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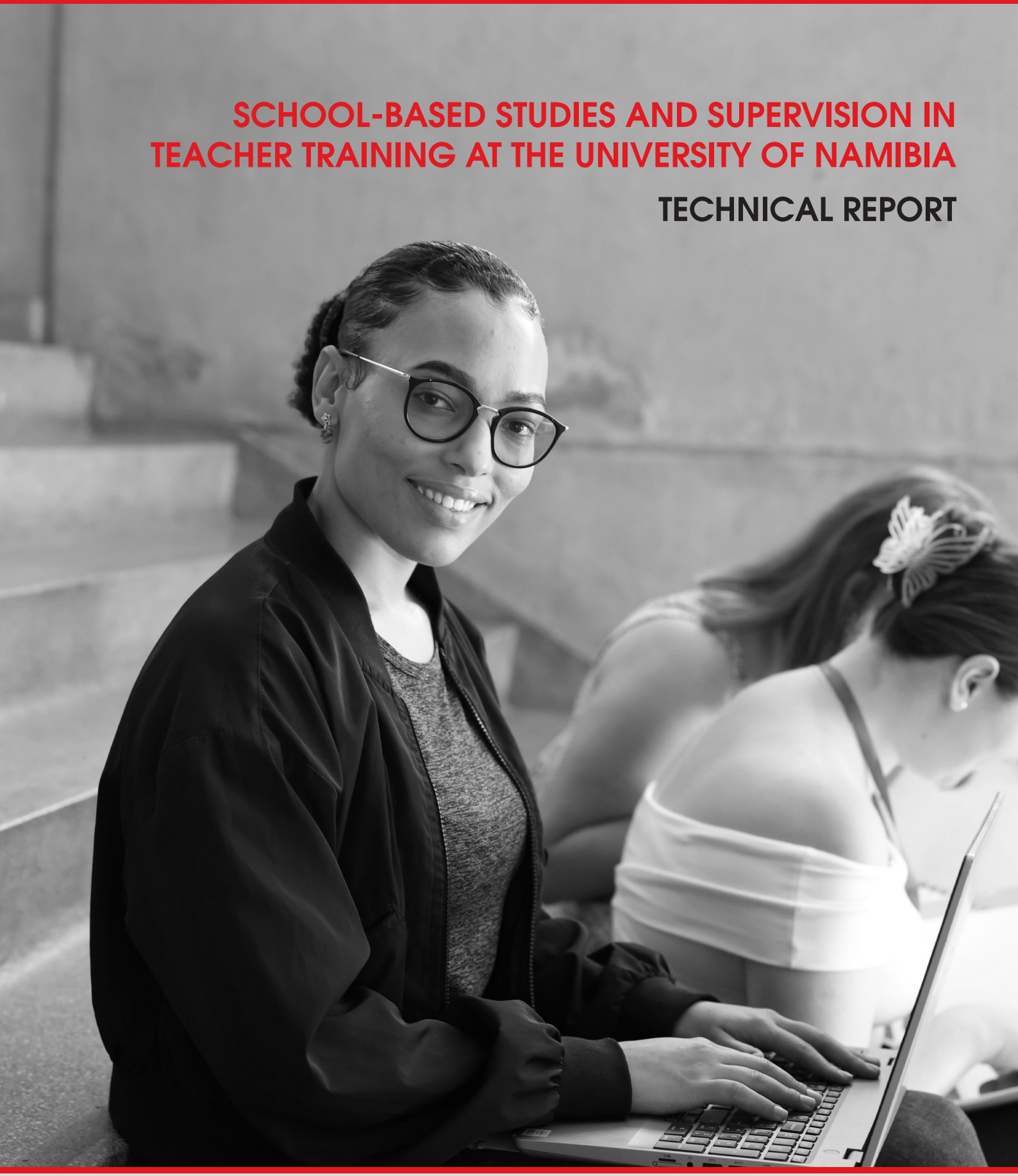
SCHOOL-BASED STUDIES AND SUPERVISION IN TEACHER TRAINING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

TECHNICAL REPORT



SCHOOL-BASED STUDIES AND SUPERVISION IN TEACHER TRAINING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

TECHNICAL REPORT

BY

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June 2025

Can be cited as follows:

Ngololo, E. N., *et. al.,* (2025). School-Based Studies and Supervision in Teacher Training at the University of Namibia. Technical Report 01/06/24, UNAM, Windhoek

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study **"School-Based Studies and Supervision in Teacher Training at the University of Namibia",** was made possible with funding from the Office of Pro-Vice Chancellor- Research, Innovation and Development (PVC-RID) and Multi-disciplinary Research Services (MRS), based on an Internal Grant that was awarded to the Social Sciences Division, under the MRS during the 2023 academic year.

The research team is grateful for the support received from the two offices for providing financial resources for the successful completion of this study. The team acknowledges the collaboration between the Windhoek and satellite campuses to ensure that this study was conducted. We are grateful to Mr. Timo Neisho for developing the online version of the questionnaire. We also sincerely thank the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and regional education directors for granting us permission to access the research sites.

The team further extends gratitude to all participants of this study, namely, mentor teachers, school management, UNAM lecturers, and students in the School of Education for allowing researchers to interview them. Their willingness to participate was critical to the content of this report.

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INTRODUCTION

Developing educational programmes that adequately prepare teachers to address the challenges of quality in schools remains an ongoing challenge in Namibia. This study evaluates the School-Based Studies (SBS) with respect to the teaching practicum component to enhance the knowledge and skills of teacher educators, students, and supervising teachers for effective teaching in Namibian classrooms. This report focuses on the experiences of mentor teachers, school management, lecturers, and students at the University of Namibia (UNAM). Experience is needed to develop a guide for the SBS for both the primary and secondary phases of the schooling system in Namibia. This study aimed to inform the development and revision of practices, as well as the content and processes, to strengthen teacher education modules to enhance SBS at UNAM.

A group of lecturers from the School of Education and a researcher from the Multi-disciplinary Research Services fostered collaboration to collect quantitative data. This study was funded by UNAM to extend the project between UNAM and the University of Oulu to strengthen teacher education through joint research in areas of mutual interest, mobility, and joint development of online courses/materials. Under this agreement, a component of the research was undertaken, leaving out the survey aimed at exploring relevant teacher-education practices.

SBS also referred to as Teaching Practicum (TP) in this report, is one of the most critical components of teacher preparation, with the greatest impact on teacher quality (Zeicher, 2010). In this regard, UNAM, through the School of Education, strives to produce competent and professionally committed teachers. Therefore, the teacher education programme offers SBS to provide student teachers with opportunities to engage in the following:

- Meet the learners in a classroom situation;
- Use and try various teaching methods and techniques;
- Interact with future colleagues and learn from their experiences;
- Experience different teaching aspects inside and outside the classroom context, including activities such as sports and cultural events;
- Gaining insights into school organisation and administration;
- Apply theoretical knowledge in practical situations to be able to experience the task of the teacher with regard to assessment, class management, lesson preparation, etc. (UNAM, n.d., p.2).

In an attempt to meet the set objectives, schools expressed their willingness to accept student teachers for teaching practicum. However, schools lack mentorship structures for trainees for a number of reasons, including lack of knowledge and skills, staff shortages, and staff workloads (Du Plessis et al., 2010). In addition, it remains unknown whether student teachers' newly acquired knowledge and skills will impact their classroom practices and address the challenges of improving learning outcomes. In this study, this notion is extended to include UNAM lecturers, mentors, and school management teams, since they play crucial roles in providing constructive feedback; creating opportunities for first-hand learning; fostering communication; offering support, encouragement, and guidance; and acting as role models. Thus, a well-designed teaching practicum is needed to ensure school – university partnerships, improved structures of school-based professional support, and the development of a responsive curriculum that addresses Namibian-based education programmes.

The growing realisation of an improved TP for UNAM started in 2019 with the National Teacher Education Indaba, attended by both internal and external stakeholders. It was noted that improving the quality of teachers requires rethinking teacher education, including the design of effective teaching practicums, coursework, and other aspects of teacher training. Thus, a comprehensive consultative meeting was conducted using interviews with teachers and final-year student teachers who were conducting their school-based studies. Furthermore, school learners completed questionnaires during the same period. The lecturers who were visiting students on school-based studies conducted group interviews with the teachers and final-year student teachers and administered questionnaires to the school teachers. These consultations revealed the need for practical skills to produce graduates with hands-on experience. In response to these demands, three core compulsory modules were redesigned to include the following 3 modules: Teaching Practicum, Project-Based Learning, and Becoming a Teacher. Prior to the teaching practicum, student teachers enrolled in a module called Teaching Practicum Preparation, aimed at equipping them with the knowledge/understanding and skills needed to be efficient primary or secondary school teachers. Consequently, teacher trainees who successfully complete the module are expected to handle primary or secondary school syllabi. Both primary and secondary school teacher trainees further enrol for Teaching Practicum 1 and Teaching Practicum II in years 3 and 4, respectively, of their teacher training programmes.

Overall, the teacher education programme was developed in response to UNAM's transformation requirements and similar trends in the job market, such

as providing teaching practicum opportunities to improve hands-on and real classroom experiences for student teachers. It was also developed to respond to the 4th and 5th industrial revolutions, as evidenced by the inclusion of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) modules. The programme was benchmarked against similar programmes nationally and internationally in terms of structure, modules, content, and credits. More stakeholder engagement has taken place with a large number of stakeholders, including Oulu University (Finland) for their input. This was done with the belief that teachers work successfully within the scope of infusing global perspectives into teacher-education curricula. Therefore, this study presents the context of the teaching practicum at UNAM with respect to the perspectives of mentor teachers, lecturers, and student teachers on the SBS quality. The findings of this study highlight the views on the empowerment and mentorship of supervisory teachers in schools, developing a network of SBS schools, collaboration between the school community and teacher education institutions, and bridging the gap between theory and practice in teacher education.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

It is necessary to study the theoretical underpinnings, concepts, and use of terminology within the context of teaching practicums. Among others, the aspects that have been reviewed are increasing the time students spend in schools, empowering and mentoring supervisory teachers in schools, developing a network of SBS schools, collaborating between the school community and teacher education institutions, and bridging the gap between theory and practice in teacher **education**. Thus, the specific research objectives are as follows:

- To determine the SBS training/experience and practices of mentor teachers, UNAM student teachers, and staff;
- To understand the theory-practice gaps and new developments that will lead to new practices and understanding of SBS implementation at UNAM.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is widely acknowledged that quality education meets the educational needs of society (Hallissy, 2013). It is relevant and applicable, as it corresponds with what society values and needs. Therefore, it is a continuous challenge for teacher education programmes to equip teachers to meet the educational

needs of local contexts. The literature highlights that competent and contextual teaching is based on teachers' knowledge that is constructed more theoretically, but also on knowledge that teachers have acquired in practical experiences (Zeichner, Payne, & Brayko, 2015). This study reviewed the literature on SBS, supervision, and mentoring to craft the conceptual framework used in this study.

School-Based Studies (teaching practicum) supervision and mentoring

In teacher education, opportunities to connect theory and practice emerge when students complete their teaching practicum. Teaching practicum or School-Based Studies is the period when students are mostly based at the school and supervised by teachers and possibly their university lecturers. However, it has been noted that teacher education programmes have failed to utilise teaching practicums to connect theory and practice sufficiently (Matengu, Ylitapio-Mäntylä & Puroila, 2020).

SBS is a critical part of teacher education in both Oulu and Namibia. At UNAM, SBS processes and practices have also been identified as a research area which has not been critically reviewed. UNAM is currently undergoing a curriculum transformation, and teaching practicum is one of the focus areas to be transformed in the School of Education.

Teaching practicum in the four-year Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Early Childhood and Junior Primary Education (ECJPE) and Senior Primary Education (SPE) takes place in three semesters as follows: Year 2, Semester 2: Teaching Practicum Preparation, in which students are exposed to the concept of teaching practicum, professionalism, and all expectations for practicum commencing in the following year. Year 3, Semester 0: Teaching practicum I, in which student teachers will be in the field at the beginning of the academic year for 12 weeks, and Year 4, Core Semester and Semester 1, in which they (student teachers) will be in schools for a period of 12 weeks. Similarly, the teaching practicum in the new curriculum of the four-year Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Secondary Education is proposed to take place in three semesters as follows: Year 2, Semester 2: Teaching practicum preparation module in which students are introduced to the concept of practicum and further prepared to link theory to the subsequent practice commencing in the following year. In Year 3, Semester 1, students enrol for Teaching Practicum I, in which they will be in the field to observe and participate in the different facets of learning, teaching, and management for 6 weeks. In Year 4, Semester 1, student teachers will be in schools for 12 weeks. It is important to ensure that all proposed changes are informed by research which can be conducted

within this collaboration. Through collaborative research, it is possible to inform the envisaged curriculum transformations of UNAM by reviewing, strengthening, and developing new modules. This research is necessary to ensure that teacher education programmes and content are aligned with the mind shift of Education 4.0/5.0, which focuses on developing 21st century teachers.

Conceptual framework

Previous research conducted in the Southern African context underlines that teaching practicum is an essential part of pre-service teacher training (Loukomies et al., 2021). Indeed, it is an opportunity for student teachers to link theory to practice, diversify their sources of knowledge about their future profession, and enrich their reflective process (ibid). In Namibia, the policy environment and teacher education are gradually developing to prevent former inequalities and enhance culturally relevant and responsive education in a socio-culturally diverse, multilingual society. Previous studies in this context show that there is a need for improvements in order for SBS to be beneficial to student teachers and prepare them to exercise their profession (Ausiku, Likando, & Mberema, 2017; Loukomies et al., 2021; Moosa & Rembach, 2020; Ngololo and Kanandjebo, 2021; Uleanya, 2021; Van De Haar, Petersen & Ramsaroop, 2022).

It has been observed that it is important for teacher training institutions and schools receiving student teachers for their practicum to cooperate closely for SBS to be successful (Ausiku et al., 2017; Loukomies et al., 2021; Van De Haar et al., 2022). A study on teaching practicum placement in rural primary schools in the Kavango regions of Namibia concluded that lack of understanding and coordination in planning and organising the practicum can lead to student teachers facing challenges during their practicum that have a negative impact on their training (Ausiku et al., 2017). Therefore, research is needed to determine how such cooperation can be implemented. Moreover, mentor teachers seem to play a major role in SBS (Moosa & Rembach, 2020; Uleanya, 2021; Van De Haar et al., 2022; Loukomies et al., 2021). In a related study in South Africa, Moosa and Rembach (2020) noted that student teachers who stated that they did not receive appropriate guidance from their mentor during their teaching practicum felt helpless and unable to apply the right practices in the classroom and improve their practices. Indeed, the ability to reflect on their teaching experience to improve their teaching practices appears to be an essential component that needs to be provided during teacher training and supported by mentors (Van De Haar et al., 2022; Ngololo & Kanandjebo, 2021). Consequently, it seems necessary to further investigate the role of mentors during teaching practices and their training needs.

In addition, the school environment in which student teachers are sent for their teaching practicum also has an important effect on practice outcomes. For example, it has been shown that the fact that many primary education student teachers from UNAM are sent to rural schools that lack resources expose student teachers to challenges they are not prepared to face (Ausiku et al., 2017). Moreover, a study of pre-service teachers' experiences with SBS in South Africa showed that a lack of knowledge of the content they had to teach in the classroom made them lack self-confidence during their teaching practicum and therefore prevented them from fully benefiting from the exercise (Uleanya et al., 2021). Therefore, it seems that the theoretical knowledge provided by teacher training institutions should also prepare student teachers for their teaching practicums. For instance, it should provide them with knowledge of the curriculum that they will have to teach in the classroom (Uleanya, 2021; Van De Haar et al., 2022), and with tools to adapt to different classroom environments (Ausiku et al., 2017). However, research on the type of teaching practicum experience that is beneficial to student teachers and how to ensure that the teaching at the teacher training institution and teaching practicum complement each other is required.

Thus, as UNAM is currently undergoing a curriculum transformation that involves changes regarding SBS, there is a need to conduct further research to determine how to create the right conditions for teaching practicum to contribute to providing student teachers in the field of Early childhood, Primary and Secondary education the necessary skills for them to exercise their profession in a way that is responsive to the educational needs of the society.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study employed a quantitative research method to explore SBS experiences and practices among mentor teachers, UNAM student teachers, and lecturers, as well as to understand the theory-practice gaps and new developments that could inform relevant recommendations. The data yielded descriptive information on SBS experiences and practices in the primary and secondary phases, as well as the rural-urban divide. The findings from both components were collated into themes to inform the development and improvement of the SBS program.

Population and sampling

The study population consisted of all 3rd (N=2,350) and 4th year student teachers (N=1,500), 200 mentor teachers, members of school management, and 250 lecturers who were teaching the Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Early Childhood and Junior Primary Education, Senior Primary Education, and Secondary Education at UNAM.

Sample from UNAM

The sample from UNAM included the following:

- All 3rd and 4th year student teachers who were enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Early Childhood and Junior Primary Education, Senior Primary Education, and Secondary Education at UNAM in the academic year 2022.
- All 250 lecturers had supervised student teachers before the commencement of the academic year 2022 and before.

Caution regarding the final sample:

- Although the study aimed to conduct a census of all 3rd and 4th year student-teachers (N = 3,850) and lecturers (N = 250), the actual responses received from the self-administered questionnaires were considerably lower. Only 151 student teachers responded, representing approximately 3.9% of the intended population. Similarly, 64 lecturers responded, accounting for 25.6% of the targeted population. These low response rates raise concerns about non-response bias, as those who participated may systematically differ from those who did not. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as reflective of the views of the respondents only and not necessarily representative of the entire population of the study. Therefore, the results are best understood

as exploratory and indicative, offering valuable insights into TP/SBS experiences but with limited generalisability.

Mentor teachers and Principals' sample

The sample for principals and mentor teachers was obtained by using a stratified sampling approach. Stratified cluster sampling is a probability sampling technique in which every member of the target population has an equal chance of being selected. This method increases the likelihood of obtaining a sample representative of the overall population by ensuring that key subgroups are proportionally included. Thus, a two-stage cluster sampling design was used for this survey:

- The first stage comprised eight educational regions: Khomas, Oshana, Omusati, //Kharas, Kavango East, Kavango West, Erongo, and Zambezi. The selection was based on the available budget.
- The second stage randomly selected some of the circuits and included all schools from those circuits within a 20 km radius from the regional capital of the selected regions.

Qualifying criteria:

- Primary school mentor teachers who have been mentoring student teachers for at least three years, starting in 2022 and beyond.
- Secondary school mentor teachers who have been mentoring student teachers for at least three years, starting in 2022 and beyond.
- Primary school principals who have been supervising student teachers for at least three years, starting 2022 and beyond
- Secondary school principals who have been supervising student teachers for at least three years, starting 2022 and beyond
- Lecturers who supervised student teachers before 2022 and beyond.

Pilot testing

Piloting the research instrument is a prerequisite for surveys of this nature. This is necessary to guarantee the quality of the data collected. Therefore, the questionnaire was pre-tested in Windhoek. Suggested changes to the questionnaires were implemented. We need to briefly report on the outcome of the pilot testing.

Regional Data

This study will also provide an opportunity to access and review regional data from all regions to gain a deeper understanding of SBS and the supervision needed to equip students with skills towards cultural responsiveness and relevance. These regional data will enrich this study and inform the compilation of a comprehensive action plan.

Data entry

A data entry module was prepared in SPSS (software version 25), and the data collected were entered by data entry clerks supervised by the UNAM research team. Data entry was verified and cleaned before analysis. The tabulation plan was discussed and agreed upon by both teams, and tables and graphs are presented as part of the report.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 25) was used to analyze survey data. We used descriptive statistics to describe the SBS experiences of mentor teachers, principals, lecturers, and student teachers.

Ethical consideration

Permission to conduct the evaluation was granted by the UNAM Research Ethics Committee. Ethical Clearance Reference Number: EX/1/8/2023

Voluntary participation

This principle demands that research participants freely opt to participate in a research exercise. Despite the existence of a signed consent form, participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage if they wished to do so. No coercion or any form of enticement was used to lure participants into participating in this research. Withdrawal from the study will not have any negative repercussions for the participants.

Confidentiality and anonymity

The researchers assured the participants that the information shared during the study would be kept private and that the results would be presented anonymously manner in order to protect the identities of the participants. Thus, participants in the study will not be required to provide information that reveals their identity. The researchers also informed the participants that all raw data, including recordings and transcripts of the interviews, would be kept safe on the principal investigator's laptop for a period of five years.

RESULTS

PART A: PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Principals and Mentor teachers

The survey interviewed a total of 470 principals and teachers. **Figure 1** presents data on individuals' roles, showing that principals accounted for 21% of the respondents, while the majority were mentor teachers (79%).

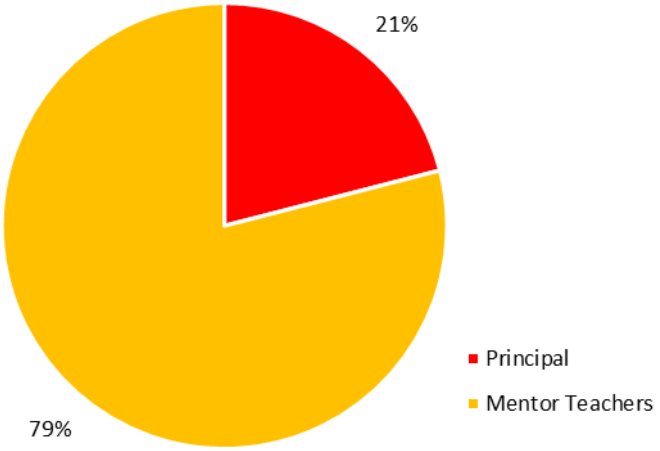

Figure 1: Mentor teachers and principals

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of principals and mentor teachers interviewed across eight regions: Khomas, Erongo, Kavango West, Kavango East, //Kharas, Zambezi, Oshana, and Omusati. The //Kharas region recorded the highest number of interviews (15.7%), followed by Erongo (15.0%), Kavango West (14.5%), and Khomas (14.1%). In contrast, Omusati (8.2%), Kavango East (10.3%), and Oshana (10.5%) had the lowest number of interviews.

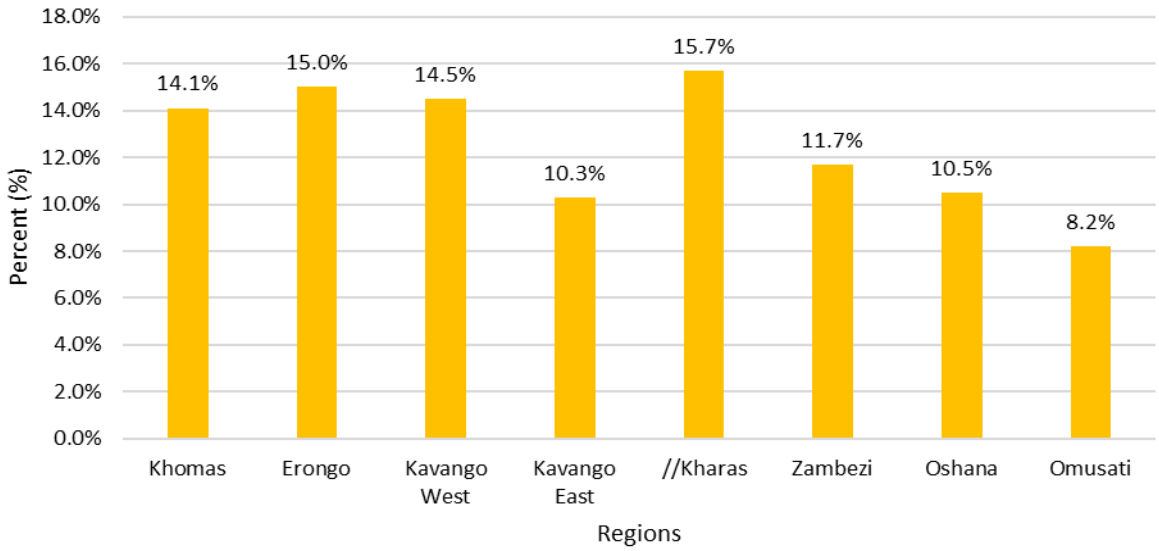

Figure 2: Principals and teachers' region of interview

Table 1: Education circuit name

Education circuit	Frequency	Percent (%)
//Kharas	1	0.2
Bukalo	1	0.2
Bunya	16	3.4
Chinchimani	1	0.2
Kandjimi	18	3.8
Katima Mulilo	3	0.6
Katji Nakatji	7	1.5
Mpungu	4	0.9
Ncamagoro	8	1.7
Ncuncuni	1	0.2
Nzinze	10	2.1
Omaruru	8	1.7
Rundu	42	8.9
Swakopmund	25	5.3
Walvis Bay	24	5.1
Circuit not reported	301	64
Total	**470**	**100**

Table 1 presents the data on the distribution of interviews across various education circuits. The results indicate that Rundu had the highest representation (8.9%), followed by Swakopmund (5.3%) and Walvis Bay (5.1%). Notably, the Bunya (3.4%), Kandjimi (3.8%), and Nzinze (2.1%) circuits also had significant representation. However, a substantial number of interviews (64%) did not report the education circuit of the principals and teachers.

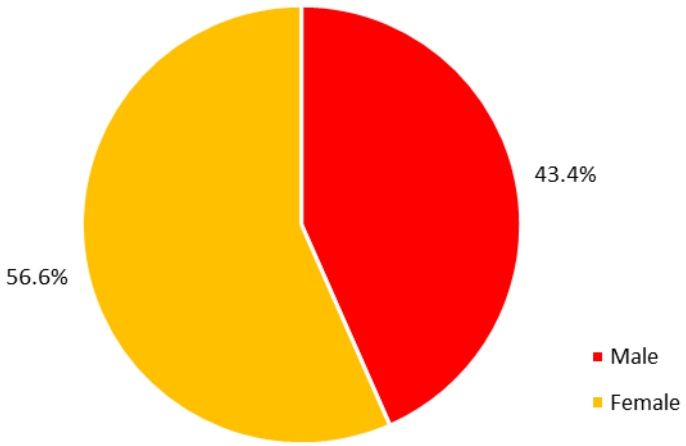

Figure 3: Sex of principals and teachers

Figure 3 shows that the majority of the principals and teachers interviewed were female (56.6%), while males accounted for 43.4% of the respondents.

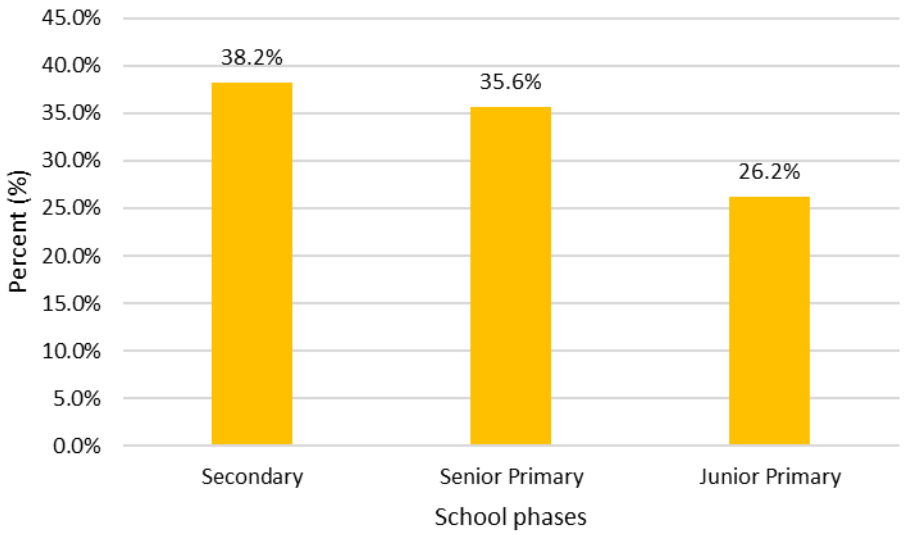

Figure 4: The school phase offered by mentoring student teachers

Figure 4 presents data on the school phase in which SBS mentoring is offered to student teachers. The results indicated that most principals and teachers interviewed provided mentoring at the secondary school phase (38.2%). This was followed by the Senior Primary (35.6%) and Junior Primary phases (26.2%).

