

Student Teachers' Presentations of Science Lessons in South African Primary Schools: Ideal and Practice

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ABSTRACT A recurring theme in science teaching in South Africa has been poor learner performance in science subjects. The article reports on an inquiry into the quality of science teaching in South African primary schools. Ideal science teaching and learning practices as presented in the literature were reviewed. Against this background, the practice of science teaching in primary schools was investigated by means of an empirical inquiry. Qualitative data were gathered by document analysis of portfolios of student teachers enrolled for a postgraduate certificate in education through distance education. The findings indicated that participants did not apply the science curriculum as intended; teaching strategies were ineffective; learner assessment followed traditional methods; and time management and lesson planning skills required further development. Generally, participants failed to implement pedagogical knowledge presented in the teacher education programme. Recommendations as to how to close the gap between ideal school science teaching and actual practice are made.