A Changing World and a Changing Teaching Practice Model for Zimbabwe in a Post Covid-19 Context

Shoorai Konyana[a] & Modise Alfred Motalenyane[*a]

* Corresponding author
E-mail: mamodise@cut.ac.za
a. Central University of Technology, Free State, South Africa

ABSTRACT

The advent of Covid-19 in March 2020 and its declaration by WHO as a global pandemic led to a closure of schools which, in turn, affected the Teaching Practice (TP) component of the 3-3-3 teacher education model. This research sets out to establish alternative TP models when face to face interaction is impossible. In doing so, the study analyses Zimbabwean teacher education TP policy with regard to how it might remain relevant in the post Covid-19 context without compromising its quality. The study was carried out at a teachers' college in the Midlands Province. It utilises online focus group discussion, interviews, and document analysis to generate data. Through the lens of content and discourse analysis, the study unpacks the professional arguments presented by college lecturers who forged onwards and redirected teacher education in the post Covid-19 context. It emerges that a TP model which accommodates supervision and assessment based on video recorded lessons is a good alternative to traditional face to face supervision. College lecturers certainly regard the TP component of teacher education as crucial and, therefore, not simply to be left in the hands of school-based supervisors. Furthermore, online supervision and assessment is possible regardless of internet access challenges. The study recommends that colleges utilise both traditional and online based supervision where applicable. Student teachers are encouraged to video record lessons during the periods they have learners, so that the video recorded lessons could be used for their supervision and assessment when learners are unavailable. Further studies could consider the feasibility of a larger scale online TP supervision model.

KEYWORDS

Covid-19 Pandemic; new-normal era; teacher education; teaching practice; Zimbabwe.

INTRODUCTION

It is a characteristic of pandemics to disrupt most sectors of social life – the education sector is certainly not spared. By the end of the year 2019, the World Health Organisation (WHO) received notification of the emergence of a novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) in the Chinese city of Wuhan (Adegboye et al., 2020). In March 2020, the WHO declared that the disease had evolved from an epidemic to a pandemic. The transmission of the disease was rapid, spreading swiftly to North America, Europe, Latin America, and our own African continent. In Africa, more specifically, the situation was reportedly worse than official figures suggested because most countries were ill equipped with the requisite disease surveillance and response infrastructure (Martinez-Alvarez et al., 2020). Besides being ill equipped, African countries' shortages in health facilities resulted in poor service provision and overstretched health care systems.

In Zimbabwe, pre-service teacher education is offered in a variety of institution types. Zezekwa et al. (2013) observe that primary school teacher education mostly occurs in colleges which are in all provinces of the country, the student teachers earning a diploma in education when they complete the course. There are 12 primary school teacher training colleges, all of which maintain close ties with the community in which they are located. Shava (2015) points out that there are three secondary level pre-service teacher education colleges. Additional education programmes are offered in the universities under their faculties of education. These include the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed), and the Master of Education (M.Ed), and are mainly high school teacher qualifications (Kwenda 2014). However, Great Zimbabwe University is now offering a pre-service B. Ed Honours for primary school teacher trainees. In order to cater for technical and vocational learning areas in the secondary school curriculum, some technical colleges now also offer pre-service teacher education programmes. Kwenda (2014) points out that all college-based pre-service teacher education qualifications are endorsed by the University of Zimbabwe. All teacher education colleges in Zimbabwe are therefore associate colleges of the University of Zimbabwe. This study was restricted to a primary teacher education college which is an associate college of the University of Zimbabwe. The college offers a three-year diploma in teacher education programme mostly to holders of Ordinary 'O' Level certificates.

The three-year diploma programme is offered as a first port of call for students who have never undertaken any qualification in teacher education. It is an initial course for teachers (Kwenda, 2014). The 3-3-3 model comprises the first three terms (one year) of academic study at college for face-to-face theoretical learning, followed by three terms which constitute one full year of teaching practice at schools, and the final three terms (one year) spent at college dedicated to face-to-face college experience, apparently allowing the students to reflect on their TP experience. The one year of teaching practice is an essential platform for initial teacher professional development in the pre-service teacher education programmes (Flores, 2016; Moyo, 2020; White and Forgasz, 2016). The TP component of any teacher education programme in Graham's view (2006) should be regarded as a formal ritualistic procedure for a teacher's

profession since qualification depends on it. Morales et al. (2020) are of the opinion that it is critical to examine the ways in which teacher training and professional development are structured, as well as the content and technique of teaching teachers.

