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The Challenges Experienced by Student Teachers during the Height of the COVID-19 Pandemic in their Teaching Practice

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Abstract

Student teachers must cultivate the capacity to amalgamate their educational insights by engaging in a blend of academic and practical endeavours. Work Integrated Learning (WIL) within Higher Education Institutions serves as a pivotal component of undergraduate programs, emphasizing student-centred learning approaches. WIL is formally integrated into degree courses, validated through assessment criteria, and awarded credit points. The execution of teaching practice must be hands-on to translate theoretical knowledge into practical application. In light of the context, as mentioned earlier, this paper scrutinizes the obstacles encountered by student teachers amid the apex of the COVID-19 pandemic in their teaching practice. Departing from the constructivist research paradigm, a qualitative methodology is employed. Data acquisition entailed conducting in-depth interviews with participants, with purposive sampling guiding the selection of student teachers. Ten (10) fourth years studying Bachelor of Education in Further Education (BEDFET) student teachers served as key informants for this investigation. Thematic analysis of the data was conducted in alignment with the study's research objectives. The discourse underscores the imperative for the continuity of teaching practice even in the face of potential future pandemics.

Keywords: Assessment, Covid -19, Student teachers, Student-centred Learning, Teaching practice, Work-integrated Learning

Introduction

Learning activities are specifically designed to require students to integrate and appropriately apply previous learning and knowledge to make and justify decisions in a work-related context. In addition, student teachers are taught and encouraged to critically appraise themselves and reflect upon their own decisions and actions in those work-related activities (Papp, 2020). However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the guidance provided to student teachers was inefficient, and they struggled to receive adequate support from 2020 to the present. Student teachers faced multiple challenges during their teaching practice, including the risk of infection between themselves, learners, and university staff members. As a result, student teachers were also concerned about their health (Christian, 2021).

According to Aglazor (2017), teaching practice is a key component of undergraduate teacher training programs. During this period, student teachers translate the skills and theory learned into reality through actual classroom teaching. However, student teachers were not sufficiently advanced in practical work, which resulted in learners missing out on new knowledge. Additionally, student teachers were more frequently infected with COVID-19 than learners in schools (Chifamba, 2022). Due to COVID-19 restrictions, such as social distancing of 1.5 meters, mandatory mask-wearing, and limited time spent indoors, it was challenging to guide and assess student teachers effectively.

Background of Study

Teaching practice provides student teachers with an opportunity to gain experience in the workplace. Atputhasamy (2005) asserts that student teachers consider the practical experience

of observing expert teachers, receiving feedback, and practising strategies as the most important factors in their professional growth. However, there is widespread concern regarding the quality of many teachers who have undergone teaching practice (Malm,2009). Educational institutions send teacher trainers (lecturers) to schools annually for school practice, yet the role of secondary schools in training these teacher trainees remains unclear. School practice is a semester-based routine prescribed by teacher-training colleges, which researchers have examined to evaluate its effectiveness in preparing teacher trainees (Hussain et al., 2022).

Aglazor (2017) emphasizes that good teaching practice significantly influences student learning, as it is a desired outcome and a primary goal of higher education institutions. Lecturers aim to adhere to best practices to provide students with the most effective learning experiences. Teaching practice is a compulsory module for all aspiring student teachers enrolled in teacher preparation programs at South African universities. It typically lasts one semester, from the beginning to the end of the first semester in the final year of study. During this period, programs focus on instructional planning, instructional technology, and micro-teaching mentoring (Model Teaching, Assessment, Feedback Reports).

According to Marais and Meier (2004) and Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009), student teachers view teaching practice as an essential component of their training, allowing them to engage in authentic teaching environments and apply theoretical knowledge in context. This hands-on experience strengthens their understanding and competency in teaching. Jansen and Van der Merwe (2015) further highlight that student teachers recognize the significance of teaching practice in equipping them with essential skills for their future careers. Aglazor (2017) underscores the importance of teaching practice from the perspective of student teachers, who perceive it as a critical aspect of their preparation for the profession, providing them with the necessary practical skills. Similarly, Kihwele and Mtandi (2020) affirm that teacher training institutions prioritize teaching practice as a fundamental component of teacher education, offering student teachers opportunities to develop teaching techniques and prepare for the realities of the profession.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, various countries implemented strategies to address the challenges faced by student teachers in their teaching practice. Globally, institutions adopted digital learning platforms to enable remote learning. In the United States, many universities integrated online teacher training programs, allowing student teachers to gain virtual classroom experience through simulations and online mentorship (Gonzalez et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020). This ensured that student teachers could still engage with learners and complete their practical teaching requirements despite pandemic disruptions.

