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Achieving Quality Teacher Education Through Teaching Practice in Nigeria: Challenges and The Way Forward

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Abstract

A complete teacher training is supposed to include teaching practice, which is the essential component of quality teacher education. Teaching practice is an essential component of teacher training that is needed to expose trainee to the reality for the process of teaching. This paper discuss the concept of teaching practice, quality teacher education as well as the problems that are faced by student teacher and their experiences, recommendations and the way forward for inclusive teaching practice for quality teacher education were discussed.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Teaching Practice, Quality Education, Challenges, Nigeria

Introduction

Teaching practice is often interchangeably use with practice teaching. It's an apprenticeship or internship programme in which learning experiences include opportunities for practical activities whereby students assume the role they will play as successful completion of their training as teachers. This is because every fields of human knowledge has representative to learn skills for quality and assist in putting the theory into practice for quality teacher education. This is because teaching practice is an important component in the new teacher education programme. Okorie, in Tamaja (2000) defined teaching practice as a period of pre-service supervised teaching whereby student teacher assume as increased responsibility for directing the learning of a group of pupils over a specific period of time.

The Concept of Teaching Practice

Teaching practice is an idea connotes the first interaction of the student as a teacher interacting with the pupils in a school setting. This expected for student teacher to develop the professional competencies and skills of a teacher through teaching practice. Roger and Steve (1993) in Dutsinma lamented that the student teacher will put into trial techniques and skills of teaching. It's expected of student teacher to adopt his own style of teaching, which will help him for self-cultivation for quality teacher production. The student teacher makes adjustment on his methodology and on his overall effort to master the skills of teaching. The minimum standard for teaching NCE awarding college by the Nigeria Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) comprised the important component as teaching practice. Due to the death of qualified teaching staff for primary and secondary education in Nigeria, the Ashby commission was institute to examine the problems and recommended remedial measures.

The objectives of teaching practice in teacher education programme includes the following:-

- To expose student teachers develop positive attitude towards the teaching profession #
- To expose student teachers to real life classroom experiences under the supervision of professional teachers.
- To enhance teachers communication to the teaching profession.

The Quality of Teacher Education programme

In Nigeria today, the quality of education is very much in doubt. Teacher education have not been innovative

relation to instructional materials. Obsolete textbooks and teaching materials are still very much in vogue. The curriculum practice in the world of work. In addition, the quality of the programme is also largely determined by those who teach the teachers. It's a matter of regret and lamentation that most teacher educators cannot be described as professional teachers since they possess degree such as B.A (Hons), B.Sc (Hons) etc, in single subject discipline without educational background, the implication of this for teacher education is decline in academic standard. Quality assurance can be described as planned and systematic programme designed to ensure that quality is maintained or improved.

In Nigeria, teacher education has no well-defined system of assessing its quality and achieving its outcomes. Okolo (2013) posits that the whole purpose of setting of the NCCE and by extension of other tertiary education programmes in their respective instructions is to institution allege quality assurance and evaluation. For whatever reason, past agencies have solely utilized the accreditation approach than the more dynamic appearance of holistic evaluation and peer review mechanisms. For teacher education, the later approaches ensure more of the institutionalisation of quality assurance evaluation for both pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes.

Teaching practice is a vital component of teacher education programme, unfortunately, little attention is developed to the effective organization of teaching practice in our teacher colleges. There is indeed a wide variation in the amount of time that student spend it. Some institutions organize teaching practice for whole term, some in six weeks and some in a whole year. These consequential differences affect the standard and invariably quality of teacher education in Nigeria. Teaching practice supervision is also susceptible to numerous biasing factors. In this first place, some teaching practice assessment instruments are subjective and interpreted in various ways depending on the supervisor's orientation, training and disposition.

Stages in practice teaching: -

Primary Stage: It's necessary to make a trip of student teachers to that particular school, where they are going for practice teaching. The main aim of this four is to see the concerned head teacher, class teachers and school staff in order to acquire information about the school and its environment. Student teachers must observe the teaching methods of school, methods of concerned class teacher, copies or note books of the student and their usual routine on reform from the toor, student teachers must have details about scheme of students, age of the student, strength of the class, abilities and specific problems of the students, timeliness of the school, textbooks and teaching materials/aids.

