning earlier because it took me most of my valuable time to compile the file. I did not know that compiling the portfolio was so demanding, but our SBS Coordinator had warned us, (Student teacher, Samupwa).*

#### **5.2.4 The Roles of the ST as perceived by the student teacher**

The success in teaching practica is not contingent upon the school where a student teacher is deployed to teach, or the subject they are assigned to teach, but the

most critical factor is the relationship between the student teacher and their support teacher (Campbell & Williamson, 1973). Differences in personalities and philosophies between student teachers and their support teachers do not auger well for their working relationship and such differences have a real potential to negatively impact on the students' performance. Student teachers clearly indicated that they were quite cognizant of the need to build and maintain a positive relationship with their support teachers. They knew how vital it was to listen and heed the advice they were offered by their of the support teachers.

*My overall performance is likely to suffer a great deal if I do not get along well with my support teacher. As a student on attachment, I am expected to spend most of my teaching practice time in their classroom. I can't be comfortable going there if our relationship is lukewarm at best. But I think as the more senior between us, the support teacher should take the lead in building a positive working environment and try to guide me whenever I go astray. I feel it is their duty to mould me into a professional. I admit that I also have a big part to play in building this relationship. (Student teacher, Chendo)*

The majority of student teachers decried the lack of sufficient communication among the triad of the student teacher, the university supervisor and the support teacher. Tomola, Simasiku, Simonda and others all suggested that university supervisors should cooperate more closely, and that supervisors should be the ones to take the initiative to close the ranks with the support teachers. University supervisors would do well to support their student teachers in situ more often, (Beck & Kosnik, 2000). Some student teachers complained that did not get opportunity to relate their inner concerns to their supervisors. It would be much better if they could ask questions, pour out and even get a feeling that the supervisor is there for them.

*Even the slightest hint that my support teacher and my supervisor always communicate about their collective expectations from me is enough motivation to propel me forward. It is a wonderful feeling to see that the supervisor and the support teacher are speaking the same language,*  
(student teacher, Ntesa)

Liebhaber (2000) recommends that ST's ought to orient student teachers at the outset of their practicum about specific goals and expectations, which would then be periodically reviewed to make any necessary adjustments in order to assist the student teacher stay on course. Some student teachers argued that support teachers have a responsibility of providing them with all the requisite materials and information for teaching practice, as well as involving them in planning. This could be achieved through collaborative lesson preparation, regular lesson observations, consistently holding pre- and post-lesson conferences and by providing timely feedback throughout the practicum experience, (Grimmett & Ratzlaff, 1986).

Most student teachers noted that support teachers are attached to them much more than do university supervisors. Due to that, they have much more opportunities to observe and assess the student teacher's professional performances in and out of the classroom, but apparently their input towards the TT's final assessment grades is inconsequential. Student teachers emphasized that support teachers' input into the student teachers' assessments should have much more impact on the students' final grade than what currently prevails.

Chendo (student) sees the role of the support teacher as that of a facilitator or an overseer during the student teacher's professional development. The support

teachers should lay a solid foundation for the student, and prepare and mould them for the professional world ahead of them. Some TT's were wary of the 'autonomy' they were allowed by some support teachers during the practicum period before they are sufficiently competent for that role. A few TT's felt that that autonomy is justifiable in preparing students for the real world of work and that it should be part of the teaching practicum. Student teachers greatly valued support teachers' positive reinforcement on content, methodology and management and not just criticism regarding their performance.

#### **5.2.5 The roles and responsibilities of the University Supervisor as perceived by the student teacher**

Student teachers who were asked about the role of their university supervisor indicated that the US's only visited them for assessments, once in each of their two major teaching subjects. Supervisors did not take any part in the day to day activities of the student teacher's practicum besides these assessment visits which were wide and far apart. TT's complained that they did not benefit from any form of practical teaching support from university supervisors prior to these assessments. Those asked were unanimous that university supervisors' roles should go beyond just assessments.

*My supervisor visited me only to assess me in my final week of School Based Studies. I did not have enough time with him to air my problems or tell him about the challenges that we students face in the schools. He was only interested in getting his part of assessing me done. I found the support*

*teacher more helpful than my university lecturer during the teaching practice,*  
(student teacher, Sipapela)

After every observed lesson, the university supervisor or support teacher is expected to conduct a post observation conference with the student teacher in order to share and discuss the overall effectiveness of the lesson and come to some consensus on future teaching goals (Nolan & Hoover, 2004). Post lesson conferences have the potential to provide immediate and constructive feedback which is critical to enable the student teacher to retain and nurture effective teaching behaviours (Pellet et. al.: 1999). Nolan & Hoover (2004) regard post observation conferences as a great opportunity for student teachers to objectively and accurately reflect on the lesson, with the assistance of their supervisors. They indicated that they preferred to confer with their supervisors when they could still freshly recall events. At the University of Namibia, university supervisors are expected to evaluate at least two lessons per phase as part of formal School Based Assessments. At the discretion of specific university supervisors or as directed by the SBS Coordinator, additional observations may be conducted. Student teachers expressed that two assessments were inadequate, given that both were coming from the university supervisor and none from the support teacher who, in fact, is the one with whom they spend more time during the practicum. A significant number of the student teachers bemoaned the lack of in-situ supervisory support from university supervisors. The university supervisor only pitches up to assess and grade them. The student teachers demanded more contact with their university supervisors.

Lyamine expressed a strong view about the supervisors' roles by referring to an apparent the 'lack of visibility from the supervisor'. She seemed disturbed that there was almost no meaningful contact between supervisors and support teachers. Conferences between the two, if any, were often brief and of no depth. University supervisors have this onus to avail themselves whenever the students need them, according to Simasiku, Mubita and Siambango. They all saw no logical excuse why contact between them and their supervisors should be so limited.

*My lecturer made no effort to know who my support teacher was. How would he then know my weaknesses or my strengths if he did not communicate with my support teacher? The lecturer never worked with my support teacher. My support teacher also had no idea who my university supervisor was. The supervisor only came twice to assess me in my final year. In my third year I was only assessed once, and that was it. (Student teacher, Likomokisa)*

Chombo (Student) explained that exposure through lesson observations, followed by feedback, before assessments is vital for student teachers' improvement. Student teachers should be afforded unlimited opportunities to receive feedback that enables self-reflection and improvement.

*The more we are observed and given feedback the better for us because we discover more things about ourselves and our teaching styles each time we are observed. We can improve on these things in the future. So I strongly feel that the number of observations before assessments has a great influence on our performance. Post-lesson discussions with supervisors might help a great deal because I will have an opportunity to implement whatever we discuss when I teach in future lessons. I therefore call for more observations and one-on-one discussions with supervisors, (Student teacher, Chombo)*

Students indicated that supervisors should make an effort to create time to confer with their students before and after their lessons. Whenever the teachers come for assessment, supervisor always seem to be in a hurry to leave. They usually have little or no time for discussions. Students identified this as a crucial setback for them. They explained that they would benefit much more if they were observed more often, if they spent more time with their supervisors, and if they received more support through pre- and post-lesson conferences.

*For our development and growth as student teachers, supervisors need to be more prepared to accommodate us and mentor us in all aspects of the teaching profession, especially during the SBS period. The more we spend time with our lecturers the more we will benefit from them. I was worried when my Phase 3 lecturer informed me that he had twelve students under his supervision during this phase. This was over and above his lecturing duties at the campus. I just felt that this was a bit too much for one lecturer. This explains why we do not get the necessary individual feedback, (Student teacher, Chendo)*

*Teaching is not a simple matter where you just do what you think is right way. You need to have someone to guide you through the methodologies over a period of time until you master the trade. The supervisors from the university have this daunting responsibility to take us through these teaching strategies and skills. But the time that we have with them is so short that we hardly learn much from them. I wish something could be done to increase the time that we spend with our lecturers during SBS, (Student teacher, Simwanza).*

#### **5.2.6 How do support-teachers perceive the preparedness of trainee teachers before receiving them for teaching practica at their schools?**

Participating ST's shared their opinions and perceptions about the preparedness of student teachers during the teaching practicum. They freely opened up and were sincere in their descriptions and explanations of their situations during the practicum. It was very gratifying, throughout the in-depth interviews, to get a glimpse of support teachers' feelings about the quality of preparedness of the

students which they were asked to work with. Some support teachers claimed that the practicum schools and the university faculty were virtually living in totally different worlds. This meant that support teachers would teach the student teachers about the real school teaching, which would be a totally divorced version from what they are taught at the university.

A general concern was aired by support teachers that the university did not bother to enlist their input about the roles they [ST] should play during the practicum. The university took it upon itself and decided to design and implement the SBS programme without input from the school. This had the undesirable effect of schools speaking a totally different language from the university, and yet the ultimate objective was supposed to be one and the same, and more crucially, the trainee was one and same.

*University methodologies are rather too theoretical, so we, support teachers, tend to build up everything that the students need to know from square number one. Being the people on the ground, we obviously look at what the trainee is required to know and do. We have to re-design their teaching practice into a simpler format. We take them through the planning process and what we expect from them. We also introduce them to what we expect during lesson delivery and reflective processes. It is my noble opinion that all these processes should be carried out by their lecturers. The lecturers need to come to the schools and spend some time with their students, demonstrating the practical side of the theory they acquired at university. This is the only way the students can grasp exactly what the university wants from them. Leaving it all to the schools has many problems, ([ST], Simataa)*

*The university has a responsibility to bring us trainees who know what they want from us. The university should know that it is not our role to take these trainees through the very basic motions of teaching. It is such a mammoth task for us to shoulder all their responsibilities in addition to our teaching loads at school. When we discuss with these students, you can tell that they*

*are ill-prepared for teaching. Some lack the commitment that comes with this profession. In as much as we are ready to help motivate these student teachers, I feel the university should do more to orient these students ([ST], Mbala)*

### **5.2.7 Support teachers' perceptions of the roles of Student teachers**

Mwala, Lumba and Sitali [ST's] indicated that they believe that one of the TT's foremost responsibilities was to be able to religiously abide by the requirements of both the university and the school. They all said that they were fully aware of the university requirements as stated in the students' SBS manuals from the university. They often felt confused when some TT's clearly misrepresented some of the stated requirements. Some TT's would claim that their lecturers demand that the students should do certain things as per their instructions, not as stated in the manual.