The Teaching Practice (TP) component of teacher education programmes in Zimbabwe is crucial and carries more weight than the campus-based theoretical component. The TP component relies mostly on the expertise of qualified and experienced school mentors and school heads who are required to "supervise, assist, guide, advise, evaluate and assess the students for much of the time that they are within the schools" (Kwenda, 2014, p. 220). Colleges have a Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) regarding roles and expectations of student teachers on TP. The supervision of TP is thus carried out by schools and colleges, though school mentors have more time with student teachers than college lecturers. Though school heads and mentors supervise and assess the student teachers, it is the college lecturers' and external assessor's assessment mark that in the end carries more weight in evaluating the overall TP performance of a student teacher. Therefore, college lecturers have to visit schools and supervise the student teachers who are practically teaching learners at schools.

The role and place of TP in the teacher education of creating reflective teachers and enhancing teacher professional transformation and growth is well documented (Aspden, 2017; Flores 2016; Moyo, 2020). Consequently, the TP component needs to be critically analysed and questioned. Stakeholders debate on the place of TP in terms of its philosophical, pedagogical, and procedural aspects, as well as the policy surrounding its implementation (Moyo, 2020). The lack of consistency in how teacher education is offered in different countries also gives rise to debates surrounding TP. In this regard, Flores (2016) advises that we need to understand teacher education within its economic, political, social and cultural context. There is also the need to recognize the epistemological and conceptual assumptions on which the organizational systems and curriculum are based. Knowledge of these debates is crucial, as it presents ideas of teaching as a craft and teaching as a profession (Loughran and Hamilton, 2016; Moyo, 2020). The contribution of this study is to rekindle the supervision and assessment policy debates on school-based and college-based TP supervision and assessment. In light of social distancing restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, this study grapples with the question, 'Who will supervise student teachers on TP and judge whether adequate teacher competencies have been mastered and can be proven?' The debate on school-based and college-based TP supervision and assessment is supported by White and Forgasz (2016) and Moyo (2020) who point to the existence of a contestation between college-based and school-based supervision. The challenge emanates from the so called 'colonisation' of Initial Teacher Education (Flores, 2016) that is manifested by a superficial disconnection between the school system as the main place for the TP (Kwenda, 2014) and colleges as supposed strongholds of theory. With regard to the teachers' college under study, which operates under a scheme of association with one university in the country, college-based teacher educators believe that they have the final decision over what

could be considered adequate performance by student teachers during TP. Accordingly, the classroom mentors who work with student teachers on a daily basis are reduced to bystanders when it comes to deciding on the final mark for the TP.

When Covid-19 was declared a pandemic in March 2020 and as a result schools were closed, the procedure that had apparently been working perfectly well up to 2019 was placed in serious confusion. Unfortunately, the college under study had a class which had just gone on TP and had to be supervised and assessed – which was impossible, as the students could no longer be visited by lecturers. A practical supervision and assessment challenge thus confronted the college. How were the student teachers on TP to be certificated as competent without going through the 'rite of passage' of TP and without the approval of the college lecturers who saw themselves as the ones with the final say when it came to determining whether TP performance were satisfactory or not? The TP component in this case posed a challenge because, unlike the theoretical component which could be completed through eLearning, the teaching practice, being a practical task, which should be carried out in an actual classroom (Flores, 2016; Moyo, 2020; Ngwaru, 2017), was problematic in its own unique way. The Covid-19 lockdown restrictions posed a challenge to the way TP supervision was carried out by both schools and colleges. The TP component is a practical one and student teachers have to practically interact with learners in a practical teaching and learning process in order for them to gain teaching skills.

Emanating as it does from the above background, this study purports to establish the perspectives of college lecturers on TP supervision and assessment of situations in which there is no certainty that learners will be available at schools to be taught by the student teachers and so demonstrate their teaching competencies. It is important to get these lecturers' perspectives because their decisions are likely to have an impact on the future of TP supervision and assessment and have the potential to change the paradigm and the philosophical ideas behind the practice of college-based teacher education in Zimbabwe. The study is thus envisaged to inform the philosophy of future teacher educational practice and conceivably redirect the way things are done in teacher education in Zimbabwe as we enter into a new-normal era.