In Africa, similar measures were adopted. In South Africa, universities and teacher training colleges transitioned to online platforms to facilitate student learning. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) provided guidelines for distance learning and used virtual tools to assess student teachers' progress, mitigating the impact of school closures (Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2020; Reddy & Naidoo, 2021). South Africa also introduced hybrid teaching models, allowing student teachers to split their time between remote teaching and limited in-person sessions. This approach enabled them to adapt to new teaching methods and effectively adjust to the changing learning environment. In both global and South African contexts, technology-based teaching platforms played a crucial role in minimizing disruptions and ensuring student teachers continued their educational journey.

Given an ideal syllabus and sufficient time for teaching, a teacher can only achieve success if they are enthusiastic, knowledgeable about the subject, skilled in teaching methods, and dedicated to their work. A teacher must also be well-informed, passionate about their subject, and believe in its value despite challenges (Lukman, 2021). Furthermore, the teacher’s character and professional competence are the most significant factors influencing education quality and its contribution to national development (Al-Najjar, 2024).

Statement of the problem

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly exacerbated existing disparities in education, particularly affecting student teachers from marginalized communities. Factors such as unequal access to technology, socio-economic barriers, and varying levels of digital literacy compounded the challenges these student teachers faced during the height of the pandemic. Additionally, the closure of schools and educational institutions disrupted the practical components of teacher training, limiting opportunities for hands-on experience and professional development.

As student teachers navigated these unprecedented circumstances, it became crucial to identify and address the specific barriers they encountered to ensure equitable access to quality education and support their transition into the teaching profession (UNESCO, 2021). During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, student teachers confronted extraordinary challenges in their teaching practices, necessitating a comprehensive examination of the obstacles they faced. The abrupt shift to remote and hybrid learning models disrupted traditional teaching methods, forcing student teachers to adapt quickly to unfamiliar technologies and pedagogical strategies. This sudden transition from in-person to virtual classrooms not only posed technical challenges but also hindered the development of essential hands-on teaching skills and interpersonal connections with students. Additionally, limited access to critical resources, such as stable internet connections and educational materials, further intensified the difficulties faced by student teachers, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds.

It is, therefore, essential to explore the multifaceted challenges experienced by student teachers during this period to develop effective support mechanisms and educational strategies for future crises. By analyzing these challenges, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on educational resilience and guide the implementation of targeted interventions that enhance the preparedness and resilience of future educators in times of crisis.

Aim of the study

This study examined the challenges student teachers experienced during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in their teaching practice.

Research question

What challenges did student teachers face during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in their teaching practice?

Theoretical framework

Kant's (1892) theory of judgment serves as the foundation of this study, emphasizing that human beings possess an inherent ability to make judgments, which enables them to interpret their experiences and navigate the world effectively. This cognitive faculty plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' understanding of their surroundings, allowing them to position themselves within society and relate to others. Kant's perspective highlights the dual role of judgment in both theoretical reasoning and practical decision-making. Contemporary scholars continue to explore Kant's insights, as seen in Rueger's Kant on Pleasure and Judgment (2024), which reinterprets key concepts from Kant's third Critique, and Blumenthal-Barby's Arendt, Kant, and the Enigma of Judgment (2022), which connects Kantian judgment to Arendt's philosophical framework. These analyses reaffirm the significance of Kant's theory in understanding human cognition and its broader implications in various fields.

The relevance of Kant's theory became particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic when student teachers faced unprecedented challenges in their teaching practice. The abrupt transition to remote learning demanded practical judgment in adapting lesson plans, engaging students virtually, and addressing technological barriers. Kant's concept of reflective judgment, which involves applying general principles to unique and evolving situations, proved crucial in this context. Research highlights that student teachers encountered difficulties in maintaining student engagement, participation, and motivation during online instruction (De Paepe et al., 2018), with over 70% of educators reporting a decline in students' well-being during the pandemic. This underscores the necessity of

sound judgment in responding to unexpected disruptions. Additionally, the crisis underscored educators' moral responsibilities, requiring them to make ethical decisions regarding student welfare and equitable access to education. Kant's view on moral education, which emphasizes developing the ability to act according to ethical principles, is particularly relevant here. As a result, teacher training programs should incorporate ethical decision-making frameworks to prepare future educators for similar challenges. More broadly, Kant's theory of judgment should be central to teacher education, fostering adaptability, resilience, and ethical responsibility in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

Literature review

The Benefits of Teaching Practice

This section discusses the benefits of teaching practice to different stakeholders.