ST's Mwala and Ntesa expressed virtually opposite views on student teachers' roles and responsibilities related to their assessment and during SBS. Mwala contended that the onus rested on the student teacher to solicit a slot or time for feedback from their ST's. Ntesa felt differently. He opined that it is the ST's role to elicit the student teacher's reflective input.

*I think student teachers have to be organised and create a platform from which they can reflect without the pressure that arises after being summoned to a meeting by an ST or US. When they invite me to such a meeting, it indicates that they are now ready and they have mustered enough courage and confidence to talk about themselves, their experiences, and their weaknesses and strengths during the lesson, ([ST] Mwala).*

*Most people are naturally bad self-monitors and, therefore, they need other people to assist them to show them how they are doing. On a continuous basis, they have to point out to them that this is wrong, this is correct. We can't expect our student teachers to be exceptional; they are human and they definitely need us to guide them. Students are usually not at ease discussing with us. They are more comfortable when they are on their own, so expecting them to take the lead and initiate conferences is asking for too much, ([ST] Ntesa).*

ST's explained that the roles of students are multi-faceted. These included;

- carrying out assignments set by both the university and the support schools,
- lesson preparation,
- compiling their portfolios,
- teaching learners, and
- performing any other tasks assigned by the ST and/or the school Principal.

Some ST's noted that over and above the listed roles, it was of immense benefit for the students to open up specific communication channels with their ST's and US's. They argued students are the ones best positioned to determine exactly when they need assistance. They further claimed that this also helps the introvert student teachers to open up and talk about their teaching experiences.

Nchindo [ST] affirms that it is indeed the TT's responsibility to initiate dialogue with the ST. This is a way to express their desire to improve. He explains how some of his students would become defensive whenever he tried to intervene but such students remained cocooned in their own territories without seeking an audience with him. He added that it was very difficult to deal with such characters.

*TT's also having the responsibility to open up communication avenues with their supervisor and their ST's. When they do that they will feel more confident and comfortable dealing with them on personal and professional terms. Hopefully the journals help with that, but definitely they are responsible for communicating as well as proving themselves during that time, ([ST], Lumba).*

*More than once, I had a student teacher who could just let things boil inside her. She expected me to always tell her what she had to do and when to do it. She did not make any effort to try and share whatever plans she had. I could hardly tell if they had any plan at all because they would take whatever I suggested without question. In spite of my insistence that they open up with me, I saw no improvement, ([ST], Mwangala).*

All participating ST's in this study explained that they usually assisted their students to self-reflect by asking them what they felt about their performance. The objective is to allow the student teachers to identify their own strengths or weaknesses. It is paramount, at an early stage in their training, that student teachers are encouraged to build confidence in their teaching without feeling intimidated to discuss their weaknesses. Students tend to be defensive and refuse to accept that their performance can only improve if they own up and admit that they made mistakes; they can improve from those mistakes.

*I endeavour to get some critical self-reflection out of my students. I do not pose leading question, but rather, I use open-ended questions to give them enough room to look at themselves critically. However, it also depends on the type of student I am dealing with at a given time. Some are such introverts you hardly get anything out of them without leading cues, but for the extroverts; they can go on and on, ([ST], Simataa)*

On the flip side, some ST's indicated that some student teachers can also be superficially too critical of themselves during the post-lesson discussions.

*I have come across a good number of such students and I have given them room for them to say as much as they wanted. When I realise that they are getting over the limit by too critical of themselves, I would advise them that being too hard on themselves is detrimental to their professional well-being. That has a trickle-down effect to the way they will treat their own learners. My advice to them is always to lighten up and be as objective as possible, ([ST] Mbala).*

ST's strongly felt there was a need for TT's, ST's and US's to hold combined conferences regularly. They indicated that there was much better communication when all of the triad members were collectively involved. These triad conferences brought lighter moments to conversation, a relieving atmosphere, different from the rigid lectures at university.

*I go for a certain way the three of us can sit down and discuss, a way that gives each of us a chance to go over the observed lesson. This could be attainable if ST's could also be involved in assessing the students as well. . (ST, Mbala)*

### **5.2.8 How Support teachers perceive their roles in the triad**

ST's believed that they were much better positioned than US's to provide a much more holistic evaluation of TT's than US's. They argued that they had much more contact with the TT and could do more justice to the TT's practicum assessment; much more than they got from just a single assessment visit that they were paid by the supervisor.

*ST's spend a great amount of time with TT's. We do share a lot of things in our discussions and whenever we have a difference, we know how we can reach a compromise. TT's see their supervisors only once in a while and*

*they make sure that they have to do extremely well; there is no room for compromises. After that they slacken again. Students seem to have convinced themselves that the supervisors are the ones who matter, not the ST. I prefer a situation where the ST and the US cooperate and speak the same language or share opinions about the TT, ([ST], Sitali)*

*Honestly speaking, there isn't much we can do about it. We really feel powerless, if not useless, as far as this is concerned. As a support teacher, my contribution to the final decision is not at all considered; it is entirely the supervisor's that counts. We just don't have as much influence as we desire despite that we do a lot of work with and for the students, ([ST], Lumba)*

*As the mentor right on the ground, I'd like to see a situation where I have more say in the student's evaluation and other areas of the student's life when they are under my charge. We share this same view with the other teachers that I have talked to. Surely we cannot be mere baby sitters who are incapable of making any meaningful contribution besides watching over. There are so many things that the supervisors do not see because they are not here. ST's are always here with the students. We definitely feel that we should be involved more, ([ST], Mbala)*

Although most of the ST's felt that they expected to be given more influence in determining the TT's final assessment, they never-the-less admitted that some among them could not be credible assessors. Some ST's are very well known to take students as temporary replacements or relief teachers. They tend to spend most of their time away from their classes because the TT would be there to take charge of the classes.

*In my view, I think the ST and US should be accorded the same weight. ST's witness everything that takes place at school when they are all alone with the TT. Since some TT's may not be showing their true colours during the supervisor's visit, it is the ST who should fill in that part. While I concede that the supervisor may be better equipped with the knowledge and expertise than us, I still feel that it is us who are always with the students, ([ST], Ntesa)*

A few ST's explained that one of the roles was that of a facilitator. This role entailed guiding the TT, assisting them to abide by the school and university guidelines in their teaching. All but one listed student assessment as an envisaged role. The odd voice out-rightly declared that he did not want to have anything to do with the final assessment of the student.

*Our role is just to assist the student. This means working with the university in implementing their programmes and getting the students to improve in whatever the university assigns them to do. We do not have to give the students any grade; it is not for us, is it? Our responsibility is that of giving support and suggesting new ideas as well as giving them direction, not to grade, their supervisor has to that, ([ST], Lumba)*

All the participating ST's mentioned pre and post lesson discussions with students as part of their responsibilities. This is one of the ways they said they could use to assist the students to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses. When the students fail to ascertain the desired changes in their teaching techniques, it became the ST's role to point these out. The ST's agreed that they should provide not only an enabling environment for self-reflection, but also honest feedback to help the TT to develop.

Accountability was listed as one of the ST's roles by Mwangala [ST]. Mwangala explained that this is a responsibility that most ST's take for granted. The ST should not leave the TT alone with the full responsibilities of teaching their classes. They should make an effort to attend all the classes that the TT is teaching so that they can provide supervision and assist whenever need arises. Some ST's would argue

that giving the TT's a full responsibility of class teaching is a sure way of giving them the practicum experience they need. Mwangala and Lubinda [ST's] questioned how an absentee ST's would know and pick up the challenges that the students might have when they are left alone.

The majority of the participating ST's perceived their roles as being responsible for facilitating triad conferences, observing and supporting TT's and providing feedback, and assisting the TT's to self-evaluate. The ST's are responsible for facilitating enabling environments for discussions that allow TT's to freely disclose their own strengths and weaknesses. The ST's are the liaisons between the US and the TT.

### **5.2.9 What are the roles of the University Supervisors in the triad**

All the participating ST's bemoaned the overrated role placed upon university supervisors, especially when it came to student assessments. Only the US's have the opportunity to assess the student teacher during the practicum. This is in spite of the fact that it is the ST who spends most of the time with the student teacher, grooming and guiding them. Mbala [ST] passionately believes that the US should have only a minimal input into the student teacher's final assessment grade. He maintains that it is grossly unfair that the student teacher's overall performance should not be determined by only one or two assessments by the US.

*Personally, I strongly feel that visiting lecturers should not, really, have much to do in giving the student teacher's final grade. Their role during TP should*

*only be limited to advising the ST in schools on best practices during SU/ST conferences. Other than that, I think they should just remain at their work stations, ([ST] Lubinda).*

*I just don't get it! They come in on an appointed day and time, into an already planned lesson. Next they sit at the back of the classroom and demand the student's teaching file. We know the student's day to day conduct, but he doesn't. The student does not usually do his work on time. But today, he made sure everything is perfect and impressive because he knows that he will be assessed. How valid is that? ([ST], Simataa)*

Most ST's recommended that SU's need to pay more visits to the schools and spend more time there so as to render support to their students. These visits should provide opportunities for the triad to meet and confer more often. This is good for communication and confidence-building on the part of the student.