Theoretical Framework

The study utilizes constructivism theory, shaped by the thoughts of Vygotsky who points out that learning takes place within social interactions and stresses culture as an environment which pressures learning (Jacobs et al., 2011). Constructivism theory assists students regarding how to share their ideas, learn from each other amongst their experiences and their ideas, and come up with good ideas while interacting with each other, and emphasises communal learning as a group (Lee-Krause et al., 2010; Mauch & Tarman, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

There is a challenge in the supervision and assessment of student teachers on Teaching Practice which emanates from a new order of operation of schools in the new-normal era. Unlike the 'on

campus', face to face theoretical component of teacher education, which can be easily offered on line as an alternative, TP demands that student teachers are supervised or assessed in schools as they practically deliver lessons to learners. However, as a result of the Covid-19 induced lockdowns and subsequent social distancing measures put in place by governments in line with WHO regulations, learners are not always readily available in schools (Moyo, 2020) for student teachers to teach and hence gain teaching skills and competencies. While college-based initial teacher education swiftly opted for an integration of face to face and online learning during Covid-19, the Teaching Practice component has remained a challenge since it has to be carried out in the schools with the student teachers practically teaching the learners in their classes. The new-normal era has seen learners in schools coming to school on alternating days. Hence, there are cases in which student teachers do not have learners to teach on those occasions when college lecturers visit their schools for supervision and assessment. Equally challenging is the question regarding whose assessment marks should be considered for the certification of student teachers on the TP component. Therefore, this study seeks to close the supervision and assessment gap in the new-normal era, in which the availability of learners in schools for student teachers to teach is not guaranteed, by suggesting an alternative supervision model which can be adopted by colleges in the new-normal era.

Research Questions

In line with the above, the study is guided by the following questions.

- What adjustments are put in place by teacher education in Zimbabwe to remain relevant in the prevalence of Covid-19?
- What challenges are posed by Covid-19 lockdown restrictions on the TP component of teacher education?
- Which TP assessment model can be adopted by teachers' colleges in the new-normal era?
- How effective is the alternative TP assessment model in assessing student teachers' practical teaching?

METHODOLOGY

Design

A qualitative approach was adopted for the study. Within the qualitative approach, a case study design was utilized. A case study allowed the researchers to make an up-close, in-depth, and detailed examination of the case under study within its real-world context. The case study is viewed by Patton (2001) as mainly seeking to have the knowledge of phenomena in its specific settings or its natural setting. In a case study, the researcher has no interest in the manipulation of the phenomenon of interest. Creswell (2014) further indicates that a case study design falls under the naturalistic approach in which researchers come up with the whole picture about the phenomenon of interest, analyse documents and detailed views of informants, and conduct the

study in a natural setting. Focus group discussions through online means and participant observation were utilized to generate data, since one of the researchers is an employee at the research site. While doing field work, the researchers had the opportunity to take note of and analyse the views and opinions of college-based teacher education educators. This enabled the researchers to see what they believed, instead of imposing their personal value judgments on the views of the participants.

Sample

The sample consisted of one TP officer, two Heads of Departments (HODs), five District Officers (DOs), and ten lecturers involved in TP supervision of student teachers. All were considered to possess valuable knowledge on the practice and implementation of TP at the case college.

Research Instruments

The researchers used open ended and unstructured interviews. These research instruments enabled the researchers to extract rich data, since they allowed room for flexibility to discover certain points stressed in the focus groups. Online focus group discussions enhanced diversity of thinking and noted contradictions and differences when they arose. They further allowed for social and physical distancing at the same time. The interviews targeted those from within the administration and coordination of TP. Interviews were held twice every week and each interview was an hour long. The interviews were carried out when it was most convenient for the participants. Using the interviews, the researchers were guided by open-ended and unstructured interview schedules. The use of open-ended and unstructured interview questions freed the participants to further explain points of interest and expand on others' viewpoints. The focus group participants expanded on some of the issues. The researchers transcribed data generated in note pads after seeking interviewees' consent.