To the learners

Learners in different schools benefit from being taught by the student teachers as they gain more knowledge and are also assisted on the subject content that they did not understand well Guerriero (2014. According to (Gholam, 2019), these learners are taught through the new methodologies as some of their teachers were trained to use the old methods of teaching. Since the curriculum has also changed, learners gain the new content terminology that the student teachers will teach them. Student teachers teach the learners a variety of subjects in which they have more content knowledge which helps the learners to improve their performance on the subjects that they are studying (Lukman ,2021). This means that student teachers must ensure that they work hard by ensuring that they are committed and willing to assist the learners that they teach during teaching practice.

To the University staff members

These are the members of the faculty who are well acquainted with the professional teacher training, teacher education programme and performance expectations for the student teacher (Bulgrid & Sayed, 2021). University staff members are the performance experts charged with evaluating and assessing student teachers during teaching practice. University staff members should visit and meet with student teachers at their assigned postings at least three times during the twelve-week field experience to enable the supervisors to make informed decisions regarding aspiring teachers' progress and performance as prospective classroom teachers (Aglazor,2017).

To the student teachers

Teaching practice is an important component of becoming a teacher. It provides experiences to student teachers in the actual teaching and learning environment (Ferreira, Martinsone, & Talić,2020). According to (Msangya, Mkoma, and Yihuan,2016), student teachers also know the value of teaching practice, and they perceive it as an important aspect of their preparation for the teaching profession since it provides the fundamental interface between studenthood and membership in the profession. During teaching practice, a student-teacher is given the opportunity to try the art of teaching before actually getting into the real world of the teaching profession (Malik &Menezes, 2020). Therefore, teachers in a society are thought to be agents of change as they are central to the delivery of quality education.

To mentor teachers

Quality teachers are the greatest determinant of student achievement, and their impact is greater than any other social factors, including class size, parent education, and income and language background. Teachers play an important role in shaping the future of individuals as well as of entire generations. indicate that mentor teachers can also influence the economic dynamism of the country by imparting skills that translate into innovation and productivity in the workplace (Maphalala, 2013). Because of the current changing and challenging world, teachers should be provided with a range of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and relevant educational experience that enable them to come up with the challenge. Thus, education is expected to play several key roles in an effort to develop the country's socioeconomic and cultural status (Du Plessis, 2023).

Challenges faced by student teachers during a pandemic of Covid 19 teaching practice

During Covid-19, student teachers were placed at different schools, and at the same time, the rules and procedures had to be followed. Thus, student teachers faced some challenges which are discussed hereunder:

Application of a variety of teaching strategies

Teaching strategies encompass various methods and techniques that educators employ to facilitate the learning process. Student teachers are expected to select strategies that align with the topic, learners' level of expertise, and their stage of learning. In a single lesson, multiple teaching strategies may be applied to achieve different learning outcomes. Kimber, Naylor, and Berry (2021) highlight that the most effective teaching strategies are those validated through large-scale trials, though innovation is not necessarily a prerequisite. However, the COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges to the practical application of teaching strategies, as social distancing measures, limited indoor time, and mask mandates rendered certain interactive techniques such as group discussions ineffective. Carroll and Constantinou (2023) emphasize that many teaching strategies could not be implemented as intended, leading to confusion among student teachers and frustration for mentor teachers. This disruption underscores the need for teacher training programs to incorporate flexible and adaptive pedagogical approaches. In current educational practices, this highlights the importance of equipping teachers with alternative strategies that work effectively in both physical and digital learning environments. The implication is that professional development should focus on preparing educators for unexpected disruptions, ensuring that they can adapt their teaching methods while maintaining engagement and instructional quality.

Furthermore, existing research suggests that student teachers often lack professional development support in refining their teaching approaches (Anilkumar, 2024). This issue became even more apparent during the pandemic, as many student teachers struggled with limited guidance on transitioning to hybrid or online learning models. Christian, McCarty, and Brown (2021) note that while collaborative learning is a well-established method, the constraints of the pandemic made it difficult to implement effectively, potentially shifting the focus from deep learning to mere task completion. Chifamba (2022) argues that when student teachers clearly understand their roles and expectations, they are better able to foster a positive and interactive learning environment. For today's educational practices, this underscores the necessity of embedding digital competency and crisis-responsive teaching strategies into teacher training curricula. The future of teacher training must prioritize scenario-based learning, blended pedagogical models, and technology integration to ensure that educators are prepared for diverse and evolving educational landscapes. The implication is that teacher education programs should emphasize both theoretical and practical knowledge, providing student teachers with the resilience, adaptability, and skills necessary to navigate future challenges in education.