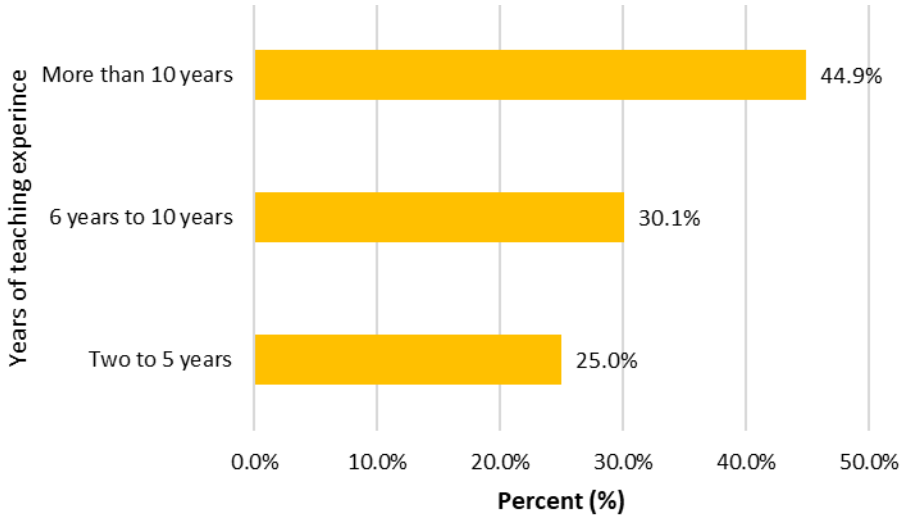

Figure 5: Principals and teachers' years of teaching practice supervision

Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of years of teaching practicum supervision experience among the principals and teachers. The results show that the majority have more than 10 years of experience (44.9%), followed by those with 2–5 years (30.1%) and those with 6–10 years (25.0%).

Figure 6 presents data on the highest qualifications of the principals and teachers. The majority held a bachelor's degree (52.1%), followed by diploma holders (28.0%) and those with a master's degree (10.7%). Additionally, 8.9%

fall under the 'Other qualifications' category, while PhD holders comprise only 0.2% of the total.

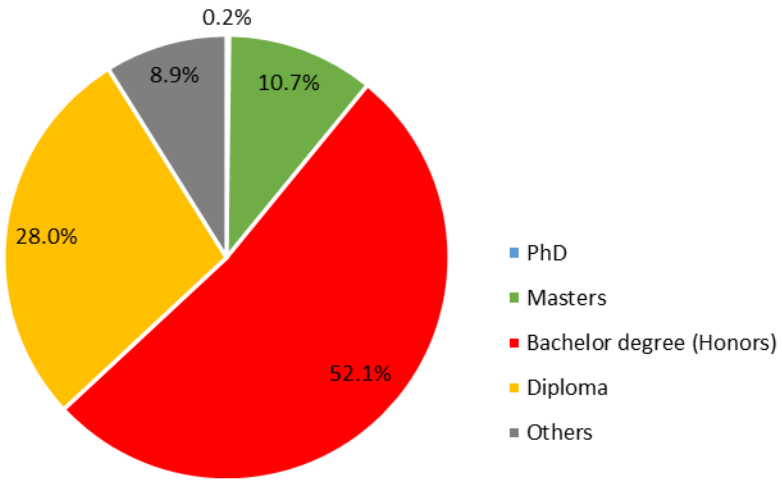

Figure 6: Principals and teachers' highest qualification

Table 2 presents the data on the designations of the principals and teachers. The findings indicate that the majority (58.7%) identified themselves as teachers, followed by principals (17.7%) and heads of departments (14.7%). Notably, 42 respondents (8.9%) did not provide their designations.

Table 2: Designation educators

Designation	Frequency	Percent (%)
Principal	83	17.7
Head of Department	69	14.7
Teacher	276	58.7
Not stated	42	8.9
Total	**470**	**100**

Figure 7 presents the data on the number of student teachers mentored by principals and teachers in the last three years. The majority (54.4%) mentored between 1 and 5 student teachers, followed by those who mentored between 6 and 10 student teachers (20.2%), and those who mentored more than 10 student teachers (25.4%).

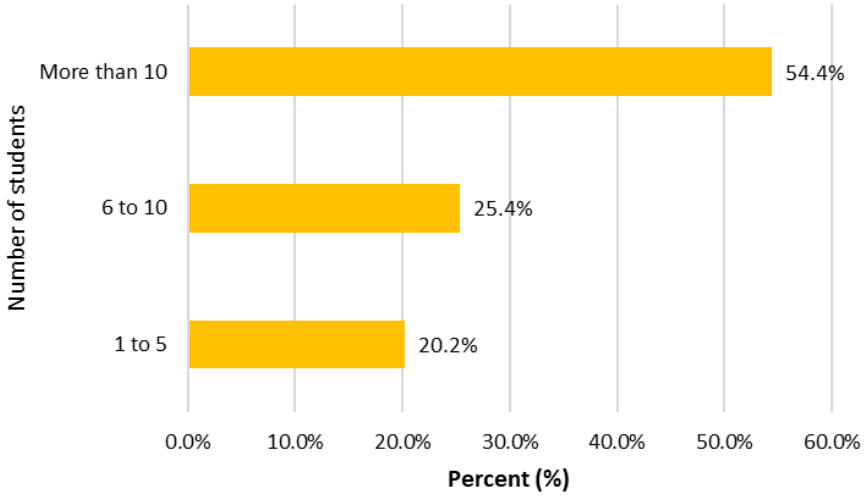

Figure 7: The number of student teachers mentored in the last 3 years

Figure 8 presents the findings on the average number of UNAM student teachers mentored annually. The majority of principals and teachers (79.3%) mentored between one and five UNAM student teachers each year. This was followed by those who mentored between 6 and 10 student teachers (9.9%) and those who mentored more than 10 student teachers annually (10.8%).

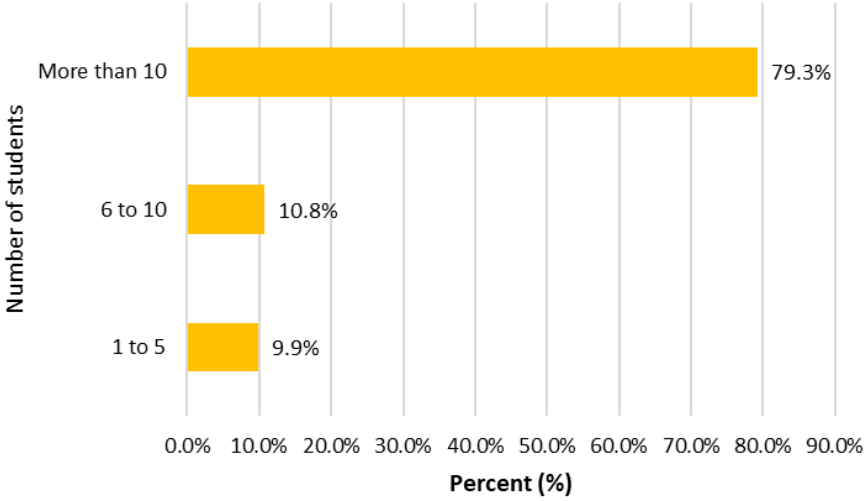

Figure 8: The average number of UNAM student teachers mentored in a single year

2. Lecturers

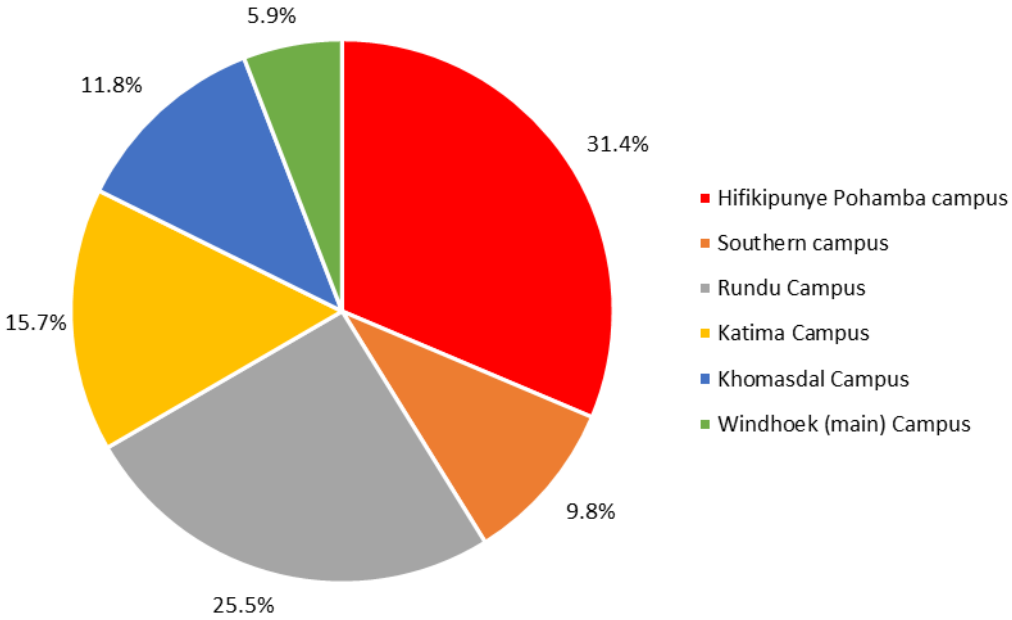

Figure 9: UNAM Campus where teacher educators are based

The study interviewed 64 teacher-educators (i.e. UNAM lecturers). **Figure 9** shows the distribution of teaching campuses where the interviewees were based. The majority of lecturers who completed the questionnaires (31.4%) taught at the Hifikipunye Pohamba Campus, followed by 25.5% at the Rundu Campus, 15.7% at the Katima Campus, and 11.8% at the Khomasdal Campus. A smaller proportion of lecturers taught at the Southern Campus (9.8%) and Windhoek (Main) Campus (5.9%).

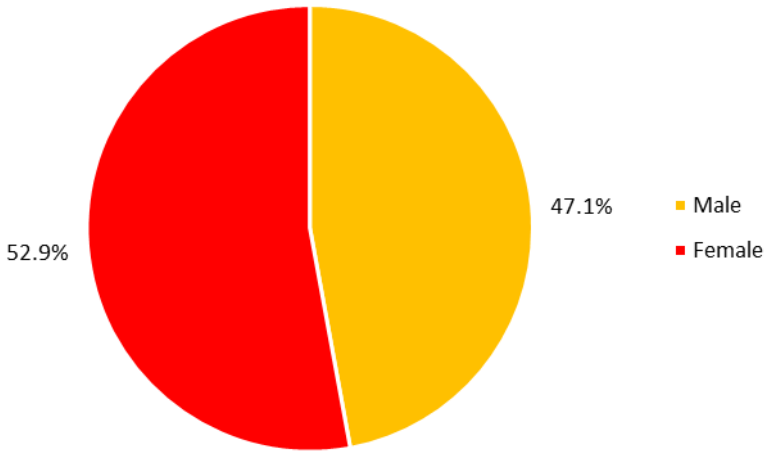

Figure 10: Sex of UNAM Lecturers

The majority of the UNAM lecturers who were interviewed were female (52.9%), while males accounted for 47.1% (Figure 10)**Figure 10**.

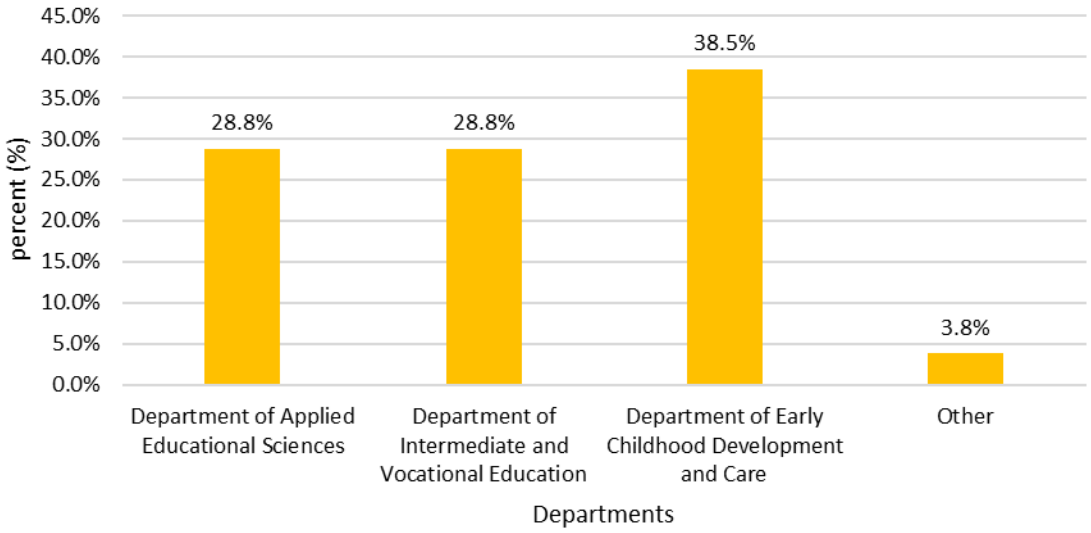

Figure 11: UNAM lecturers' departments

Figure 11 presents the findings regarding the lecturers' departments. The results show that most lecturers (38.5%) were from the Department of Early Childhood Development and Care, followed by 28.8% from the Department of Applied Educational Sciences and an equal 28.8% from the Department of Intermediate and Vocational Education. Additionally, 3.8% were affiliated with 'Other, not specified' departments.

Table 3 illustrates the distribution of lecturers based on their years of teaching practice supervision experience. The findings show that 23.4% of the respondents reported having two to five years of experience, while 27.5% had six to ten years of experience. Additionally, 34.4% had more than ten years of experience in teaching practice supervision. Notably, 20.3% of the lecturers did not provide their years of teaching practice supervision.

Table 3: UNAM lecturers' years of teaching practice supervision

	Frequency	**Percent (%)**
Two to 5 years	15	23.4
6 years to 10 years	14	21.9
More than 10 years	22	34.4
Not stated`	13	20.3
Total	**64**	**100**

Figure 12 shows the lecturers' highest qualifications. The majority of lecturers (60.8%) held a master's degree, followed by 27.5% who held a PhD. Additionally, 11.8% reported having a bachelor's degree or Postgraduate Diploma as their highest qualification.

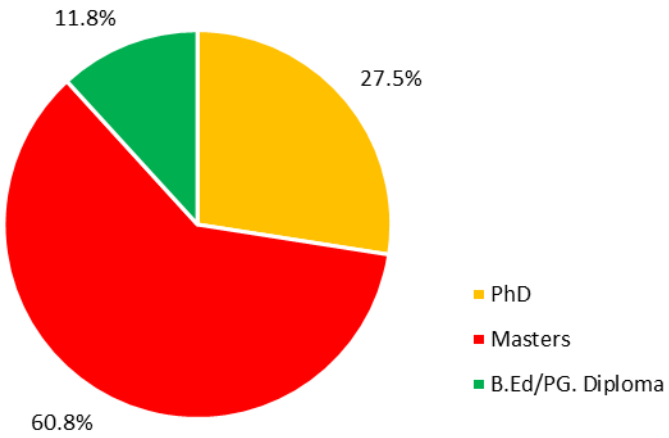

Figure 12: UNAM lecturers' highest qualification

Figure 13 presents the results for UNAM lecturers' academic ranks. The majority (74.5%) were identified as lecturers, followed by 15.7% who were senior lecturers. Additionally, 9.8% reported that they were assistant lecturers.

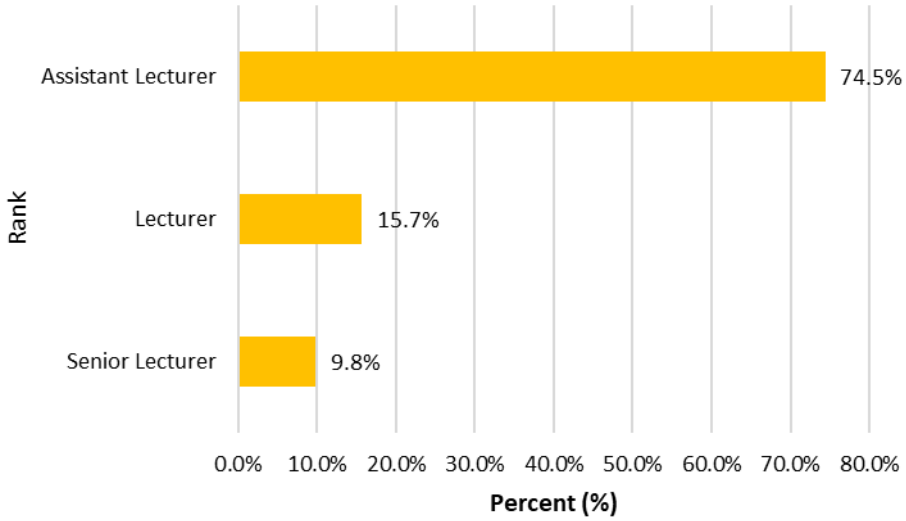

Figure 13: UNAM Lecturer's academic ranks

3. Students

The study interviewed 151 students across six UNAM campuses. **Figure 14** presents the findings on the UNAM campuses where the interviewed students were registered. The majority of students (37.1%) were registered at the Katima Campus, followed by 21.8% at the Khomasdal Campus and 12.9% at the Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus. Additionally, 8.9% of the students were registered at the Rundu Campus, 12.1% at the Windhoek (Main) Campus, and 7.3% at the Southern Campus.

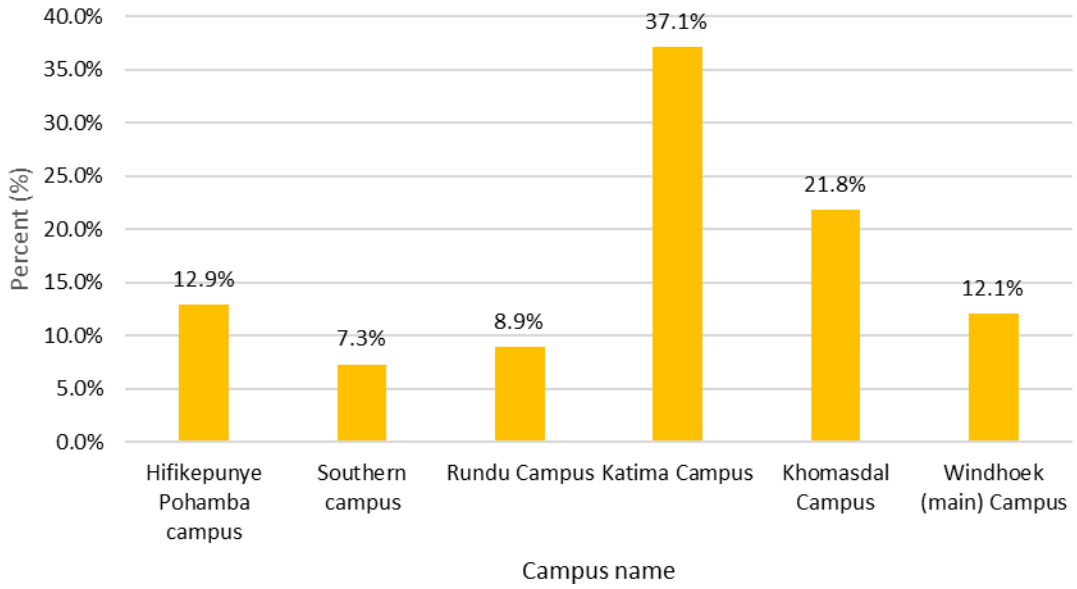

Figure 14: UNAM Campus where students are registered

Figure 15 shows the distribution of students by sex. The majority (66.7%) of the interviewed students were female, and 33.3% were male.

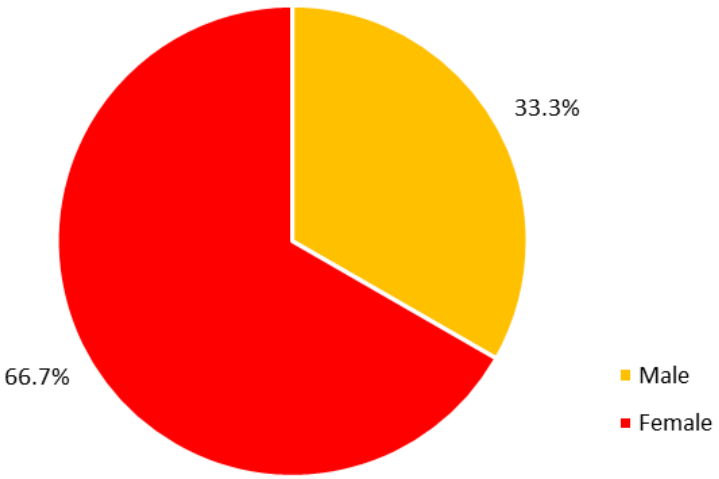

Figure 15: Sex of students

Most students (55.3%) were registered in the Bachelor of Education in Upper Primary programme, followed by 21.1% enrolled in the Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood and Junior Primary Education (ECJPE) programme (**Figure 16**). Additionally, 13.8% were registered in the Bachelor of Education in Secondary Education program, 8.9% in the Bachelor of Education in Senior Primary Education (SPE) program, and 0.8% in the Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) program.

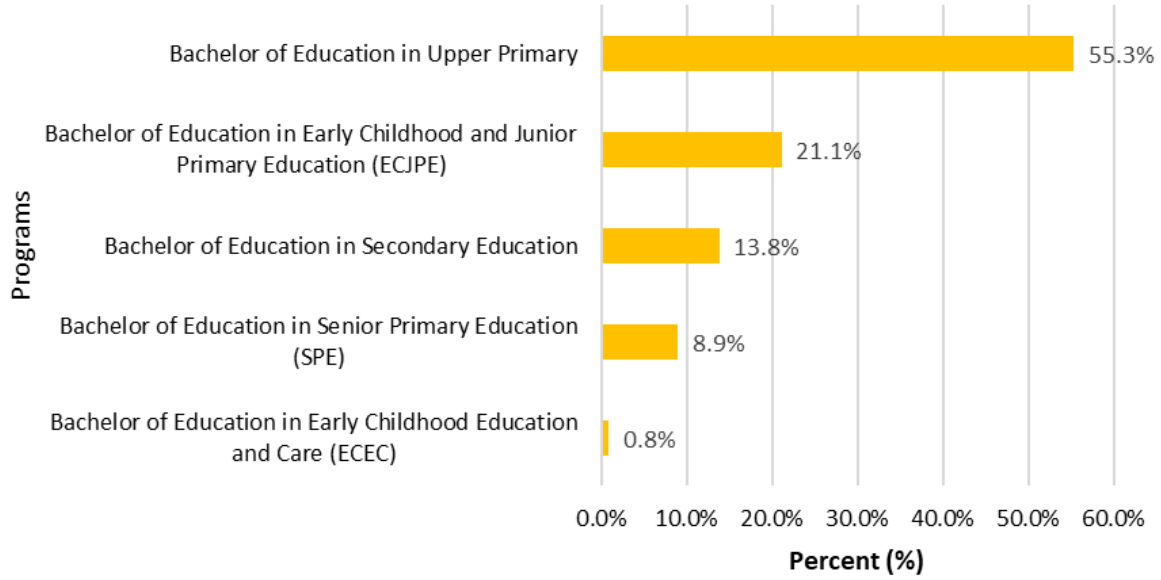

Figure 16: Programmes students registered

Table 4 presents the results for students' TP/SBS course codes for Junior and Senior Primary. Most students (38.8%) were enrolled in Phase III ESU 3891, followed by 22.4% in Phase III ESP 3891 and 21.2% in Phase II ESP 3790. Additionally, 12.9% were registered for Phase II ESU 3790, while 2.4% were enrolled in Phase I ESP 3690 and Phase I ESU 3690.

Table 4: TP/SBS course code (Junior and Senior Primary ONLY)

	Frequency	Percent
Phase I ESP 3690	2	2.4
Phase I ESU 3690	2	2.4
Phase II ESP 3790	18	21.2
Phase II ESU 3790	11	12.9
Phase III ESP 3891	19	22.4
Phase III ESU 3891	33	38.8
Total	**85**	**100**

Table 5 shows the findings on students' year of enrolment. The majority (41.7%) of the interviewed students were in their 4th year, followed by 38.4% in their 3rd. Notably, 19.9% of the students did not report their year of enrolment.

Table 5: Students' year of enrolment

	Frequency	Percent (%)
3rd year	58	38.4
4th year	63	41.7
Not stated	30	19.9
Total	**151**	**100**

Figure 17 illustrates the results for students' modes of study. The majority (92.6%) were studying full-time, while 7.4% were studying part-time.

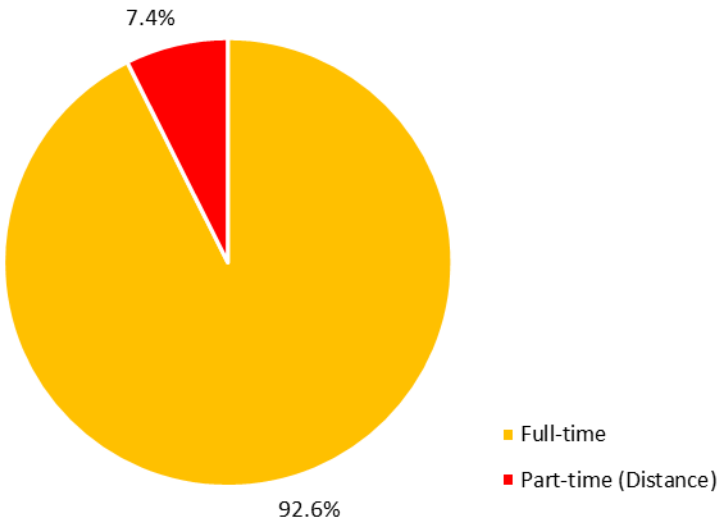

Figure 17: Students' mode of study

Figure 18 presents students' employment status as teachers or educarers before enrolling in the Bachelor of Education Program. The findings indicate that 11.5% of the students had prior employment in this capacity, while the majority (88.5%) did not. This suggests that most respondents entered the programme without previous teaching or educarer experience.

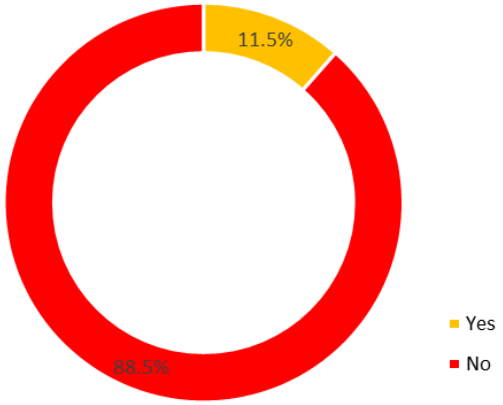

Figure 18: employed as a teacher/educarer before enrolling in the Bachelor of Education

Figure 19 displays the findings on students' years of teaching experience among those who were previously employed as teachers or educarers before enrolling in the program. The results show that 14.3% had less than one year of teaching experience, 21.4% had one to three years, and the majority (64.3%) had more than three years of teaching experience.