Data Collection Procedure

One TP Officer, two HODs and five District Education Officers (DEOs) were purposively selected to respond to open-ended and unstructured interviews. Although these participants held the posts above, they are also college lecturers and, as such, were deemed to be information rich in terms of the practice of TP at the case college. Purposive sampling utilises a smaller part of the population of cases which is accessible. For this study, efforts were made to create conditions that supported the maximum opportunity to collect the most appropriate data on the phenomenon under study. According to Tshuma and Mafa (2013), information rich cases denote those participants from whom one can acquire a great deal of information concerning issues which are important to the study. The TP officer is the one who mans the TP office, keeps the information on the student teacher deployment, and keeps all supervision and assessment reports for all students on TP. The HODs directly supervise the TP officer and the DEOs help the TP officer in coordinating deployments of other lecturers on the supervisory role during TP supervision. Their mandate is to make sure all student teachers in their districts are supervised and assessed. They also collect the supervision and assessment reports for the TP officer and

prepare reports on how each TP supervision visit was carried out. The study interviews were open-ended so as to give the respondents the chance to express themselves without suggestive responses being given.

In line with WHO guidelines, as well as Moyo (2020), the WhatsApp platform was also used for focus group discussion (so as to observe social distancing). Lecturers involved in TP supervision and assessment discussed issues pertaining to supervision and assessment of TP, especially in the new-normal era. The discussions were mainly focused on dealing with student teacher supervision and assessment in circumstances in which learners are not available in schools for student teachers to engage with in live lesson deliveries. Content analysis was utilised to carry out a systematic examination of themes, patterns and meanings, and biases on lecturers' perspectives regarding TP supervision/assessment.

Data Analysis

A qualitative content analysis was utilized to make meaning out of the debate that lecturers engaged on through a virtual platform. Content analysis in line with Creswell (2014) was employed to come up with a systematic examination and interpretation of data presented, in an endeavour to establish themes, patterns, meanings, and biases pertaining to views of college lecturers on the supervision and assessment of student teachers under circumstances in which the availability of learners at schools was not guaranteed because of lockdown restrictions. Data were thematically analysed following Creswell's open-coding procedures (2014). These procedures entailed a systematic organisation and categorisation of data and then a description of it thematically. In order to condense the data into manageable categories, themes were assigned codes. For ethical considerations and to maintain confidentiality in data reporting, numbers were assigned to participating lecturers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis through thematic analysis brought about four themes: (1) Adjustments to teacher education necessitated by Covid-19, (2) Challenges of TP supervision, (3) Suggested TP supervision models, and (4) Proposed TP supervision model. Each of these themes and the evidence for them is presented below.

Theme 1: Adjustments to teacher education necessitated by Covid-19

After the onset of Covid -19 in Zimbabwe in March 2020, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development (MHTESTD) introduced the integration of face to face and online learning, so that during lockdown learning continued without disturbance. However, participants in this study indicated that for teachers' college students, the online learning had its own share of challenges, as pointed out by lecturer 3 (female aged 45) who said:

> While online learning would be ideal under the circumstances, some of the student teachers do not have the necessary ICT gadgets to help them access online learning. Furthermore, some live in rural areas where they do not have internet

access and on top of that, data bundles are not affordable to some of our students. Therefore, as good as it is, we cannot rely on online learning since not all students benefit from it.

Lecturer 1 (male aged 48) added:

While it is a noble idea to utilize online learning during lockdown, not all our students have the ICT skills to benefit fully from online learning.

Lastly, lecturer 6 (Female aged 40) noted:

Some of our students are technophobic. If they have to rely on ICT gadgets in order to learn, surely not all of them will benefit from this approach.

The issues raised by these participants are pertinent. Student teachers do not have the necessary ICT devices for them to engage in online learning. Furthermore, the internet is a challenge in Zimbabwe, especially in the rural areas where some of the students were residing during the lockdown periods. Another challenge to the online provision was the cost of data to enable students to access online learning. These findings are consistent with work by Octaberlina and Muslimin (2020) and Maposa (2020) who observe that barriers to online learning include lack of appropriate ICT equipment, lack of internet access, and lack of digital skills to prepare appropriate content for student teachers. Further, Tariq et al. (2018) add that lack of technological skills by teacher educators and student teachers, including institutional culture, hinder the implementation of online learning. Therefore, even though higher education introduced the integrated approach of face to face and online learning, part of the approach had a number of hindrances which needed to be addressed.