Assessment for Practice

Different types of assessments are conducted in higher education institutions to develop student teachers' teaching practices (Mpofu & Maphalala, 2018). Formative assessment provides clear and timely feedback, helping student teachers monitor their progress and regulate their teaching strategies (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick,2005). Formative assessments, such as observation-based evaluations, self-reflection, and portfolios, are crucial in preparing student teachers for professional practice. However, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted these assessments, shifting institutions to online learning and making it challenging to effectively assess student teachers' competencies (Chifamba, 2022).

The shift to online learning revealed gaps in the assessment process, particularly in evaluating practical teaching skills remotely. Institutions must now integrate hybrid assessment models, combining traditional face-to-face observations with digital tools for real-time feedback. Teacher education programs should emphasize digital assessment tools, AI-driven feedback mechanisms, and flexible assessment methods to prepare student teachers for diverse

educational settings (Du Plessis, 2023). Training on self-regulated learning and reflective teaching should also be reinforced to enhance student teachers' ability to adapt to different teaching environments.

Time for Teaching

The 2020 lockdown regulations significantly affected school attendance, with nearly one million children aged 5–18 out of school (Newlin, Ndebele, & Legg-Jack, 2024). Rotational attendance further limited student teachers' opportunities to engage with learners effectively, impacting their practical training (Huck & Zhang, 2021). Schools and universities must develop strategies to ensure student teachers gain adequate teaching time, even in disrupted learning environments. Blended learning approaches incorporating digital teaching tools can provide continuity in teacher training. Future programs should prepare student teachers for crisis-responsive teaching, incorporating training on flexible curriculum delivery and adaptive lesson planning. Institutions must also consider alternative modes of practical exposure, such as virtual classrooms and simulation-based teaching experiences.

Learners' Discipline

Discipline was a major challenge for student teachers during the pandemic, as remote and hybrid learning environments made classroom management difficult (Newlin, Ndebele & Legg-Jack, 2024). Cultural differences and the lack of real-world exposure to classroom dynamics further exacerbated student teachers' struggles with maintaining discipline. Schools must implement structured behaviour management training as part of teaching practice to equip student teachers with classroom management skills in physical and virtual settings. Teacher education programs should incorporate modules on digital discipline strategies, emotional intelligence, and culturally responsive teaching to prepare student teachers for diverse and unpredictable classroom environments.

Support from Mentor Teachers

Mentorship during teaching varies significantly, with some student teachers receiving strong support while others are treated as relief teachers (Brandon & Cuenca, 2015; Davis & Fantozzi, 2016). Poor mentorship negatively impacts student teachers' professional growth (Mbhiza, Thabisile & Masinire, 2024). There is a need for structured mentorship programs that clearly define the roles of mentor teachers and ensure consistent guidance for student teachers. Universities and schools must collaborate to establish training sessions for mentors. Future training programs should formalize mentorship structures with accountability measures, incorporating digital mentorship platforms to provide real-time guidance and support to student teachers, even in remote settings.

Adjustment to Remote Learning

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a shift to remote learning, forcing student teachers to adapt to virtual classrooms, digital engagement strategies, and technology-related challenges (Nelwin et al., 2024). Many struggled with fostering relationships with learners and mentors in a remote environment (Carroll & Constantinou, 2023). Teacher education programs must integrate digital literacy training to equip student teachers with the necessary skills for virtual teaching. Schools must also provide consistent access to digital tools and internet connectivity. This means that education should focus on hybrid learning models, training student teachers in online pedagogy, digital engagement strategies, and the use of learning management systems to ensure they are prepared for diverse teaching contexts.

Connecting with Mentor Teachers

Effective mentorship is essential for student teachers' professional growth, yet remote learning environments have made it difficult for student teachers to receive timely feedback from their mentors (Bhebhe, 2022). The challenge of communication has impacted student teachers' confidence and development (Neville & Outka, 2020). Schools and universities must establish structured communication channels for student teachers and mentors, ensuring that feedback is timely and meaningful. Future programs should emphasize virtual mentorship frameworks, using digital collaboration tools to bridge the gap between mentors and student teachers. Training should also include time management and proactive communication skills to help student

teachers navigate remote mentoring relationships effectively.