*I don't think it is fair for the student teacher to spend all the time under the tutelage of an ST who will not be part of the assessment process. The lecturer will simply come on that day to grade them. If I were to suggest a ratio for the assessment criteria, I think the ST in the schools should contribute 80% towards the assessment grade to the SU's 20%. (ST, Lisho).*

*There are lots of things that should happen at the schools that are not happening. For example, supervisors should spend some time with us and together, we can critically look at what we have observed: the positives, the negatives, and the way forward. This is not taking place at all. Why? The US's are not keen to have this, or they don't have the time. Each time they come for their students they already feel like leaving, they are always on the move. ([ST], Ntesa)*

Lubinda and Mwangala [ST'] regarded the role of the US as that of a gatekeeper who ensures that the TT is in check. Lubinda amplified this by saying the US's role was to confirm that TT's were given sufficient teaching opportunities and ensure that they partake in co- and extracurricular activities. Mwangala perceived the US's role as that of an overseer, waiting to solve any problems that the TT encounters.

He further regards the role of the US as that of liaison between the university and the school.

*The US is the link between the university and the school. This is the person to whom the TT goes when he/she having any problem. TT's are usually young and need someone from the university, someone who can listen to them and solve their problems, be they social or professional, ([ST], Mwangala).*

The ST's listed quite a substantial list of their perceived roles and responsibilities towards TT's wellbeing during the practicum. Top among them were helping TT's to prepare and plan for their lessons, guiding and supporting TT's through observations, providing feedback to TT's through post-lesson discussions, occasionally evaluating students and, most importantly, being accountable mentors.

However, most ST's were quite unhappy with the amount, if not lack, of communication between them and the SU's. However, they did not lay much blame on themselves, but on the university for failing, or for lacking the will, to communicate with them. They justifiably felt that since they are the people always on the ground with the TT's, they are not getting fair treatment from the university in as far as TTs' assessments are concerned. They strongly implored the university to accord them the recognition they felt they so much deserved.

#### **5.2.10 ST's perception of the preparedness and readiness of trainee teachers for teaching practica**

In spite of a few dissenting voices, most of the participating ST's were generally satisfied with the quality of the preparedness of TT's for SBS. They felt that the

university had done everything in its power to prepare their students for SBS. Most indicated their willingness and readiness to delegate greater responsibilities to TT's who were prepared and keen on learning. They admitted that there are always exceptions; there is always that proverbial 'rotten apple'.

*I am quite pleased with what the university did to prepare their students. The university programmes showed what the students are supposed to do. Everything is very well laid out in their SBS manual. I am convinced that the faculty up is doing its best preparing these students. The tasks that these students bring are well structured to cover the time they are with us; we do not have to labour too much with them, ([ST] Mbala).*

*I don't have a problem with the students' readiness to teach. I have always been given students who were very well prepared for their work. In addition, they are eager to work with very minimal supervision. I don't have to be there all the time. They know why they are on SBS, ([ST] Simataa).*

*I am not so sure if the university is doing enough. More often than not, I have had to teach some TT's everything, from lesson preparation, lesson delivery, evaluation, and you name it. What do they learn at university? We are virtually the teacher educators ourselves. There are times when I have to re-teach the lessons they have taught, ([ST] Sitali).*

STs played a crucial role owing to their critical presence in the TT's life during the teaching practicum and collegial relationship which they develop with the US. It, however, places the triad in an awkward situation that despite the ST being the more influential person than the SU, it is the latter who continues to wield more sway in determining the TT's final SBS assessment grade. STs are understandably frustrated by this lack of recognition by the university. Ideally, they believe that they deserve a more influential role than what currently obtains.

### 5.2.11 How University Supervisor's perceive their role in SBS

The US's were quite articulate about their roles and responsibilities during SBS. They sincerely shared their personal experiences during SBS, including their relationship with the ST, the TT, and the SBS Coordinator and about how the SBS was organised and run. Every TT happens to be unique, works in a unique setting and under a unique ST. All these variations and the US's personal philosophy and personal experiences have a heavy bearing on the characteristics of the triad.

Most USs confessed that although the student evaluation rubric provided by the university gives a guide on the marks to be awarded for specific areas, it still lacked clarity and left too much to the discretion of the assessor. All the US's admitted that they had developed their own individual approaches in interpreting the rubric. This, admittedly, presents a myriad of challenges. The most glaring being the wide discrepancies created by the different approaches. Some US's suggested that standardisation interventions need to be implemented to narrow down the discrepancies that are found from lecturer to lecturer. Masiye and Mulele [SU's], confessed that they were rather reluctant to use the university assessment rubric in its current form. They made some modifications to make it easier and more user-friendly.

*The UNAM student evaluation form for SBS has numerous criteria that are difficult to objectively assess and award a mark. I just took it upon myself to modify them make them easier to follow. Those marks, if not broken down, I mean, you cannot do justice to students. The whole form needs to be revised; some of the things that it prescribes do not make sense, ([SU], Masiye).*

*I can't imagine having to write a comment for every criterion that is listed. They are so many of them. So, I removed the column for the comments for individual criterion and enlarged the section at the bottom of the form where I can make some really detailed remarks about the lesson. Of course I did not deviate from the basic criteria, it is only the approach that I modified to make my life easier, but achieving the same results, ([SU], Mulele)*

TT's naturally become quite jittery and nervous when they are being assessed by the visiting US, more so when the TT knows that the US has only a single lesson, or two at most, to make that do or die assessment. Most US's stressed that they fully understood the student's situation and emphasised that it was their [US's] responsibility to calm down the TT's nerves, well before the lesson. Masiye, Simushi, Sinvula and Mulele all concurred that the best way of doing that was to announce to the TT the date and time of the pending assessment visit. They argued that SBS assessment can be an overwhelming experience for TT's who are apt to make costly mistakes when they try too hard to impress. US's explained that they had the responsibility of emotionally preparing the TT's for assessment by counselling them at the time that they deliver the announcement.

Sililo, Sibeso and Sisamu [SU's], were totally against the practice of announcing pending assessment visits by lecturers. Their argument was that there was no logical explanation why TT's should not be equally prepared for every other lesson that they are assigned to teach, whether it is evaluated or not. They argued that it is the responsibility of the SU and the university to impress upon TT's that they should be at their best at all times, and not only for selected lessons. Understandably, unannounced assessment visits by US's can help TT's to be always 'on their toes'

and decrease the tendency of TT's presenting deceptive and superfluous lessons, only to return to their true selves when the assessment is done.

*I would not want to visit a student and only to be told that the student is not ready for assessment, or they do not have a formal lesson on that day because learners are writing a test or doing revision. So to prevent all this I announce the date and time of the visit so that the student is prepared for my visit, (Masiye [SU]).*

*It is not often that we visit these students for assessment. It is quite unfair just to budge into their territory and say I have come to assess you, without letting the student know about it. It is like you are just crucifying the poor student. I think they deserve to be warned of the visit so that they are ready and they are thoroughly prepared. I mean, this is about their life; it's not easy just to determine their life in just a flash, (Mulele, [SU]).*

*I know that I will get a perfect lesson from the student if I tell them that I will be coming, but, will that lesson be a correct or honest reflection of the student's capability? Is he always like this, or what he /she gave me was simply cosmetic? He knew I was coming for him, didn't he? If he had not been informed, would the lesson be of the same quality? Are we not lying to ourselves? (Sililo, [SU]).*

All the supervisors pointed out that it is imperative that they provide TT's with feedback immediately after the assessed lesson. They all agreed that, ideally, the post lesson discussions need not take more than a day before they are done; that is when everything is still fresh in their minds. By the US's own admission, and through claims from TT's, feedback is rarely provided on time, if at all. The reasons provided by US's for failing to timely provide feedback was that they were overstretched with so many TT's to assess in a very short space of time , in addition to schools which are so far apart. They claimed to be in a hurry to get to the next school for another TT's lesson observation. Others, however, stated that they

always make an effort to assess TT's early and still have time ahead so that they can slot in time for post lesson discussions before they moved to the next school. They indicated that it was their role to create such a schedule; schools would not do that for them if the US.s didn't initiate it themselves.

*I always make it a point that I schedule one student in the morning and one just after break time in mid-morning. The idea is to create time for feedback before I move to the next station. I hate having to try to remember all the stuff if I delay with the post lesson feedback, (Kawana, [SU]).*

US's stated that they have the responsibility of soliciting honest self-critiques from the TT's. They admitted that they sometimes get carried away and do most of the talking during post lesson discussions. Ideally, their role is to set the ball rolling for an open post lesson discussion. US's should ask probing questions to allow the TT to openly say out what they thought to be the highs and lows of their lesson presentation. It should not be the US to say their mind first; otherwise the TT would not freely counter what the US has already declared, lest the student will become unnecessarily defensive.

*Before I grade my students on SBS, I usually want them to do some kind of self-evaluation of their lessons before I say anything. Reflection is actually an area that is assessed at the end of every lesson. It carries some marks. So, I invite my students to give me their own assessment, and even suggest what grade they think they deserve for the lesson, (Mutuso, [SU])*

*My conference with the student always starts with any of the following questions: So, what do you think about your lesson? What aspects of the lesson impressed you most? If you were to teach the same lesson again, what, specifically, would you do differently? These questions, sort of, open up the discussion. They actually pave the way for the student to talk about their performance. My role will be just to facilitate the reflective process, to encourage the student to be realistically critical, not for me to criticise them, (Matengu, [SU]).*

One of the most important roles that the SU agreed they should quite actively play is that of bringing the triad together for in-depth conferences. These conferences are pivotal in creating a platform where all the triad members can frankly share their experiences and also iron out any problem that the TT might have. They also help to build a strong working relationship among all the members. In order to prevent some conflicting declarations in front of the student, Sisamu and Mulele [US's] both suggested that the US and the ST can hold a form of 'caucus' before inviting the TT in. However, some SU's disagreed and saw no need for the 'caucus' which may be misconstrued as an unfair discussion to unfavourably influence the TT's final grade. In a study on relationships between SU's and ST's, Rothman (1981), found out that conflicts often occur about who, actually, is in control between the two.

