

Student teachers' perceptions of the importance of block teaching practice in Tanzania

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Despite the importance of block teaching practice in teacher preparation programmes, there has been some negligence in teacher training institutions in organizing block teaching practice. Therefore, this study investigated student teachers' perceptions of the importance of block teaching practice in public teachers colleges. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The sample for the study involved 94 student teachers from two public teachers colleges. In gathering data, random sampling techniques, purposive sampling procedures and stratified technique were adopted. Different data collection methods were applied such as questionnaire and focus group discussion. The findings revealed that organization of block teaching practice in public teachers colleges is adequate for teacher preparation before student teachers are sent to practicing schools. The student teachers were satisfied with preparation of block teaching practice as well as assistance provided by their tutors in teachers colleges. The data further showed that the block teaching practice is an important component in preparation of teachers. The findings identified various courses learnt theoretically in teachers colleges were very useful for student teachers during block teaching practice. Finally, findings revealed problems encountered by student teachers during block teaching practice period. These were meager subsistence allowances and unavailability of teaching and learning materials at practicing schools. Besides the fact that student teachers in public teachers colleges were satisfied with whole package of block teaching practice the problems and weaknesses revealed have to be eliminated for effective organization of conducting block teaching practice in public teachers colleges. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training should revise the amount of fund allocated for block teaching practices also to ensure teaching and learning materials are adequately available at practicing schools.