Research design and methodology

A case study was adopted for this paper. Thus, the qualitative approach was utilized. Permission to collect the data was sought from the University Higher Degrees Committee, the Department of Basic Education, circuit managers, and principals of schools. The participants were informed about the study on time, and the appointments were made as they were given enough time to decide to take part in the study. Data was collected using the in-depth interviews. The interview schedules were used to collect data from the participants to obtain more information on the challenges the students faced during teaching practice. Purposive sampling was used to select the staff members, mentor teachers, and student teachers from selected schools. Key informants for the study consisted of 10 student teachers from selected schools who were interviewed. Ethics of research were considered before they responded to the questions from the participants, as they were informed about the study and coded. The data collected was recorded and transcribed. The data was then analysed thematically, considering the research objective of the study.

Discussion of major findings

Major findings on the challenges experienced by student teachers during COVID-19 are discussed hereunder:

Application of a variety of teaching strategies

Student teachers could not use some teaching strategies and techniques that are rooted in communication methods while teaching some of them said that:

ST 1: I did not manage to use group work as physical contact was not allowed. So, grouping them was not practiced at all.

ST2: Online teaching was introduced. We used to send some activities to the learners to write, but the problem was that some learners did not have the data and technological gadgets such as cell phones, laptops, etc.

It is clear from the findings that the inability to use certain teaching strategies rooted in communication methods during COVID-19 highlights the importance of adaptability, creativity, and innovation in teacher preparation and professional practice. Literature by (Christian et al., 2021) indicated that by embracing alternative approaches and leveraging available resources, student teachers can create dynamic and engaging learning environments that meet the diverse needs of their students amidst the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

Assessment for practice

Assessment of the student of student teachers was not effective- some of the students did not go to teaching practice and had to complete the assessment tasks provided by the programme which was initiated. Learner's workbooks could not be accessed. Some student teachers supported this by saying that:

ST3: It was not easy to assess the workbooks of the learners due to COVID-19 rules and regulations. And on my side lecturers did not visit the school for assessment

ST4: Learners were not assessed on the same day they were divided into groups, which means learners might have told each other about the questions that were on the assessment task for example, the test

The challenges faced in assessing student teachers' students during COVID-19 underscore the need for flexibility, innovation, and collaboration in assessment practices. The finding was supported by (Chifamaba, 2022) by indicating that it was difficult to assess the student teachers during teaching practice. This means that by addressing these challenges proactively and implementing effective assessment strategies, student teachers and educational institutions can ensure the continued quality and integrity of teacher preparation programs amidst the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

Time for teaching

Student teachers indicated that time for teaching was insufficient as learners who were many in the subject were divided into groups and could not manage to complete the topics on the

ATP (Annual Teaching Plan). Learners were not taking these teachings seriously because the topics had to be repeated when teaching those groups. Two of the student teachers said that:

ST1: As learners were not coming to school, we did not finish teaching the topics to be covered for examinations

ST5: We did not complete the teaching the topics on the ATP, and it was stressful to us because, when learners were taught in different groups, we had to repeat teaching the same topics all the time and every day

During COVID-19, the challenges faced by student teachers regarding insufficient time for teaching, divided groups, and the repetition of topics have significant implications for curriculum coverage, student engagement, and classroom management, as it was not easy to get enough time for teaching the learners (Huck & Zhang, 2021). Therefore, student teachers need to adapt to these challenges, prioritize student learning needs, and seek support to optimize teaching and learning experiences amidst the constraints posed by the pandemic.

Learners' discipline

There was a problem dealing with the discipline because they were grouped, and this led to poor attendance and not writing the activities given. To support the finding two of the student teachers said that:

ST4: It was not difficult to work with those learners as some of them took advantage of not attending the classes, writing the tasks, and not coming to school after being divided into groups.

ST3: Some of the learners were coming to school

Discipline problems resulting in poor attendance and non-completion of activities during COVID-19 can have significant implications for students, teachers, and the overall learning environment (Newlin et al., 2024). It is, therefore, essential for schools and educators to address these challenges proactively and implement strategies to promote positive behaviour, student engagement, and academic success.

Support from the mentor teachers

The student teachers indicated that most of the learners they were teaching did not have gadgets to use, especially with communication. To support the above finding, two of them said:

ST2: Some learners did not have cell phones, data that could be used for communication and retrieving information for assessment tasks to be written

ST3: As student teachers, we were unable to get feedback on the assessment tasks that we were given by our lecturers, as direct contact was not allowed. And the app for remote learning was not perfect as it had problems and only functioned when one had data

The lack of gadgets for communication and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the urgent need to address the digital divide and ensure equitable access to technology and online resources for all students (Brandon & Cuenca, 2015). This means that bridging the digital divide is essential for promoting inclusive education and ensuring every student can thrive in a digital world.