Nolan & Hoover, (2004), state that the basic responsibility of the US and the ST is to guide the TT as he/she enters the world of teaching. They are the central people who provide the necessary support and scaffolding to help the TT develop as a professional. In addition, they both provide assessment to the students. In agreement with this statement, Simushi [SU], lists her multi-dimensional roles as a university supervisor. She explains that each TT is unique; therefore they require equally unique treatment. The support that she provides for a particular student may not be necessarily the same kind of support she would provide for another student. She adopts a tailor-made action plan for individual students. She contends that it is her duty to find out what challenges TT's need as well as what interventions to implement.

Most of the participating SU's stated that one of their roles is to provide effective feedback as much as possible. This entails committing as much time as possible to

formal and non-formal conferences with the students so as to discuss any issue which students may raise. Some SU's indicated that they felt quite uncomfortable to overwhelm their TT's with loads of criticism during formal conferences. They said their role is to select some aspects that need immediate redress and improvement. These could be dealt with informally and leave the others to be tackled later in formal conferences. Sibeso [SU] was cautious not to disenfranchise TT's too early by dwelling on negatives more than on positives during any discussion, whether formal or informal. He contended that his primary role is to build the TT's self-confidence as they enter the world of classroom practice.

*I see my role as a university SBS supervisor as that of a counsellor, mentor or guide who helps the students to become less nervous as they start their SBS. I cannot afford to be too hard on the student at the beginning. I can however, tighten the screws during subsequent visits because by then, the student has settled, (Sibeso, [SU]).*

The table below illustrates the different roles of the members of the triad as perceived by the triad:

<b>Student Teachers</b>	<b>Support teacher</b>	<b>University Supervisor</b>
1. Self-reflection	1. Providing feedback to student teacher	1. Student assessment
2. Class teaching as per instruction from university and school	2. Facilitating student teaching	2. Mentoring and guiding students Supporter
3. Maintaining an SBS file	3. Guiding and mentoring student teachers	3. Facilitating triad conferences
4. Developing a teaching portfolio file	4. Formative/summative assessment functions	/Communication
5. participating in co and extra-curricular activities	5. Lesson observations	4. Communicating and facilitating university policy

6. carrying any other duty assigned by the university or school.	6. Determine appropriate workloads	5. Supporting students' professional growth on SBS
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### 5.2.12 Envisaged Roles as perceived by the Triad

The roles played by individual members of the practicum triad were perceived to be numerous, but some were intertwined. It was evident that some of the roles that were attached to SU's were also played by the ST's. The foremost ones were those of providing on-going support and assessment to the TT's. These particular roles were regarded as crucial to the development of the TT's throughout their stay during the entire practicum period. It was regarded as paramount that the TT's should acquire the skills and strategies to identify their own strengths and weaknesses during lesson preparation and delivery as well as determine certain behavioural modifications to improve their teaching performance.

Being able to provide an honest and unrestrained evaluation of a lesson was identified as one of the most important roles that each member of the triad should play. The triad members strongly stated that it was imperative that they all be consistent in their attendance of triad conferences. SU's also identified professional uprightness as the pillar that supports appropriate teaching behaviours. They admitted that this was something that seriously lacked among all the triad members.

The triad was unanimous about the importance of good self-reflection skills for TT's. They all stressed the need for sincerity and honesty when students did self-reflections. Ideally, it was felt that TT's should not be subjected to imposing or intimidating environments during triad conferences as that had the potential of forcing them to be cocooned in their shells. They would feel too intimidated to open up and freely partake in the discussions. For US's or ST's to ask TT's what grade they think they deserve was also regarded as an intimidating practice. Not all the TT's would be honest to award themselves what that really deserved; it's either they inflate or they deflate.

TT's believed that it was the ST's role to orient them to classroom practice and to the culture of the school. The TT's also believed that it was the ST's role to mentors them so that they could analyse their own behaviours. TT's have a role to freely express themselves during conferences to enable them to take full control of their practicum experience, rather than having the ST's dominating them during discussions, (Coulon & Byra; 1997).

TT' and US's stated that it was the ST's role to prepare the TT so that they can gradually assume the responsibility of assuming full teaching loads. They have a duty to take the TT's through a progressive sequence of teaching responsibilities that empower the TT's to be eventually confident, effective and self-sufficient. A major concern that came up was the assumption by the university that ST's know, or should know, what the university expects them to do, and yet the university does not provide any form of training to ST's. Jones & Sparks (1996) made the same

observation including the fact that ST's rarely received requisite information on what is expected of them to bring out the best out of the TT.

The triad members' envisaged roles for the US's included:

- supervising and assessing students,
- motivating TT's
- providing timeous feedback,
- facilitating triad conferences,
- supervising university assignments,
- guiding TT's in abiding by university policy

The SU's agreed to their role but felt that they were over-stretched by the university because of the 'excessive' numbers of the TT's they were required to assess over a limited space of time. Moreover, they were expected to travel over distant areas because their students were spaced out throughout the whole of Zambezi region, with a couple more students stationed outside the region. This limited them from taking time with their students to engage in any meaningful and in-depth conferences. Given less students and more time, SU's envisaged role was to provide more mentorship and guidance through un-assessed lesson observations in preparation for TT's' final assessment/s.

All the triad members regarded flawless communication as a sure vehicle towards building trust, respect and confidence within the triad. Efficient communication enables the smooth transmission of timeous feedback, clear orientation of the TT's, community expectations, performance appraisals, and for providing other forms of

support. The main role of the US, according to Zimpher, de Voss, & Nott (1980), is “communicate university purposes and expectations” for the TT and the ST.

The most notable theme that emerged from data gathered from the triad members was triadic power conflicts. SU's are placed at the top of the power pyramid. That power manifests through the roles that the SU's play. The ST plays second fiddle to the SU. The student, as expected, is right at the bottom of the power matrix. The envisaged situation is where the ST can also play an equally influential role as the SU. It was agreed by everyone in the triad that it is the ST, who really spends much more time with the TT, but he/she has little or no input in the students' issues that really matter, such as final assessments. The SU has all the 'muscle' to decide the student's final grade during his/her flash visits. Some ST's stated that while they conceded that SU might know more than them, the ST's surely spent more time with TT's than the SU's did.

Students were clearly aware of the unfortunate reality that the supervisor is considered as more important than the support teacher in the assessment matrix. The majority of the students interviewed revealed that the supervisor is the final, if not the sole, decider of the final assessment grade that they will get. Almost all the students indicated that it would be ideal if the support teachers were accorded the role of awarding grades to student teachers since they are the ones who spend most of the time with them.

What some student teachers found rather perplexing was the fact that some supervisors assigned to them were from outside their specialisations or disciplines. This, students lamented, posed a serious challenge for both the supervisee and the supervisor. Ntesa [TT] was supervised by one who was hardly from her specialisation and was evidently out of touch and unconvincing. While some of the pedagogical aspects were beyond reproach, content aspects were incongruent with what the student teacher knew to be true and fundamentally basic in the subject area.

*I really felt both agitated and embarrassed that we could argue with my supervisor over what I thought was general knowledge. There are lots of things that are done differently in different subject specialisations and I really feel that lecturers who are not adequately versatile in other specialisation other than their own should only supervise those student teachers in their disciplines, (Ntesa, [TT]).*

### **5.2.13 SYNTHESIS**

The teaching practicum is the student's experience that is closest to the real world of work that they are preparing to enter. It becomes imperative, therefore, that this experience is made to be as realistic as possible. Triad members: the university supervisors, the support teachers and the student teachers who took part in this study were all immensely forthcoming and cooperative in responding to questions and sometimes volunteering valuable information. They all expressed their perceptions about the currently prevailing state of teaching practice and went as far as suggest the envisaged role definition of triad members.

During the analysis of data from the triad members, common themes from the perspectives of each triad member were connected, arranged and organised into specific categories in an attempt to find answers to the research questions. Patterns and themes that emerged from the data categories were matched with the conceptual framework and research questions to enable analysis, interpretation and draw inferences.

Responses and narratives showed that the participants already had some perceptions about their roles and responsibilities during their practicum. Student teachers' eagerly explained and clarified specific circumstances behind their responses. They fully appreciated that the lesson planning and preparation are vital for effective classroom teaching. Student teachers attributed classroom disorganization to poor preparation and they were equally aware that every lesson required its own planning and preparation.

Support teachers were sincere about what they thought of the quality of preparedness of the students they assigned to work with. Some indicated that the practicum schools and the university faculty were virtually living in totally different worlds. It was found that some of the roles that were attached to SU's were also played by the ST's, such as providing on-going support and assessment to the TT's. TT's were urged to acquire reflective skills and strategies to identify their own strengths and weaknesses so as to improve their teaching performance. It was felt that TT's should not feel intimidated during triad conferences. Asking TT's what grade they think they deserve was also regarded as a form of intimidation.

The triad members indicated that some of their partners in the triad were inconsistent in their attendance of triad conferences. SU's also encouraged professional uprightness as the pillar that supports appropriate teaching behaviours. They admitted that this was something that seriously lacked among all the triad members.