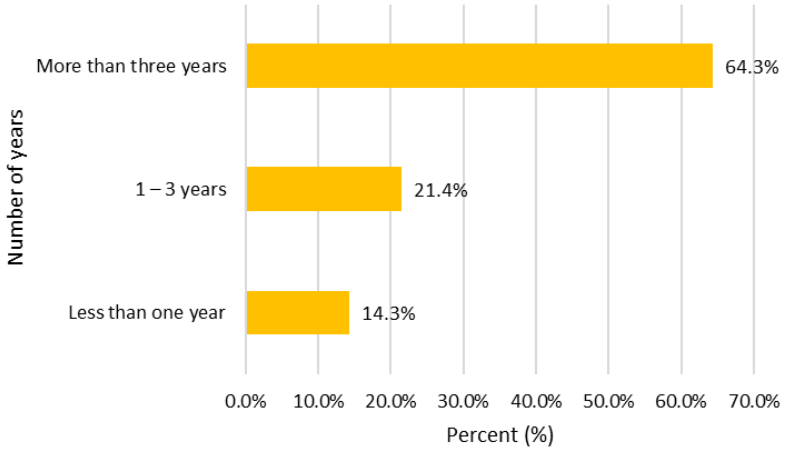

Figure 19: Number of years of teaching experience for those with prior teaching experience

The results in **Figure 20** indicate that 6.6% of the students reported having qualifications beyond Grade 12, while the majority (93.4%) had only a Grade 12 qualification. This suggests that most respondents did not hold additional qualifications beyond secondary education.

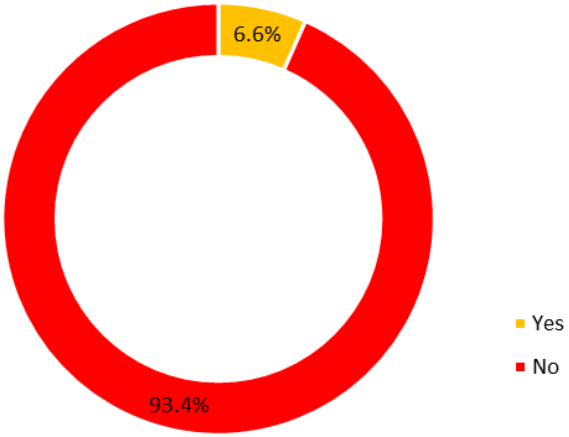

Figure 20: Students with any qualification other than Grade 12

PART B: SCHOOL BASED STUDIES EXPERIENCES

1. Experiences of Principals and Mentor Teachers

Overall Experience

Mentor teachers and principals were asked about their perceptions of the overall experience of the quality of SBS. The results in **Figure 21** indicate that the majority (61.7%) disagreed with the overall quality of the SBS, while 11.3% strongly disagreed. Additionally, 22.7% remained neutral, and only 3.8% agreed on the quality of the SBS.

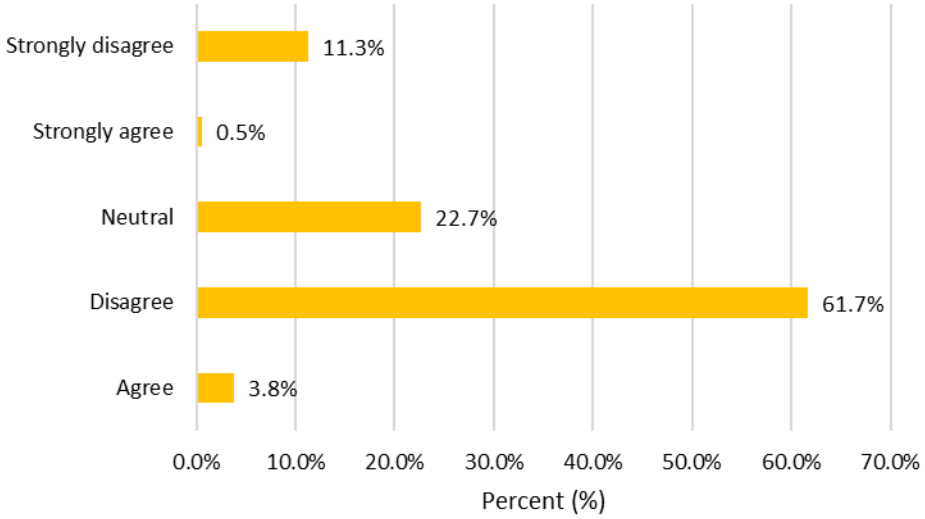

Figure 21: Mentor teacher/principal's perceptions of the overall quality of the SBS

Mentor teachers and principals were asked to describe an ideal SBS using a five-item Likert scale. The results, presented in **Figure 22**, indicate the following:

- **Guidance to new teachers assigned to observe student teachers:** The majority of mentors agreed or strongly agreed that SBS provided guidance in this regard, with 34.2% strongly agreeing and 51.9% agreeing, totalling 86.1%. Additionally, 9.4% were neutral, while only a small percentage disagreed (3.0%) or strongly disagreed (1.5%) with the statement.
- **Basis for future teaching practice programs:** A significant proportion of mentors (92.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that the SBS serves as a foundation for future teaching practice programs, with 39.8% strongly agreeing and 53.1% agreeing. Meanwhile, 6.0% were neutral, and a very small percentage disagreed (0.8%) or strongly disagreed (0.3%).
- **Common focus for discussing teaching practice-related issues:** The majority (89.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that SBS provides a common focus for discussing teaching practice-related matters, with 35.9% strongly agreeing and 53.5% agreeing. Additionally, 9.0% were neutral, while only 1.3% disagreed, and 0.3% strongly disagreed.
- **Sensitisation of key stakeholders on the importance of the program:** Most mentors (88.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that the SBS plays a role in sensitising students, mentor teachers, principals, university TP/SBS supervisors, and others about the importance of the program. Specifically, 33.8% strongly agreed and 55.1% agreed. Additionally, 9.6% were neutral, while only a small percentage disagreed (1.0%) or strongly disagreed (0.5%).
- **Teaching practice as a cooperative enterprise:** The majority (90.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that teaching practice is a collaborative effort requiring cooperation from various professional colleagues inside and outside the university. Specifically, 46.3% strongly agreed and 44.1% agreed. Meanwhile, 8.6% were neutral, and only a small percentage disagreed (0.5%) or strongly disagreed (0.5%).

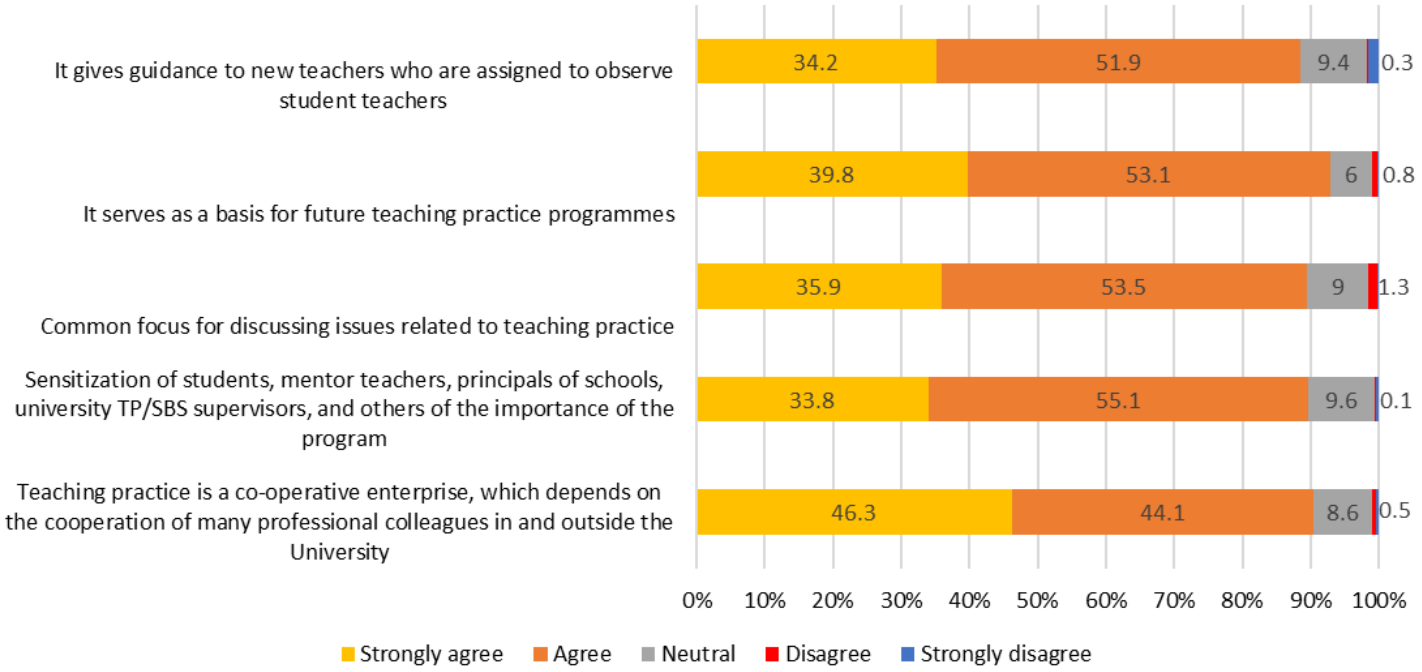

Figure 22: How would you describe an ideal SBS as a mentor teacher or principal

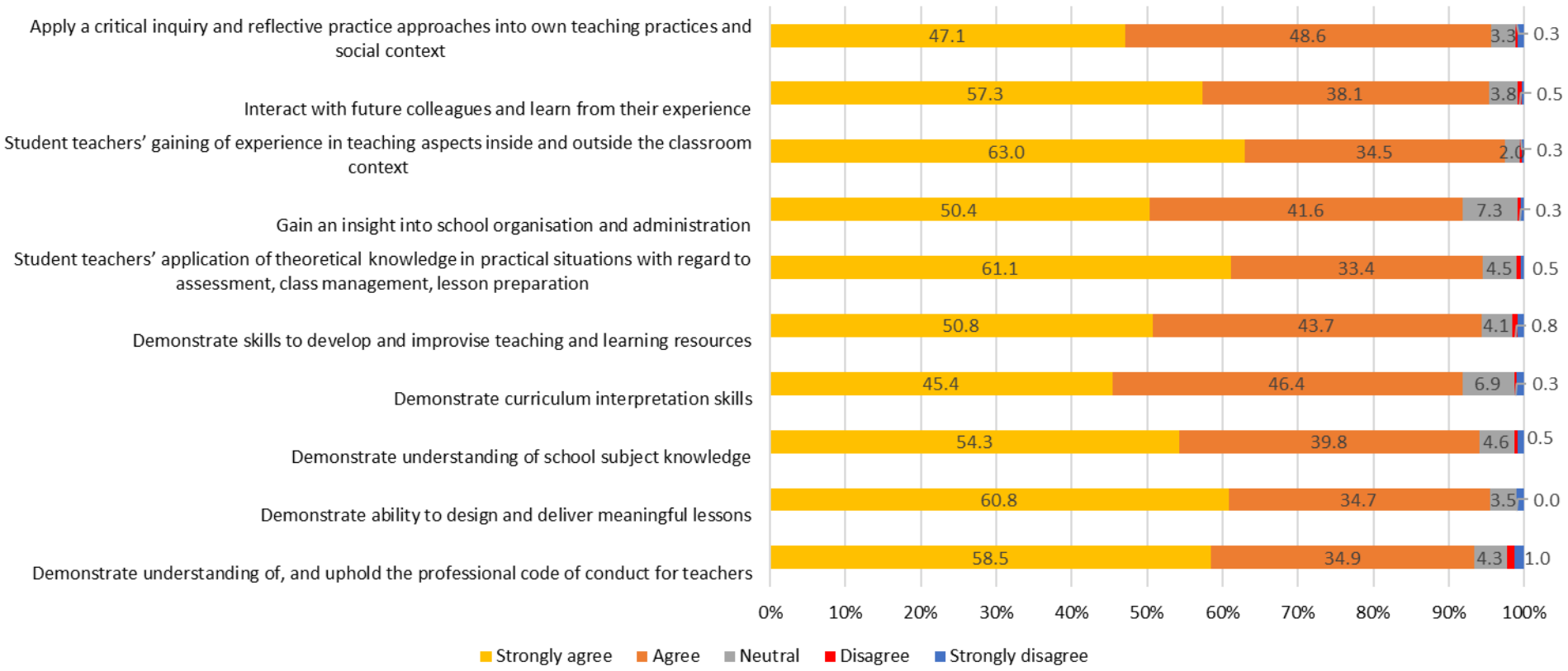

Figure 23: How would rate the specific learning objectives that student teachers are expected to achieve through SBS experience

Learning Objectives

Mentor teachers and principals were asked about the specific learning objectives they expected student teachers to achieve through the SBS experience. Their responses, ranked on a five-point Likert scale, are presented in **Figure 23**:

- **Application of critical enquiry and reflective practice approaches:** The majority of mentors (95.7%) either strongly agreed (47.1%) or agreed (48.6%) that student teachers should apply critical enquiry and reflective practice in their teaching and social contexts. Only 3.3% were neutral, while a small percentage disagreed (0.3%) or strongly disagreed (0.8%).
- **Interaction with future colleagues and learning from their experiences:** Most mentors (95.5%) either strongly agreed (57.3%) or agreed (38.1%) that student teachers should engage with future colleagues. Only 3.8% were neutral, and a small percentage disagreed (0.5%) or strongly disagreed (0.3%) with the statement.
- **Gaining experience in teaching inside and outside the classroom:** A total of 97.5% of mentors strongly agreed (63.0%) or agreed (34.5%) that student teachers should gain experience in various teaching aspects, including extramural activities. Only 2.0% were neutral, while 0.3% disagreed, and 0.3% strongly disagreed.
- **Gaining insight into school organisation and administration:** The majority of mentors (91.9%) strongly agreed (50.4%) or agreed (41.6%) that student teachers should gain insight into school administration and organisation. Meanwhile, 7.3% were neutral, and a small percentage disagreed (0.3%) or strongly disagreed (0.5%).
- **Application of theoretical knowledge in practical situations:** Most mentors (94.5%) strongly agreed (61.1%) or agreed (33.4%) that student teachers should apply theoretical knowledge to classroom management, assessment, and lesson preparation. Only 4.5% were neutral, and a small percentage disagreed (0.5%) or strongly disagreed (0.5%).
- **Developing and improvising teaching and learning resources:** A total of 94.4% of mentors strongly agreed (50.8%) or agreed (43.7%) that student teachers should demonstrate these skills. Meanwhile, 4.1% were neutral, and only 0.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.
- **Demonstrating curriculum interpretation skills:** The majority of mentors (91.9%) either strongly agreed (45.4%) or agreed (46.4%) that student

teachers should demonstrate curriculum interpretation skills. Additionally, 6.9% were neutral, 0.3% disagreed, and 1.0% strongly disagreed.

- **Understanding school subject knowledge:** Most mentors (94.2%) either strongly agreed (54.3%) or agreed (39.8%) that student teachers should demonstrate subject knowledge. Meanwhile, 4.6% were neutral, 0.5% disagreed, and 0.8% strongly disagreed.
- **Designing and delivering meaningful lessons:** The majority (95.4%) strongly agreed (60.8%) or agreed (34.7%) that student teachers should develop and deliver effective lessons. Only 3.5% were neutral, and a small percentage strongly disagreed (1.0%).
- **Understanding and upholding the professional code of conduct:** Most mentors (93.4%) strongly agreed (58.5%) or agreed (34.9%) that student teachers should uphold professional ethics in their practice. Additionally, 4.3% were neutral, while 1.0% disagreed, and 1.3% strongly disagreed.

Learning Design / Methodology

Additionally, mentor teachers and principals were asked how they wish to mentor student teachers for SBS under two key learning design/methodology themes: **"Modelling as a Mode of Practice"** and **"Coaching and Facilitating."** They were required to indicate "Yes" or "No" for various mentoring strategies under each theme. The results of **modelling as a mode of practice** are shown in **Figure 24**:

- **Explanation:** The majority of mentors (81.5%) indicated that they wish to incorporate explanation in their mentoring approach, while 18.5% responded "No." This suggests that most mentors recognised the importance of explanation in guiding student teachers.
- **Elaboration:** A significant proportion of mentors (61.5%) preferred to incorporate elaboration in their mentoring, while 38.5% did not. This indicates that while elaboration is valued, it is not as universally prioritised as explanation.
- **Lecturing:** Most mentors (78.0%) indicated that they do not prefer lecturing as a mentoring method, while 22.0% chose "Yes." This suggests that lecturing is not widely considered an effective mentoring strategy for the SBS.
- **Demonstration:** A vast majority (91.0%) of mentors preferred incorporating demonstrations in their mentoring approach, while only

9.0% did not. This highlights the strong recognition of demonstrations as an essential mentoring technique.

- **Thinking Aloud Through Process:** Only 40.3% of mentors preferred using the "thinking aloud through process" approach, while 59.8% did not. This suggests that although some mentors see value in verbalising their thought processes, the majority do not prioritise this approach.
- **Recapping or Summarising Information:** Most mentors (68.0%) prefer to include recapping or summarising information in their mentoring, while 32.0% do not. This indicates that summarisation is considered an important but not universal strategy for mentoring student teachers.

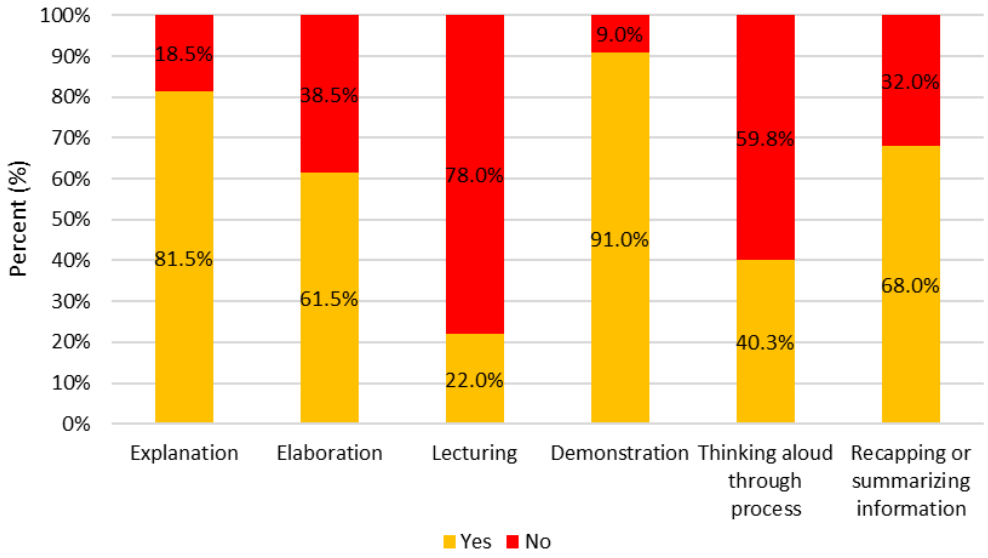

Figure 24: How would you wish to prepare students for SBS: when modelling as a mode of practice

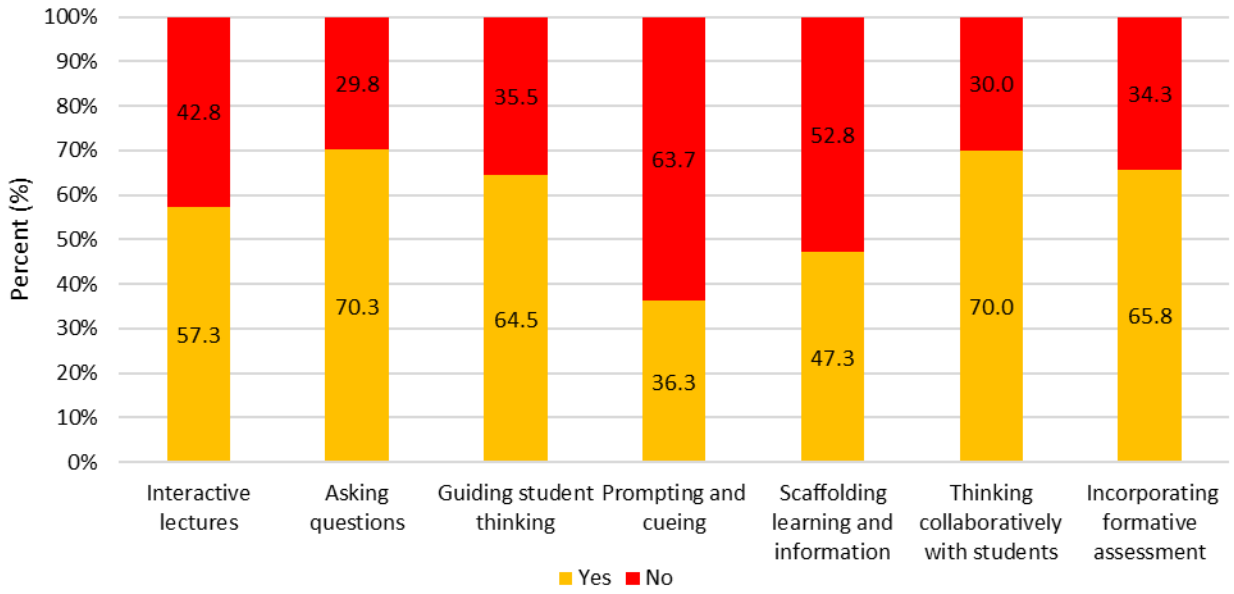

Figure 25: How would you wish to prepare students for SBS: when coaching and facilitating

The results for **coaching and facilitating** mentoring student teachers for SBS are presented in **Figure 24**:

- **Interactive Lectures:** A total of 57.3% of mentors preferred utilising interactive lectures, while 42.8% did not. This suggests that while many mentors value interactive lectures, a significant portion does not prioritise this method.
- **Asking Questions:** The majority of mentors (70.3%) preferred using questioning as a mentoring approach, while 29.8% did not. This highlights that asking questions is widely recognised as an effective coaching and facilitation technique.
- **Guiding Student Thinking:** Most mentors (64.5%) preferred guiding students' thinking, while 35.5% did not. This indicates that guiding students' cognitive processes is an important but not universally prioritised method of mentoring.
- **Prompting and Cueing:** Only 36.3% of mentors preferred using prompting and cueing, while 63.7% did not. This suggests that prompting and cueing are not widely favoured strategies for coaching and facilitating student teachers' development.
- **Scaffolding Learning and Information:** A total of 47.3% of mentors preferred employing scaffolding techniques, while 52.8% did not. This indicates a divided perspective on the value of scaffolding in mentoring relationships.
- **Thinking Collaboratively with Students:** The majority of mentors (70.0%) preferred engaging in collaborative thinking with student teachers, while

30.0% did not. This suggests a strong recognition of collaborative thinking as an important mentoring strategy.

- **Incorporating Formative Assessment:** Most mentors (65.8%) preferred incorporating formative assessment in their mentoring practices, while 34.3% did not. This highlights that formative assessment is valuable for helping student teachers meet SBS learning objectives.

In Phase 1 (Year 3, B. Ed. program), mentor teachers and principals were asked about the ideal SBS duration for developing student teachers' expertise. Education). The results in **Figure 26** show that most mentors (58.2%) preferred an 8-week period, emphasising comprehensive skill development, while 32.9% supported six weeks. Only 8.9% favoured 3 weeks, suggesting limited confidence in shorter durations. Overall, mentors preferred a longer SBS period for effective teacher training.

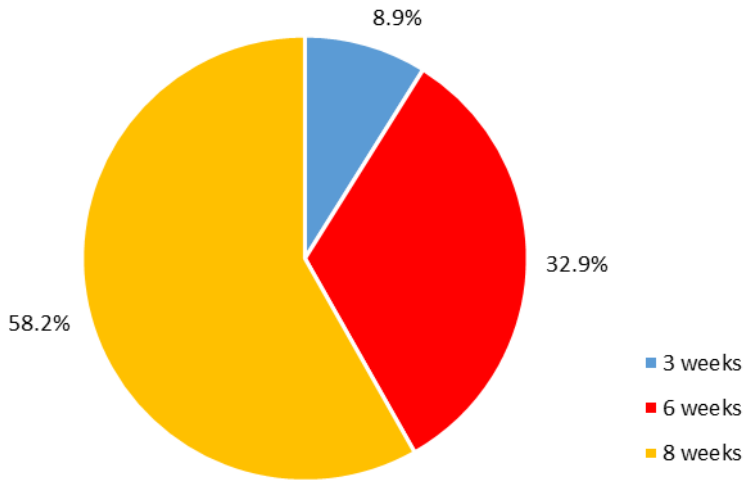

Figure 26: Adequate period of SBS to develop a student-teacher's expertise in Phase 1 (year 3)

Similarly, mentor teachers and principals were asked about the ideal SBS duration for developing student teachers' expertise in Phase 2 (Year 4, B.Ed. Education). **Figure 27** reveals that the majority (57.3%) preferred a 12-week period, reflecting a strong preference for extended training. Meanwhile, 22.4% supported both 8-week and 10-week durations, indicating that a notable portion favoured a slightly shorter timeframe.

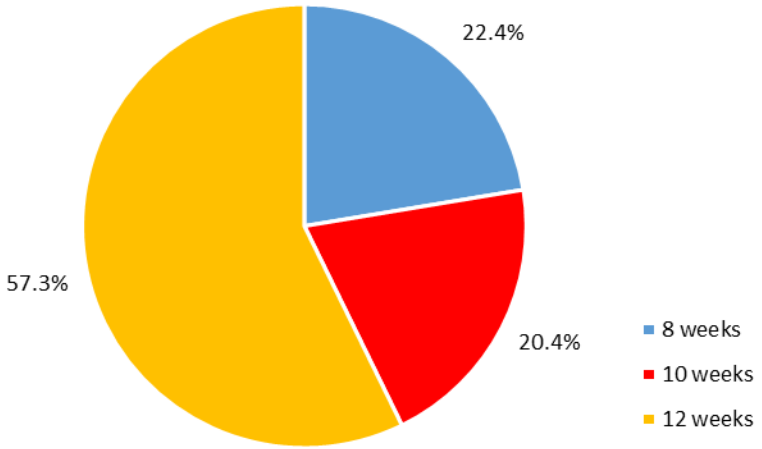

Figure 27: Adequate period of SBS to develop a student-teacher's expertise in Phase 2 (year 4)

Roles of Student teachers, Teacher Mentors & Lecturers

Mentor teachers and principals were asked to rate the performance of student teachers, lecturers, and their own performance based on their experience across various professional and pedagogical aspects.

The results of the performance of student teachers are presented in **Figure 28**, highlighting the varying levels of adherence and competency among student teachers:

- **Planning work based on guidance from mentors and university supervisors:** The majority (28.1%) of mentors reported that student teachers always planned their work according to the guidance provided, while 25.4% often did so. Additionally, 36.2% sometimes adhered, 3.3% rarely followed, and 7.0% never followed the guidance.
- **Demonstrating strong teaching skills and subject knowledge:** A total of 20.0% of mentors indicated that student teachers always exhibited strong teaching skills and subject knowledge, while 32.9% indicated that they often did so. Meanwhile, 36.5% demonstrated these skills occasionally, 9.9% rarely, and only 0.8% never demonstrated proficiency.
- **Familiarity and adherence to school rules and procedures:** A significant portion (30.3%) of mentors reported that student teachers always adhered to school regulations, while 34.6% reported that they frequently complied. Additionally, 22.5% sometimes followed the rules, 10.1% rarely did so, and 2.5% never adhered to them.
- **Participation in school functions:** The largest group (39.6%) of mentors observed that student teachers always engaged in school activities,

while 28.0% of them frequently participated. However, 18.7% occasionally attended, 10.6% rarely attended, and 3.0% never attended.

