

Experiential Learning for Health Sciences Education Students: An Open Distance Learning (ODL) Context

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the experiences of student teachers currently registered for the BCUR degree studying in an ODL university. The degree comprises nursing education and management and the students had attended the teaching practice workshop, a component of nursing education programme. An explorative, descriptive, interpretative and qualitative design was conducted to explore student teachers' experiences of the teaching practice workshop they have attended. The interviews were conducted with twenty student nurse educators who participated in the study. Purposive sampling, which is based on the belief that the researcher's knowledge about the population can be used to hand-pick sample elements, was used. The study yielded both positive and negative experiences. The positive was the provision of an environment, which exposed them to teaching, and acquisition of pedagogical skills. Negative experiences were also reported, including poor and inaccessible orientation, outdated study guide and workbook, ineffective feedback and a very short period of exposure to teaching practice. Workshops should be divided into two phases, first phase for orientation and second phase for teaching practice and assessment. Students should be thoroughly prepared for on-line teaching.

KEYWORDS: Experiential learning, ODL, student nurse educators, teaching practice.

INTRODUCTION

Practical teaching (also known as the practicum, teaching practice or experiential learning) forms an integral part of teacher training. Teaching practice is a valued and a very necessary part of education for students to become competent teachers. It grants student teachers experience in the actual teaching and learning environment, Ngidi & Sibaya (2003) as quoted by Kiggundu & Nayamuli (2009, p. 345). Teaching practice has three major connotations: the practicing of teaching skills and acquisition of the role of the teacher; the whole range of experiences that students go through in schools; and the practical aspects of the course as distinct from theoretical studies (Mukumbang & Alindekane 2017, pp. 1-3). During teaching practice, a student teacher is given the opportunity to try the art of teaching before actually getting into the real world of the teaching profession and for student teachers of nursing, the real world of nursing education. Teacher training education institutions like the University of South Africa (UNISA), which offers open distance learning (ODL) are under pressure to prepare their student teachers for the actual world of teaching and the practicum/teaching practice provides an avenue by which this expectation may be addressed (Swee-Choo Goh and Mathews 2011, pp. 1-13). Teaching practice constitutes a bridge between theory and practice and enables the student teachers to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will equip them to work effectively with all students regardless of their life experiences, gender, background, race or socio-economic status (Marais & Meier 2004). According to Komba & Kira (2013) during teaching practice, student teachers observe subject teachers at work so as to learn about teachers' skills, strategies and classroom developments. Students are also able to evaluate their own teaching experiences through interactions with the teachers and lecturers. Through self-reflection student teachers are able to implement a variety of approaches, strategies and skills with a view of bringing about meaningful learning. Exposing student teachers to teaching practice is a global phenomenon. In Germany, teacher candidates are expected to apply their declarative knowledge to authentic classroom situations (Stumer, Konings & Seidel 2013, pp. 467-483). In Romania, a study conducted by Gabriela (2016) indicated that mentoring and coaching done during teaching practice is of critical importance in the practical training of future teachers. For nursing students enrolled at the institution under study, teaching practice represents the range of experiences from which they are exposed when they work in the classroom and provide lessons in the simulated setting for a period of one week as opposed to observing subject teachers at work. Nursing students enrolled for the degree in Nursing Education at the institution under study will be referred to as student nurse educators in the subsequent discussion.

This study aimed at exploring and describing the experiences of student nurse educators who attended the teaching practice workshop during the 2018 academic year and how these experiences influence their perception of nursing education. The words teaching practice/experiential learning/practicum will be used interchangeably with nursing education practice/workshop. The more is known about the concerns faced by student teachers

during their practicum, the greater the possibility of reducing stress and improving their success and maximizing the benefits of the practicum for them.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Open distance learning has become an integral part of higher education globally, mainly to cater for the increasing demand for higher education. ODL has proved to be effective in providing students with relevant knowledge, professional competence and enhanced emotional competence such as taking responsibility for personal and professional development, emotional maturity, self-motivation, self-discipline, dedication and perseverance (Olivier 2016, pp. 3-12). Higher education institutions in South Africa that are providing teacher education programmes including those offering open distance learning are required in terms of the provisions of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to ensure that their students are exposed to teaching practice where they can interact with the realities of classroom teaching (Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011-2015; Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications 2011). Therefore, teaching practice is part of teacher Education and Training Programme at ODL institutions in South Africa (Mokoena 2017, pp. 122-124).

