

An Evaluation Of The Supervisory/Mentoring Role Of The Cooperating Teacher During Teaching Practice

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This study investigates work integrated learning (WIL) as applied in a teacher education program. It investigated the role of the cooperating teacher in the supervision of student teachers during teaching practice. It was further articulated in the form of the following sub-problems: (a) what is the role of cooperating teachers during teaching practice; and (b) how cooperating teachers are fulfilling that role. Data for the first sub-problem was collected by a study of the relevant literature, which provided a conceptual framework. The second part of the study was of an empirical kind to determine to what extent cooperating teachers were fulfilling their role. Through a mixed methods design, 75 cooperating teachers and 82 student teachers from the education institute answered post-practicum questionnaires. A further 7 cooperating teachers and 8 student teachers were interviewed. Data indicated that the majority of respondents rated the execution of the supervisory functions by the cooperating teacher as good / excellent. A major area of concern, however, was the lack of consultation and collaboration between tertiary institution and the school, and which impacted on a number of aspects of cooperating teacher's performance.

Keywords: supervision, mentoring, cooperating teacher, teaching practice