- **Timely notification of absences:** Most mentors (45.2%) reported that student teachers always informed the appropriate personnel about absences, while 24.5% did so frequently. Additionally, 19.4% sometimes provided notifications, 8.8% rarely did, and 2.0% never informed the relevant personnel.
- **Punctuality in attending staff activities:** The majority (66.9%) of mentors indicated that student teachers always attended staff activities on time, whereas 22.7% frequently did so. Conversely, 7.8% attended lectures occasionally, 2.5% rarely, and only 0.3% never met this expectation.
- **Conducting themselves professionally as members of the teaching profession:** A total of 43.7% of mentors observed that student teachers always demonstrated professionalism, while 28.5% observed that they frequently did so. Additionally, 18.2% occasionally exhibited professional behaviour, 6.8% rarely did, and 2.8% never demonstrated professionalism.
- **Completion of assigned duties before returning to the university:** More than half (52.7%) of the mentors reported that student teachers always completed their assigned duties, while 33.9% sometimes fulfilled them. Meanwhile, 9.8% rarely completed their duties, and 3.7% never completed their duties.

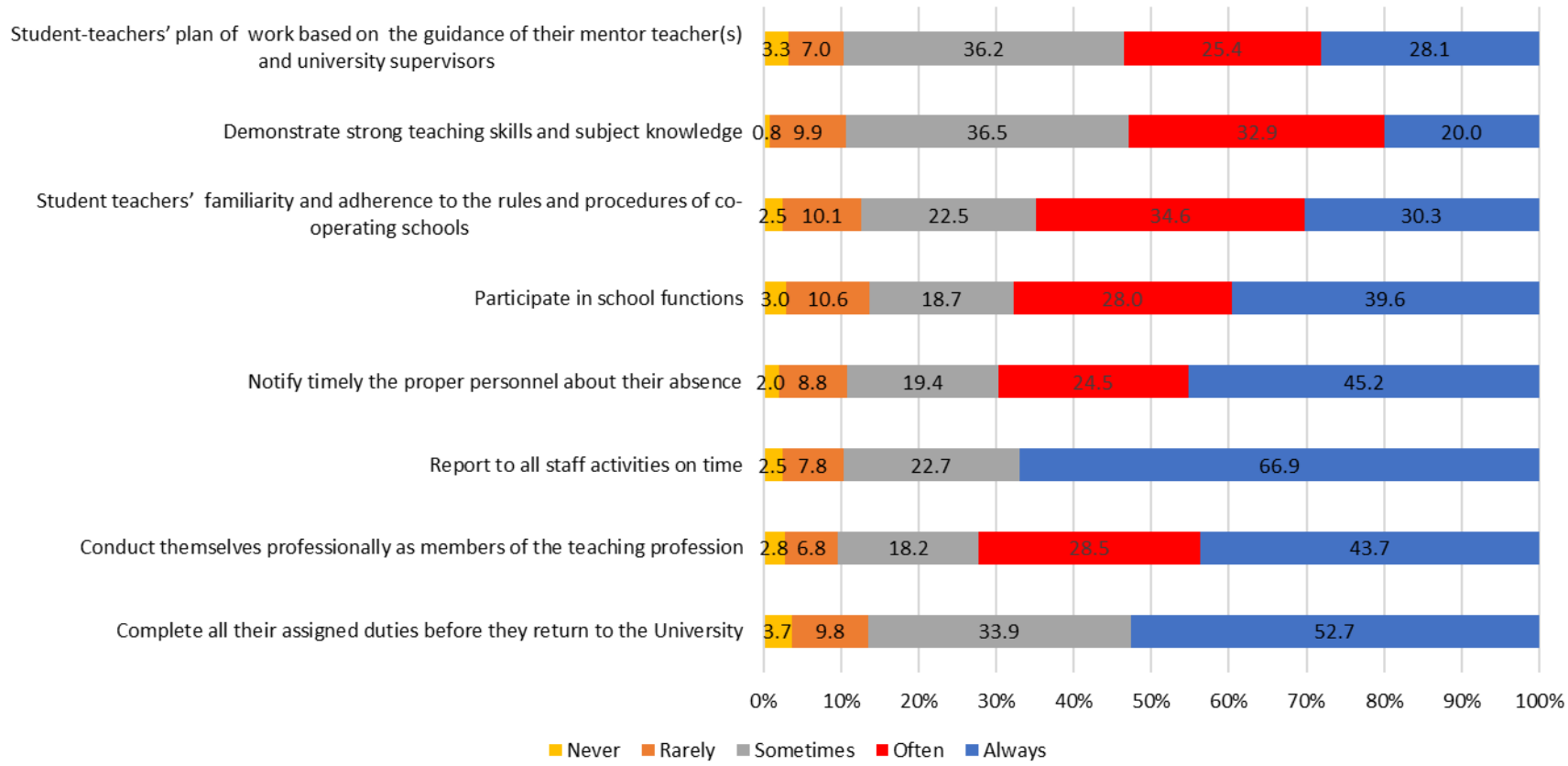

Figure 28: Mentor teachers and principals ratings of performance of student teachers based on their experience

Mentor teachers and principals rated the engagement and support provided by university lecturers in various aspects of student-teacher supervision. The results, presented in **Figure 29**, highlight the varying levels of communication, monitoring, and assistance:

- **Meetings between university lecturers (SBS supervisors) and school principals to discuss student-teacher progress:** A total of 14.8% of respondents reported that these meetings always occurred, while 16.1% stated that they often took place. Additionally, 29.4% of the respondents indicated that meetings sometimes occurred, whereas 22.3% noted that they rarely occurred. However, 17.4% of respondents reported that these meetings never occurred, highlighting a gap in communication.

- **Pre- and post-instruction meetings between university lecturers and student teachers:** A total of 23.5% of respondents indicated that these meetings always occurred, while 30.4% reported that they often took place. Meanwhile, 22.2% stated that meetings sometimes occurred, 14.6% noted rare instances, and 9.3% reported that they never occurred, highlighting inconsistencies in student-teacher guidance.

- **Checking student-teacher TP/SBS portfolios by university lecturers:** More than a third (38.3%) of respondents reported that portfolios are always reviewed, while 25.5% stated that they are often checked. Additionally, 22.0% indicated that portfolios were sometimes reviewed, whereas 8.7% noted rare instances, and 5.4% reported that they were never checked, suggesting a lack of systematic assessment.

- **Meetings between university lecturers and mentee teachers supervising student teachers:** A total of 15.7% of respondents indicated that these meetings always happened, while 19.8% reported that they often took place. Meanwhile, 21.3% noted that meetings sometimes occurred, whereas 20.3% stated that they were rare. However, 22.9% reported that these meetings never occurred, indicating weak collaboration between university lecturers and mentee teachers.

- **Assistance in solving interpersonal communication problems during SBS:** A total of 18.6% of respondents stated that assistance always occurred, while 18.1% reported that it often occurred. Additionally, 24.4% noted that this assistance sometimes occurred, whereas 18.6% indicated that it rarely occurred. However, 20.2% reported that this assistance never occurred, highlighting a gap in conflict resolution support.

- **Verification of student-teacher attendance during teaching practice:** More than a third (34.8%) of respondents indicated that attendance

verification always happens, while 15.8% stated that it often occurs. Additionally, 16.1% noted that verification sometimes occurred, whereas 14.8% reported rare instances. However, 18.4% of the respondents stated that attendance verification never occurs, suggesting a need for stronger monitoring mechanisms.

- **Evaluation of student-teacher lessons:** Nearly half (48.6%) of the respondents reported that lesson evaluations always happened, while 24.2% stated that they often occurred. Additionally, 18.6% noted that evaluations sometimes occurred, whereas 4.4% indicated rare instances. However, 4.2% reported that lesson evaluations never occurred, highlighting a lack of consistent feedback and assessment.

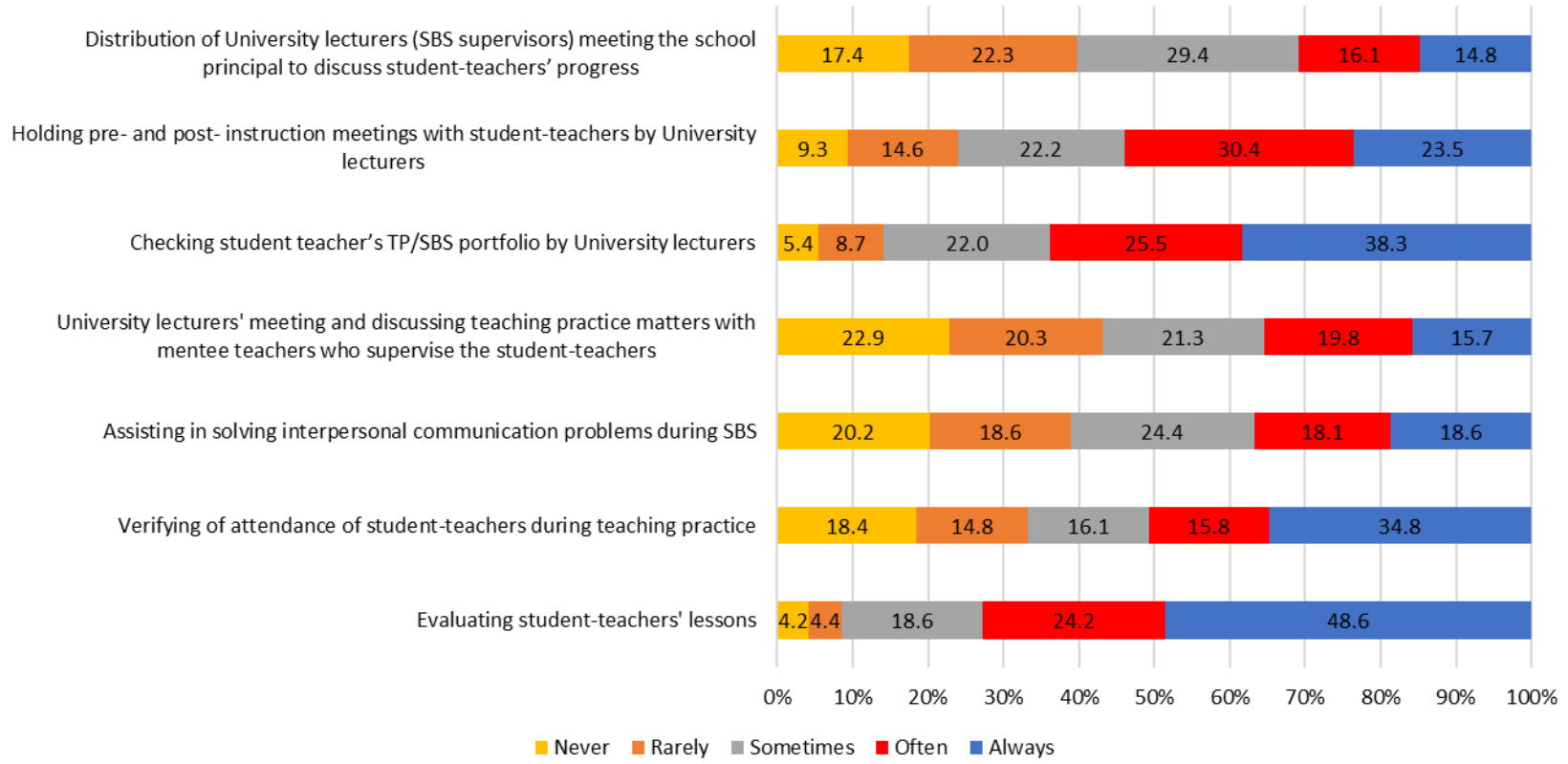

Figure 29: Mentor teachers and principals' ratings of performance of lecturers based on their experience

Mentor teachers and principals rated their performance in supporting student teachers across various areas of supervision. The results, presented in **Figure 29**, reveal differing levels of engagement, monitoring and guidance:

- **Encouraging observation during the first week of teaching practice**: A total of 64.7% of respondents reported that this encouragement always took place, while 23.5% stated that it often occurred. Additionally, 7.7% indicated that it sometimes happened, while 3.1% noted rare instances. However, 1.0% reported that it never happened, reflecting strong overall support for observation.
- **Guiding student teachers to prepare lesson plans and schemes of work**: A total of 45.8% of respondents indicated that this guidance always occurs, while 33.3% reported that it often takes place. Another 12.8% stated that it sometimes happens, 4.9% noted rare instances, and 3.1% reported that it never happens. This suggests a generally consistent level of support for the planning.
- **Ensuring that student teachers begin teaching during the second week**: A total of 47.3% of respondents reported that this always occurs, while 32.0% stated that it often happens. Additionally, 16.3% indicated that it sometimes occurred, 2.8% noted rare instances, and 1.6% reported that it never happened, indicating strong engagement in early teaching.
- **Supervising and guiding student teachers throughout the teaching practice session**: A total of 52.5% of respondents reported that supervision always occurred, while 35.3% stated that it often happened. Additionally, 8.1% noted that it sometimes happened, while 1.8% reported rare instances, and 2.3% stated that it never happened, showing active involvement in supervision.
- **Using the relevant TP/SBS form to observe and assess lessons**: A total of 59.4% of respondents indicated that they always use the form for lesson observation and assessment, while 26.4% reported that it often occurred. Additionally, 9.9% stated that it sometimes happened, while 2.4% noted rare instances, and 1.8% reported that it never happened, underscoring the importance of adherence to assessment protocols.
- **Providing feedback to student teachers on their teaching**: A total of 61.8% of respondents reported that they always provide feedback, while 27.1% stated that it often happens. Additionally, 7.5% indicated that feedback was sometimes provided, while 2.3% reported rare instances, and 1.3% stated that feedback was never given, highlighting a strong commitment to guidance.

- **Checking student-teachers' TP files and guiding the preparation of lesson plans and schemes of work**: A total of 32.5% of respondents stated that they always checked files and provided guidance, while 34.8% reported that they often checked them. Additionally, 20.9% noted that files are sometimes checked, while 6.7% indicated rare instances, and 5.2% stated that they never check the files, suggesting room for improvement in this area.
- **Entering teaching practice marks in the relevant TP form 1**: A total of 54.2% of respondents reported that they always entered marks, while 29.7% stated that this often occurred. Additionally, 8.3% mentioned that marks were sometimes entered, while 2.6% indicated rare instances, and 5.2% reported that marks were never entered, suggesting occasional lapses in documentation.
- **Guiding student teachers in maintaining classroom control and understanding their responsibilities**: A total of 67.0% of respondents stated that they always ensure student teachers understand their responsibilities and maintain control, while 22.7% reported that this often happens. Additionally, 6.4% noted occasional guidance, while 3.1% indicated rare instances, and 0.8% reported that this guidance never happened, highlighting strong classroom management mentorship.
- **Holding post-lesson meetings to assess student-teacher performance**: A total of 37.3% of respondents indicated that these meetings often take place, while 36.0% stated that they always do. Additionally, 16.5% reported that meetings sometimes occurred, while 7.5% noted rare instances, and 2.8% indicated that they never took place, suggesting a need for more structured feedback sessions.
- **Avoiding criticism of student teachers in front of others**: A total of 64.8% of respondents stated that they always avoid public criticism, while 13.2% indicated that it often happens. Additionally, 3.4% reported occasional instances, 2.6% noted rare occurrences, and 16.1% reported that they never avoided public criticism, highlighting varied approaches to constructive feedback.
- **Assisting student teachers with school policies and resources**: A total of 51.8% of respondents stated that they always provided this support, while 29.0% reported that it often occurred. Additionally, 12.2% noted occasional assistance, while 4.4% mentioned rare instances, and 2.6% reported that they never offered this guidance, suggesting a broad understanding of the importance of familiarising student teachers with the school environment.

- **Discussing student teachers' development and progress**: A total of 50.5% of respondents indicated that they always engaged in these discussions, while 31.3% stated that these discussions often occurred. Additionally, 13.5% mentioned that they sometimes occur, while 3.3% reported rare instances, and 1.4% stated that these discussions never take place, reflecting a strong focus on student-teacher growth.

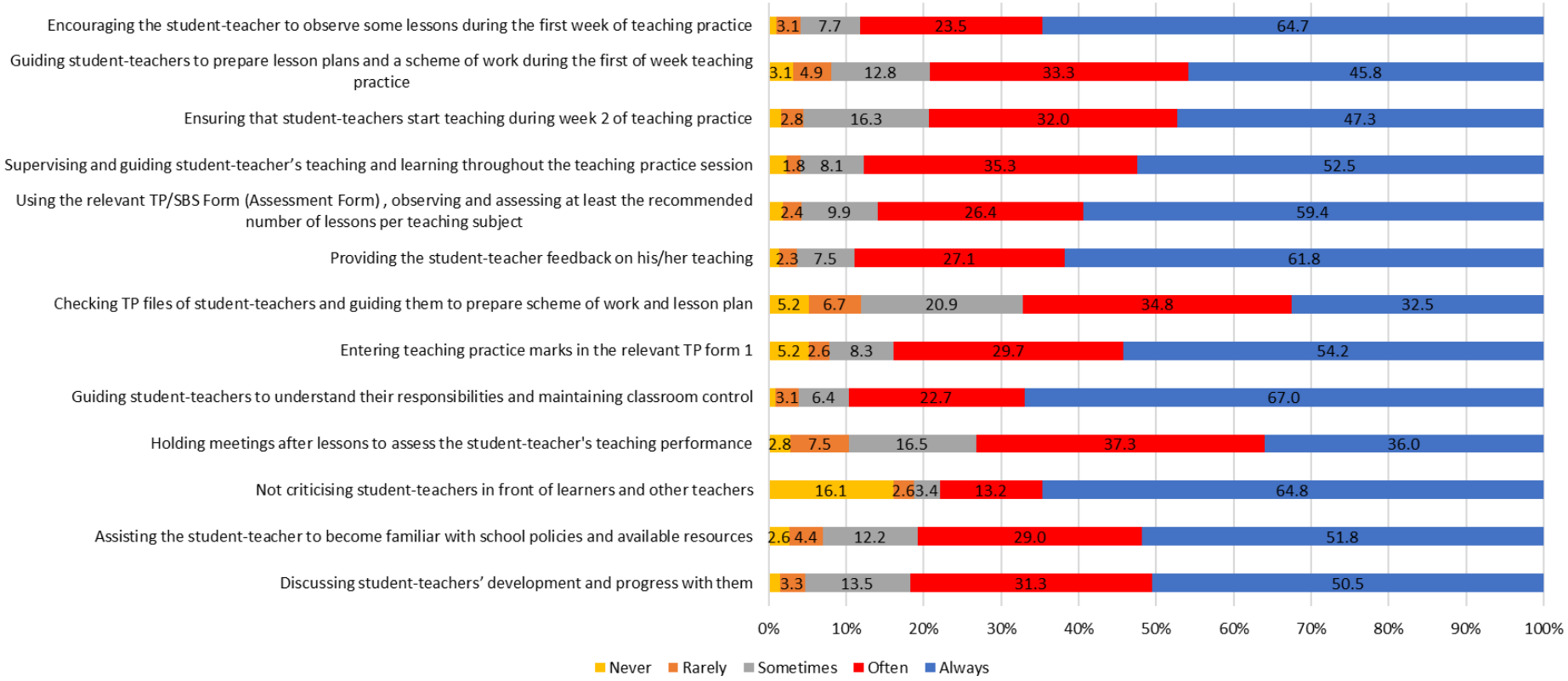

Figure 30: Mentor teachers and principals rating of own performance based on their experience

Learning Assessment

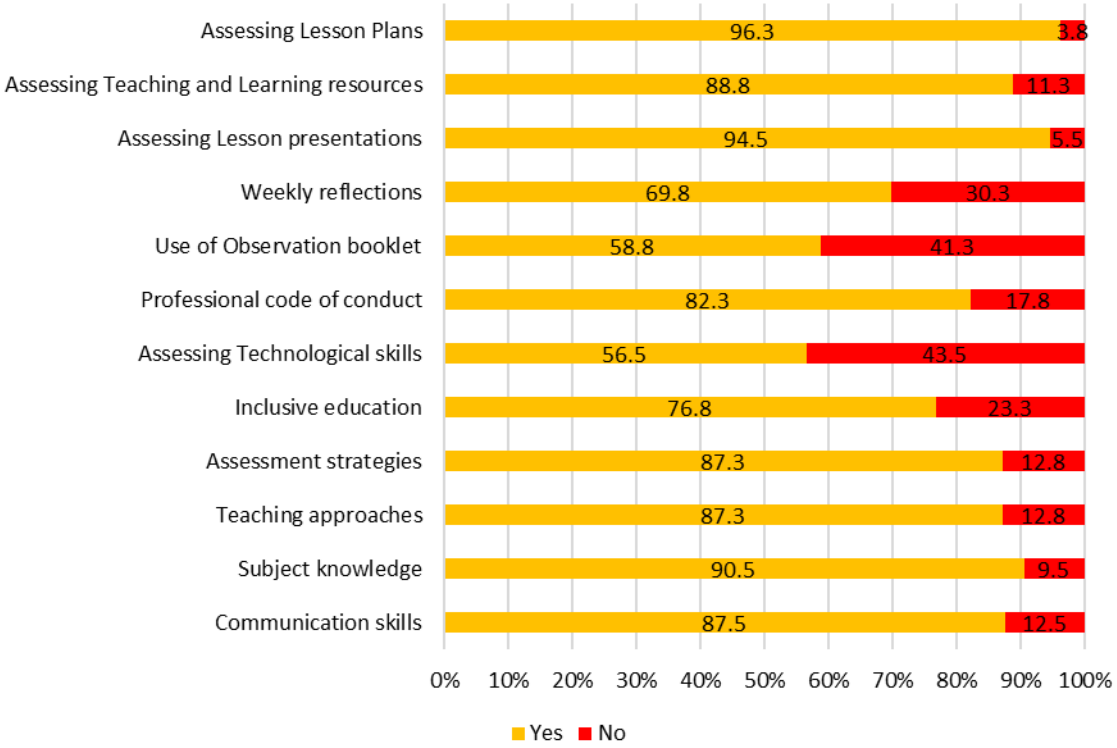

Figure 31: Type of assessment/evaluations should be done during SBS

Mentor teachers and principals provided their perspectives on the types of assessments and evaluations conducted during the SBS sessions. The results in **Figure 31** indicate varying levels of emphasis on the different aspects of teacher preparation.

- **Assessing Lesson Plans:** The data revealed a strong consensus on the necessity of evaluating lesson plans during SBS sessions, with 96.3% of respondents affirming its importance. This overwhelming agreement underscores the role of structured and well-prepared lesson plans in effective teaching and learning. In contrast, only 3.8% do not see the need for such assessments, possibly reflecting diverse perspectives on teaching methodologies or the perceived value of formal lesson-plan evaluations.
- **Assessing Teaching and Learning Resources:** A significant majority (88.8%) of respondents recognised the importance of assessing teaching and learning resources during SBS sessions, highlighting their critical role in ensuring quality and accessibility for both teachers and students. However, 11.3% of respondents did not consider such evaluations necessary, suggesting varying opinions on the impact of resources on teaching effectiveness or a preference for more flexible approaches.

- **Assessing Lesson Presentations:** A strong majority (94.5%) supported evaluating lesson presentations, emphasising the need for clear, engaging, and pedagogically sound delivery. The 5.5% who did not prioritise such assessments may view other aspects of teaching as more crucial or advocate for a less formal evaluation process.
- **Weekly Reflections:** There was substantial support (69.8%) for incorporating weekly reflections in SBS evaluations, as they provided opportunities for student teachers to analyse their experiences and identify areas for improvement. However, 30.3% did not see them as essential, possibly due to differing views on effective progress assessment methods.
- **Use of Observation Booklets:** Opinions on observation booklets were divided, with 58.8% advocating for their inclusion in SBS assessments, recognising their value in structured evaluations. However, 41.3% did not find them necessary, possibly due to concerns about practicality or effectiveness in documenting teaching performance.
- **Professional Code of Conduct:** A majority (82.3%) supported evaluating professional conduct during SBS, reinforcing the importance of ethical behaviour, professionalism, and respect in teaching practice. However, 17.8% did not prioritise such assessments, reflecting differing views on their relevance.
- **Assessing Technological Skills:** More than half (56.5%) believed that technological skills should be assessed in SBS, acknowledging the growing role of digital tools in education. However, 43.5% did not prioritise this, which may indicate varying perceptions of the role of technology in teacher training.
- **Inclusive Education:** A strong consensus (76.8%) supports assessing inclusive education, ensuring that student teachers are prepared to accommodate diverse learning needs. However, 23.3% did not prioritise these assessments, possibly due to differing perspectives on their applicability in SBS.
- **Assessment Strategies:** A large majority (87.3%) recognised the importance of evaluating assessment strategies, ensuring that student teachers could design and implement effective evaluations of student learning. The 12.8% who did not prioritise this may have alternative views on how assessment strategies should be developed.
- **Teaching Approaches:** Similarly, 87.3% of respondents advocated for assessing teaching approaches, emphasising the need for diverse

instructional methods. The 12.8% who did not prioritise these assessments may have believed in a more flexible or less structured approach to teaching.

- **Subject Knowledge:** A strong majority (90.5%) stressed the importance of assessing subject knowledge, ensuring that student teachers have the necessary expertise to deliver effective instruction. However, 9.5% did not prioritise this, possibly reflecting varied views on how subject knowledge should be evaluated.
- **Communication Skills:** Finally, 87.5% supported assessing communication skills, recognising their importance in effective teaching and professional interactions. The 12.5% who did not prioritise this may have seen other skills as more critical or preferred alternative evaluation methods.

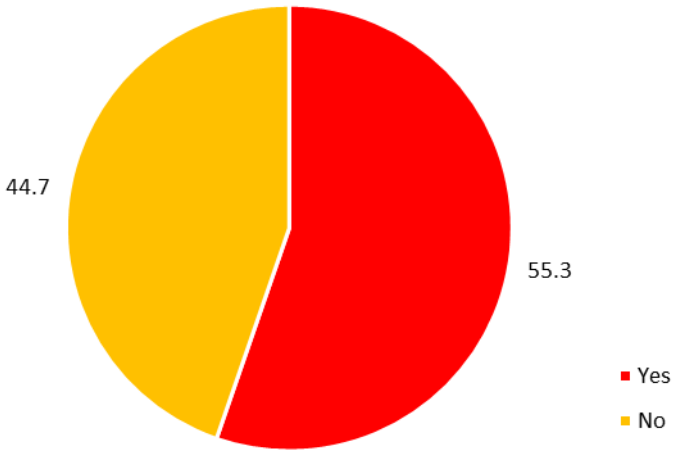

Figure 32: Effect of informing SBS students before visiting them for competency and professionalism

Mentor teachers and principals were asked whether prior notification of student teachers before university lecturers' assessments enhanced the evaluation of their competency and professionalism. The results in **Figure 32** show that approximately 55.3% of respondents believe that prior notification is beneficial, as it allows for adequate preparation and ensures that student teachers can effectively demonstrate their skills and knowledge. However, 44.7% disagreed, arguing that advance notice may compromise the authenticity of the assessment by enabling students to tailor their performance. This division underscores the need for further discussion within educational institutions to determine the most effective approach to assess student teachers during SBS placements.