Out of the 26 public universities in South Africa, 13 of them have departments of nursing science that are providing postgraduate nursing education programmes and are required to comply with the provisions of the (DHET) policies in terms requirements referred to in the afore-mentioned discussion when it comes to teacher education and training.

The institution under study has a department of nursing science called Health Sciences Department. Health sciences department started offering the Bachelor's degrees since 1975 of which Nursing Education is one of its majors. The degree is aimed at preparing nurse educators tasked with the responsibility of preparing nurse practitioners capable of providing efficient and competent service to the citizens of South Africa. It was established to address the challenge of the shortage of nurse educators, which to date is still evident as alluded to by Mulaudzi, Daniel and Direko (2012, p. 1) who stated that South Africa like all other countries in the world is faced with the shortage not only of nurses, but also nurse educators which is anticipated to be further impacted by the high number of nurse educators who are close to retirement. Therefore, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are under pressure to increase nurse educator education and training in sufficient numbers to meet national health care needs of South African citizens.

Teaching practice for student nurse educators is organized in a variety of ways in Institutions of Higher learning providing programmes on nurse educator preparation. In contact universities student nurse educators are exposed to lesson observations in a real classroom setting, lesson presentations under the supervision of subject lectures at the institution where studying. Once these steps are completed, student nurse educators are then sent to colleges of nursing (where a memorandum of cooperation exist with the higher learning institution) to give ten more lessons over a [period of one week. They are then exposed to final critiquing by lectures where studying for certification as nurse educators.

Student nurse educators at the institution under study are exposed to experiential learning for a period of one week in a simulated environment where peer teaching takes place. During the presentation, critiquing is done by facilitators and constructive and corrective feedback is given to students after each lesson presentation. A number of lesson plans need to be prepared beforehand so that the student is eligible to attend. The South African Nursing Council (SANC) a statutory body that regulates nursing education in South Africa has stipulated competencies, which student nurse educators need to acquire before, registered as nurse educators. These are:

- Scholarship of teaching and learning
- Academic and student management
- Curriculum development
- Leadership and management
- Research and knowledge production

These competencies are in line with those of the World Health Organization (WHO) which focusses on the following domains: Theories and principles of adult learning; Curriculum design and implementation, nursing practice; Research and evidence; Communication, collaboration and partnership; Ethical/ legal principles and professionalism; Monitoring and evaluation and Management and leadership (World Health Organisation [WHO], 14-36).

This model of simulation at the institution understudy is also practiced in America as alluded to by Fitzgerald, Gordon, Katz & Hirsch (2012, p. 5) in their study on “Advanced Practice Nursing Education: Challenges and

Strategies” where they stated that simulation for student teachers fosters collaborative practice and provide clinical experiences that emphasize the optimization of student practice outcomes. Also in the United Kingdom (UK), the use of simulation experiences to enhance practice learning for student teachers is increasingly applied in nursing education (Merrell, Khanom & Olumide 2014, pp. 490-501).

The research was undertaken following concerns raised by managers of some of the nursing colleges through informal discussions with the researcher that the performance of the majority of nurse educators particularly those prepared in the ODL context is below acceptable standards. However, no research could be found on the competencies of nurse educators prepared in the ODL context in South Africa. The same concern raised by some nursing college managers came up in a study conducted by Poindexter (2013, p. 559) in America. The study indicated that graduate nursing education focuses in specialty roles in clinical practice and clinical research and there is growing concern that these skills are necessary but not sufficient to assume a nurse educator role. The fact that student nurse educators in the context of this study are exposed to practice teaching for a period of only one week (5 days) constitute an unequal link between theory and practice. During this period student nurse educator are expected to develop themselves as pedagogical experts as well as didactical knowledge experts as they engage in a simulated teaching experience.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the experiences of student nurse educators currently registered for Health Sciences Education in the Bachelor of Curationis (BA Cur) offered in an ODL university in South Africa.

Research objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- Explore and describe the experiences of student nurse educators regarding the teaching practice workshops, a component of Health Sciences Education.
- To identify strengths and weaknesses of the workshops as experienced by student nurse educators.
- To determine the teaching and learning practices that will enhance the teaching practice workshops.

Research method

Study design

A qualitative, explorative, descriptive and interpretative design was used to understand the experiences of student nurse educators attending the teaching practice workshops. Qualitative research design was compatible with the study’s focus because it enables researchers to dig deep into the phenomenon under study with the purpose of describing and understanding the experiences of student nurse educators regarding nursing education practicum (Marshall & Rossman 2011).

