

Teaching Practice for the 21st Century: Challenges and Prospects for Teacher Education in the North-West Province, South Africa

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ABSTRACT The objective of this paper is to report on the findings of the study conducted with teacher trainees from the North-West province of South Africa on the challenges of and prospects for a teaching practice programme. A case study method in the form of qualitative descriptive research was used for the methodology and design of the research. A sample of 20 out of 200 teacher trainees who had spent a minimum of 2 years at the tertiary institution was randomly selected. The data analysis was based on research questions and guided by the theoretical framework of the study. The findings reveal that teaching practice for the 21st century is plagued by challenges that affect the success of the programme. Some of the challenges identified are that teacher trainees use wrong criteria to select practice schools, teacher trainees are not adequately prepared for teaching practice, mentors are not sufficiently involved in teaching practice because they lack knowledge of mentorship, and the assessment and awarding of teaching practice marks are subjective. It is recommended that the organisation of teaching practice be revised to include stipulated criteria to select practicing schools and to provide training to mentors on their responsibilities during teaching practice.