2. Experiences of lecturers

Overall experience

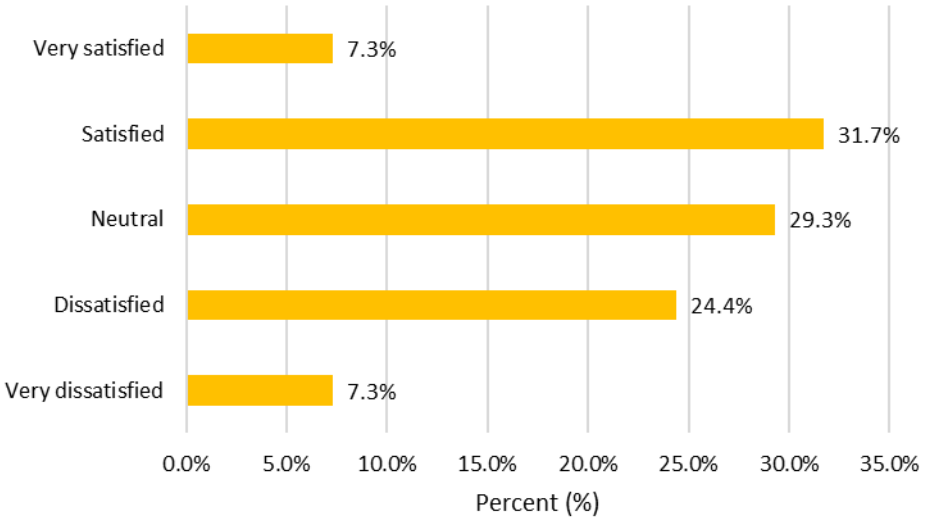

Figure 33: Lecturers' perceptions of the overall quality of the SBS

UNAM lecturers were asked about their perceptions of the overall quality of the SBS they encountered. As shown in **Figure 33**, 7.3% reported being very dissatisfied, and 24.4% expressed dissatisfaction. A total of 29.3% held a neutral stance, whereas 31.7% were satisfied. Notably, 7.3% reported being very satisfied with their experience. These findings highlight the diverse range of opinions of university lecturers regarding SBS quality.

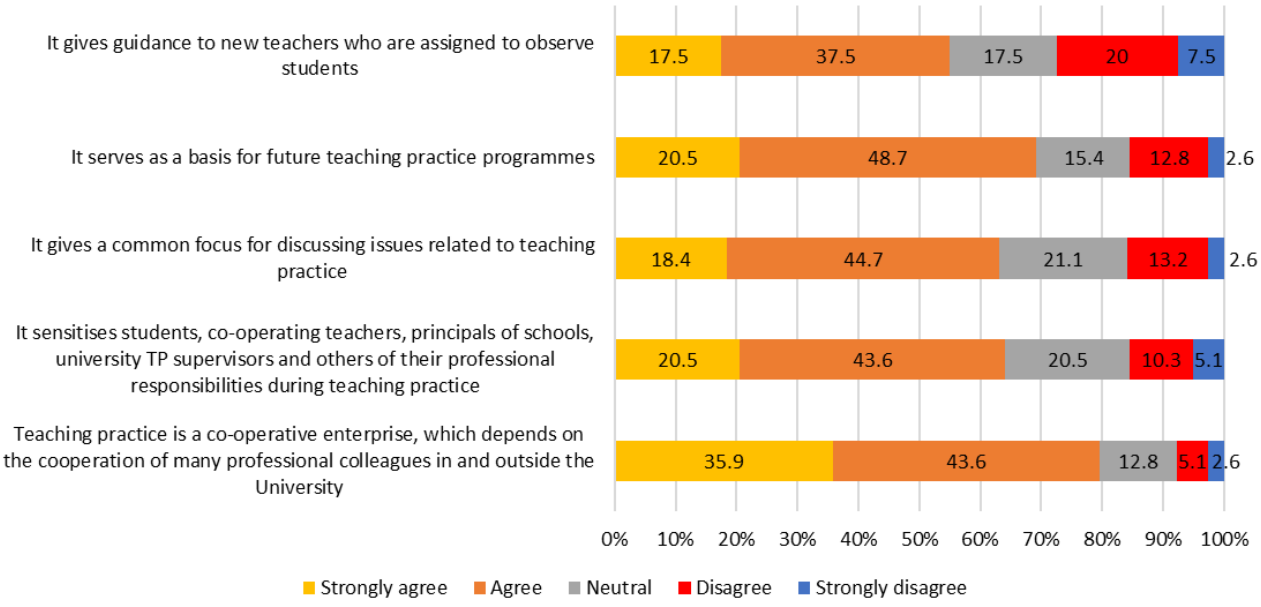

Figure 34: Describe your ideal School Based Studies/Teaching Practice as a University lecturer

UNAM lecturers were asked to describe an ideal SBS using a five-item Likert Scale. The results are shown in **Figure 34**:

- **Providing Guidance to New Teachers:** A total of 55.0% of respondents (17.5% strongly agreed, 37.5% agreed) believed that SBS should provide guidance to new teachers assigned to observe students. However, 27.5% (20.0% disagreed, 7.5% strongly disagreed) did not share this view, while 17.5% remained neutral, indicating mixed perspectives on the extent of structured support SBS should offer.
- **Serving as a Foundation for Future Teaching Practice:** A total of 69.2% of respondents (20.5% strongly agreed, 48.7% agreed) supported the idea that SBS should serve as a basis for future teaching practice programs. Conversely, 15.4% (12.8% disagreed, 2.6% strongly disagreed) did not see the SBS in this way, while the remaining 15.4% remained neutral, suggesting some variation in views on its long-term impact.
- **Facilitating Discussions on Teaching Practice:** A total of 63.1% of respondents (18.4% strongly agreed, 44.7% agreed) emphasised the role of SBS in fostering discussions on teaching practice-related issues. However, 15.8% (13.2% disagreed, 2.6% strongly disagreed) did not consider this a key function, while 21.1% remained neutral, reflecting differing views on the SBS as a platform for professional dialogue.
- **Raising Awareness of Professional Responsibilities:** A total of 64.1% of respondents (20.5% strongly agreed, 43.6% agreed) believed that SBS helps sensitise students, cooperating teachers, principals, and university supervisors to their professional responsibilities. Meanwhile, 15.4% (10.3% disagreed, 5.1% strongly disagreed) did not perceive this as a primary function, and 20.5% remained neutral, indicating varying opinions on the effectiveness of the SBS in promoting professional accountability.
- **Encouraging Collaborative Teaching Practice:** A total of 79.5% of respondents (35.9% strongly agreed, 43.6% agreed) supported the idea that SBS should emphasise collaboration among professional colleagues within and outside the university. However, 7.7% (5.1% disagreed, 2.6% strongly disagreed) did not share this perspective, while 12.8% remained neutral, highlighting differences in views on the level of cooperation required in SBS.

Learning Objectives

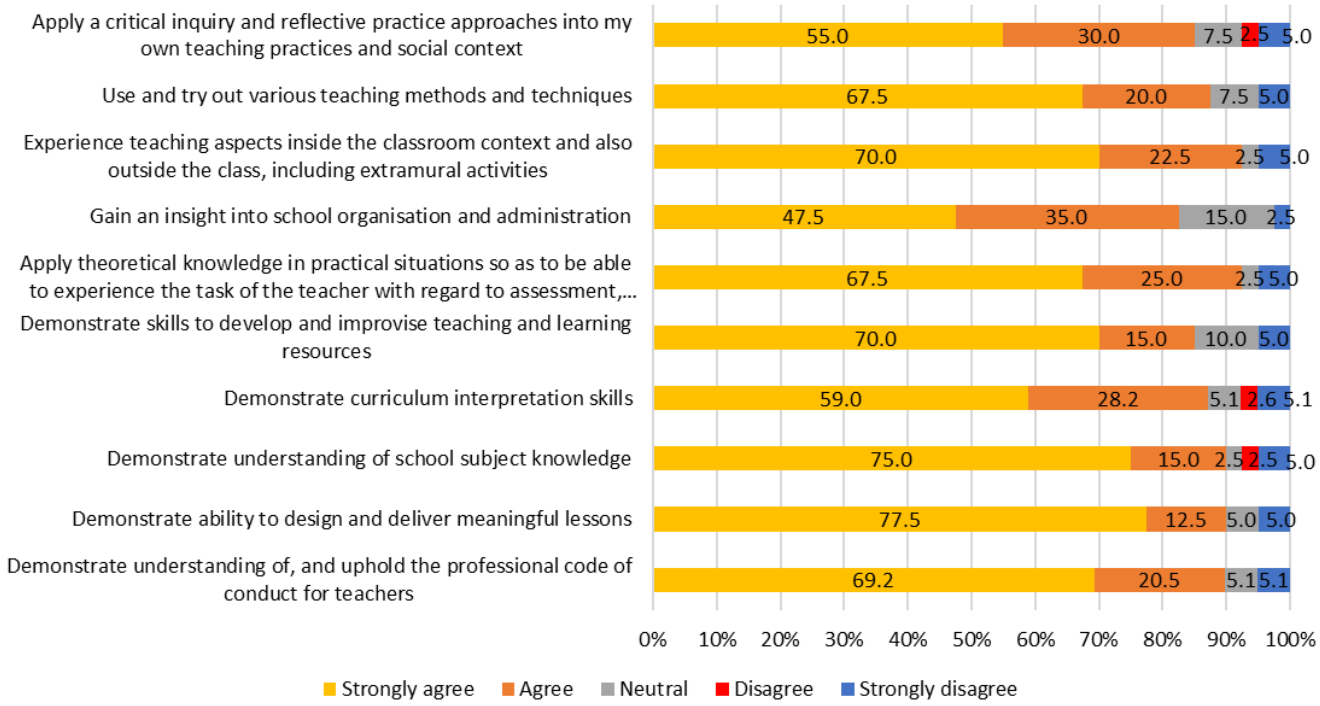

Figure 35: How would you rate specific learning objectives that students are expected to achieve through SBS experience

UNAM lecturers were asked about the specific learning objectives they expected students to achieve through the SBS experience. Their responses, ranked on a five-point Likert scale and shown in Figure 35**Figure 35**, reveal strong support for various competencies essential to teacher preparation:

- **Critical enquiry and reflective practice:** A majority (85.0%) of lecturers (55.0% strongly agreed, 30.0% agreed) endorsed the importance of integrating critical enquiry and reflective practice into teaching within a social context. Meanwhile, 7.5% remained neutral, and 7.5% (2.5% disagreed, 5.0% strongly disagreed) opposed this objective. These responses indicate a broad agreement on the need for reflective and enquiry-based teaching.
- **Experimenting with Teaching Methods:** A total of 87.5% (67.5% strongly agreed, 20.0% agreed) supported the idea that students should explore and apply various teaching techniques. Only 7.5% remained neutral, while 5.0% strongly disagreed, highlighting the strong overall endorsement of methodological flexibility in teaching.

- **Experiencing Teaching Inside and Outside the Classroom:** A vast majority (92.5%) of lecturers (70.0% strongly agreed, 22.5% agreed) emphasised the importance of students engaging in both classroom and extracurricular teaching experiences. Only 2.5% remained neutral, and 5.0% strongly disagreed, showing overwhelming support for this objective.
- **Understanding School Organization and Administration:** A total of 82.5% (47.5% strongly agreed, 35.0% agreed) endorsed including school administration and organisation in the SBS. However, 15.0% remained neutral and 2.5% strongly disagreed. This suggests a broad agreement but with some degree of ambivalence.
- **Applying Theoretical Knowledge in Practice:** A combined 92.5% (67.5% strongly agreed, 25.0% agreed) believed that SBS should help students translate theoretical knowledge into practice, particularly in areas such as assessment, classroom management, and lesson preparation. Only 2.5% remained neutral, while 5.0% strongly disagreed, reinforcing the strong consensus on this objective.
- **Developing and Improving Teaching Resources:** A majority (85.0%) of lecturers (70.0% strongly agreed, 15.0% agreed) stressed the importance of students demonstrating the ability to create and refine teaching materials. A total of 10.0% remained neutral, while 5.0% strongly disagreed, reflecting a high level of agreement with some minor uncertainty.
- **Interpreting the Curriculum:** A total of 87.2% (59.0% strongly agreed, 28.2% agreed) supported the development of curriculum interpretation skills among students. Only 5.1% remained neutral, while 7.7% (2.6% disagreed, 5.1% strongly disagreed) opposed the objective. These findings highlight the strong endorsement of curriculum literacy as a key competency.
- **Demonstrating Subject Knowledge:** A vast majority (90.0%) of lecturers (75.0% strongly agreed, 15.0% agreed) emphasised the need for students to demonstrate a solid understanding of subject knowledge in their answers. Only 2.5% remained neutral, while 7.5% (2.5% disagreed, 5.0% strongly disagreed) did not support this objective, indicating a broad agreement on subject mastery as a critical learning goal.
- **Designing and Delivering Meaningful Lessons:** An overwhelming 90.0% (77.5% strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed) of the respondents agreed that students should be able to design and deliver effective lessons. Only

5.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed, highlighting the near-universal consensus on the importance of this teaching competency.

- **Upholding the Professional Code of Conduct:** A total of 89.7% (69.2% strongly agreed, 20.5% agreed) endorsed the importance of students understanding and adhering to the professional code of conduct for teachers. Meanwhile, 5.1% remained neutral and 5.1% strongly disagreed, reflecting strong agreement with minimal dissent.

Learning Design/Methodology

UNAM lecturers were asked how they prefer to mentor student-teachers for SBS under two key learning design/methodology themes: **"Modelling as a Mode of Practice"** and **"Coaching and Facilitating."** They were required to indicate **"Yes"** or **"No"** for various mentoring strategies under each theme. The results for **Modelling as a Mode of Practice** are presented in **Figure 36**:

- **Explanation:** The majority of lecturers (57.1%) indicated that they wish to incorporate explanation in their mentoring approach, while 42.9% responded "No." This suggests that while explanations are valued, there is some divergence in opinion regarding their necessity in preparing student teachers for SBS.
- **Elaboration:** A significant proportion of lecturers (59.5%) preferred to incorporate elaboration in their mentoring, while 40.5% did not. This indicates that while elaboration is recognised as important, it is not universally prioritised as other strategies.
- **Lecturing:** Most lecturers (69.0%) indicated that they do not prefer lecturing as a mentoring method, while 31.0% chose "Yes." This suggests that traditional lecturing is not widely considered an effective approach for mentoring student teachers in the SBS.
- **Demonstration:** A vast majority (81.0%) of lecturers preferred incorporating demonstrations in their mentoring approach, while only 19.0% did not. This highlights the strong recognition of demonstrations as an essential technique for preparing students for SBS.
- **Thinking aloud through processes:** Only 45.2% of lecturers preferred this approach, while 54.8% did not. This suggests that while some lecturers see value in verbalising their thought processes, the majority do not prioritise this approach in their mentoring.
- **Recapping or summarising information:** Most lecturers (57.1%) prefer to exclude recapping or summarising information in their mentoring, while 42.9% prefer to include it in their mentoring. This indicates a division in

opinion regarding the importance of summarisation in mentoring student teachers for SBS.

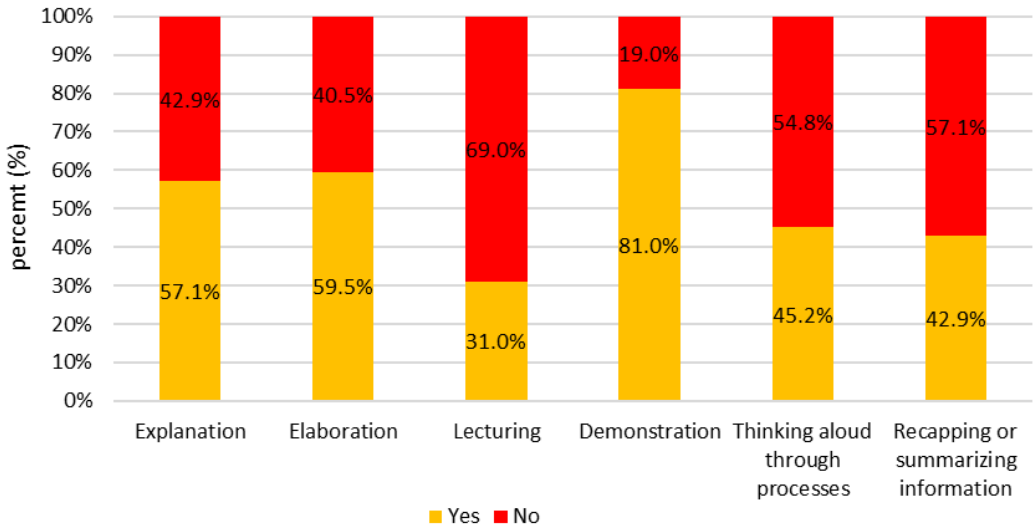

Figure 36: How would you wish to prepare students for SBS: when modelling as a mode of practice

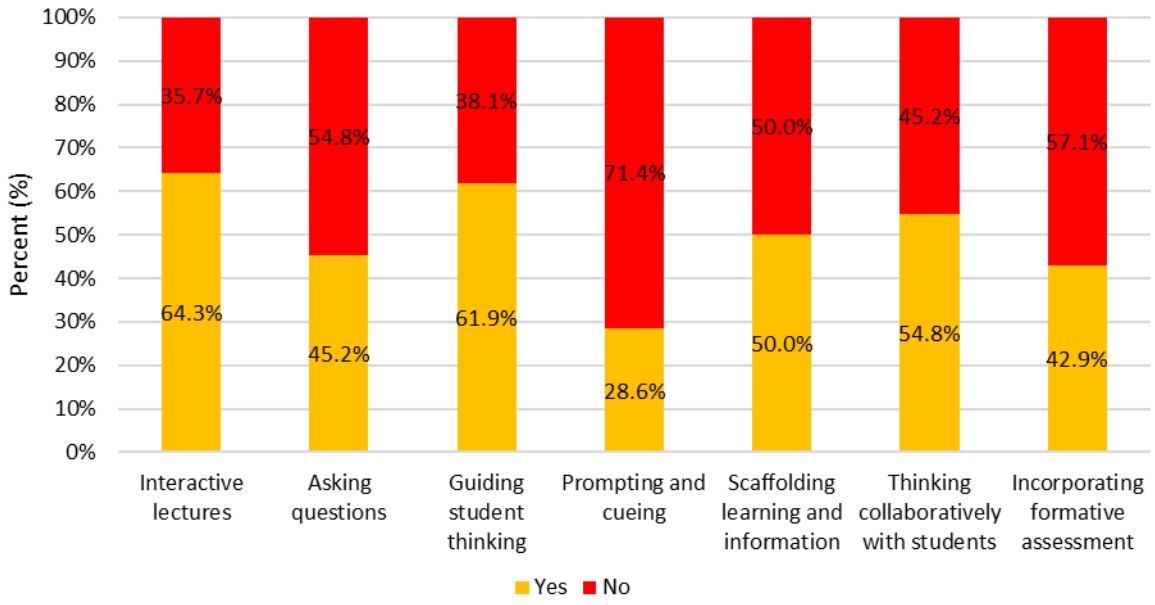

Figure 37: How would you wish to prepare students for SBS: when coaching and facilitating

The results for **coaching and facilitating** mentoring student teachers for SBS are presented in **Figure 37**:

- **Interactive Lectures:** The majority of lecturers (64.3%) indicated that they wish to incorporate interactive lectures in their mentoring approach, while 35.7% responded "No." This suggests a considerable interest in using interactive lectures as a preparation method for SBS.
- **Asking Questions:** A notable proportion of lecturers (45.2%) preferred incorporating question-asking in their mentoring, while 54.8% did not. This

indicates a division in opinions regarding the role of questioning as a preparatory approach for the SBS.

- **Guiding Student Thinking:** Most lecturers (61.9%) preferred incorporating guiding student thinking in their mentoring approach, while 38.1% did not. This highlights a strong preference for this method to help students achieve their learning objectives in the future.
- **Prompting and Cueing:** Only 28.6% of lecturers supported incorporating prompting and cueing in their mentoring approach, while 71.4% did not. This suggests that most lecturers do not prioritise this strategy when preparing student teachers for SBS.
- **Scaffolding Learning and Information:** An equal proportion of lecturers (50.0%) supported and opposed scaffolding as a mentoring strategy. This indicates a split opinion on whether scaffolding should be included in the SBS preparation.
- **Thinking Collaboratively with Students:** A slight majority (54.8%) of lecturers preferred incorporating collaborative thinking in their mentoring approach, while 45.2% did not. This suggests that collaborative thinking is valued but not universally prioritised in SBS preparation.
- **Incorporating Formative Assessment:** Most lecturers (57.1%) indicated that they do not prefer integrating formative assessment into their mentoring, while 42.9% support its inclusion. This suggests that formative assessment is not widely considered a key strategy for mentoring student teachers in the SBS.

Figure 38 presents the lecturers' opinions on the appropriate duration of SBS for developing a student teacher's expertise during Teaching Practicum Phase 1 (Year 3). The majority of lecturers (62.5%) prefer an 8-week SBS period for developing student teachers' expertise during Teaching Practicum Phase 1 (Year 3), while 25.0% support a 6-week duration, and 12.5% advocate a 3-week timeframe. These findings indicate a strong preference for a longer SBS duration, with most lecturers favouring an 8-week period.

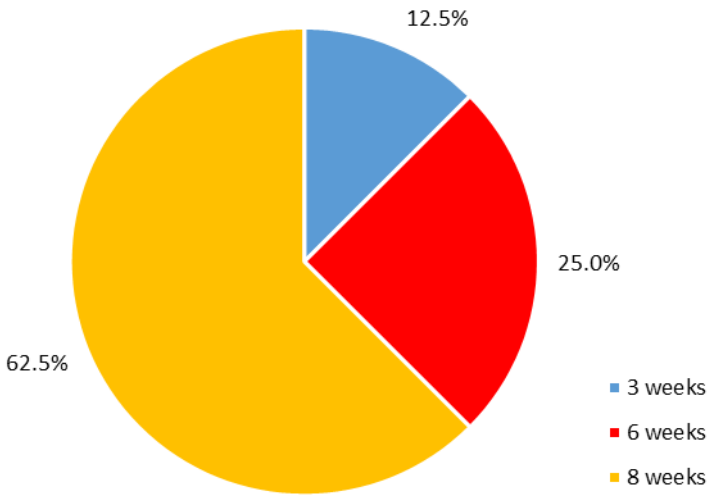

Figure 38: Adequate period of SBS to develop a student teacher's expertise in Phase 1 (year 3)

Figure 39 illustrates lecturers' perspectives on the ideal duration of SBS for fostering student teachers' expertise during Teaching Practicum Phase 2 (Year 4). Most lecturers (67.5%) advocated for a 12-week SBS period, indicating strong support for an extended timeframe to enhance student-teacher development. A smaller proportion (20.0%) preferred an 8-week duration, while 12.5% recommended a 10-week period. These findings emphasise a clear preference for a longer SBS duration, with most respondents considering a 12-week period as the most effective for cultivating student teachers' expertise in teaching.

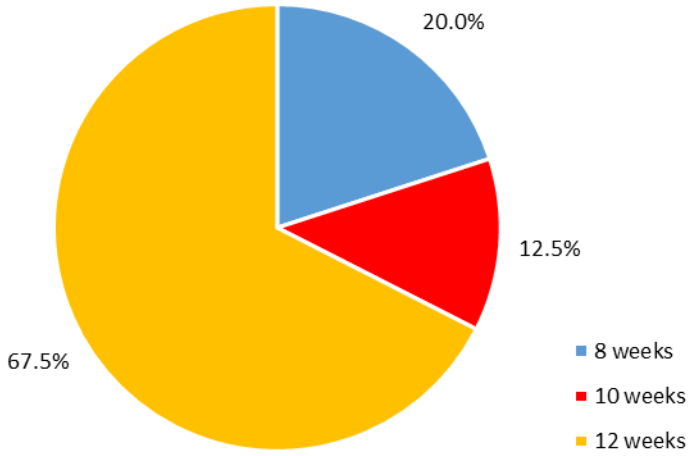

Figure 39: Adequate period of SBS to develop a student-teacher's expertise in Phase 2 (year 4)

Roles of mentor teachers and lecturers

Figure 40 presents the lecturers' evaluations of mentor teachers and principals based on the following mentorship responsibilities:

- **Encouraging student teachers to observe lessons during the first week of teaching practice:** A total of 27.5% of lecturers indicated that Mentor Teachers always fulfilled this role, while 32.5% stated that they sometimes did. Additionally, 17.5% reported that observation was often encouraged, 12.5% said it occurred rarely, and 10.0% noted that it never occurred. These findings suggest varying levels of engagement, with a significant proportion of Mentor Teachers either consistently or occasionally fulfilling this role.
- **Guiding student teachers in preparing lesson plans and a scheme of work during the first week of teaching practice:** According to 22.5% of lecturers, Mentor Teachers always provided this support, whereas 32.5% mentioned that it happened sometimes. Another 12.5% noted that it was often practiced, 17.5% indicated it was rare, and 15.0% stated that it never occurred. These results point to inconsistencies in the assistance provided to student teachers.
- **Ensuring that student teachers start teaching in the second week of teaching practice:** About 22.5% of lecturers reported that Mentor Teachers always ensured this, while 32.5% said it happened sometimes. Additionally, 17.5% indicated that it was often the case, 15.0% observed that it was rare, and 12.5% noted that it never occurred. These responses highlight the varying degrees of effectiveness in transitioning student teachers to classroom instruction.
- **Supervising and guiding student teachers' teaching and learning throughout the teaching practice session:** Responses varied, with 42.5% of lecturers stating this occurred sometimes, while 22.5% confirmed it was always done. Another 12.5% mentioned that it happened often, whereas 12.5% said it occurred rarely, and 10.0% indicated that it never happened. These findings reveal inconsistencies in the frequency with which Mentor Teachers provide supervision and guidance.
- **Observing and assessing the recommended number of lessons using TP Form 7:** A total of 45.0% of lecturers stated that Mentor Teachers always adhered to this requirement, while 20.0% mentioned that it was often done. Additionally, 15.0% said it sometimes occurred, 17.5% indicated

that it was rare, and 2.5% reported that it never happened. These results suggest that while adherence is common, some inconsistencies persist.

- **Providing feedback on student teachers' teaching:** About 35.0% of lecturers indicated that Mentor Teachers always provided feedback, whereas 30.0% said it happened sometimes. Another 12.5% mentioned that it was often done, while 17.5% noted that it was rare, and 5.0% stated that it never took place. These findings indicate that although feedback is a common practice, its frequency varies.
- **Checking TP files and guiding student teachers in preparing teaching materials:** Responses were mixed, with 28.2% of lecturers stating that this always happened, while an equal percentage reported that it often occurred. Another 28.2% indicated that it was sometimes done, whereas 20.5% noted that it was rare, and 17.9% said that it never took place. These findings highlight the varying levels of support provided in this field.
- **Entering teaching practice marks in the relevant TP/SBS evaluation form:** According to 45.0% of lecturers, Mentor Teachers always completed this task, while 17.5% said that it often happened. Another 20.0% mentioned that it occurred sometimes, 10.0% stated that it was rare, and 7.5% reported that it never took place. These responses suggest that while many Mentor Teachers consistently enter marks, some inconsistencies persist.
- **Ensuring that student teachers understand their responsibility for learners while maintaining classroom control when necessary:** Approximately 27.5% of lecturers indicated that this responsibility was always emphasised, while 35.0% stated that it was sometimes done. Additionally, 25.0% mentioned that it often occurred, 5.0% said it was rare, and 7.5% noted that it never occurred. These findings suggest that while many Mentor Teachers reinforce this responsibility, there is variation in their emphasis.
- **Holding meetings after lessons to assess student teachers' teaching performance:** Feedback from lecturers showed that 35.0% reported that these meetings always occurred, while 22.5% said they sometimes took place. Another 15.0% indicated that they happened often, whereas 17.5% noted that they were rare, and 10.0% mentioned that they never happened. These responses suggest that post-lesson evaluations are common but are not uniformly implemented.
- **Avoiding criticism of student teachers in front of learners and other cooperating teachers:** According to 27.5% of lecturers, Mentor Teachers

always avoided public criticism, while 25.0% said they never did. Additionally, 20.0% mentioned that it often occurred, 22.5% noted that it happened sometimes, and 5.0% reported that it was rare. These findings indicate a lack of uniformity in handling criticism.