Study setting

The study was conducted in South Africa, UNISA and specifically in the Department of Health Studies, one of the biggest departments in the College of Human Sciences. The department of Health Studies at UNISA is the only university in SA that provides student nurse education and training programme in an ODL context and is the largest producer of nurse educators in the country.

Study population and sample

The participants in this study were student nurse educators attending the teaching practice workshops between July and August 2018 at the Durban Regional center of UNISA. A total of 32 student nurse educators attended the two workshop sessions (15 and 17 respectively). Nine participants who volunteered to participate were from the July group and eleven from the August group making a total of 20 participants. They were enrolled for the BA Cur degree and registered with the Health Sciences Education module. A non-probability, purposive sampling of student nurse educators attending the teaching practice was used. The sample size was determined based on the fact that these student nurse educators have lived experience of the teaching practice workshops.

Data collection and procedure

Written narratives were used to obtain experiences of student nurse educators during teaching practice. A structured question guide was designed by the researcher and was distributed to all student nurse educators who were willing to participate in the study. The question guide consisted of 3 items:

- What are your experiences of the workshop (from the preparation done by the department, to participants’ preparation and during the workshop)?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the workshop?
- Which teaching and learning practices could enhance the teaching practice workshops?

Two groups of workshop attendees were met on two different occasions. The first group was met on 13 July 2018 which was the second day of the workshop during their lunch break to avoid disruption of the programme. Briefing on the purpose of the research project, voluntary participation and written consent was provided. The question guide and consent forms were distributed to those willing to participate and were collected on the last day of the workshop so that they were able to capture all workshop proceedings in their narratives. The second round of data collection took place on 15 August and the above-mentioned process was followed. Twenty student nurse educators participated in the study.

Data analysis

Qualitative content analysis was used to allow the researcher to interpret the underlying meanings of the text as suggested in literature (Creswell 2013). Open coding was done and similar codes were categorized together. Themes and sub-themes were developed from the codes.

Ethical considerations

The question guide contained a section that explained the purpose of the study, confidentiality, that participation was voluntary and a section where participants had to sign if willing to participate in the study. To maintain confidentiality participants were requested not to put their names or student numbers in the question guide. Two boxes were provided so that consent forms that bear students signatures were not mixed with question guide to avoid linking question guide the signed consent forms. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Higher Degrees Committee of the Department of Health Studies at UNISA as well as the College of Human Sciences (HSHDC/821/2017).

Findings

The raw data from written narratives were studied, analysed by the researcher and categorized into themes derived from three research questions in the question guide. After axial coding was applied to the data, codes sharing the same characteristics were grouped into subthemes and categories were developed and are presented in table 1 below.

THEMES, SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES

TABLE 1. Themes, sub-themes and categories

Theme 1	Sub-themes	Categories
Experiences during the workshop	Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information lacks clarity Online orientation does not give adequate guidance. Online orientation availability
	Preparations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study guide used outdated No feedback after booking Lack of support and direction
Theme 2	Sub-themes	Categories
Strengths/weaknesses of the workshop	Technology Study guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of PowerPoint Guides outdated
Theme 3	Sub-themes	Categories
Teaching and learning practices to enhance workshop	Improved orientation practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology

THEME 1: Experiences during the workshop

Sub theme 1: Orientation

Seven out of twenty participants shared frustrations that they experience with online orientation provided. The general feeling was that the information lacks clarity, does not give adequate information and video broadcast not available all the times for those not able to attend session.

Supporting verbatim quotes

Participant 1

“The only criticism I have is that I feel that orientation should be clearer so in the future nursing students will be more ready. The lesson plan for the case study maybe should be called Problem solving or indicated.”

Participant 5

“I was not happy with the online orientation because I was unable to watch it later that day. As an open distance learning, I feel the online presentations should be available anytime for those who were busy during the presentation time to watch it later.”

Participant 11

“It would be better if the orientation is done live not online where students can be able to ask questions and get clarity where they don’t understand. Example: personal analogy strategy is not clear what students are expected to do during personal analogy, other than that everything went well.

Participant 14

“There is a strong possibility that we could have performed better if we had orientation and preparation and a practice run before the assessment could be done.”

Participant 3

There should be more orientation before the workshops so we can prepare more effectively and efficiently. Unsure of certain things like case study-should be clearer – should state it is “problem solving” was misinterpreted.”

Participant 18

“The study guide did not give direct guidelines; some aspects were left update is needed. Feedback for practical sessions booking need attention, letters not receiving us on time to book leave.”