*The next chapter will summarise the study and discuss the research findings. It will make some recommendations based on the findings.*

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this study were to investigate the parameters of collaborative functions and overlaps of university supervisors and support teachers during the University of Namibia's model of teaching practicum; the school based studies. The practicum model at the University of Namibia's Katima Mulilo Campus [which is the same model at the other three satellite education campuses of the university] comprises of campus-based studies and school-based teaching studies. The model is premised on the principle of WBL (work-based learning).

As the literature review revealed, numerous scholars emphasize that there is need for coordinated school/university partnership models which enhance efficacy and build coherent curricula, (Haymore, Sandholtz, 2002; Levine, 2006). Also revealed in both literature and research findings was that ST's usually become motivated and more effective when there is collaboration between the school support teachers and the university supervisors in guiding and assessing student teachers.

In order to attain the objective of producing effective teachers, numerous collaborative models in teacher education have been developed. incorporating teaching practicum as a core component in teacher training is crucial for enabling

trainee and novice teachers to master the trade of teaching in the real context of a school (Hill & Brodin, 2004; Kennedy, 2006).

Literature and this study revealed that student teachers need strict supervisory support and guidance in order for them to grow as professional teachers. Supervision is a strong part of inducting trainee teachers into the “community of practice”. Support teachers have to work in collaboration with university-based supervisors to help student teachers to acquire the learning experiences through observing, counselling, instructing, role modelling and providing feedback.

The current model of partnership between the University of Namibia and support schools is not clearly defined. Each member of the practicum triad is apparently uncertain of the demarcations of their particular roles. This study, therefore, had sought to establish those parameters with a view to re-define the parameters for the benefit of the triad. This research has established that the majority of school-based support teachers and university lecturers work too narrowly within their own territories.

## **6.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The study has revealed that in the absence of a closely coordinated partnership structure, support teachers usually work at variance with the requirements of the University of Namibia’s School Based Studies rules and regulations. They tend to

disregard what the university stipulates in the SBS manual. Despite that the manual was designed for reference by the whole triad, it was quite evident from the data collected that it is only the student teachers who make some effort to follow it, albeit not so religiously. Students are sometimes made to choose between following the university supervisor's or the support teacher's instructions. More often, such instructions are at variance and the student submitted that they were subjected to quite an awkward situation.

### **6.2.1 How do trainee teachers perceive their roles, those of their lecturers and support teachers during teaching practica?**

Findings on student teachers' perception about their roles, and those of their lecturers and support teachers during teaching practica the study found that students were generally more than keen to explain and justify circumstances behind their actions, behaviours or approaches. While student teachers fully appreciated the importance of planning and preparation, data from US's and ST's revealed that they were largely culprits of disorganization or lack of continuity due to poor preparation.

On practicum assessment, student teachers revealed that the roles of the support teacher and that of the university supervisor were so vague that it led them to be observed by the support teacher in formative assessment only and by the university supervisor in summative assessment only.

The student teachers indicated their roles included working improvement strategies for future lessons following observers' comments but most indicated that they preferred reflecting on their own shortfalls or deficiencies and suggesting areas for improvement on their own rather than being subjected to a barrage of criticisms.

Students expressed disappointment at delays before post lesson conferences were conducted. They stated that they found it unfair to recall all the details of the lesson if evaluation came too late and hence they could not make any meaningful self-reflection or receive balanced feedback.

Some student teachers strongly criticised supervisors who were not punctual for their appointments. Even when they eventually pitch up, such behaviour deprived the students their right to have a fair and all-round assessment of their full lessons. Some students still felt aggrieved even when supervisors justified their late coming with an explanation that student teachers should always expect and be prepared for such eventualities, including any unforeseen interruptions. Students felt short-changed by such behaviours from supervisors.

Disturbingly, some student teachers indicated that some university supervisors are always in a hurry to get through the whole assessment without doing a proper job. Some of the post lesson conferences were hurried or were too short for any meaningful feedback. However, some university supervisors would strive to ensure that their students got a constructive feedback in reasonable time.

Half the students indicated that they did not mind whether they were pre-informed or not about when their supervisors planned to visit them. If they knew about when their supervisors would be coming, they would obviously enhance their teaching performance, hence presenting an artificially perfect lesson. Others believed that a more realistic picture can only come if visits were unannounced.

Video recording of their lessons was seen as a positive and vital for improving their teaching. Recorded lessons offered them the opportunity to self-evaluate and reflect on their lessons' weak and strong points. Students can watch their own teaching behaviour and iron out weak points to improve and grow. They can refine their teaching styles and methods.

Portfolio development was mentioned as a student's major responsibility during teaching practice. A few students evidently disliked the amount of work that went into portfolio development. Some students admitted that it proved quite problematic when they delayed to develop their portfolios and waited for the last days of their SBS period. This put them under undue pressure forcing them to work on back-log. They claimed they could not find any justifications for having a portfolio, in addition to having School Based Studies file. According to UNAM's guide to portfolio development, a portfolio is: 'a collection of materials that depict the nature and quality of teaching and students' learning'. It also reflects a teacher's professional growth.

Some student teachers felt that they were not ready for the 'autonomy' which they were given by some support teachers. A few disagreed and felt that that autonomy

was justifiable and came in handy in preparing students for the real world of work. Student teachers greatly valued support teachers' positive reinforcement on content, methodology and management and not just criticism regarding their performance.

### **6.2.2 The Roles of the ST as perceived by the student teacher**

Many student teachers complained about lack of communication among the triad of the student teacher, the university supervisor and the support teacher. They suggested that university supervisors should work closely with support teachers and should take the initiative to close the ranks with the support teachers. They were urged to support their student teachers in situ more often. Some student teachers complained that did not get opportunity to share their personal problems with.

### **6.2.3. Students' perceptions of the roles of Support teachers**

Some student teachers argued that support teachers have a responsibility of providing them with all the requisite materials and information for teaching practice, as well as involving them in planning. They claimed this could be through collaborative lesson preparation, regular lesson observations, consistently holding pre- and post-lesson conferences and by providing timeous feedback.

They indicated that support teachers are closer to them than university supervisors. Because of their presence, support teachers have much more opportunities to observe and assess the student teacher's professional performances in and out of the classroom. Student teachers emphasized that support teachers' input into the student teachers' assessments should have much more impact on the students' final assessment grade.

Some students saw the role of the support teacher as that of a facilitator or an overseer during teaching practice. Support teachers should be the pillar that helps to prepare and mould them for the professional world ahead of them.

### **The roles and responsibilities of the University Supervisor as perceived by the student teacher**

Student teachers indicated that the university supervisors rarely visited them but only came for assessments. They were not part of the student teacher's daily life besides coming for assessments. TT's did not receive any form of practical teaching support from university supervisors prior to these assessments.

The university supervisor, according to data obtained from the students, is expected to conduct a post observation conference with the student teacher in order to share and discuss the overall effectiveness of the lesson and come to some consensus on future teaching goals (Nolan & Hoover, 2004). They indicated that they preferred to confer with their supervisors when they could still freshly recall events. At the University of Namibia, university supervisors are expected to evaluate at least two

lessons per phase as part of formal School Based Assessments. At the discretion of specific university supervisors or as directed by the SBS Coordinator, additional observations may be conducted. Student teachers expressed that two assessments were inadequate, given that both were coming from the university supervisor and none from the support teacher who, in fact, is the one with whom they spend more time during the practicum. A significant number of the student teachers bemoaned the lack of in-situ supervisory support from university supervisors.

Some students expressed a strong view about the supervisors' roles by referring to an apparent 'lack of visibility from the supervisor'. University supervisors have a responsibility to avail themselves whenever the students need them.

They explained that exposure through lesson observations and by feedback is vital for student teachers' improvement. Student teachers demanded to be afforded unlimited opportunities to receive feedback that enables self-reflection and improvement. They implored supervisors try harder to make time for conferences with their students. Data gathered revealed that supervisor always seem to be in a hurry to leave just after observations. They usually have little or no time for discussions. Students were not happy and saw this as a crucial setback for them.

#### **6.2.4 How do support-teachers perceive the preparedness of trainee teachers before receiving them for teaching practica at their schools?**

Just as student teachers indicated, some support teachers also revealed that the practicum schools and the university faculty were virtually living in totally different

worlds. This meant that support teachers would teach the student teachers about the real school teaching, which would be a totally divorced version from what they are taught at the university.

A general concern which emerged from support teachers was that the university did not bother to enlist their input about the roles they [ST] should play during the practicum. The university took it upon itself and decided to design and implement the SBS programme without input from the school. This had the undesirable effect of schools speaking a totally different language from the university, and yet the ultimate objective was supposed to be one and the same, and more crucially, the trainee was one and same.

#### **6.2.5. Support teachers' perceptions of the roles of Student teachers**

One of the TT's foremost responsibilities that emerged from findings was the need for students to religiously abide by the requirements of both the university and the school. They all said that they were fully aware of the university requirements as stated in the students' SBS manuals from the university. They often felt confused when some TT's clearly misrepresented some of the stated requirements. Some TT's would claim that their lecturers demanded that the students should do certain things as per their instructions, not as stated in the manual. However, others expressed virtually the opposite views on student teachers' roles and responsibilities as far as assessment was concerned. They contended that the onus rested on the student teacher to solicit a slot or time for feedback from their ST's.

Data revealed that most support teachers wanted the students to open up specific communication channels with their ST's and US's. They argued students are the ones best positioned to determine their pressing needs. They indicated that this approach also helps the introvert student teachers to open up and talk about their teaching experiences.

It also emerged that some ST's require students to self-reflect by asking them what they felt about their performance. They stated that this allow the student teachers to identify their own strengths or weaknesses and it encouraged students to build confidence in their teaching without feeling intimidated to discuss their weaknesses. It also emerged that some student teachers can also be superficially too critical of themselves during the post-lesson discussions. ST's strongly indicated that there was a need for TT's, ST's and US's to hold combined conferences regularly.