Theme 2: Challenges of TP supervision
Turbulent times such as those of pandemics pose a number of challenges for education. In the Zimbabwean context, Hove and Dube (2021) observe that the Covid-19 pandemic was accompanied by economic and skills challenges. The lockdown itself presented even more pressing challenges for student teachers on TP and lecturers. During TP visits by college supervisors, learners were not available in schools for student teachers to be assessed while practically teaching. Even when schools reopened, learners came to school on alternating days to cater for social distancing. In such cases, some student teachers would not have learners when lecturers visited schools for supervision and assessment. Assessment challenges arose especially for student teachers who were in their final term of TP, since they had to be externally assessed on TP and a mark for their TP component endorsed before they could embark on their final residential year. Under these circumstances, participants in the study deliberated on possible ways of assessing the class on TP.

Online assessment

The idea of supervising and assessing student teachers on TP through online models was discussed, but the participating lecturers thought it was not feasible. For example, lecturer 5 (Male aged 52) said:

> TP is a hands-on engagement and, in that sense, cannot be perceived in comparison with taught lectures and tutorials where students can just read material posted online.

Lecturer 7 (male aged 58) added:

> Online supervision and assessment are not feasible. Considering poor internet access in some schools, it is difficult to imagine how a 30 minutes lesson could be observed online without disturbances of poor connectivity.

The idea of online supervision and assessment was deemed not feasible. While it was feasible for taught courses, it was deemed not feasible for teaching practice because this involves the student teacher practically teaching, the challenge being that it is not about the student teacher receiving tutorial material online, but about him or her displaying learnt teaching skills and competencies

The views of these participating lecturers echo that of educators in Moyo's (2020) study which rejects online approaches to TP supervision and assessment on the grounds that the approach cannot capture all the richness inherent in a live lesson delivery. TP involves practical activities in which the student teacher is expected to demonstrate certain teacher competencies. Therefore, online approaches to TP were rejected for not being able to present these competencies fully. Furthermore, the lockdown robbed student teachers of the teaching experience they went out to get in the first place. According to Manu and Owusu-Ansah (2019), experience is important in teaching skills acquisition and it is gained over a period of time. The lockdown shortened the time for student teachers to gain teaching experience.

Assessment of professional documents only, without lesson delivery

The idea of assessing TP through professional documents was debated and most participants declined it. For example, lecturer 1 (male aged 48) said:

> Passing students based on TP professional documents only reduces the TP component of the course to a portfolio-based course. Students may draft the documents from home, without gaining any teaching skills.

Lecturer 4 (male aged 50) also pointed out:

> Professional documents only constitute a fraction of the competences a student teacher should develop during TP. It is necessary to supervise and assess student teachers on class and classroom management, among other competences, which cannot be captured in the professional documents.

Lecturer 2 (female aged 46) added:

> Supervising students without observing the students delivering lessons trivializes
> the idea of practice in TP. Lesson delivery is very important and lecturers should
> have the chance to observe student teachers deliver a lesson, so as to determine
> if students are capable of achieving the set objectives.

The study found that college lecturers rejected the idea of supervising and assessing student teachers based on their professional documents, the reasons proffered being that student teachers might not gain any teaching skills by drafting the documents.

This view echoes those by Moyo (2020) who sees the idea of document-based TP supervision as not feasible. This is so because TP supervision and assessment are guided by an assessment instrument that stipulates specific teaching competencies the student teacher should demonstrate. Documentation, consisting of the Teaching Practice file and other professional documents such as schemes of work, individual progress record, and a number of other records, only contributes a fraction of the competencies a student teacher should demonstrate in a single TP supervision. Competencies such as class and classroom management and stimulus variations call for the physical presence of the TP supervisor in order to capture these dynamics of lesson delivery (Moyo, 2020).

School-based supervision

Lecturers were concerned regarding the objectivity of school head, T.I.C and mentor supervision. Lecturer 6 (female aged 40) said:

> Basing on the difference between our marks and those from the school-based
> supervisors like the mentors, T. I.C, Depute Head, it is difficult to say they are
> objective in their supervision and assessment. It seems they give more marks just
> to make students happy.