Sub-theme 2: Preparation

Participants were asked to share their experiences on the preparation done by the department for the workshop as well as their individual preparation. Mixed responses were gleaned from this sub-theme, some responses were positive and others negative. A small number of participants (8) experienced preparation of the workshop by the department as good and the overwhelming majority viewed it as very poor.

Supporting verbatim quotes (positive)

Participant 12

“The preparation done by the department was very organized. Venue booking, orientation, discussions, online additional resources and interactive broadcast proved highly beneficial with regards to completion of the practical session”.

Participant 7

“It was a well prepared practical. I had a wonderful and empowering week My tutor was so insightful and allayed our fears. I had excellent practical session and enjoyed every moment”.

Participant 10

“Department preparation was good. We had everything which is part of the presentation and the equipment was available. The small groups, which were formed, help me a lot to get used to present in front of a small group before presenting to a big group. Power point was a little bit challenge but with the help of the facilitator and other fellow students, I acquired the skill.”

Participant 15

“Orientation was good. I think more interactive action must be done to students. Decentralize the practical workshops according to centers. Students find it costly to travel far from practical centers to venues. Example have practical’s in Richards bay, Durban and so on.”

Supporting quotes (Negative)

Participant 16

It was. said we should do bookings via e-mail, fax or post. I did fax mine and I did not get the response from the department. By then I started calling, calling and calling. It seems as if the offices I was calling was closed because not a single day was answered. I sent e-mails, they were not answered. Nevertheless, at the end someone replied to my e-mail and said they are sorry, their fax was not working and no one was informing us. Anyway, it was a part of learning. I am grateful about all the department did for me to give me a chance to be their student.”

Participant 2

Nursing education practical’s are very strenuous, as you prepare by yourself and there is no good guidance on how to tackle the lesson plans. You have to do a lot of follow up concerning the bookings. Do not get feedback in time for arrangements. The online orientation is not enough as you remain with information that lacks clarity. The study guide that we have used was outdated. Our lecturer made it much simpler for us on the 1st day explaining what was expected of us”

Participant 8

“According to me the UNISA failed to provide conducive environment for us to do practical’s. The environment was noisy, poor light and dirty. UNISA still using equipment that is old, the projector is not suitable for new laptops. The students in the campus they were very disturbing wanted to come in by force to take chairs and tables (it was too disturbing for us as students who were doing practical’s) Infection control poor, poor. The toilets were very dirty, noticed students using one hand towel to wipe hands (towel roll) not changed it was wet and dirty)

Participant 19

“There was a delay in getting feedback regarding the booking. Although the booking form was sent. There is no help when you phone. The guide is not updated as it says use transparencies. Some students came prepared with the transparencies and had to be sent away as they did not have power point presentations. Nowhere in the guide did it talk about power point. The online interaction did not give much information.”

THEME 2: Strengths and weaknesses of the workshop

Sub-themes: Technology and study guide

Participants under theme 2 mainly focused on the use of technology during the workshop as well as the study guide, which is supposed to direct them on how to prepare for the workshop.

Strengths

Some participants hailed the workshop as useful and successful. They reported having acquired skills and confidence in teaching using the power point.

Supporting verbatim quotes

Participant 11

“The lecturer was so knowledgeable, accommodating and respectful. The workshop helped to improve my teaching skills and improve confidence on presentations. Use of power point as technology is improving every day; this gave me opportunity to learn power point and presentation. The whole experience was so fruitful”.

Participant 9

“It was good that the institution is up to date with technology. But arrangements should be made for students to be taught on the use of power point”.

Participant 12

“Well structured workshop. Tutors good role models”.

Participant 10

“I received good constructive feedback. I gained skills, confidence and ease to be a good educator. I gained knowledge and am now empowered to teach and share this knowledge.”

Participant 1

“The workshop definitely assists one in getting rid of bad practices that one has taught oneself and adapt the correct guidelines to ensure that we emerge as well trained practical educators.”

Weaknesses

The participants also pointed a number of weaknesses; most glaring was poor environmental conditions and the study guide which is very old and outdated. Almost all participants cited the environment that is poor and not conducive to teaching and learning.

Supporting verbatim quotes

Participant 10

“Tutor disorganized, not prepared. No sequence in carrying out workshop. Tutor allows personal view to interfere in students’ view e.g. If I decide to present a lesson but the tutor does not like topic, I am asked to change topic because she does not approve of topic. Very poor toilet facilities, dirty, smelly toilets. We pay fees but security complains to hand out toilet paper to students. Classroom not conducive for teaching, dirty dusty, floors not scrubbed, and light bulbs not changed. Poor lighting. White board damaged. Air cons not working.”