Preparation of Lesson: On this note, student teachers must know the subject, the relevant book and audio/visual materials which he/she is going to teach, because already prepared lessons give confidence to the teacher. Student teachers and supervisor can reform the teaching learning process after its evaluation.

Qualities of a good Lesson

A good lesson has the following qualities:-

- i. Lesson planning should be in complete details
- ii. Lesson should be interesting
- iii. Effective and timely use of teaching methods and instructional materials
- iv. Students should be ready for the lesson
- v. Students should be involved practically in teaching learning process
- vi. Lesson should be taught in professional and friendly environment
- vii. All students should be given same attention by keeping in view their individual differences.

Teaching in classroom: The stage of teaching in classroom is known as practice teaching. Student teachers while teaching in the classroom pass through different steps of his/her teaching (introduction, presentation and recapitulation) and concerned teacher/supervisor assesses/observes his/her lesson.

Evaluation of teaching practice:-The supervisor needs to observe the student teacher while teaching in the classroom. He also needs to observe the punctuality of lesson planning, teaching methods, use of instructional materials, teaching aids and their adequacy, pitch of voice, dress, start and end of lesson, interest of the students, discipline of the class, use of blackboard, students notebooks and objectives of the lesson.

Participation in other Routine work of school:- Student teachers have to spend whole day in the practicing school. They have to participate in all the activities of school for example preparation of timetable, preparation and maintenance of different registers, evaluation of class work and home work, arrangement of tutorial groups, sport/games, morning assembly, co-curricular activities, duty during recess and as duty master, arrangement of audio/visual aids room, house economies, science laboratory etc.

Role of a supervisor in teaching practice:- The supervisor of student teacher has an important roles in practice teaching as follows:

- i. A resource person
- ii. A advisor
- iii. A general moral booster
- iv. An interpreter of feed back
- v. An assessor

Supervisor duty is not only to evaluate the lesson of teaching practice, but by using his/her all abilities to make thus experiences (all stages of teaching practice) result oriented. He should have all the planning beforehand, have meeting and conversation with teacher educators experienced teachers of the institution, educationalist, concerned school head teachers and other teachers. Introductory letters should be arranged before the departure of students teachers to the practicing schools in other to create awareness of the student teachers about the preparation of lesson plans and other assigned activities. During teaching practice it is the duty of supervisors to supervise their lesson, lesson, other assigned activities, guidance and counseling as well as provide the student teachers with feedback and to enable them so that they can criticize and reform them self. Student teachers should not be criticize in front of the practicing school staff and students. If there is a need then all the student teachers should be gathered and the scolded and warned without nominating and asking the name of supervisor's role is to prepare teacher for future, therefore, he/she should act as a facilitator.

The Impact of Teaching Practice on Quality Teacher Education

Education particularly teacher education I expected to be of good quality, this is because teacher education entails or rather, it is an instruction for "training the trainers".

According to Azubuike in Mbachu (2021) "task forces can be formed the national council of education, can function like a war council and students of all ages can be mobilized into the school, but if nothing is done to raise the morale of teachers and increase their dedication, the effort to deliver high quality curriculum will be a mirage". Teacher education needs to be of good quality in order to equip the teachers to delivers to the students what's required, to enable them face the global challenges.