#### **6.2.6. How Support teachers perceive their roles in the triad**

It strongly emerged that ST's felt that they were much better positioned than US's to provide a much more holistic evaluation of TT's than US's. They argued that they had much more contact with the TT and could do more justice to the TT's practicum assessment; much more than they got from just a single assessment visit that they were paid by the supervisor. Although most of the ST's felt that they expected to be given more influence in determining the TT's final assessment, they never-the-less admitted that some among them could not be credible assessors. Some ST's are very well known to take students as temporary replacements or relief teachers.

A few ST's explained that one of the roles was that of a facilitator. This role entailed guiding the TT, assisting them to abide by the school and university guidelines in their teaching. All but one listed student assessment as an envisaged role. The odd voice out-rightly declared that he did not want to have anything to do with the final assessment of the student.

Data revealed that ST's perceived their roles as being responsible for facilitating triad conferences, observing and supporting TT's and providing feedback, and assisting the TT's to self-evaluate. The ST's are responsible for facilitating enabling environments for discussions that allow TT's to freely disclose their own strengths and weaknesses. The ST's are the liaisons between the US and the TT.

### **6.2.7 ST's perception of the preparedness and readiness of schools and teachers for teaching practica**

In spite of a few dissenting voices, it emerged that most ST's were generally satisfied with the quality of the preparedness of TT's for SBS. They believed that the university had done everything in its power to prepare their students for SBS. Most ST's would feel at ease to delegate greater responsibilities to TT's who were prepared to learn. Findings revealed that despite the ST being the more influential person than the SU, it is the latter who continues to wield more sway in determining the TT's final SBS assessment grade. STs strongly expressed their displeasure at this lack of recognition by the university.

### **6.2.8 How University Supervisor's perceive their role in SBS**

It emerged from USs' responses that although the student evaluation rubric provided by the university gives a guide on the marks to be awarded for specific areas, it still lacked clarity and left too much to the discretion of the assessor. US's admitted that they modified the rubric to incorporate their own individual approaches in interpreting the rubric. T it emerged from findings that they were rather reluctant to use the university assessment rubric in its current form.

Supervisors revealed that it was their role to provide TT's with feedback immediately after the assessed lesson. They all agreed that, ideally, the post lesson discussions need not take more than a day before they are done; that is when everything is still fresh in their minds. By the US's own admission, and through claims from TT's, feedback is rarely provided on time, if at all. The reasons provided by US's for failing to timely provide feedback was that they were overstretched with so many TT's to assess in a very short space of time , in addition to schools which are so far apart. They claimed to be in a hurry to get to the next school for another TT's lesson observation. Others, however, stated that they always make an effort to assess TT's early and still have time ahead so that they can slot in time for post lesson discussions before they moved to the next school.

SU's revealed that their role includes bringing the triad together for in-depth conferences. They also have a responsibility to help build a strong working relationship among all the triad members. In a study on relationships between SU's and ST's, Rothman (1981), found out that conflicts often occur about who, actually,

is in control between the two. This theme has emerged quite prominently in this study.

### **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study, therefore, recommends the following:

- (a) Student teachers should be provided with clear guidelines on the teaching practicum, stating their roles and responsibilities as well as their combined obligations towards the school and the university as ‘institutional twins’. They should be instructed, in no uncertain terms, that the support teacher and the university supervisors are equals and their roles have to be equally respected.
  
- (b) The university and partnership schools should improve their communication through mandatory partnership meetings where teachers and lecturers from both institutions discuss their collective mandate as teacher training institutions. On these platforms, challenges, misconceptions, mistrusts, etc are discussed and ironed out.
  
- (c) This study noted with concern the apparent ‘second fiddle’ role played by the support teacher during final SBS assessment in spite of his/her formative presence in the student’s practicum attachment. The study, therefore, recommends bringing the status of the support teacher at par with that of the university supervisor. The study also recommends that support teachers and

university supervisors receive adequate re-training to play their roles more effectively.

- (d) The study recommends that mechanisms be put in place by both partnership schools and university to ensure that all student teachers are adequately supported during SBS through increased formative assessments by a combined team of support teachers and university supervisors, and that assessment responsibilities are not skewed in favour of the latter.
- (e) The university and schools should develop ways of ensuring that pre and post lesson conferences become part of assessment to encourage the triad to convene them more regularly.
- (f) The study recommends that time spent on School based studies be significantly increased to ensure that students receive sufficient work-based learning [WBL]. The current state of SBS is by far inadequate to provide such experiential exposure.

#### **6.4 SYNTHESIS**

This study focused on the role parameters within the teaching practicum triad in Zambezi Education Region, Namibia. The study should be replicated in a different education region with a similar setting elsewhere. There is need for future research that can explore possibilities of having universities setting up teacher training schools in the mould of the medical university teaching hospitals. Given the myriad

challenges besetting teacher training, particularly the practicum component, such a study has the potential of yielding interesting results.

It can also be an interesting study for the Faculty of Education at UNAM to explore possibilities of the having specialist practicum staff whose sole mandate and focus would be to professionally support and monitor student teachers' development as well as assess their performance during SBS, while having very little or no other teaching loads.

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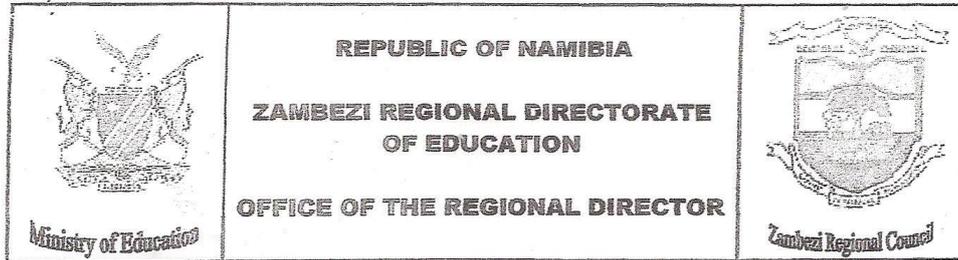
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Appendix A



Tel No.: (066) 261962/261931  
Fax No.: (066) 253187

Private Bag 5006  
Katima Mulilo

Enquiries: Adrenah K Mukela  
Reference No: 11/1/1

10 February 2014

UNISA  
PO Box 157  
Katima Mulilo  
Namibia

Attention: Africa Zulu

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS IN CAPRIVI REGION:  
YOURSELF

Your letter to the office of the Regional Director: Zambezi Region date 10 February 2014 with the caption request to conduct a research in school in Katima Mulilo was received.

The Ministry of Education, Zambezi Region hereby would like to thank you for willingness to conduct a research in our schools. Kindly be informed that approval is granted to you to conduct your research as requested, but let me draw your attention to the following aspects:

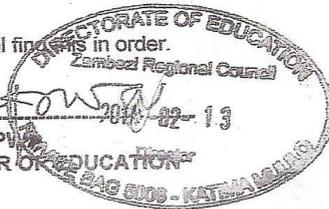
**NOTE!**

- a) The granted approval should not disrupt the normal teaching and learning at those schools you intend visiting.
- b) Ministry of Education, Zambezi Region hereby would like to request you to share your findings with the Directorate.

By copy of this letter the Inspector of Education is notified accordingly of your presence at the school.

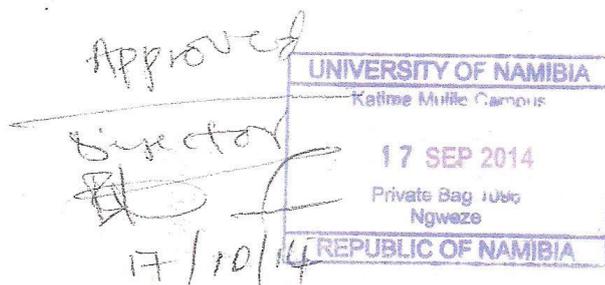
I trust and hope you will find this in order.

  
MR AUSTIN M SAMUPWA  
REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



CC: Inspectors of Education

## Appendix B



P. O. Box 157  
Katima Mulilo  
Namibia

12 September 2014

Dr Bennett K. Kangumu  
Director., Katima Mulilo Campus, University of Namibia  
Bag 1096  
KATIMA MULILO  
NAMIBIA

Dear Sir

**Request for permission to conduct research at Katima Mulilo Campus, University of Namibia,**

I, **AFRICA ZULU** am doing research under the supervision of L. M. Lumadi, a Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies, towards a Doctor of Education Degree at the University of South Africa. We are seeking your permission to carry out a study entitled "Role parameters within the context of the practicum triad: teacher training perspectives from Namibia's Zambezi Region". The aim of the study is improve the partnerships between UNAM, as the principal teacher training institution in Namibia, and regional support or practicum schools, with particular emphasis on professionally coordinated school based studies.

The study will entail carrying out interviews, focus group discussions and participant observations which will be done as per schedule of UNAM's School based Studies calendar.

The benefits of this study are the resultant development of a better and more effective teaching practice model for Namibia and other countries.

Feedback procedures will entail sharing the findings with your institution and other stakeholders in teacher education.

Yours sincerely

.....  
*Africa Zulu*

**AFRICA ZULU** [UNISA Student: 5085-900-5]

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**Appendix C [part (a)]**

**INFORMATION- LETTER TO THE PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT**

[ADDRESS & DATE]

.....  
.....  
.....

**Dear Prospective Participant**

INFORMATION LETTER TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

My name is **Africa Zulu** and I am doing research with Professor M. W. Lumadi, a professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies, towards a Doctor of Education Degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled **“Role parameters within the context of the practicum triad: teacher training perspectives from Namibia’ Zambezi Region”**.