- **Assisting student teachers in understanding school policies and available resources:** About 32.5% of lecturers stated that Mentor Teachers sometimes provided guidance, while 22.5% said it often happened. Another 20.0% confirmed that it was always done, 17.5% noted that it was rare, and 7.5% reported that it never took place. These findings suggest inconsistencies in the introduction of student teachers to school policies.
- **Discussing student teachers' development and progress:** A total of 30.0% of lecturers reported that these discussions always took place, while 25.0% mentioned that they sometimes occurred. Another 12.5% indicated that they were often conducted, 15.6% said they were rare, and 7.5% noted that they never happened. These results highlight the varying levels of engagement in student teachers' professional growth.

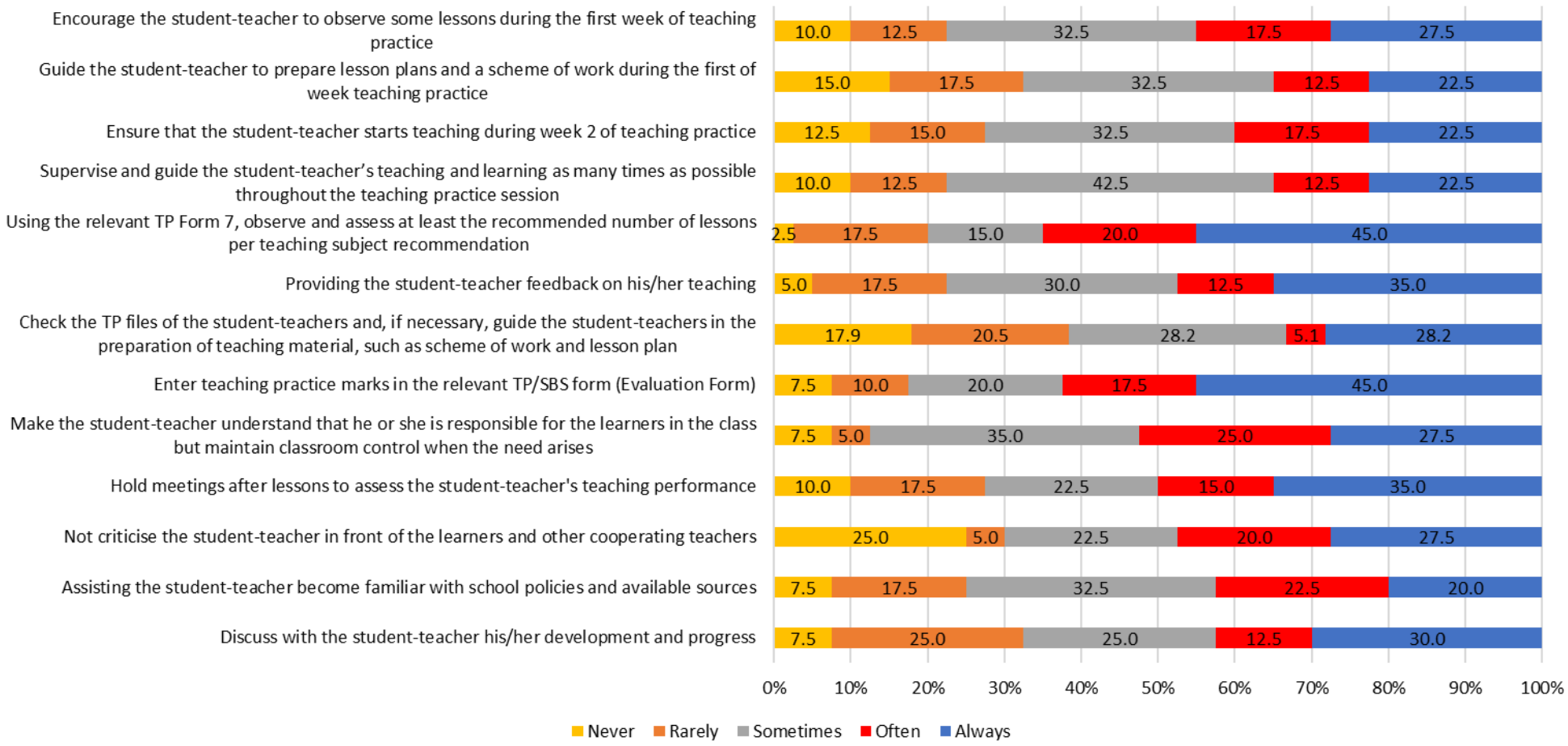

Figure 40: Lecturers ratings of performance of mentor teachers and principals based on their experience

Figure 41 presents the findings on lecturers' self-assessed performance based on their experiences. They were asked to rate their engagement in several key activities related to student-teacher supervision:

- **Meeting the principal to discuss student-teacher progress:** A notable 26.8% of lecturers reported always meeting the principal for such discussions, demonstrating consistent involvement, while 29.3% stated that they sometimes did. Additionally, 24.4% mentioned meeting the principal often, whereas 9.8% indicated that they rarely did, and 6.3% noted that they never engaged in these discussions. These findings highlight varying levels of engagement, with some lecturers regularly involving the principal and others interacting less frequently.
- **Holding pre- and post-instruction meetings with student teachers:** Just over half (51.2%) of the lecturers reported always conducting these meetings, indicating strong engagement. Another 17.1% mentioned that they sometimes held them, while 9.8% stated that they often did. However, 17.1% reported rarely organising these sessions, and 4.9% reported that they never occurred. While most lecturers maintained regular discussions before and after instruction, some inconsistencies in meeting frequency persisted.
- **Reviewing the TP/SBS portfolio of student teachers:** A significant portion (42.5%) of lecturers reported always checking portfolios, ensuring thorough monitoring, while 32.5% frequently engaged in this task. Meanwhile, 17.5% stated that they reviewed portfolios occasionally, and only 7.5% admitted to never doing so. These findings suggest that most lecturers are actively involved in assessing student teachers' work, although some do so sporadically.
- **Meeting and discussing teaching practice matters with cooperating teachers:** Approximately 30.8% of lecturers indicated that they always engaged in these discussions, highlighting consistent collaboration. Additionally, 28.2% reported frequently interacting with their cooperating teachers, while 23.1% mentioned occasional discussions with them. However, 17.9% noted that such meetings were rare, suggesting that while many lecturers actively communicate with supervising teachers, others do so less frequently or not at all.
- **Assisting in resolving interpersonal communication challenges between student teachers and cooperating teachers:** Findings indicate that 55.0% of lecturers always provided support in addressing such issues, demonstrating a commitment to fostering positive relationships. Another 17.5% frequently assisted, and 20.0% occasionally assisted. However, 7.5% stated that they rarely intervened, and the same proportion reported that unresolved conflicts were escalated to the TP Coordinator.

This highlights the importance of timely conflict resolution to ensure a productive teaching environment.

- **Verifying student teachers' attendance during teaching practice:** Nearly half (45.0%) of the lecturers consistently monitored attendance, while 22.5% reported doing so frequently. Meanwhile, 15.0% mentioned that they occasionally verified attendance, 7.5% stated that they rarely checked, and 10.0% admitted that they had never tracked it. Ensuring regular attendance remains a key aspect of student teachers' professional development and adherence to program expectations.
- **Evaluating student teachers' lessons:** The majority (85.0%) of lecturers reported always assessing student teachers' lessons, demonstrating a strong commitment to providing feedback and guidance. However, 5.0% mentioned that they evaluated lessons only occasionally, and 2.5% indicated that they rarely did so. This suggests that while most lecturers are actively involved in lesson evaluation, a small proportion may need to enhance their support to ensure comprehensive mentoring.

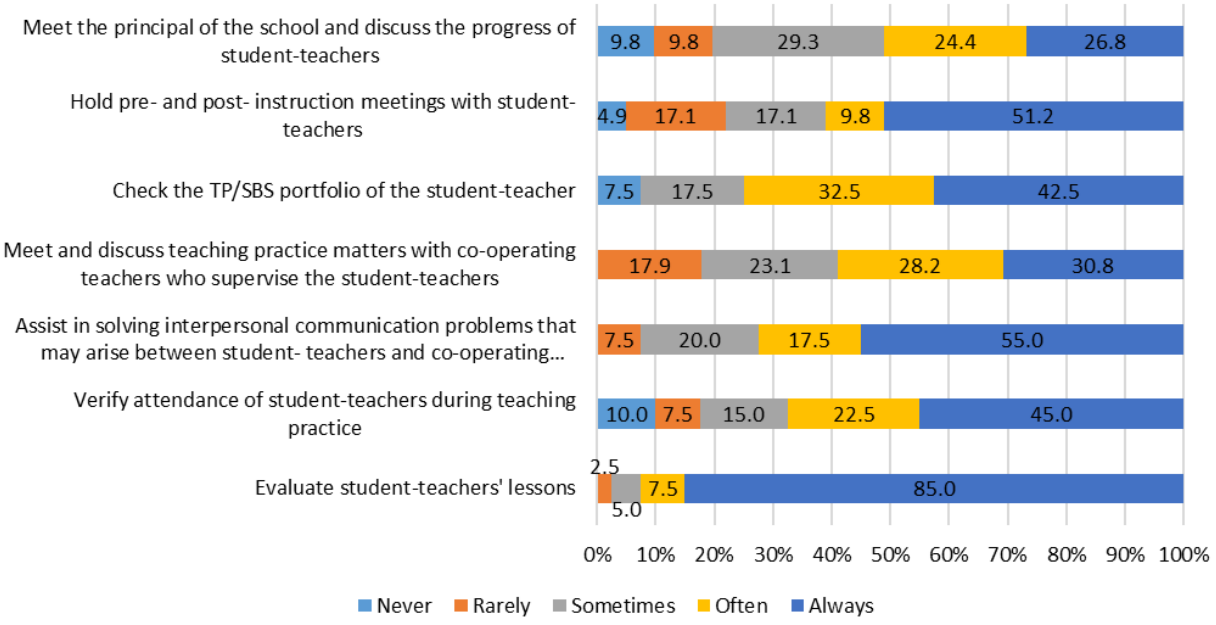

Figure 41: Ratings of lecturers' performance based on their own experience

Learning Assessment

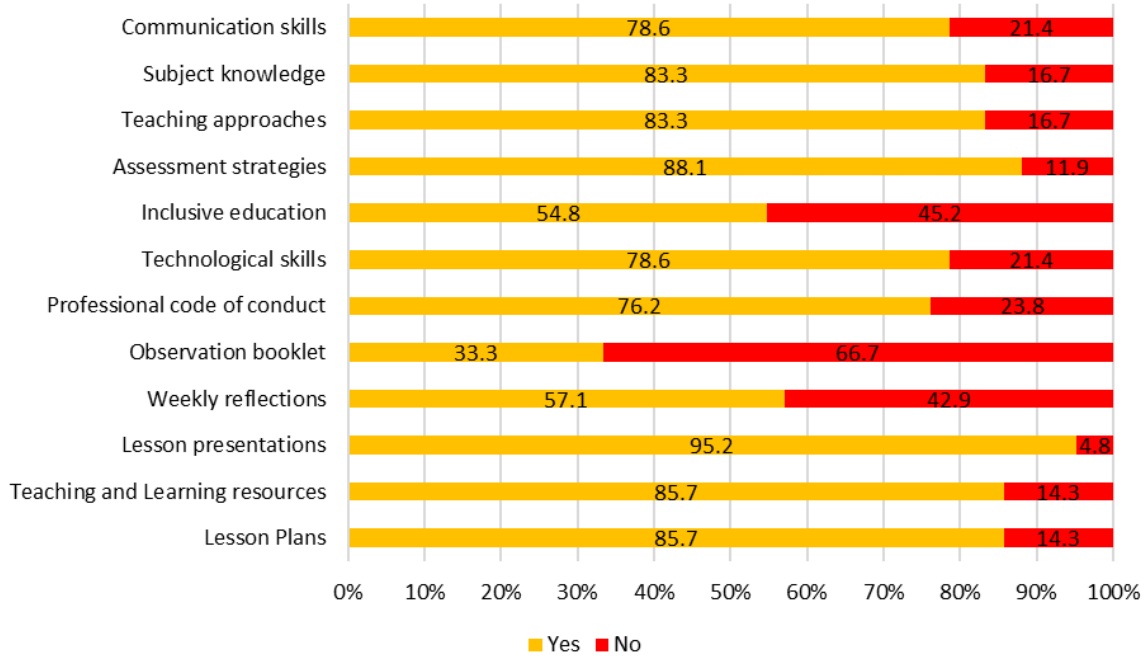

Figure 42: Kind of assessment/evaluations should be done during SBS

The lecturers also shared their perspectives on the types of assessments and evaluations conducted during the SBS sessions. The findings in **Figure 42** reveal differing levels of emphasis on various aspects of student-teacher preparation:

- **Lesson Plans:** A substantial 85.7% of lecturers supported assessing lesson plans, reflecting widespread acknowledgement of their role in enhancing teaching effectiveness and improving student learning outcomes.
- **Teaching and Learning Resources:** Similarly, 85.7% of lecturers emphasised the importance of evaluating teaching and learning materials, reinforcing the need to ensure high-quality instructional resources for effective teaching.
- **Lesson Presentations:** An overwhelming 95.2% of lecturers endorsed assessing lesson delivery, highlighting the crucial role of presentation skills in promoting student engagement and comprehension.
- **Weekly Reflections:** Findings indicate that 57.1% of lecturers advocated for assessing reflective practice, suggesting recognition of its benefits in fostering continuous professional growth and refining teaching strategies.
- **Observation Booklet:** Only 33.3% of lecturers supported using observation booklets for assessment, pointing to a potential area for improvement by incorporating structured observation tools to enhance feedback and support student teachers' development.

- **Professional Code of Conduct:** Data revealed that 76.2% of lecturers favoured evaluating adherence to professional standards, underscoring the importance of ethical conduct alongside pedagogical skills in teacher training.
- **Technological Skills:** Notably, 78.6% of lecturers agreed on the need to assess technological proficiency, highlighting the growing importance of digital literacy in modern education and the necessity for student teachers to integrate technology effectively into their teaching.
- **Inclusive Education:** Findings show that 54.8% of lecturers supported assessing knowledge and application of inclusive teaching practices, emphasising the need to equip student teachers with skills to accommodate diverse learners.
- **Assessment Strategies:** A strong 88.1% of lecturers endorsed the evaluation of assessment techniques, reinforcing the importance of preparing student teachers to employ diverse methods for measuring student understanding and informing instructional decisions.
- **Teaching Approaches:** The results indicate that 83.3% of lecturers supported assessing teaching methodologies, highlighting the need for student teachers to adopt varied and effective strategies that cater to different learning styles.
- **Subject Knowledge:** Similarly, 83.3% of the lecturers emphasised the importance of evaluating content mastery to ensure that student teachers have the necessary expertise to deliver subject material effectively.
- **Communication Skills:** Findings show that 78.6% of lecturers advocated assessing communication abilities, recognising their role in fostering meaningful interactions and effective knowledge transfer in the classroom.

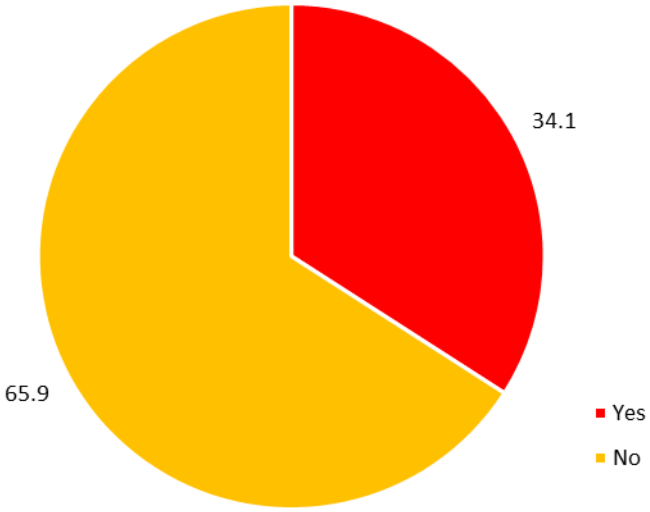

Figure 43: Effect of informing SBS students before visiting them for competency and professionalism

The practice of notifying SBS student teachers in advance of assessment visits raises questions about its ability to capture an authentic picture of their competencies and professionalism. **Figure 43** shows that 65.9% of lecturers expressed concerns about the effectiveness of this approach. These findings point to the need to revisit current assessment practices to promote a more accurate and holistic evaluation of student-teacher performance during the SBS.

3. Experiences of student-teachers

Overall experience

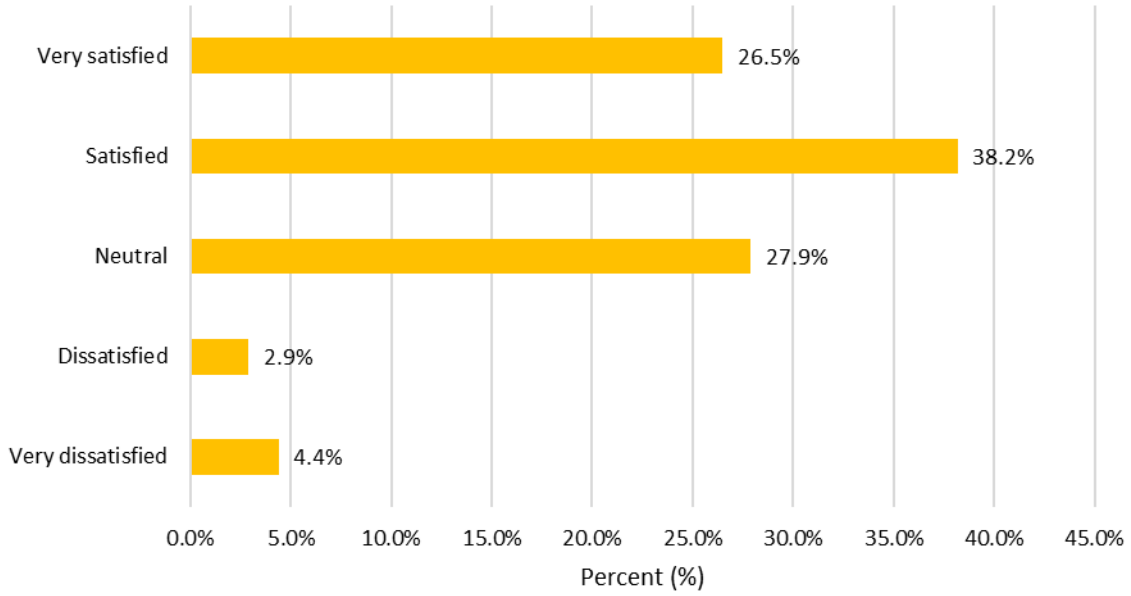

Figure 44: Student-teachers' perceptions of the overall quality of the SBS

Student teachers were asked to share their perceptions of the overall quality of the SBS experience. As illustrated in **Figure 44**, 4.4% reported being very dissatisfied, 2.9% indicated dissatisfaction, and 27.9% remained neutral. On the positive end, 38.2% expressed satisfaction, and 26.5% reported being very satisfied with their lives. These findings reflect a spectrum of views, with a substantial portion of student teachers expressing positive experiences with the SBS programme.

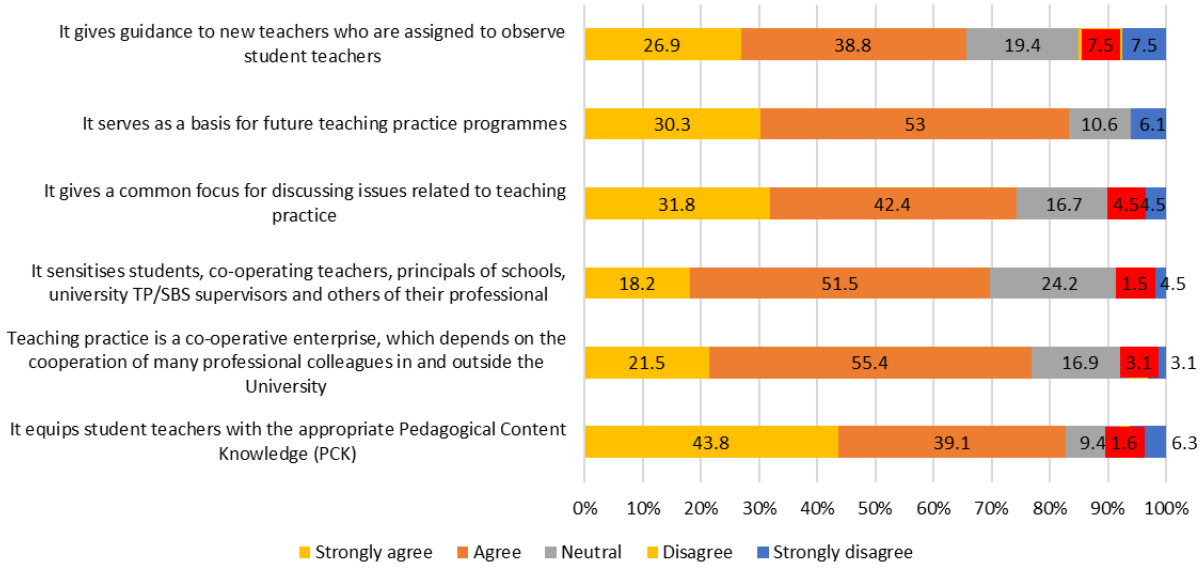

Figure 45: Describe your ideal School Based Studies/Teaching Practice as a student-teacher

Student teachers were asked to describe an ideal SBS based on a five-item Likert Scale. The results, illustrated in **Figure 45**, reflect their views across several key dimensions:

- **Guidance to new teachers assigned to observe student teachers**: 26.9% of student teachers strongly agreed that SBS provided such guidance, while 38.8% agreed. Of the respondents, 19.4% expressed a neutral stance, and 7.5% each disagreed and strongly disagreed. This reflects a range of opinions regarding the effectiveness of SBS in guiding new teachers during observations.
- **Serves as a basis for future teaching practice programs:** 30.3% strongly agreed and 53.0% agreed that SBS plays this foundational role. A total of 10.6% were neutral, while 6.1% strongly disagreed. These findings suggest a general agreement on SBS's influence on shaping future teaching practice programmes.

- **Provides a common focus for discussing teaching practice issues:** 31.8% strongly agreed, and 42.4% agreed. Of the respondents, 16.7% were neutral, while 4.5% disagreed and strongly disagreed. This points to the widespread acknowledgement of SBS's value in promoting discussions related to teaching practice.
- **Sensitises stakeholders to their professional responsibilities (including students, cooperating teachers, principals, and university supervisors):** 18.2% and 51.5% of respondents strongly and moderately agreed, respectively. Of the respondents, 24.2% were neutral, while 0.7% disagreed and 4.5%. Overall, these results indicate the general recognition of SBS as a tool for raising awareness of professional roles.
- **Recognises teaching practice as a cooperative endeavour involving multiple professionals:** 21.5% strongly agreed, and 55.4% agreed. Of the respondents, 16.9% were neutral, and 3.1% each disagreed and strongly disagreed. This reflects the prevailing consensus on the collaborative nature of teaching practice.
- **Equips student teachers with appropriate Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK):** 43.8% strongly agreed and 39.1% agreed. Of the respondents, 9.4% were neutral, 1.6% disagreed, and 6.3% strongly disagreed. These results suggest a broadly positive perception of SBS in developing student teachers' PCK.

Learning Objectives

Student teachers were asked about the specific learning objectives they expected to achieve through their SBS experience. Their responses, presented in **Figure 46** and ranked on a five-point Likert scale, reveal strong support for a range of competencies essential to their preparation:

- **Apply a critical enquiry and reflective practice approach to their own teaching and social context:** 35.8% strongly agreed, 52.2% agreed, 7.5% were neutral, 3.0% disagreed, and 1.5% strongly disagreed. This reflects a predominantly positive outlook on integrating critical enquiry and reflection into teaching practice.
- **Use and try out various teaching methods and techniques:** 43.9% strongly agreed, 50.0% agreed, 3.0% were neutral, and 1.5% each disagreed and strongly disagreed. These results strongly endorse experimenting with diverse instructional strategies.

- **Interact with future colleagues and learn from their experience:** 50.0% strongly agreed, 40.9% agreed, 3.0% were neutral, 4.5% disagreed, and 1.5% strongly disagreed. Most student teachers valued peer interaction and collaborative learning.
- **Experience teaching both inside and outside the classroom (including extramural activities):** 47.0% strongly agreed, 37.9% agreed, 12.1% were neutral, and 3.0% strongly disagreed. There is clear support for exposure to diverse teaching environments.
- **Gain insight into school organisation and administration:** 40.3% strongly agreed, 43.3% agreed, 9.0% were neutral, 4.5% disagreed, and 3.0% strongly disagreed. The majority see SBS as an opportunity to understand school operations beyond teaching.
- **Applying theoretical knowledge in practical situations (including assessment, classroom management, and lesson planning):** 33.3% strongly agreed, 56.1% agreed, 7.6% were neutral, 0.7% disagreed, and 0.7% strongly disagreed. High levels of agreement suggest that SBS is perceived as a bridge between theory and practice.
- **Demonstrate skills to develop and improvise teaching and learning resources:** 37.9% strongly agreed, 48.5% agreed, 9.1% were neutral, 3.0% disagreed, and 1.5% strongly disagreed. This highlights the strong confidence in resource development skills.
- **Demonstrate curriculum interpretation skills:** 23.1% strongly agreed, 55.4% agreed, 15.4% were neutral, 4.6% disagreed, and 1.5% strongly disagreed. While most agreed, the relatively high neutrality suggests some uncertainty in this area.
- **Demonstrating an understanding of school subject knowledge:** 40.0% strongly agreed, 50.8% agreed, 6.2% were neutral, and 0.7% each disagreed and strongly disagreed. The majority affirmed confidence in their subject matter knowledge.
- **Demonstrate the ability to design and deliver meaningful lessons:** 49.2% strongly agreed, 46.2% agreed, 3.1% were neutral, and 0.7% strongly disagreed. This reflects a strong sense of competence in lesson planning and its delivery.

