

Exploring Student Teachers' Experiences of the Concept Quality Education and Quality Instruction at a South African University

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KEYWORDS Teacher Training. Pedagogy. Assessment. Content. Lecturer Evaluation

ABSTRACT This study sought to establish university students' experiences on the quality of education received from lectures. Quality of education involves acquisition of pedagogical content knowledge, personal characteristics of lecturers, and teaching and assessment strategies practices in the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The study adopted an interpretive study following a qualitative approach. It made use of a case study design with a purposive sample of fifteen Fourth year Bachelor of Education students. Data were collected using focus group interviews with participating students. Content analysis was used to analyse data through emerging themes. Students argued that most lecturers employed by the university were good quality lecturers while some were considered poor quality. Students categorized poor quality lecturers as inexperienced and those who missed lectures attending conferences or on sabbatical leaves. Students considered an outstanding lecturer as a fully qualified person who is always on time and available for lectures and consultations. The results reveal that students have acquired sound pedagogical content knowledge from the university and lecturers employed various assessment strategies which challenged students' higher order thinking abilities. The usefulness of the teaching practice component was also confirmed though poor organisation of teaching practice was condemned. The study concludes that initial training received by students at UKZN is of high quality and recommends that more attention should be placed on improving teaching practice supervision.