However, lecturer 4 (male aged 50) had the following to say:

> We cannot ignore the contribution of school supervision and assessment, as
> college has invested time and resources in carrying out workshops to equip
> mentors in the schools. I still agree though that we cannot consider their
> assessment as final.

But lecturer 3 (female aged 45) had another view point:

> *Not all mentors got the chance to attend the workshops. Hence, we cannot rely on
> mentor supervision and assessment only.*

Lecturers considered that school-based supervisors such as the mentors, TICs and deputy heads were more lenient when it came to awarding marks for supervised student teachers. This made lecturers believe that these school-based supervisors were not quite objective in their awarding of marks as they assess student teachers. Yet, on the other hand, school-based

supervisors benefitted from workshops held by the college staff to develop them on issues of mentoring, including supervision and assessment. Therefore, as indicated in the debate, it was not proper to side-line these school-based supervisors because they had been equipped with supervisory skills.

In line with Flores (2016) and Moyo (2020), the study found that there exists mistrust between college-based lecturers and mentors in schools. That is despite the fact that some mentors have been workshopped to handle supervision of student teachers. Therefore, school-based supervision is insufficient and students' TP supervision cannot be left in the hands of school-based supervisors. This also points to the fact that the TP component of the teacher education programme is given great importance (Van Nuland, 2011; White and Forgasz, 2016) and the lecturers feel they are the ones in a position to carry out meaningful supervision of their students – they cannot leave it to chance. The same sentiments are held by Schön (1983), who agrees that lecturer supervision paves the way for student teacher reflective practice.

Chikodzi (1999) and Chiromo (2004) also agree that school-based teaching practice marks are much higher on average, as compared to those awarded by college lecturers. The two authors interpret this to mean that mentors tend to side with student teachers and empathise with them against college lecturers whom they perceive to be witch hunters and fault seekers, who are hard-hearted and uncompromising. This, in turn, suggests that there could be in existence a lack of collaboration between teacher education institutions and schools in which student teachers are deployed for teaching practice. Closely related to this view, Chiromo (2004) points out that, while on Teaching Practice supervision, lecturers do not involve mentors in the process. According to Chiromo (2004), mentors are not consulted by college supervisors on issues relating to student teachers' progress and they are not involved in the actual process of teaching practice supervision when they visit schools. In Chikunda's (2008) view, this is happening because the teaching practice model in Zimbabwe, while it is supposed to be based on the premise of social constructivism and socially critical orientations, in practice has remained based on neoclassical instrumentalism. Chikunda (2008) observes that the neoclassical and technical delivery of TP can be traced back to the traditional technical approach to schooling adopted by the colonial education system which has penetrated to the present-day teacher education system. "This approach has created a technocratic mindset that continues to influence the professional character of teacher educators" (Chikunda, 2008). However, in the face of Covid-19, this neoclassical ideological approach to the teaching practice component of teacher education does not work. A necessity has been created to change the Zimbabwean primary teacher education TP model to align it with the changing world.

Therefore, the need for college lecturer supervision and assessment remains paramount and there remains a need for college lecturers to come up with a method that they could use to assess student teachers when learners are not available. An alternative supervision model has to be provided in order to supervise and assess the group already on TP which, hopefully, could be used in the future under similar circumstances.

Theme 3: Alternative TP assessment model

An alternative model suggested was that of online supervision. Lecturer 2 (female aged 46) suggested:

> Under circumstances where learners come to school in few numbers and on alternative days, student teachers can connect with a lecturer from college as they teach at their schools. The lecturer, who is connected through zoom, Microsoft teams or even WhatsApp video call, can follow the lesson from the comfort of their office. That way the college beats the travel restrictions and at the same time maintains social distancing.

While this sounds convincing and applicable, a follow up view to this pointed out the challenges associated with online supervision and assessment in Zimbabwe. The view presented by lecture 7 (male aged 58) was:

> Not all student teachers are deployed at schools with quality internet WiFi to sustain a thirty-minute lesson connected to college online. Most students are deployed at rural schools where internet access is a big barrier to this online supervision and assessment model.

Another version of the use of ICTs in TP supervision was proffered. Lecturer 6 (female aged 40) proposed:

> Student teachers should take chances of learner availability and take videos of themselves teaching. They keep the videos for situations where the learners are not available. Then the student teacher may find means to submit the video together with their professional documents to college or they upload the video when they manage to get internet access. Furthermore, only one student can travel to college and submit the TP videos of many students at once. This way internet access is not a barrier and just a few students will have to travel to college to submit the videos.