Participant 15

“One media dominating teaching session- power point. No equipment- have to buy laptop to do presentation. The university must provide venues fully equipped with teaching aids. Tutors must score students based on criteria no other v students- never verify from class the performance strength.”

Participant 3

“Study guide outdated and not applicable to certain parts of the workshop. Need orientation on what will be done for the week.”

“Information on tutorial letter was not stressing the use of power point as entry to workshop but when we are there is no option about it. For future colleagues I will plead for them that tutorial letter must be updated for what is needed because that turn workshop to be stressful.”

Participant 2

“Little /no guidance with preparation of the lesson plans.”

Participant 16

“Lack of orientation about the physical layout of the campus. There was no tea time lunch of 5-10 minutes. There was racism. Our lecture was White. Students we were five, 4 blacks and one Indian. The lecture was siding with the Indian being against Black. She was giving Indian lady to comment on the other student’s work. Of which was annoying to be facilitated by other students. There was a day where the student (Indian lady) suggested that 2 Black students be fired and book for the practical’s in August.”

Other weaknesses cited by participants:

- Not all students were assessed in the same way- lecturers each had their own way of assessing students.

- The noise levels and disruption from fellow students not part of the practical's was extremely disruptive.
- The toilets were filthy, no hand paper towels, jumbo fabric roll to wipe hands very unhygienic and poor infection control practices.
- Time allocated for these workshops too short- only 5 days
- All lectures should be approachable and be friendly to students- to reassure them. All lectures must have a standard method of correction and expectations from students.
- The first day there was no classroom for our group- we wasted so much time.
- The study guide is very old and has not been updated hence we are not updated with current information

THEME 3: Practices that will enhance the teaching practice workshops

Sub-themes: Improved orientation practices; Technology and Study guide

The researcher sought ideas from participants as important stakeholders of the educational programme as to how nursing education workshops could be enhanced to improve outcomes and to equip them with relevant pedagogical skills so that they become better nurse educators of the future. Two main subthemes emerged, that is, improved orientation practices and use of technology during their preparation for the workshop. What also kept on coming up from the narratives was the urgent need to streamline the study guide for teaching practice (HSE2603) so that guidance provided is effective, current and beneficial

Practices to enhance appropriate orientation

The following are some of orientation practices as quoted verbatim from students' narratives:

- "An orientation day a week before the practical's where corrections are given so students have time to redo or re-prepare their content." Participant 1
- "The practice workshop is planned well but time is limited and online orientation should be done on campuses to allow students one on one questions and answers otherwise the whole plan is perfect for me." Participant 11
- "It would be nice to have workshops for orientation of 1-2 days where we would get training on what is expected from us during the practical's." Participant 2
- "Have a skills laboratory so that students can be able to teach (demonstrate). For example, student wants to teach about hand washing there must be at least a tap available." Participant 5
- "I think a little guidance and expectations should be given the day before the lecture. This was done during my session by my lecturer and I found it most beneficial. Colleagues from other groups reported that lecturers were so harsh and critical. This is first time exposure for some and can be very daunting. Lecturers should all be on the same page with regard to expectations, guidance and support. Feedback from previous students and current colleagues were horrific and enough to make a young student "freeze". Participant 1
- "Need more guidance with preparation." Participant 4
- "Demonstration before practical's to be given the chance to learn as we are here to learn." Participant.

Technology related practices

The following regarding technology was suggested

- "To have a teaching session on power point to teach students how to use it." Participant 7, 13
- "Improvement on technical issues during video broadcast live streaming." Participant 10
- "Able to use electronic media effectively while teaching" Participant 7
- "University to provide equipment for students. We are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Media must be explained to students on how to use it." Participant 15
- "Teaching methods for rural areas and college must also be accommodated. Not every student has access to computer or college for that matter." Participant 9

Study guide review

There was a unanimous call from the majority of participants to urgently update the study guide for nursing education workshops. Some of the assertions were:

- “The study guide must match what is expected on the actual practical session. UNISA uses outdated study guides.” Participant 6
- “Study guide to be updated.” Participant 13

Discussion

This paper examined experiences of student nurse educators regarding nursing education workshops generally known as teaching practice workshop in general education. The results addressed three research questions namely: share your experiences during the teaching practice workshop, what are strengths and weaknesses of the workshop and what are the teaching and learning practices that can enhance workshops outcomes. Participants in their narrative reports shared both negative and positive experiences.