The aim of this study is to establish the facets of the school participation in teacher training which are most effective in supporting trainee teachers throughout their school based practicum and to collate suggestions from practicum schools, trainee teachers and the University of Namibia’s Faculty of Education in developing an effective partnership model of teaching practica for primary school teacher training in Namibia.

You are one of the fifteen other participants who have been selected to participate in this study due to your involvement with the teaching practice component of teacher training offered by the University of Namibia.

The study involves a semi-structured interview. This interview will take us approximately ten minutes.

Being in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

### Appendix C [part (b)]

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After the period of five years has elapsed, the data will be destroyed and /or deleted from data memory devices.

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact me, Africa Zulu on +263 66 262 6032 or email: [azulu@unam.na](mailto:azulu@unam.na). The findings are accessible for ten years. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Africa Zulu on +263 66 262 6032 or email: [azulu@unam.na](mailto:azulu@unam.na).

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact L. M. Lumadi on +27 2 429 8747 or email: [Lumadmw@unisa.ac.za](mailto:Lumadmw@unisa.ac.za). Alternatively, contact the research ethics chairperson Dr Madaleen Claassens, Email: [mcdtc@netactive.co.za](mailto:mcdtc@netactive.co.za).

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

.....

Africa Zulu

**APPENDIX D**

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had it explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have been assured that I will receive a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

.....

Name & Surname of participant (print)

.....

Name & Surname of researcher (print)

.....

Signature of participant

.....

Signature of researcher

Date: .....

Date: .....

## Appendix E

### (LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH)

[ADDRESS A & DATE]

Dr C. Villet

Dean: Faculty of Education, University of Namibia

+264 61 206 3631 Email: [cvillet@unam.na](mailto:cvillet@unam.na)

WINDHOEK

Dear Madam

#### **Request for permission to conduct research at the University of Namibia, Katima Mulilo Campus**

I, **AFRICA ZULU** am doing research under the supervision of L. M. Lumadi, a Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies, towards a Doctor of Education Degree at the University of South Africa. We are seeking your permission to carry out a study entitled **“Role parameters within the context of the practicum triad: teacher training perspectives from Namibia’ Zambezi Region”**. The aim of the study is improve the partnerships between UNAM, as the principal teacher training institution in Namibia, and support or practicum schools, with particular emphasis on professionally coordinated school based studies.

The study will entail carrying out interviews, focus group discussions and participant observations which will be done as per schedule of UNAM’s School based Studies calendar.

The benefits of this study are the resultant development of a better and more effective teaching practice model for Namibia and other countries.

Feedback procedures will entail sharing the findings with your institution and other stake-holders in teacher education.

Yours sincerely

.....

**AFRICA ZULU** [UNISA Student]

**Appendix F**

**LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

[ADDRESS & DATE]

Mr Samupwa [Regional Director]  
Ministry of Education, Zambezi Educational Region  
P. Bag 5006  
KATIMA MULILO

Dear Madam

**Request for permission to conduct research in schools in Katima Mulilo**

I, AFRICA ZULU, am doing research under the supervision of L. M. Lumadi, a Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies, towards a Doctor of Education Degree at the University of South Africa. We are seeking your permission to carry a study entitled **“Role parameters within the context of the practicum triad: teacher training perspectives from Namibia’s Zambezi Region”** in the eight primary schools in Katima Mulilo urban. The aim of the study is to improve the partnerships between UNAM, as the teacher training institution, and the Ministry of Education, through support schools.

The schools have been selected because of their crucial involvement in teacher education in Zambezi Region. The study will entail carrying out interviews, focus group discussions and participant observations which will be done as per schedule of UNAM’s School based Studies calendar.

The benefits of this study will be the resultant development of a better and more effective teaching practice model for Namibia and other countries.

Feedback procedures will entail sharing the findings with the Ministry and other stake-holders in teacher education.

Yours sincerely

.....

**AFRICA ZULU** [UNISA Student]

**Appendix G [Part A]**

**LETTER REQUESTING AN ADULT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW**

[ADDRESS & DATE]

.....

.....

.....

**LETTER REQUESTING YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW**

Dear .....

This letter is an invitation to you to consider participating in a study I , AFRICA ZULU, am conducting as part of my research as a doctoral student entitled **“Role parameters within the context of the practicum triad: teacher training perspectives from Namibia’ Zambezi Region”** at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study has been given by ... and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise as related to my research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. The importance of the teaching practice component of teacher training is substantial and well documented. In this interview I would like to have your views and opinions on this topic. This information can be used to improve teacher training.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately ten minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

With your kind permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. All information you provide is

**Appendix G [Part B]**

considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for twelve months in my locked office. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at +264 66 262 6032 or by email at azul@unam.na

I look forward to speaking with you very much and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form which follows on page 3.

Yours sincerely

.....

AFRICA ZULU

## Appendix H

### Semi-structured Interview schedule: University Supervisors

Title of the interviewee: .....

Current position: .....

Qualification: .....

Gender: .....

1. For how long have you been involved with supervising student teachers on School based studies?
2. In your view, what is the importance of teaching practice for student-teachers?
3. Can you describe your current roles/responsibilities, as a university supervisor, in Teaching Practice or School based Studies.
4. In your opinion, what do you envisage to be the ideal roles and/or responsibilities of a support teacher during School based Studies?
5. How can you describe the current roles and/or responsibilities of the support teacher during School based Studies?
6. In your opinion, what do you envisage to be the ideal roles and/or responsibilities of a support teacher during School based Studies?
7. How can you describe the roles and/or responsibilities of the student teacher during Teaching Practice or School based Studies?
8. In your opinion, what do you envisage to be the ideal roles or responsibilities of the student teacher during School based Studies?
9. How can you describe your working relationship with:
  - (a) Support teachers?
  - (b) Student teachers?
10. What aspects of UNAM's Teaching Practice or School based Studies:
  - (a) Are most effective in supporting student teachers?
  - (b) Need improvement?

## Appendix I

### Semi-structured Interview schedule: Practicum support-teachers

Title of the interviewee: .....

Current position: .....

Qualification: .....

Gender: .....

11. For how long have you been involved with supporting student teachers?
12. In your view, what is the purpose of teaching practice for student-teachers?
13. Can you describe your current roles/responsibilities, as a support teacher, in Teaching Practice or School based Studies.
14. In your opinion, what do you envisage to be the ideal roles and/or responsibilities of a support teacher during School based Studies?
15. How can you describe the current roles and/or responsibilities of the University lecturer during?
16. In your opinion, what do you envisage to be the ideal roles and/or responsibilities of a University supervisor during School based Studies?
17. How can you describe the roles and/or responsibilities of the student teacher during Teaching Practice or School based Studies?
18. In your opinion, what do you envisage to be the ideal roles or responsibilities of the student teacher during School based Studies?
19. How can you describe your working relationship with:
  - (c) University supervisors?
  - (d) Student teachers?
20. What aspects of UNAM's Teaching Practice or School based Studies:
  - (c) Are most effective in supporting student teachers?
  - (d) Need improvement?

Appendix J

FOCUS GROUP/INTERVIEW ASSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I \_\_\_\_\_ grant consent/assent that the information I share during the group discussions (focus group interviews) may be used by the researcher, AFRICA ZULU, for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be digitally recorded and grant consent/assent for these recordings, shared in the group discussions to any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant's Name: ..... (Please print)

Participant Signature: .....

Researcher's Name:

Researcher's Signature: .....

## Appendix K

### Observation Form for Student Teacher's Performance and Professional Practice

Student Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

School based Studies Phase: \_\_\_\_\_

Major Specialisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Class/classes Taught: \_\_\_\_\_

Period of observation: [from] \_\_\_\_\_ [to] \_\_\_\_\_

**This observation form is to serve as an instrument to evaluate the named student teacher's professional performance during School based Studies, based on the given criteria.**

#### Category I: Preparation and Presentation

*[Place a tick and add comment in the appropriate box]*

	The student teacher thoroughly and consistently fulfils the performance indicator	The student teacher usually and extensively fulfils the performance indicator.	The student teacher sometimes and adequately fulfils the performance indicator.	The student teacher inadequately/superficially/ rarely /never fulfils the performance indicator.
Lesson planning and preparation of instructional material				
Subject content knowledge				
Pedagogical knowledge				
Knowledge and application of Namibian national professional standards				
Assessment of learners' educational needs				
Use of teaching and learning resource materials				

## Category II: Learning Environment

*[Place a tick and add comment in the appropriate box]*

<b>Criterion</b>	The student teacher consistently and thoroughly fulfils the performance indicator	The student teacher usually and extensively fulfils the performance indicator.	The student teacher sometimes and adequately fulfils the performance indicator.	The student teacher inadequately/superficially/ rarely /never fulfils the performance indicator.
<b>Indicator</b>				
Provides equitable learning opportunities to all the learners				
Interacts appropriately with learners				
Applies effective classroom procedures and routines				
Has proper conduct and effectively manages learners' behavior				
Promotes democracy as well as gender sensitivity				
Has an ability to create a conducive physical atmosphere for learning				

### Category III – Instructional Delivery

*[Place a tick and add comment in the appropriate box]*

<b>Criterion</b>	The student teacher consistently and thoroughly fulfils the performance indicator	The student teacher usually and extensively fulfils the performance indicator.	The student teacher sometimes and adequately fulfils the performance indicator.	The student teacher inadequately/superficially/ rarely /never fulfils the performance indicator.
<b>Indicator</b>				
Presentation skills reflect content and pedagogical knowledge				
Has effective communication skills and can clearly deliver content				
Develops instructional strategies in proper sequence to address individual learners' needs.				
Encourages learner participation through varied questioning and discussion strategies				
Engages all learners in well-paced and appropriately chosen instructional methods				
Provides timely and adequate feedback				
Monitors learning through the use of both formal and informal assessments tools				
Is flexible and skilfully responds to unexpected learners' needs				
Skilfully addresses cross-curricular disciplines				

### Category IV – Overall Professionalism

*[Place a tick and add comment in the appropriate box]*

<b>Criterion</b>	The student teacher consistently and thoroughly fulfils the performance indicator	The student teacher usually and extensively fulfils the performance indicator.	The student teacher sometimes and adequately fulfils the performance indicator.	The student teacher inadequately/superficially/ rarely /never fulfils the performance indicator.
<b>Indicator</b>				
• Adheres to school requirements of keeping accurate records				
Demonstrates knowledge of opportunities for professional growth and development				
Communicates professionally with authorities, colleagues, ancillary staff and learners				
Adheres to procedures and regulations in relation to attendance, punctuality and involvement in co and extra-curricular activities				
Has knowledge and adheres to school and circuit calendars of events				
• Has general conduct that demonstrates professional and ethical integrity as demanded by the Namibian Ministry of Education				

**Appendix L**

**ATTENDANCE REGISTER: PHASE .....**

This register must be **initialled** by the student teacher on a **daily basis**. At the end of the SBS period this document should be signed and certified by the *Principal*.