Adjustment to remote learning

Student teachers were unable to adjust to remote learning as they had challenges with the transition to online teaching during COVID-19. It underscores the importance of providing adequate support, resources, and training to student teachers to facilitate effective teaching and learning in remote environments. Three of the student teachers said that:

ST3: During the transition to online teaching, one of the biggest challenges I faced was adapting my teaching methods to the virtual environment. I found it challenging to engage students and maintain their attention during online lessons. The lack of face-to-face interaction made it difficult to gauge student understanding and address questions and concerns effectively. Additionally, technical issues and internet connectivity problems often disrupted the flow of instruction, causing frustration for both myself and my students."

ST5: As a student teacher, I struggled with the sudden shift to remote learning and the pressure to deliver quality instruction in an online

format. One of the major challenges I encountered was the limited access to educational resources and materials needed to support online teaching. Many students did not have reliable internet access or access to necessary technology, making it challenging to facilitate meaningful learning experiences. Adapting assessments and providing feedback also proved to be difficult in the online environment, as traditional methods didn't always translate effectively to remote learning.

ST 7: From my experience, one of the most significant challenges with the transition to online teaching was maintaining student engagement and motivation. Without the physical presence of students in the classroom, it was challenging to create a sense of community and foster active participation in online lessons. Students often felt disconnected and disengaged from the learning process, which made it difficult to sustain their interest and enthusiasm for the subject matter. Finding innovative ways to promote interaction and collaboration in the virtual classroom became a priority, but it required experimentation and adaptation of traditional teaching strategies."

The challenges student teachers face with the transition to online teaching during COVID-19 underscore the importance of providing comprehensive support, resources, and professional development opportunities to facilitate their successful adaptation to remote learning environments. (Carroll & Constantinou (2023 indicated that many student teachers struggled to foster virtual relationships and attend to the needs of online learners, as this was not part of their preparation. By addressing the barriers and limitations associated with online teaching, student teachers can enhance their effectiveness as educators and promote positive learning experiences for their students amidst the challenges of the pandemic.

Conclusion

In conclusion, applying various teaching strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the importance of adaptability, creativity, and innovation in teaching. Kant's judgment theory emphasizes the role of active reason in navigating complex situations and provides valuable insight into how student teachers can approach these challenges. His concept of practical judgment highlights the need for educators to go beyond reactive measures and actively engage with the resources available, finding creative solutions to maintain student learning. This aligns with the difficulties faced by student teachers, such as challenges in group work, limited access to technology, and maintaining student engagement. As supported by scholars like Christian et al. (2021) and Chifamba (2022), the pandemic revealed the need for flexible, innovative approaches to teaching, reinforcing Kant's idea that teachers must continuously adjust their methods to meet the evolving needs of their students.

Recommendation

The challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted the need for student teachers to be equipped with more than just traditional teaching knowledge. In today's ever-evolving education landscape, student teachers must possess many skills and competencies beyond subject matter expertise. The pandemic revealed how quickly disruptions can occur and how essential it is for teachers to be adaptable, resilient, and prepared for unforeseen challenges. These qualities are now integral to teacher preparation programs, emphasizing the importance of teaching practices that build pedagogical expertise and the ability to navigate crises. The disruptions caused by the pandemic illustrated the limitations of traditional education methods. They underscored the importance of preparing student teachers to employ diverse teaching strategies, from technology-enhanced instruction to collaborative learning techniques. This focus on adaptability ensures that student teachers are ready to engage their students effectively, regardless of the learning environment.

Furthermore, the volatile nature of the educational landscape has shown that teaching practice is not just about delivering lessons but also about fostering essential competencies such as classroom management, communication, and the ability to adjust quickly to changing circumstances. Effective classroom management, now more than ever, requires student teachers to maintain a conducive learning environment, foster positive relationships with students, and

effectively handle the challenges posed by technology and remote learning. With hands-on experience and guided mentorship, teaching practice provides invaluable opportunities for student teachers to hone these competencies. Additionally, exposure to the administrative aspects of teaching, including lesson planning and assessment design, prepares student teachers to manage the logistical challenges of teaching in dynamic environments. By cultivating these skills and strategies, student teachers are not only prepared for classroom success but are also equipped to handle the complexities and uncertainties that come with today's educational landscape.

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