

Experiential learning for health sciences education students: An open distance learning (ODL) context

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Purpose: To explore and describe the lived experiences of student teachers currently registered for the Bachelor of Curationis (BCUR) 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.

Method and Design: An explorative, descriptive, interpretative and qualitative design was conducted to explore student teachers experiences of the teaching practice workshop they have attended. 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. Students who were willing to participate were requested to sign the consent form. Data was collected through written narratives and a Collaiz's method of data analysis was followed.

Results: The majority of the students indicated that the workshop period of five days is too short compromising face to face learning and makes teaching and learning to take place underduress. They also expressed fear of the unknown and anxiety as they had never taught before. Others felt it was real experience situation, where they practiced peer assessment and had an opportunity of socializing with fellow students.

Conclusions: Student teachers indicated that the one day orientation done beginning of the year should be extended to five days to facilitate maximum guidance by lecturers and to ensure proper preparation of lesson plans. This should be followed by another five days for the teaching practice workshop. Audio visual teachings and recording was suggested as a form of assessment. Use of latest technology such as power point presentation should be used instead of overhead projectors and posters

Key Words: Experiential learning, ODL, student teachers, teaching practice.

Biography:

Dr Masango is holding a D Phil Nursing Education (2002), M Cur Nursing Education (1998), B Cur Hons Nursing Education (1993), Diploma in nursing administration (1995), BCUR Education and Community Health Nursing (1991), Certificate in Clinical HIV/AIDS management for nurses (2008).

Dr Masango is currently working as a senior lecturer in the Department of Health Studies at the University of South Africa (UNISA). She has previously worked as a professional nurse at Ngwelezane hospital in KwaZulu Natal Province (1982-1985), as a lecturer and senior lecturer at the University of Zulu Land (1995- 2007), Provincial coordinator for the University Research Cooperation (2007-2009) and Campus manager at Net Care Education (2009-2010). She is and has been involved in the supervision of post-graduate students (M&D) some of which have completed their theses and dissertations.

Dr Masango has published quite extensively in accredited journals both nationally and internationally. And has a very strong interest in nursing education, philosophy of education, research and TB/HIV/AIDS.