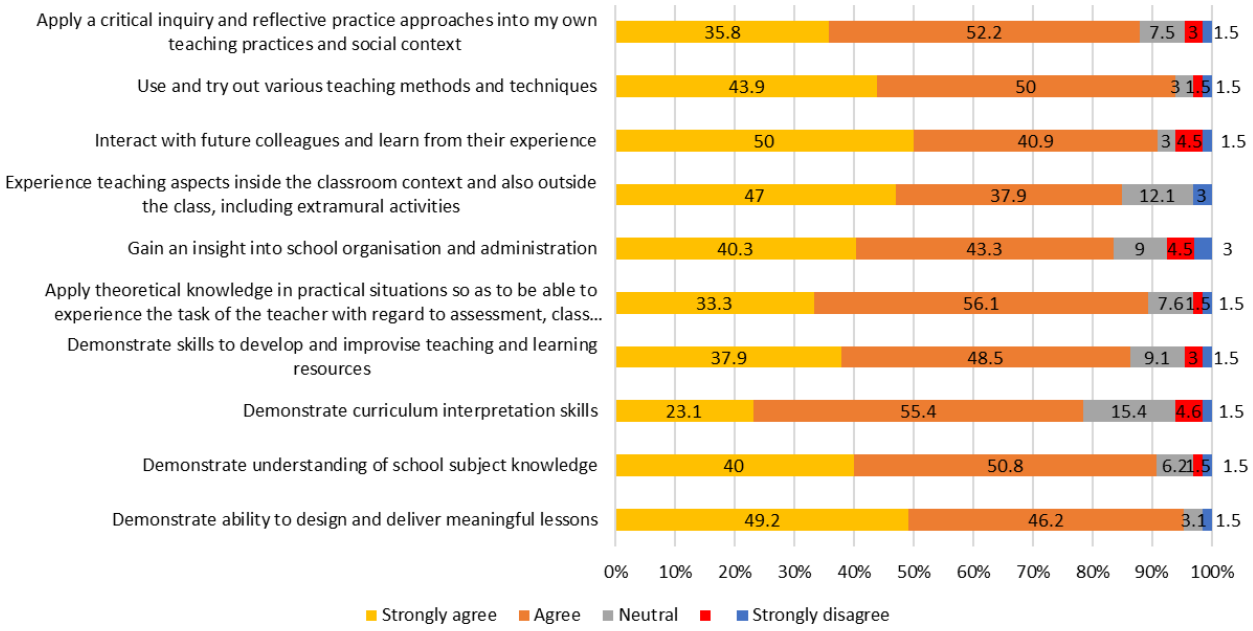

Figure 46: How would you rate specific learning objectives that students are expected to achieve

Learning Design/Methodology

Student-teachers were asked how they wished to be prepared for the SBS-under two key learning design/methodology themes "Modelling as a Mode of Practice" and "Coaching and Facilitating." They were required to answer "Yes" or "No" for various mentoring strategies under each theme. The results for Modelling as a Mode of Practice are presented in **Figure 47**:

- **Explanation:** A total of 75.0% of the student teachers indicated that they wished to receive explanations as part of their preparation, while 25.0% expressed no preference for this aspect.
- **Elaboration:** A total of 57.4% student teachers expressed a desire for elaboration in their preparation, while 42.6% indicated no preference for this aspect.
- **Lecturing:** 38.2% of student teachers indicated a preference for lecturing as part of their preparation, while 61.8% expressed no preference for this aspect.
- **Demonstration:** 69.1% of student teachers preferred to have demonstrations as part of their preparation, while 30.9% indicated no preference for this aspect.
- **Thinking aloud through the process:** 33.8% of student teachers expressed a preference for thinking aloud through the process as a preparation strategy, while 66.2% indicated that they did not prefer this method.

- **Recapping or summarising information:** A total of 60.3% of student teachers expressed a preference for recapping or summarising information during their preparation, while 39.7% indicated that they did not prefer this method.

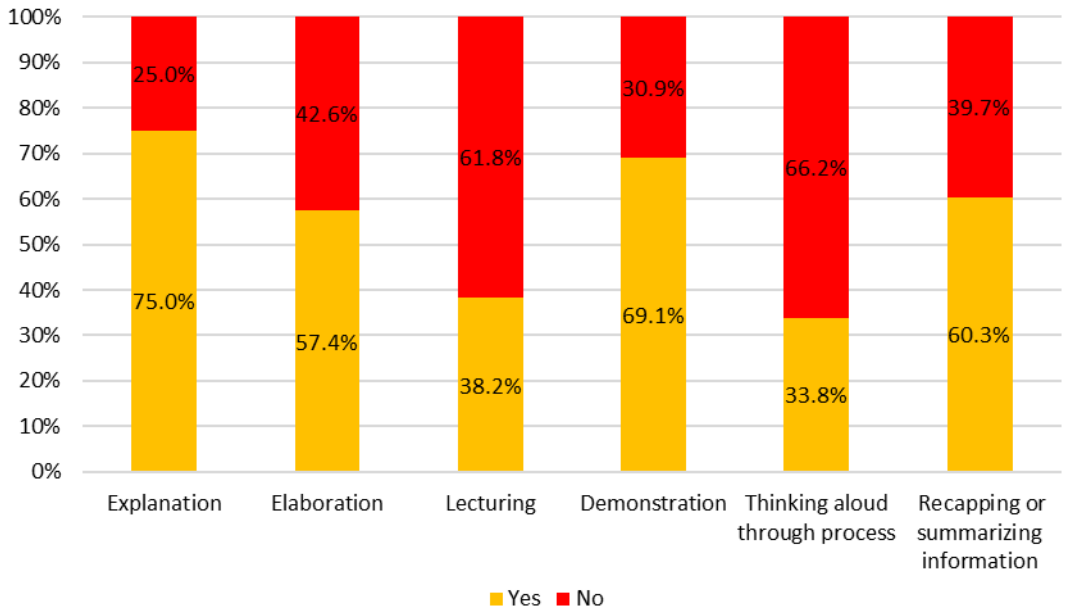

Figure 47: How do student-teachers wish to be prepared for SBS: based modelling as a mode of practice

The results for coaching and facilitating mentoring student teachers for SBS are presented in **Figure 48**:

- **Interactive lectures:** A total of 54.4% of student teachers expressed a preference for interactive lectures as part of their preparation for SBS, while 45.6% indicated that they did not prefer this method.
- **Asking questions:** A total of 77.9% of student teachers indicated a preference for the use of questioning as a mentoring strategy during SBS preparation, while 22.1% expressed no preference for this method.
- **Guiding student thinking:** 60.3% of the student teachers expressed a desire for their preparation to include guidance in student thinking, while 39.7% indicated that they did not favour this approach.
- **Prompting and cueing:** Of the respondents, 29.4% expressed a preference for prompting and cueing during their SBS preparation, whereas 70.6% (48 individuals) did not support the use of this method.
- **Scaffolding learning and information**: 42.6% of student teachers favoured scaffolding learning and information using prompting and cueing, while 57.4% did not support this approach.

- **Thinking collaboratively with students:** A total of 58.8% of student teachers expressed a preference for engaging in collaborative thinking with students during SBS preparation, while 41.2% (28 individuals) did not favour this method.
- **Incorporating formative assessment:** 32.4% of student teachers indicated a preference for the inclusion of formative assessment strategies during SBS preparation, while 67.6% did not support this approach.

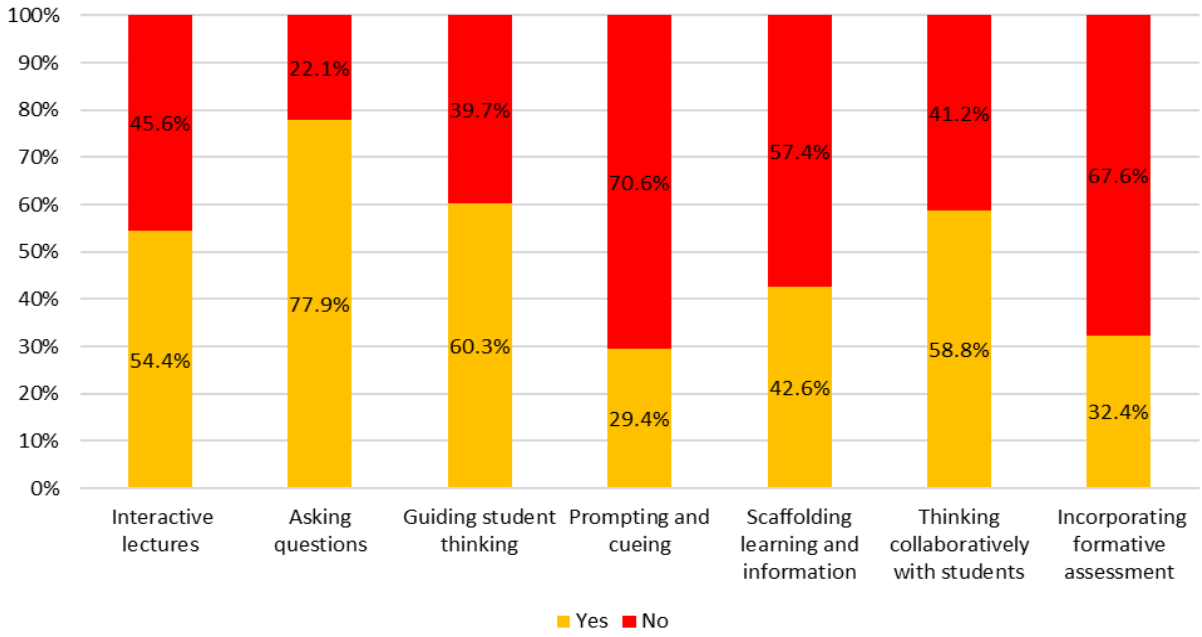

Figure 48: How do student-teachers wish to be prepared for SBS: based on coaching and facilitating

Figure 49 presents the student teachers' perspectives on the ideal duration of the SBS programme during Teaching Practicum Phase 1 (Year 3). The findings revealed that 25.4% of the student teachers recommended a 3-week duration, 34.3% advocated for a 6-week period, while the largest proportion (40.3%) suggested that 8 weeks would be most appropriate. These results highlight diverse views on the optimal SBS length, with a slight preference for a longer, 8-week engagement to effectively foster their expertise and professional development during the practicum.

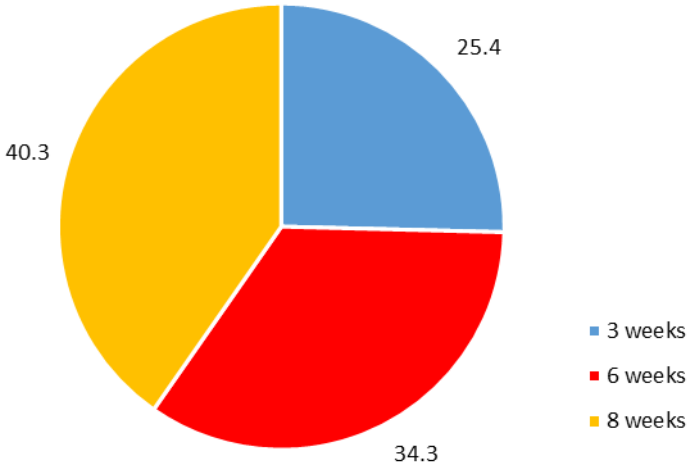

Figure 49: Adequate period of SBS to develop a student teacher's expertise in Phase 1 (year 3)

Figure 50 presents the student teachers' opinions on the appropriate duration of the SBS program for developing their expertise during Teaching Practicum Phase 2 (Year 4). The results show that 25.8% of the student teachers suggested an 8-week duration, 7.6% advocated for a 10-week period, while the majority (66.7%) recommended a 12-week timeframe. These findings indicate a clear preference for extended practicum durations in the final year, with most respondents favouring a 12-week SBS to deepen their professional learning and teaching competence.

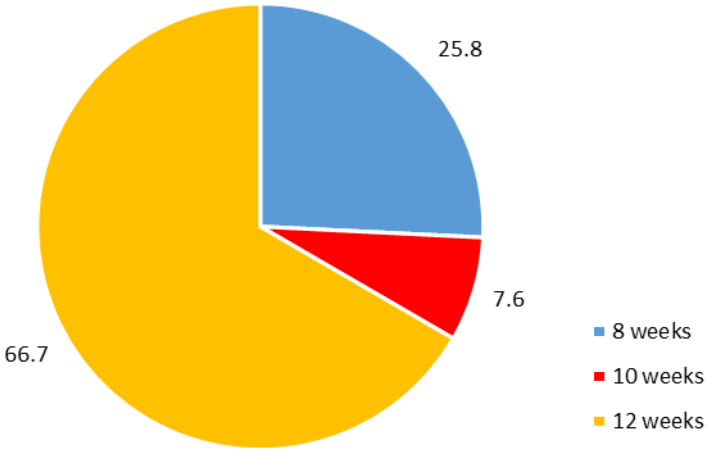

Figure 50: Adequate period of SBS to develop a student-teacher's expertise in Phase 2 (year 4)

Roles of mentor teaches and lecturers

Figure 51 shows student-teachers' evaluation of mentor teachers and principals based on their mentorship responsibilities:

- **Encouraging student teachers to observe lessons during the first week of teaching practice:** A total of 41.5% of student teachers reported that mentor teachers and principals always encouraged them to observe lessons, while 27.7% said this occurred sometimes. Additionally, 15.4% indicated that it happened often, 4.6% noted that it occurred rarely, and 10.8% reported that it never occurred. These findings show that most student teachers received some form of support in this area, although gaps remain.
- **Guiding student teachers to prepare lesson plans and a scheme of work during the first week of teaching practice:** According to 38.5% of student teachers, mentor teachers and principals always provided this guidance, whereas 23.1% stated that it occurred sometimes. Another 9.2% reported that it happened often, 12.3% said it happened rarely, and 16.9% indicated that it never occurred. These results suggest moderate support, but there are notable inconsistencies in implementation.
- **Ensuring that student teachers start teaching during Week 2 of teaching practice:** About 34.8% of student teachers reported that mentor teachers and principals always ensured this occurred, while 24.2% said it happened sometimes. Additionally, 12.1% indicated that it occurred often, 15.2% noted that it was rare, and 13.6% stated that it never happened. These responses highlight the inconsistent transitions from observation to teaching roles.
- **Supervising and guiding student teachers' teaching and learning throughout the teaching practice session:** A total of 32.3% of student teachers reported that this support always occurred, while 30.8% stated that it happened sometimes. Another 20.0% indicated that it occurred often, 4.6% said it was rare, and 12.3% reported that it never occurred. These findings point to uneven levels of engagement in pedagogical mentorship programs.
- **Using TP Form 7 to observe and assess the recommended number of lessons per teaching subject:** The majority of student teachers (44.6%) reported that this was always done, 24.6% stated it happened sometimes, and 21.5% indicated it occurred often. Only 7.7% of respondents said it was rare, and 1.5% reported that it never occurred. These responses indicate widespread compliance with the assessment protocols.

- **Providing student teachers with feedback on their teaching:** According to 58.5% of student teachers, feedback was always provided, while 16.9% said it happened sometimes. Additionally, 2.3% reported that it occurred often, 9.2% said it rarely occurred, and 3.1% noted that it never occurred. These findings suggest that feedback is a commonly fulfilled mentoring responsibility.
- **Checking TP files and guiding student teachers in the preparation of teaching materials such as schemes of work and lesson plans:** A total of 37.9% of student teachers reported that this was always done, while 18.2% stated it occurred often. Another 16.7% said it happened sometimes, 10.6% noted it occurred rarely, and 16.7% reported that it never occurred. These responses revealed notable variability in the support for teaching material preparation.
- **Entering teaching practice marks in the relevant TP Evaluation Form:** The majority of student teachers (68.2%) indicated that this was always done, 18.2% reported it occurred often, and 10.6% said it happened sometimes. Only 3.0% of the respondents noted that it rarely occurred. These findings reflect high compliance with this administrative task.
- **Helping student teachers understand their responsibility for learners and maintaining classroom control:** A total of 60.0% of student teachers reported that mentor teachers and principals always undertook this responsibility, 23.1% said it occurred often, 10.8% noted it happened sometimes, 4.6% reported it was rare, and 1.5% said it never occurred. These responses suggest a strong emphasis on instilling classroom management responsibilities.
- **Holding meetings after lessons to assess the student teachers' teaching performance:** Only 24.2% of the student teachers reported that such meetings always occurred, 27.3% stated they happened sometimes, and 21.2% said they occurred often. Meanwhile, 12.1% indicated that it was rare, and 15.2% noted that it never occurred. These findings reveal the inconsistent practices of reflective mentorship.
- **Avoiding criticism of student teachers in front of learners and other teachers:** More than half (51.5%) of the student teachers reported that mentor teachers and principals always avoided public criticism, 19.7% said it happened sometimes, and 7.6% indicated it occurred often. Meanwhile, 3.0% stated that it was rare, and 18.2% reported that such criticism never occurred. These responses suggest generally respectful practices, with some exceptions noted.
- **Assisting student teachers in becoming familiar with school policies and available resources:** A total of 51.5% of student teachers stated that this support always occurred, 19.7% said it happened sometimes, and 13.6%

indicated that it occurred often. In contrast, 7.6% reported that it rarely happened, and 7.6% said it never occurred. These findings highlight the strong institutional orientation practices.

- **Discussing student teachers' development and progress:** According to 46.9% of student teachers, such discussions always took place, 21.9% said they occurred sometimes, and 9.4% noted they happened often. However, 10.9% reported that these discussions occurred rarely or never. These responses reflect a moderate level of engagement in the professional development conversations.

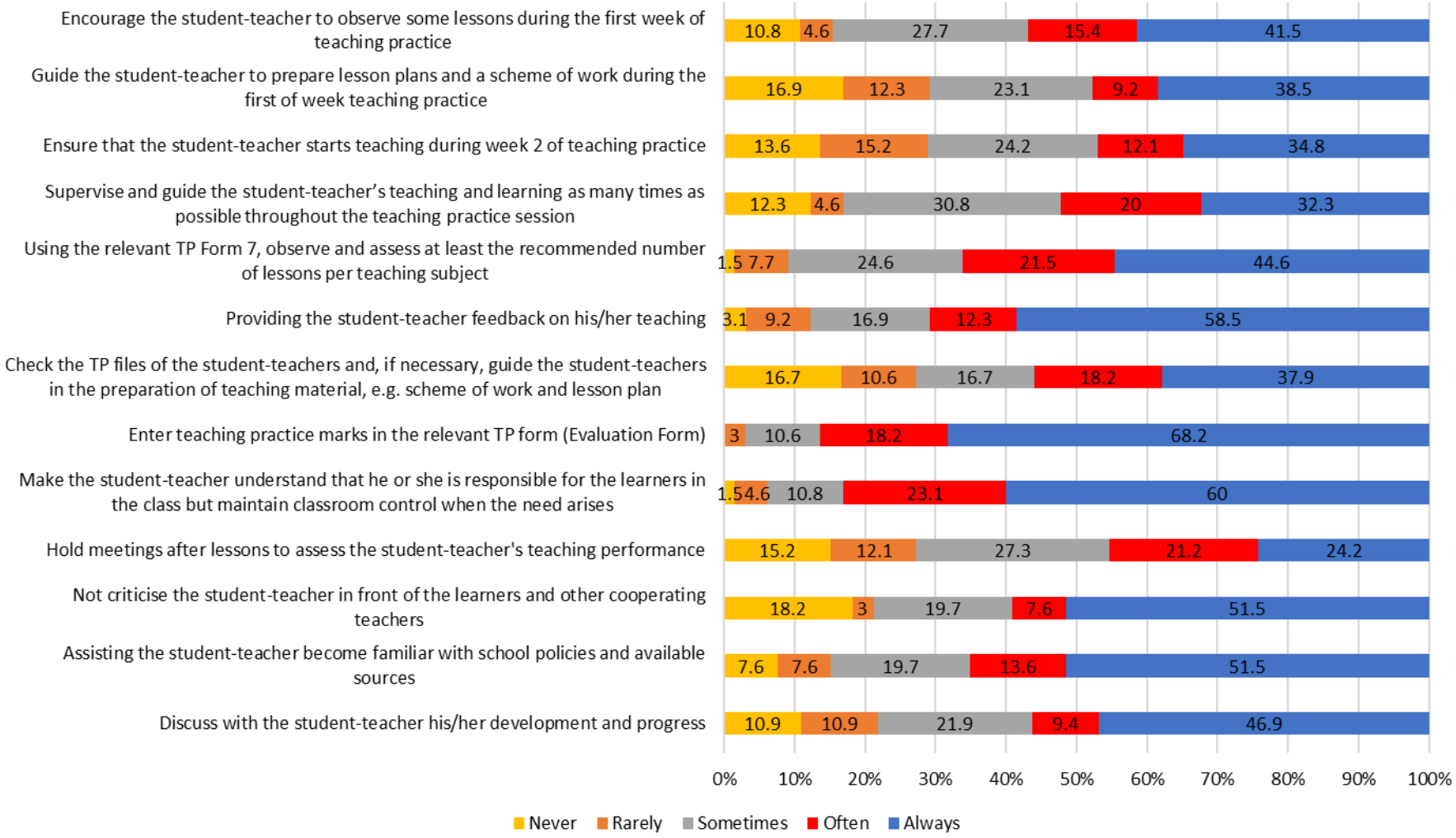

Figure 51: Student-teachers' rating the performance of the Mentor Teachers

Figure 51 presents the student teachers' evaluations of lecturers' performance during teaching practice. The findings indicate mixed experiences, with some responsibilities consistently met, while others showed notable gaps in lecturer engagement:

- **Meeting the principal to discuss the progress of student teachers:** A total of 26.2% of student teachers reported that lecturers always met the principal for this purpose, while 10.8% said it happened sometimes, and 9.2% indicated it occurred often. However, a substantial proportion of student teachers noted a lack of engagement in this area, with 30.8% reporting that it rarely happened and 23.1% stating that it never occurred.
- **Holding pre- and post-instruction meetings with student teachers:** According to 23.1% of student teachers, lecturers always held these meetings, while 13.8% said they occurred often and 27.7% reported that they happened sometimes. In contrast, 23.1% stated that these meetings rarely took place, and 12.3% reported that they never occurred, highlighting the variability in the extent of instructional support.
- **Checking the TP/SBS portfolio of the student-teacher:** The majority of student-teachers (56.9%) indicated that lecturers always checked their portfolios, while 16.9% reported that it occurred often, and 15.4% said it happened sometimes. A smaller proportion of participants reported rare (4.6%) or no engagement (6.2%) in this task, suggesting relatively strong but not universal compliance.
- **Meeting with cooperating teachers to discuss teaching practice matters:** About 29.2% of student teachers stated that lecturers always engaged in such meetings, while 7.7% said it happened often, and 27.7% reported that it occurred occasionally. However, 18.5% noted that it happened rarely, and 16.9% reported that such meetings never took place, indicating gaps in collaboration with cooperating teachers.
- **Assisting with interpersonal communication problems between student- and cooperating teachers:** A total of 30.8% of student-teachers indicated that lecturers always assisted in resolving such issues, while 10.8% reported that it occurred often and 26.2% said it happened sometimes. In contrast, 21.5% stated that this assistance was rare, and 10.8% reported that it never occurred, highlighting inconsistency in conflict resolution support.
- **Verifying student-teacher attendance during teaching practice:** The majority of student-teachers (61.5%) reported that lecturers always verified their attendance, with 12.3% saying it happened often and another 12.3% stating that it occurred sometimes. A smaller proportion

reported rare (6.2%) or no verification (7.7%), suggesting general adherence to this responsibility.

- **Evaluating student teachers' lessons:** According to 57.8% of student teachers, lecturers always evaluated their lessons, while 12.5% reported that it happened often and 20.3% said that it occurred sometimes. Only a few student teachers indicated that evaluation happened rarely (7.8%) or never (1.6%), reflecting their strong overall commitment to assessment responsibilities.

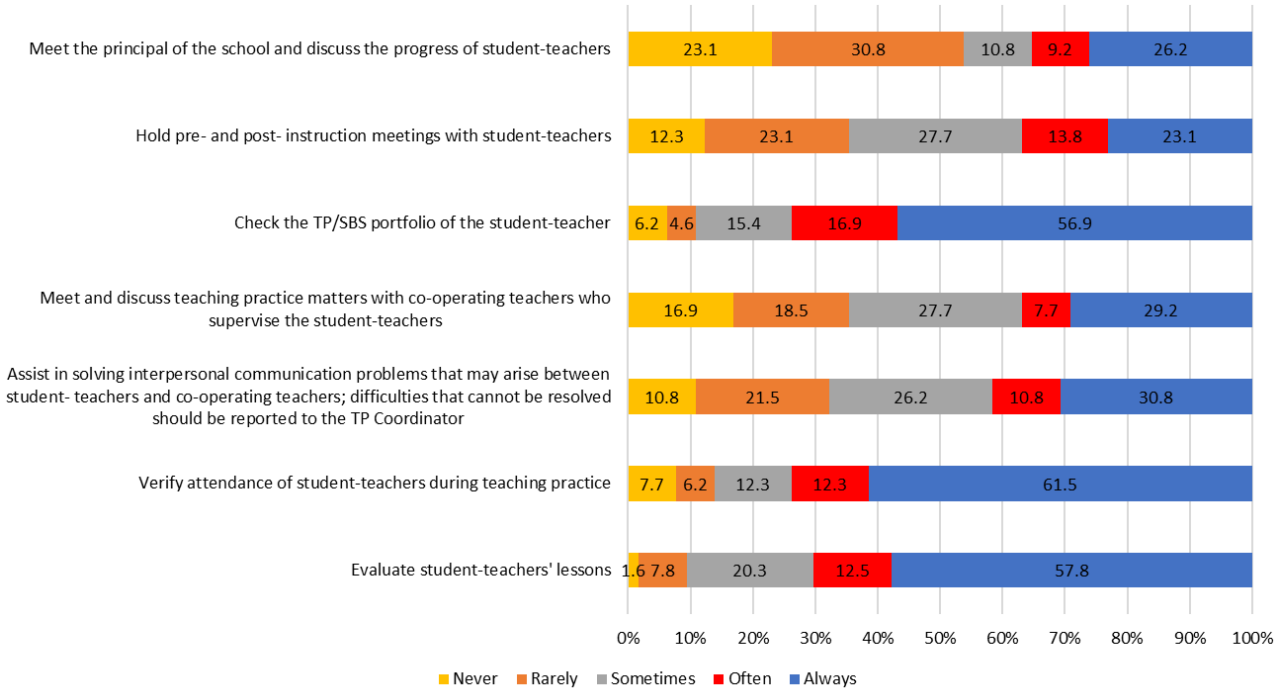

Figure 52: Student-teachers' rating the performance of lecturers

Learning Assessment

Figure 53 presents the student teachers' perspectives on the types of assessments and evaluations that should be conducted during the SBS. The findings reflect varying levels of emphasis on the different components of student preparation and professional development:

- **Lesson plans:** A large majority of student teachers (86.8%) agreed that lesson plans should be assessed during SBS, while 13.2% disagreed. This suggests a strong consensus on the importance of lesson planning as a core evaluative component.

- **Teaching and learning resources:** 69.1% of student teachers reported having access to these resources, while 30.9% indicated they did not. This implies that while most student teachers had the necessary

materials, a considerable proportion still lacked access to essential teaching aids.

- **Lesson presentations:** 82.4% of student teachers reported having access to lesson presentations, whereas 17.6% said they did not. This shows that most participants had opportunities to develop and present lessons during the SBS.
- **Weekly reflections:** A total of 69.1% of student teachers engaged in weekly reflections, while 30.9% did not. This suggests that a significant number of participants valued reflective practice, which is crucial for their professional growth.
- **Observation booklets:** Only 42.6% of the student teachers reported using observation booklets, while 57.4% indicated that they did not. This points to the limited use of this tool for tracking and documenting teaching experiences.
- **Professional code of conduct:** 60.3% of student teachers reported that they had a professional code of conduct in place during their SBS, while 39.7% did not. This highlights the importance of reinforcing ethical and professional standards during the training process.
- **Technological skills:** Only 25.0% of student teachers reported having technological skills, while a striking 75.0% indicated that they lacked such competencies. This reveals a critical gap in digital literacy that may hinder innovation in teaching practices.
- **Inclusive education:** Sixty student-teachers (60.3%) reported incorporating inclusive practices during SBS, while 39.7% did not. This indicates a moderate level of awareness and application of inclusive education principles.
- **Assessment strategies:** Of the student teachers, 61.8% reported using assessment strategies during their teaching, while 38.2% did not. This indicates that while most participants engaged in assessing learners, a notable proportion did not employ such strategies.
- **Teaching approaches:** Similarly, 61.8% of student teachers reported using a variety of teaching approaches, while 38.2% did not. The findings suggest that some student teachers may benefit from further support in diversifying their instructional methods.
- **Subject knowledge:** 67.6% of student teachers reported possessing adequate subject knowledge, while 32.4% indicated they did not. This

reflects the participants' relatively strong content knowledge, although some gaps remain.