However, the view of lecturer 8 (male aged 55) was against the use of video recorded TP lessons. This particular lecturer believed:

> Those videos recorded TP lessons are stage managed. They do not reflect the actual student teacher teaching performance. It's better to wait until the situation permits for college lecturers' school visits to supervise students teaching live.

The views of these college lecturers resonate with those of other scholars such as Mupfiga et al. (2017) and Moyo (2020) who indicate that the challenges in online learning, including online supervision, are lack of internet, high cost of mobile devices, high broad band costs, lack of mobile learning management systems, resistance to change by lecturers, and WiFi connectivity. Besides these challenges, Maposa (2021) also highlighted institutional culture as a

barrier to online learning. This implies that some institutions may resist online supervision due to their culture, while others invest in it.

Theme 4: Effectiveness of the alternative TP assessment model

Opinions put forward by the participants in this study point out that online supervision may not be practical for all students due to lake of internet access, but that the video-based TP model is quite effective when internet access is not guaranteed. Lecturer 8 pointed out:

> We have been giving student teachers distance learning assignments based on the use of ICTs where they would video record themselves teaching and submit these to college for marking. We can adopt the same strategy for TP supervision and assessment in the same way we were doing with the distance learning assignment under the 2-5-2 teacher education model.

To add, lecturer 3 (female aged 45) emphasised:

> Keeping video recorded lessons of student teachers is effective in times of lockdown when learners are not in schools. Student teachers can submit the videos by other means when they have no internet access.

Unlike in Moyo's (2020) findings, participating lecturers in this research study supported online video assessment of students teaching, though with some reservations. Having required student teachers to engage in assignments based on their lesson delivery during teaching practice and to video record these assignments which would then be marked by their lecturers at college, some participating lecturers believed that such a method of assessment could be extended to TP supervision and assessment. While the study has reservations on online assessment, the video-based model of assessment was found to be effective, though it depends on the availability of learners at schools. Therefore, the model demands that student teachers video record themselves teaching, utilizing the time they have learners in classes effectively, so that when there is lockdown supervision can be based on those videos.

The video-based model of Teaching Practice supervision advocated for by the participating lecturers in this study could be an answer to the challenges of online supervision cited by authorities such as Mupfiga et al (2017) and Moyo (2020). The model is user friendly even for students deployed at schools without internet access. It is also further backup evidence for the teacher competency skills mastered by the student teacher while on teaching practice. The cultural resistance alluded to by Maposa (2021) may remain a threat to this idea because, as cited by Jonasson (2016), educationists suffer from change-inertia. But, when the model is welcomed and tried, it is effective in that lessons taught are preserved and can be used for supervision when the Covid 19 situation does not permit school visits.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The discussion above which pertains to the supervision and assessment of TP in the new normal era is framed within four themes: the need for change in changing times and the change in society necessitated by the prevailing Covid 19 pandemic; the possibility of online TP supervision and assessment; reliance on school-based TP supervision and assessment; and finally, the possibility of a flexible TP supervision model that can be adopted in the new normal era. The general view emerging from these findings is that change is inevitable in terms of how Teaching Practice supervision and assessment should be conducted. This is in line with curriculum studies which confirm that a change in society constitutes a change in curriculum (Harley and Wedekind, 2004; Maimela, 2015). The government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of HTESTD, has put in place a number of adjustments to cater for the smooth running of teacher education during the prevalence of Covid-19 pandemic and hopefully in the new normal era. However, the adjustments do not address the bone of contention, which is how TP supervision and assessment should be carried out. There are challenges associated with the current TP model in the new normal era. These include the unavailability of learners in schools during lockdown and the specific challenge of basing school-based supervision for student teachers on TP. The absence of an internet network to support online supervision and assessment efforts is a further big challenge. However, there are possibilities of online supervision and assessment when resources permit, as well as student teachers being able to use video recorded lessons for both TP supervision and for them to reflect on their own practice. College administration should organise additional mentor workshops in order to equip mentors with relevant supervision skills and should definitely consider an online TP assessment model. Finally, further research on TP supervision should be carried out on a much larger scale to include views from other teacher training colleges

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