The central goal of students teaching programmes is to provide aspiring teachers challenging, relevant and rewarding field experiences to inculcate essential teaching skills and professional quality growth. Teaching practice is an opportunity for aspiring teachers to understand the role and operation of how the business of schooling is done. This field experience provide a challenging yet rewarding experience of working with students in actual classrooms and acquiring professional competence. He believed that these experiences have the potentials to enhance the teachers acquisition of professional competence. Acquired experiences will include among other things, their ability to assume the various responsibilities of quality classroom teachers as shared by Saphier et al. (2008):

- Plan and deliver instruction that meets the learning needs of all students regardless of their individual learning styles, developmental and cognitive levels.
- Organize and manage the classroom environment for maximum academic performance.
- Manage classroom interactions and students behavior to create size, conducive learning atmosphere for students academic success.
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively with students, parents, and other members of school community for the benefit of students learning.
- Exercise decision making in identifying and using age, content and grade level appropriate instructional strategies in lesson delivery.
- Using appropriate assessment tools and methods to determine students learning
- Use reflective practice to evaluate effectiveness of meeting intended instructional objectives.
- Create a dynamic classroom environment which fosters positive, effective communication among students, teachers, parents and other members of school community.
- Demonstrate self – confidence and knowledge of the content and the importance of the curriculum to students everyday life.

Challenges of Teaching Practice to quality Teacher Education

Dupemu and Adekola (2010) pointed out some factors that affect the normal functioning of teaching practice for quality teacher education which are as follows:-

- a. Inadequate teaching facilities: This is a problem associated with equipped nature of most schools it may not be too services in the urban area, the rural schools are most affected. Since most of the instructional aid are not available, and student teacher is left with no option than to improvise which in most cases ignored by the teacher.

- b. The problem of large classes: most of the classes are overcrowded especially in the government schools where a class may have between 80-100 pupils/students. A student teacher, teaching for the first time may find it difficult to cope with such large classes. Students may sometimes be nervous, resulting to frustration and confusion. It's also impossible for the student teacher to know the pupils/students one by one.
- c. Insecurity Problem: problem of insecurity can sometimes affects the supervisor visit to student teachers practicing school, if there is no security in the are/place. The insecurity challenge/challenges which the country is facing are a barrier to effective teaching practice exercise.
- d. Duration: in most cases there is insufficient time for the student teacher to put his required theories into practice. This has forced the student teachers to see the practice teaching period as a period to write examination in one of the courses teaching practice. The result is as half-baked teachers.

Maphosa et al. (2007) enumerated some more challenges of teaching practice, these include:

- (i) Problem of accommodation and transportation
- (ii) The anxiety and resentment of student teachers
- (iii) Lack of cooperation among the student teachers and the learners.
- (iv) Incompetence of the mentors

There are other challenges of teaching practice, which includes, lack of mastery of the subject well, in many teaching practice situations According to Davidson (2015) the practice teachers are perceived as persons who are only in the school to pass a test in practice teaching and no more. Okorie (2014) summarized teaching practice challenges with regard to student teachers as follows: -

- a) Outside the classroom, the teachers time is not always his own
- b) Teaching affords the student: teacher varied and interesting opportunities to use his intellectual and creative leadership qualities.
- c) At times, a teacher most live in the community in which he works. In most cases, he may find the place deficient I cultural, social, housing and transport facilities.
- d) Its possible that in some communities, the members may attempt to encroach on the teachers personal preferences.

Conclusion

The teaching practice exercise was designed to tech student teachers to be teachers but inadequacy of personnel and logistics to implement it has made the exercise in effective with regards to achieving the goals for which it was set up. Many student teachers are inadequately prepared for the exercise deprives them from attaining the necessary experiences, skills and confidence they need which they eventually take up the teaching job.

Recommendations

In order to make teaching practice more meaningful and as inclusive for quality teacher education and as an instrument of professionalism, the following recommendations were made;

- Student-teachers should be exposed to proper orientation before going on teaching practice exercise. Potential teachers should be exposed to micro-teaching before send to face students. The experience of practicing with their own colloquies will give them a taste of what teaching feels like and motivate them to do it better when they will be tested on the field.
- Teaching practice exercise should not be a short term endeavor, but should span about six months to ground the aptitude, attitude and competence in prospective teachers.
- There is need for the ministry of education/local education authorities to provide adequate teaching facilities most especially in rural schools.
- Effective supervision of student teachers should be adequately provided by colleges and facilities of education supervisors.
- The trainee teacher should be made to understand the benefits of the programme.
- Ministry of education should create/initiate ways of motivating student teachers for the quality teacher education.

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