- **Communication skills:** A total of 76.5% of the student teachers reported having strong communication skills, while 23.5% indicated that they lacked them. Given the importance of communication in effective teaching, this finding highlights an area of strength among most of the student teachers.

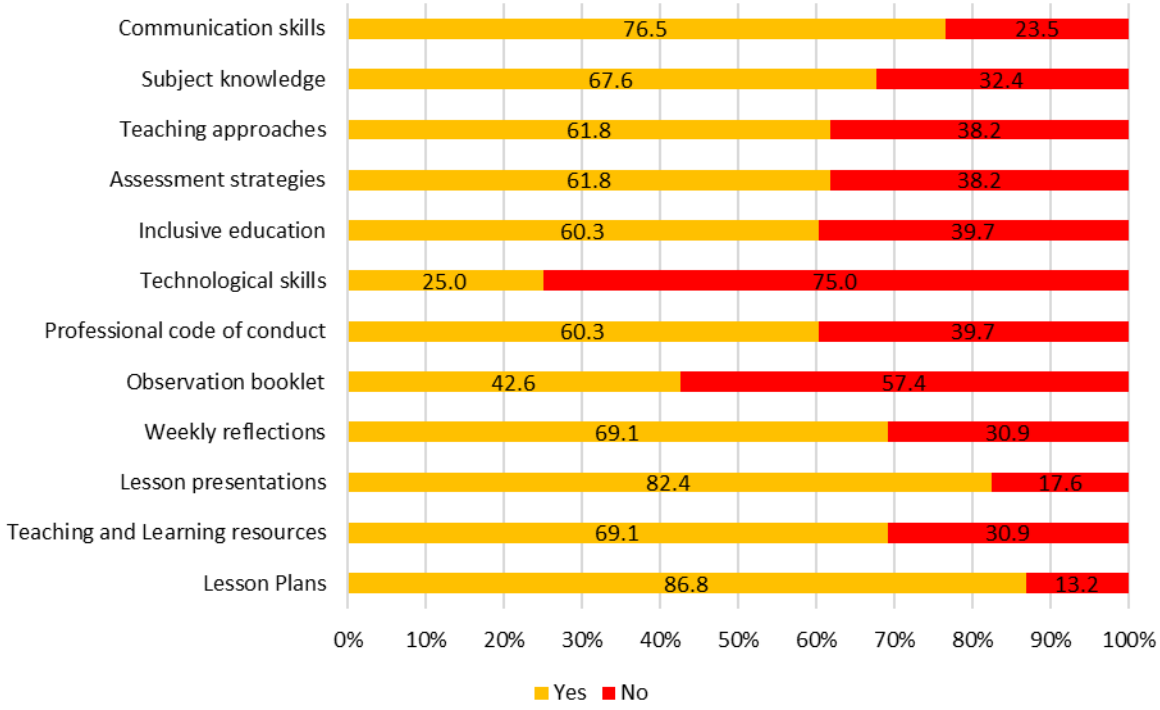

Figure 53: Kind of assessment/evaluations should be done during SBS according to student-teachers

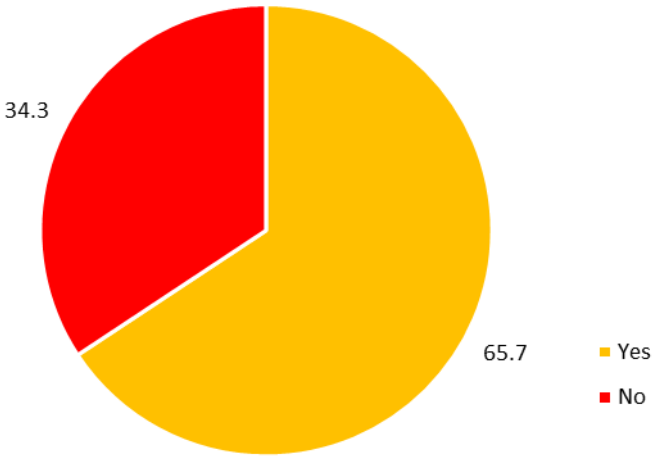

Figure 54: Effect of informing SBS students before visiting them for competency and professionalism based on student-teachers

Figure 54 shows the findings regarding the practice of informing TP/SBS students before assessment visits; 65.7% of student-teachers believed that it could help lecturers accurately determine their competency and professionalism, while 34.3% disagreed. This indicates divided opinion among student teachers on the effectiveness of this approach, with a majority supporting it as a means to ensure a more accurate assessment, while a significant proportion disagrees, suggesting concerns about its impact on the assessment process.

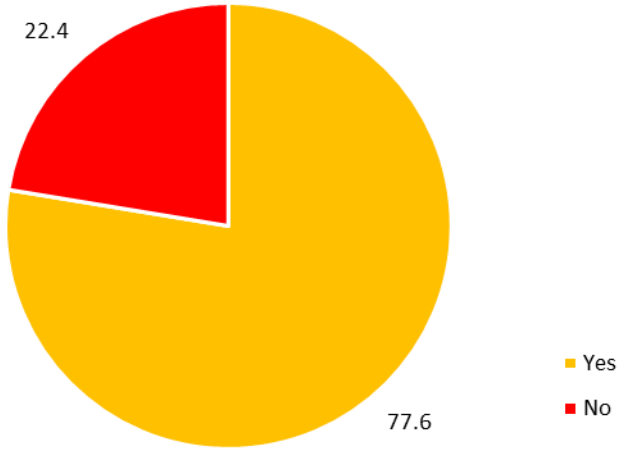

Figure 55: Do you want to belong to a TP/SBS networking support group

Figure 55 presents the results regarding the formation of the TP/SBS networking support group. A substantial 77.6% of respondents expressed a desire to belong to such a group, while 22.4% did not.

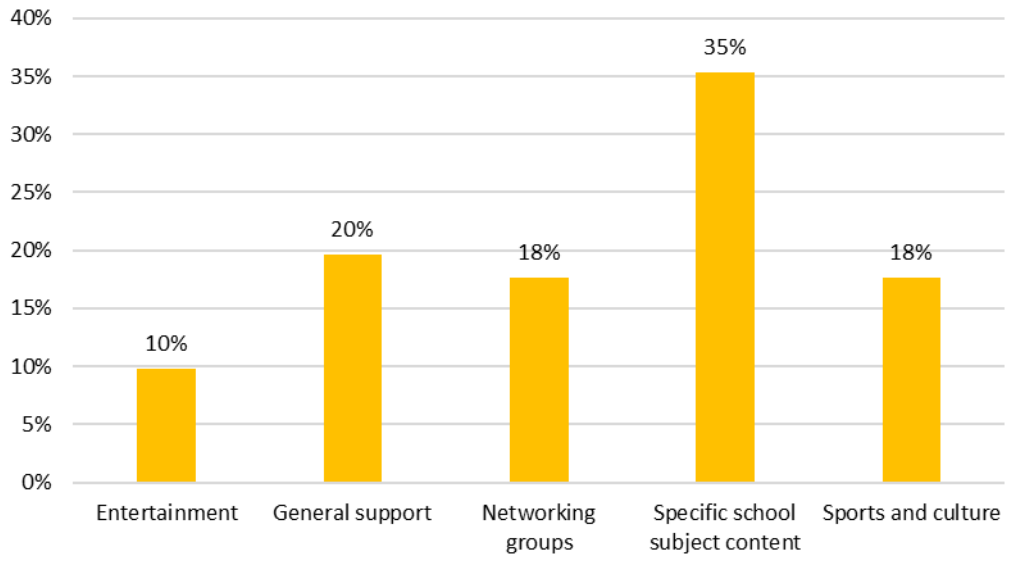

Figure 56: If yes to wanting to belong to a TS/SBS support group in Figure 55, which of the following groups would you be interested to join

Among those who expressed interest in joining a TS/SBS support group, **Figure 56** shows that 35% of student teachers were interested in support related to specific school subject content, 20% preferred general support, 18% were interested in networking groups, 18% favoured sports and culture activities, and 10% expressed interest in entertainment-related activities.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section presents a discussion of the findings from the experiences of mentors, lecturers, and student teachers in the SBS. The discussions revolved around the time students spent in schools, quality of SBS/TP mentorship, assessment, and learning objectives. Section A presents the mentor teachers' perceptions, followed by those of the lecturers (Section B) and student teachers (Section C).

Perceptions of mentor teachers and principals

The mentors (including principals and teachers) had more than 10 years of teaching practice supervision experience, and most possessed Bachelor of Education degrees, with a few having Master of Education degrees. These supervisors mentored between one and five student teachers. Although an upward trend in the educational levels of mentors was observed in this study, the mentor teachers were not autonomous, as is the case in Finland, where their counterparts at both primary and secondary levels have a five-year university teacher education at the master's level (Paronen and Lappi, 2018). Heikkinen et al. (2023) describe the teaching force in Finland as highly educated with capable professionals, and that no elements of assessment, registration or control are required in mentoring. Furthermore, Heikkinen et al. (20204) alluded to the fact that in Finland, participation in the mentoring programme is voluntary, and more experienced teachers are regarded as equal in the peer-mentoring groups which is contrary to mentoring in Namibia.

The mentors' perceptions showed a positive inclination towards the overall quality of SBS, with some glitches in the area of assessment. The SBS was said to be important in that it sensitises the need to guide student teachers and to collaborate with students, fellow mentor teachers, principals of schools, university TP/SBS supervisors, and other relevant stakeholders within and outside the schools. The SBS programme can be complex and requires tactful skills to successfully mould student teachers into the desired professional. Accordingly, Caires et al. (2012) stressed the importance of a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the complexity, dynamics, and idiosyncrasies involved in becoming a teacher from the perspective of student teachers. In this study, assessment practices were lagging, possibly due to limited

opportunities to develop assessment instruments and administer them in modelled classrooms. It appears that the current SBS program promotes the development of theoretical knowledge. Hence, Caire et al. (2012) emphasise the documentation of best practices on the assessment and evaluation of the guidance and support provided by supervisors as critical elements needed to achieve the desired SBS programme. Clearly, the desired SBS is far from being achieved, considering the level of support rendered to student teachers, as indicated in this report.

Critical enquiry and reflective practice approaches were identified as integral components of learning objectives to be integrated into teaching practices. This could be interpreted to mean that student teachers looked up to mentors as role models from whom they could acquire important technical and soft skills that could shape their career. Mentors stressed that in addition to gaining subject content knowledge, student teachers gained a multitude of skills in class management, curriculum interpretation, lesson preparation, and organisation and administration. In addition, this study revealed that student teachers acquired a professional code of conduct. In Pakistan, a code of conduct is necessary for effective learning (Shakir & Adeeb, 2014). Adopting these attributes could foster constructive dispositions influencing student teachers' behaviour and practices, beliefs, knowledge, and characteristics, and not only could the disposition have a long-lasting effect on instructional practices on student teachers but also on the teacher training programme (Altan and Lane, 2018). This study observes that there are few studies related to the role of teachers' significant life experiences in the development of their teaching dispositions and practice and how they inform teaching. However, the findings of this study suggest that mentors are a key element in demonstrating skills in developing and improvising teaching and learning resources during teaching practice.

Modelling was identified as a mode of practice encompassing the following methods: explanation, elaboration, demonstration, recapping or summarising information, and utilising interactive lectures. While coaching facilitation methods should employ the mode of asking questions, thinking collaboratively with students, incorporating formative assessment, and guiding student thinking over prompting and cueing, scaffolding learning, and information. These findings support Altan's (2018) view that mentorship should be conducted via presentations and interviews with student teachers. Seale (2022) suggests that presentations could include myriads of areas such as Guided Weekly Reflection (GWR) activity for student teachers to open communication and build a relationship, and a community of practice (COP) support group to provide student teachers (STs) a safe setting for reflective

conversations to process the experience. Interviews could be GWR, training needs, and requirements for participation by student teachers, and in turn, these activities would enhance communication and relationship building (Seale, 2022). Our findings are aligned with those of Ploj Virtic et al. (2023), who found that student teachers are likely to utilise teaching methods, techniques, and experiments that their mentor teachers use.

There were varying levels of student teachers' proficiency in planning their work within the parameters set by their mentors and university supervisors. The variability levels were with respect to teaching skills and subject knowledge, familiarity with and adherence to the rules and procedures of cooperating schools. This inconsistency could reflect the way in which student teachers were being prepared for SBS. Although experience may be contextual, mentors conceded that they should act professionally and abide by school rules, such as being involved in extracurricular activities and consistently informing the appropriate personnel about their absence. In agreement with the findings of this study, student teachers need to learn the skills needed for the 21st century, including effective leadership, quality of teaching, ability to collaborate, critical thinking skills, oral presentation skills, written communication skills, ability to use technology, and willingness to examine civic and global issues, among others, to connect with the world and understand the issues and changes that our world is currently facing. In fact, the teaching programme lacks innovative skills in ICT that focus on green education, the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), the development of creativity, and gamification and game-based learning topics (UNESCO, 2024). UNESCO further asserts that teacher education programmes play an important role in modelling effective curriculum and instruction that addresses both content and skills, enabling student teachers to learn well and consequently offer important, structured opportunities to plan curriculum, set learning goals for their learners, organise daily practice, and conduct evaluation (Luna, 2015).

Perceptions of lecturers

Findings reveal that lecturers' ideal SBS is one that provides proper guidance to all, especially new teachers who are assigned to mentor student teachers, subsequently enhancing the teacher training programmes. Furthermore, lecturers stress that SBS should serve as a medium for discussing teaching-practice issues and promote awareness of professional responsibility among stakeholders. Currently, the theoretical component of teaching counts for more credits than the practical component in the programmes (UNAM School of Education Prospectus, 2024). Lecturers do not seem to exert much effort in

the practicum due to the design of the programs. Seemingly discussions around SBS-related issues often take place during teaching practice, requiring the revision of the current SBS.

Regardless of the duration and phase of SBS, lecturers strongly expect students to immerse themselves in teaching, administrative, and extracurricular aspects, as well as other activities inside and outside the classroom, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the teaching career. In addition, lecturers opined that student teachers needed other relevant skills such as application of theoretical knowledge in practice, assessment, class management, lesson preparation, curriculum interpretation, subject content knowledge, and others to design and deliver meaningful lessons and consequently enhance their overall teaching effectiveness. In doing so, students may demonstrate a good understanding of school subject knowledge during the SBS in tandem with the knowledge learned at the university before the SBS. The use of digital technology in teaching and the professional code of conduct for teachers during SBS are said to contribute to their development as ethical and responsible educators. In agreement, we believe that the objectives of the SBS as part of the university curriculum are to introduce students to real-life school situations and progressively become qualified teachers (Ngololo & Kanandjebo, 2021). According to the literature, in many countries and universities, a constituent part of educational programmes is dedicated to pedagogical subjects and teaching practices (Proj Virtic et al., 2023). In the same vein, Kaldi and Zafeiri (2023) argue for an active, persistent, and careful consideration/analysis/review of perceptions, knowledge, and/or actions that occurred in a specific period of time by describing the strategies and steps to be followed.

The findings indicate a high level of support for lecturers to explain, elaborate on important information, and integrate demonstrations as ways of preparing students for SBS. Scholars indicate that the preparation of students prior to practice at schools is important and should not just be short pre-departure training without looking at the significance of individual learning in schools (Shalawati & Hadijah, 2018). This study identified various methods of preparing students for SBS; however, the findings indicate a split opinion on what should be incorporated in the preparation process. According to the data, the following methods are less preferred by lecturers: lecturing, thinking aloud through processes, providing students with summarised information, interactive lectures, asking questions, guiding students thinking, prompting and cueing, thinking collaboratively with students, and incorporating formative assessment.

Although most lecturers opposed the identified methods, it does not mean that they should not be used as part of students' SBS preparation.

The findings show that lecturers strongly support the 8-week period for SBS Phase 1 and the 12-weeks period for SBS Phase 2. Our findings corroborate those of Shalawati and Hadijah (2018) that student teachers can be placed in the SBS program for different lengths of time, from two months at the minimum to one whole semester. Ndebele and Legg-Jack (2022) suggest that for students to learn and improve their classroom practices that lead to better education services, the SBS timeframe should be longer so that student teachers can be effectively supported by mentors in their serving schools to enable them to fulfil the mandate of their teaching practice exercise.

According to the findings, lecturers indicated that observation is crucial during the SBS, as it assists student teachers to learn about the type of learners they will engage with and teach for the whole duration of the SBS and how to apply the theory they learned at the university into practice. This study emphasises that when student teachers are at schools for SBS, they are under the complete care and support of school management and mentor teachers and therefore learn by observation. Broadly, observation as a part of mentoring is a useful strategy for supporting student teachers (Mundalamo & Sedumedi, 2014). Corroborating this argument, Ndebele and Legg-Jack (2022) noted that mentor teachers encouraged student teachers to observe them teaching for the first week of SBS and only allowed them to teach from the second week. Our results corroborate those of Ploj Virtic et al. (2023), who found that student teachers' "teaching skills are learned more effectively when they observe and try out for themselves the teaching practices and models applied by their mentors" (p. 239). Moreover, through observation, student teachers can consider their mentor teachers as experts and become keen to emulate their teaching strategies (Jack, 2022; Mundalamo & Sedumedi, 2014). Furthermore, lecturers revealed that some of the mentors' roles include guiding the student teachers to prepare lesson plans and schemes of work during the first week of teaching practice and supervising the student teachers' teaching and learning as many times as possible throughout the teaching practice session. These roles can be acquired through observation and assessed via the recommended number of lessons per teaching subject.

Lecturers opined that mentor teachers sometimes or always fulfilled the identified roles. However, our findings showed that the lecturers had mixed opinions on whether mentor teachers always provided supervision and guidance to student teachers. The findings are not surprising, depending on the site with reference to schools and campuses, where the leadership and

intuition of mentors may influence the varying experiences of students. In conducive settings, mentor teachers have a positive impact on student teachers' development in different areas of pedagogical content knowledge, including planning, preparation, and implementation of lessons (Ndebele and Legg-Jack, 2022). In agreement, Mundalamo and Sedumedi (2014) stressed that mentoring can act as a gatekeeper to the profession and that proper guidance is needed to retain student teachers in the programme. Contrary to the experience described above, student teachers may have negative experiences that may lead to dropping out of the teaching programme.

Seemingly, lecturers understand and perform their SBS duties exceptionally well, especially those related to evaluating and communicating with students. For instance, the majority of them confirmed that they consistently engaged in pre- and post-instruction meetings and discussions with student teachers, checked the SBS portfolio, assisted in solving interpersonal communication problems between student teachers and mentor teachers, and verified the attendance of student teachers during teaching practice. This finding concurs with Mundalamo and Sedumedi (2014), who found that lecturers who visit schools during practicum and observe student teachers teaching, support student teachers through discussions and when necessary, and serve as liaisons between the faculty and the school. Although lecturers stated that visits to schools during teaching practice have been duly accomplished, the findings show that the significance of lecturer duties varies; hence, roles such as meeting and discussing teaching practice matters with mentor teachers and school principals were considered less important and often receive less attention from lecturers.

Our findings further revealed that the most important aspects for evaluation by both lecturers and mentor teachers during SBS were lesson planning, teaching and learning resources, weekly reflections, professional conduct of student teachers, technological and communication skills, teaching approaches, students' assessment strategies, subject knowledge, and lesson presentations, which emerged as the top assessment aspects. Evidently, lecturers expected student teachers to execute certain tasks and responsibilities as part of the overall purpose of the practical component of their respective teaching programmes. Lecturers then assess and evaluate student teachers' performance and supervise their stay during the SBS. Notably, the aspects of SBS that were evaluated varied in terms of relevance to the SBS, with the least being the utilisation of the observation booklet, used during Phase I and II. Furthermore, lecturers were not in support of informing students during SBS, before visiting them for assessment, as it has an influence on efficacy in terms

of accurately assessing student teachers' competencies and professionalism. Partially, this has been a practice, mainly because of location sites and resources.

Perceptions of students

Students expressed satisfaction with the overall quality of the SBS experience, in that it offers guidance to new teachers observing student teachers, serves as a foundation for future teaching practice programmes, provides a common focus for discussing teaching practice issues, and sensitises stakeholders about professional responsibilities. Most students agreed that the SBS fulfilled these functions. Additionally, students indicated that their expected learning objectives from the SBS were applying critical enquiry and reflective practices, using various teaching methods, interacting with colleagues, experiencing teaching inside and outside the classroom, gaining insight into school organisation and administration, applying theoretical knowledge, developing teaching resources and materials, interpreting curriculum, demonstrating subject knowledge, and designing meaningful lessons. The findings indicate that students are knowledgeable about the learning objectives that could enhance their critical thinking skills during SBS and professional growth. Comparatively, positive experiences may be attained in various subject areas, suggesting their broad applicability and potential to improve educational practices (Ankyiah & Bamfo, 2023; Verawati et al., 2021).

Students indicated their preferences for various methods for achieving learning objectives through modelling, coaching, and facilitation. These include explanations, elaborations, demonstrations, thinking aloud, interactive lectures, asking questions, guiding student thinking, prompting and cueing, scaffolding learning, collaborative thinking, and formative assessments. Furthermore, students value observing concrete examples, receiving detailed explanations, and having opportunities for reinforcement and clarification through modelling strategies. On the other hand, the coaching and facilitation mode of practice received relatively mixed responses, especially on 'prompting and cueing' and related activities.

Preferably, student teachers suggested that SBS be conducted between three to eight weeks for Phase 1, while for Phase 2, it should be covered within a period of eight to twelve weeks. The difference for fieldwork implies that student teachers may want longer fieldwork experience to gain more practical skills. The lengthy period is also supported by Zeichner (2010); and Ronfeldt and Reininger (2012) that extended student teaching experiences, typically ranging from 8 to 12 weeks, are crucial for the comprehensive development of teaching expertise. These studies suggest that longer

practicum duration correlates positively with teacher effectiveness and retention. Conversely, Valencia et al. (2009) and Slick (1998) argue that mentorship quality and practicum structure may be more critical than length. For instance, a well-organized 3-week practicum can sometimes yield better results than a poorly structured longer one, indicating that an overly long practicum may lead to diminishing returns. Notwithstanding, we argue that the length is necessary to allow student teachers to be exposed to administrative, extramural activities, and teaching aspects for holistic development. However, we concur that the teaching practicum programme should be structured comprehensively to cover all the necessary competencies.

Student teachers opined that both mentors and lecturers should collaborate to strengthen guidance with reference to building good character and assessment of the SBS. Seemingly, student teachers sometimes get overworked, resulting in poor interpersonal relationships, and other times, they are not given opportunities to teach. These outcomes negatively affect trust and cooperation between the two parties, and some mentors tend to give unrealistic scores. In addition, student teachers opt for familiar sites to conduct their practicum to avoid costs on accommodation and transport. However, the choices have implications on assessment, whereby they may be favoured by mentors due to earlier established relationships, such as being their former learners and relatives. The literature supports the findings that effective mentorship and clear communication are essential in terms of mentor teachers' and university lecturers' performance. Hudson (2013) and Ambrosetti (2014) emphasised the importance of structured guidance and professional development provided by mentor teachers, as well as collaboration between mentors and university supervisors. In addition, student teachers raised concerns about the way mentors completed the evaluation form. It could be that teachers were not inducted on SBS which could include aspects of evaluation. In agreement, Rorrison (2008) and Borko and Mayfield (1995) suggest that evaluations should consider contextual variables such as school culture and focus more on creating supportive learning environments rather than solely assessing performance. This indicates a need for further research on the impact of specific mentoring practices during different phases of student teaching and how university lecturers can better bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Student teachers appreciated the variety of assessment components in the evaluation form, such as lesson plans, teaching/learning resources, lesson presentations, weekly reflections, observation booklets, inclusive education practices, assessment strategies, teaching approaches, subject knowledge,

and communication skills. However, concerns were raised about the need to assess adherence to professional conduct and technological skills. Black and Wiliam (2009) and Clarke and Hine (2019) underscore the importance of formative assessment and feedback in developing teaching skills. Assessing lesson plans and engaging in reflective practice are crucial for professional growth. Nonetheless, Gordon (2001) and Fazio and Volante (2011) warn that an excessive focus on assessments can detract from the experiential learning process, suggesting the need for a balanced approach, inclusive of multiple learning objectives. Although formative assessment practices were applied during SBS, there is a need to expand it to include the emerging industry skills needed for teachers to function in the evolving 21st century. Thus, there is a research gap in understanding the impact of different types of assessments on student teachers' development and the effectiveness of assessments related to technological skills and inclusive education practices in modern classrooms. Overall, while the literature supports many of the findings, it also highlights areas for further investigation to enhance teacher education programs.

CONCLUSION

Mentor teachers were capable professionals who volunteered to mentor UNAM student teachers, among others, without being inducted on how best to guide the mentees. Perceptions of mentor teachers show a positive inclination towards the overall quality of the SBS, with some glitches in the area of assessment and variability in student teachers' preparedness with respect to teaching skills and subject knowledge.

Lecturers wished that student teachers would maximise their skills in using various teaching methods and techniques to integrate critical enquiry and reflective practice into the different school social contexts where they (student teachers) are placed. However, the lecturers had mixed opinions on whether mentor teachers always provided supervision and guidance to student teachers. In addition, lecturers considered meeting and discussing teaching practice matters with mentor teachers and school principals as less important and often given less attention. However, such meetings would strengthen the strategic relationships between UNAM and its key stakeholders, including schools.

Student teachers preferred modelling as a mode of practice to aid them in achieving the SBS objectives. Mentor teachers also supported this practice; however, concerns were raised about the need to assess adherence to professional conduct and technological skills. The study participants generally preferred a longer period of fieldwork experience to gain more practical skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The SBS period is suggested to be offered over a longer duration, preferably not less than an 8-week period, to allow for a more comprehensive development of expertise.
- There is a need for consistent and structured communication channels between lecturers and student teachers to ensure effective guidance and support throughout their training.
- There is a need for consistent monitoring and feedback mechanisms to ensure the effective development of student teachers during their practicum experiences.
- Provision of adequate support and intervention is needed to address and mitigate interpersonal conflicts during teaching practice placements.
- There is a need for regular and comprehensive evaluation processes to support the professional development of student teachers through active engagement and observation opportunities and support for developing essential teaching skills, materials, and competencies.
- Mentors need to model and gradually take student teachers through teaching responsibilities during the early stages of their practicum.
- Assessment practices during teaching practice should encourage weekly recording and documentation of marks. Assessment should include reflections and observation booklets, technological skills, and managing classroom dynamics while maintaining classroom control. For example, criticising student teachers in front of learners or other cooperating teachers should not be encouraged. Assessment outcomes should be made available to both parties involved.
- There is a need for induction for student teachers to provide clear guidance, including duties and expectations, and to help them acclimatise to the school environment.
- There is a need for universities to strengthen professional collaboration and cooperation through short training programmes for mentors.
- This research suggests the need for a reevaluation of assessment practices and communication between student teachers and lecturers to ensure a fair and comprehensive evaluation of student teachers' performances during SBS.

Further research:

- There is a need for more studies on how reflective practices and mentorship quality impact the effectiveness of teaching practicums.
- Further research is needed on the impact of specific mentoring practices during different phases of student teaching and how university lecturers can better bridge the gap between theory and practice.

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