STUDENT TEACHER: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT TEACHER: \_\_\_\_\_

WEEK	DATE: FROM - TO	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						

.....

**Signature: Subject Teacher**

Date: .....

.....

**Signature: Principal**

Date: .....

**TOTAL NUMBER OF SBS DAYS**

**DAYS ABSENT**



**TAKE NOTE:** Attendance register without necessary signatures and a school stamp will not be accepted by the SBS Office

**Appendix M**

**UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**SCHOOL-BASED STUDIES (SBS) FILE CHECKLIST**

**PHASE 1**

STUDENT TEACHER..... SCHOOL.....

PHASE ..... SUBJECTS.....

	<b>FILE CONTENT</b>	<b>v / x</b>
1	TABLE OF CONTENT	
2	PRINCIPAL'S CONFIRMATION FORM	
3	ATTENDANCE REGISTER	
4	TIME TABLE OF CLASSES OBSERVED	
5	RECORD OF LESSONS OBSERVED	
6	RECORD OF LESSONS PRESENTED	
7	LESSON PREPARATION PLUS LESSON EVALUATION FORMS	
8	ASSIGNMENT	
9	COLLECTED COPIES & FORMAL DOCUMENTS:  Tests, Assessment activities, Worksheets, Policy documents on examinations and assessment	

.....

.....

Mentor/Lecturer

Signature

Date

Appendix N

**UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**RECORD OF LESSONS OBSERVED BY THE STUDENT-TEACHER**

**PHASE1**

SUBJECT TEACHER: (print) .....

STUDENT TEACHER: .....

MAJOR OPTION: .....

No.	Date	Grade	Subject	Topic	Signature of Subject Teacher
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					

Appendix O [Part A]

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

LESSON PREPARATION FORM: PRE- AND LOWER PRIMARY EDUCATION

NAME.....

SCHOOL.....CLASS .....

TEACHER.....

THEME + Sub-Topic.....DATE.....

SUBJECT.....GRADE.....

SUBJ.TOPIC/SKILL.....FOCUS.....

LESSON STAGE:

New	Continuation	Revision	Repetition
-----	--------------	----------	------------

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE/ ENTRY LEVEL OF LEARNERS

.....  
.....

LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S): Learners will: .....

.....

2. BASIC COMPETENCY (IES): By the end of grade.....the learners can:

.....  
.....

3. LESSON OBJECTIVE(S): By the end of this lesson the learners should be able to:

.....

4. TEACHING AND LEARNING

MEDIA.....

.....

5. Write different levels of assessment criteria based on your lesson objective/s, for this lesson:

.....  
.....  
.....

6. LIFE SKILL COMPETENCIES as required in the Pilot Curriculum Guide.

PARTICIPATION  INTERPRETATION  COMMUNICATION

INVESTIGATION  EVALUATION  APPLICATION

## Appendix O [Part B]

### 7. THE LESSON PHASES

INTRODUCTION: Arouse awareness and interest for topic; connect to previous knowledge and contextualize; mention what lesson is about AND determine level of current knowledge of content to be taught.
PRESENTATION/DEVELOPMENT: Exploration of content, transfer of knowledge, make connections. (Include: Time and language skills; Content + vocabulary; Grouping; Teacher- and Learners' activities); Check homework as needed.
REINFORCEMENT: Inquiry and experimentation, application of knowledge; Compensatory Teaching: enrich/remediate, identify needs for learning support; writing activity, game, assess if new learning has taken place based on pre-presentation knowledge and give meaningful homework as needed.
CONCLUSION: Recap; utilization of knowledge; learners' reflect on what they have learned, what they enjoyed about the lesson; feed forward and so forth.
Teacher REFLECTION on the lesson with actions to improve.

#### EXAMPLE: SUGGESTED LAYOUT OF LESSON PLAN PROCEDURES/PHASES (17/7/2012)NB

TIME/SKILL/ STRATEGY/ INTEGRATION	LESSON CONTENT AND VOCABULARY	TEACHER ACTIVITIES, MEDIA AND METHOD(S)	LEARNER ACTIVITIES, MEDIA AND METHOD(S)
Min.; Listening and speaking; prior knowledge; homework	INTRODUCTION		
Min.; Listening, speaking, reading, theme-cross curricular-subject integration, Writing	DEVELOPMENT		
Min.; Activity: applic. of knowl. E.g. game. Also	REINFORCEMENT		

enrichment, remediation, (l. support).			
Min...; recap summary, learner reflections, <i>homework</i>	CONCLUSION		

Student teacher reflection on action/challenges and suggested ways for improvement.

.....

.....

.....

Appendix Q [Part A]

**UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**PHASE: 2 LESSON EVALUATION FORM FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Student no.: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_

EVALUATION CRITERIA	MARKS	COMMENTS
<b>1. LESSON PREPARATION</b>	<b>[25]</b>	
(a) Comprehensive lesson plan (including teaching and learning activities, timing, etc.) (6)		
(b) Challenging and attainable objectives (4)		
(c) Contain all the necessary components/phases of the lesson (2)		
(d) Motivating introduction prepared (2)		
(e) Key questions prepared (3)		
(f) Appropriate Teaching methods identified (2)		
(g) Application tasks included e. g homework (2)		
(h) Appropriate teaching aids/media (4)		
<b>2. LESSON PRESENTATION</b>	<b>[20]</b>	
(a) Gains immediate attention and directs learners towards lesson objectives (2)		
(b) Makes insightful use of subject knowledge supplemented with practical application (3)		
(c) Logical sequence of key information (2)		
(d) Include open-ended and higher-order questions (3)		
(e) Adopts an integrated approach to teaching and learning (2)		
(f) Engages learners in <b>active/meaningful</b> learning (2)		

(g) Continuous monitoring of learners' understanding (1)		
(h) Fair, consistent and sensitive to learners (1)		
(i) Tactful, non-violent handling of discipline problems (1)		
(j) Effective time management (2)		
(k) Appropriate assessment strategies (1)		
<b>3. TEACHING AND LEARNING MEDIA</b>	<b>[6]</b>	
(a) Varied use of creative and appropriate media (2)		
(b) Effective and skilful use of teaching/learning media (2)		
(c) Neat and organised use of chalkboard/posters/worksheets etc (2)		
<b>4. COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>[6]</b>	
(a) Uses clear and simple language (2)		
(b) Speaks clearly with a good tone (1)		
(c) Appropriate use of non-verbal communication cues (1)		
(d) Shows interest in listening to learners (1)		
(e) Language use across the curriculum applied (1)		
<b>5. REINFORCEMENT AND CONCLUSION</b>	<b>[5]</b>	
(a) Use appropriate strategies for assessment (1)		
(b) Effective and relevant reinforcement activities e.g. games, projects etc. (1)		
(c) relates to lesson objectives and assessment criteria (2)		
(d) Effective closure of the lesson (1)		
<b>6. GENERAL IMPRESSION</b>	<b>[ 3]</b>	
(a) Confidence (1)		
(b) Enthusiasm (1)		
(c) Dress code (1)		
<b>TOTAL MARKS</b>	<b>65</b>	

General remarks:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

—  
Lecturer's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix R

**UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**RECORD OF LESSONS ASSESSED BY SUBJECT TEACHER(S) PHASE 1**

STUDENT-TEACHER: .....

SCHOOL: .....

SUBJECT TEACHER: (print) .....

MAJOR OPTION: .....

<b>NO</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>GRADE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>MARK FOR LESSON</b>	<b>SIGNATURE SUBJECT TEACHER</b>
1						
2						
3						

## Appendix S

### KATIMA MULILO CAMPUS

Private Bag 1076, Winela road  
Katima Mulilo, Namibia  
☎ +264 66 262 6000; URL : <http://www.unam.edu.na>



15 May 2015

## TOWHOM IT MAY CONCERN

### CERTIFICATE OF EDITING & PROOFREADING

This is to certify that I, Prof. Grzegorz Kopij, University of Namibia, Katima Mulilo Campus, edited and proofread Africa Zulu's Doctoral thesis entitled "**Role Parameters within the Context of the Practicum Triad: Teacher Training Perspectives from Namibia's Zambezi Region.**" The author of the thesis is University of South Africa's DEd student, Name: Africa Zulu, student Number 50859005.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grzegorz Kopij", is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Prof. Grzegorz Kopij

E-mail: [gkopij@unam.na](mailto:gkopij@unam.na)

Phone: +264 66 262 6005

Katima Mulilo Campus: University of Namibia