Positive experiences

Surprisingly and perhaps worryingly, very few students hailed the preparation of the workshop as good and highly beneficial, useful and successful. They viewed orientation as good but suggested that more student/teacher interaction is needed. They reported having acquired skills and confidence in teaching and in particular using the power point. Participants also acknowledged having received guidance from knowledgeable, accommodating and respectful lectures/ facilitators .(It is worth mentioning that the department of Health Studies employ facilitators as mentors on a contractual basis to assist Health Sciences Education lecturers to run the workshops throughout UNISA regional centers across South Africa).Constructive feedback received from educators assisted in shaping their teaching skills and development of qualities expected from an educator. One of the primary responsibilities of mentors during facilitation of teaching practice workshops is to give guidance on immediate challenges faced by mentee (Lindhard, 2008) as quoted by Mapolisa & Tshabalala (2014, p. 17). The development of confidence as mentioned by participants was also reported in a study conducted by Kyriacou & Stephens (2010, p. 19) which revealed that student teachers acknowledged and celebrated development of confidence that came from the teaching practice experience.

Negative experiences

Findings of the study also revealed that while student nurse educators had positive experiences about the workshops, these were outweighed by the negative experiences with preparation, orientation and assessment during the workshops, outdated study guide and poor preparation for use of technology. Environment according to a number of participants was not conducive to teaching and learning, it was described as filthy, noisy with poor ablution facilities and poor working equipment. According to literature, a conducive environment physical and psychological environment is conducive to effective teaching and learning. Kuncoro & Dardiri (2017, p. 2) a conducive teaching environment helps teacher to do their job and obligations well and wholeheartedly and learners to achieve their educational goals. Study guide for HSE2603 requires urgent update so that it provides appropriate guidance to student nurse educators and orientation need to be properly structured and communicated to all stakeholders (lectures/facilitators and students) so that uniformity is ensured in terms of guidance given to students and outline expectations of the workshop to them. This will ensure maximum support is provided to students. Saricoban (2010, p. 707) propounds that lack of audio visual equipment and other supplementary materials such as internet and course book that is considered to include communicative tasks and activities all negatively affect the outcome of learning and teaching. Participants viewed period of only 5 days as very short. This is true because according to Mokoena (2017, p. 123), practice teaching for student teachers at the same ODL institution under study is organized in block periods of six weeks.

LIMITATIONS

The study provided rich data that the institution understudy including others providing student nurse teacher programmes can use to improve teaching practice for student nurse educators. However, the study was conducted only at one regional center and the findings cannot be generalized to other centers. In addition, the study findings are based on the experiences of 20 participants who volunteered to participate. Other participants who did not participate may have had more positive or negative experiences than those who participated.

CONCLUSIONS

The study yielded a mixed bag of experiences and that not enough orientation was provided to student nurse educators to prepare them effectively for the workshops. The following conclusions were drawn:

- Student nurse educators' experiences of the teaching practice workshop were both positive and negative.
- Support given to student nurse educators was not similar. In some instances limited assistance or no assistance at all was given during teaching practice. Although some facilitators were viewed as very friendly and provided good guidance, others were described as unfriendly, harsh and relied other students for decisions to rate students after lesson presentation. General student supervision was found to be different.
- Environment provided by the university was explained as deplorable and not at all conducive to teaching, learning, and equipment poor.
- Orientation need to be well-planned and online orientation to be accessible whenever required. Study guide and workbook to reviewed as a matter of urgency and aligned to on-line teaching and learning. Currently the study guide and workbook is still talking about transparencies and overhead projectors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, suggestions were made on how teaching practice could be improved to effectively prepare student nurse educators for their future role as nurse educators. They are as follows:

- Suitable venues that are well equipped with the necessary technological gadgets, away from the mainstream student activities to avoid disturbances and ensure privacy. The teaching practice workshops are provide to professional nurses who are pursuing their studies and I am of the opinion that they should be accorded the necessary respect.
- University contracted facilitators should be continuously empowered and updated so that they are able to provide appropriate guidance, support and supervision during teaching practice.
- Good orientation for both facilitators and student nurse educators cannot be overemphasized. It must stress uniformity with how students should be treated during teaching practice. For student nurse educators, it must be informative, precise and accessible. It should include teaching on the use of PowerPoint.
- Update of the study material.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Professor TE Masango is Associate professor at the University of South Africa (UNISA) department of Health Studies who is passionate about nursing education and philosophies. She has been teaching for the past 32 years and has supervised 10 masters and 2 doctoral students to completion.

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