

## FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE

Augustine Owusu – Addo (PhD), Ernest Larbi and Alfred Kuranchie

Faculty of Education, Catholic University College of Ghana, Fiapre

---

**ABSTRACT:** *The aim of the study was to investigate pre-service teachers' perspectives of their training programme based on the off-campus teaching practice they engaged in as well as challenges faced. The study adopted the mixed method approach. The sample for the study was 196 students who were final year students of the Catholic University College of Ghana, Fiapre. Questionnaire was developed to elicit responses for the participants. The study revealed positive perspectives of the participants on the preparatory programme. They were also able to apply the professional knowledge and skills gained in the classroom indicating a smooth transition of theory to practice. However, the study participants reported some challenges encountered, which need to be addressed by the schools where the pre-teachers go for internship to enhance such future exercises.*

**KEYWORDS:** Theory, Practice, Micro-Teaching, Internship

---

### INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of equipping individuals with knowledge, skills and values for the development of their societies and nations as a whole. It is a key for sustainable development, peace, stability and economic growth of a nation (Bandeled & Faremi, 2013). According to Amuche and Kukwi (2013), education is a weapon for acquiring relevant skills, knowledge and behaviours for survival in this changing world. Education provides a medium for capacity building and maintenance of societies. It is a fundamental right of every individual. This has made lots of governments to pledge their commitments to providing equal and better education for all its citizens. For instance, in Ghana, the quest to provide education for all led to the introduction of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) by the then government in 1996. The introduction of fCUBE was to provide free education to all members of the nation to probably equip them with the needed knowledge and skills to enable them function and contribute to the nations' development. In furtherance to that, in the 2017/2018 academic year, the government introduced free education at the senior high school. This commitment of government is realized by the demands placed on schools in the provision of education through their activities (Pralhad, 2009).

Schools play a critical role in educational dispensation. It is required that the school provides quality education through the interactions teachers have with students. A quality education, according to Bandele and Faremi (2013), is education that meets learning needs, improves upon the lives of learners and their entire living experiences. It is an undeniable fact that the vision and mission of educational institutions cannot be realized without the effort of teachers. Teachers form prominent members of any school organizational team (Joshua & Bassey, 2004). It is the responsibility of teachers to transform the general goal of education into achievable units on every instruction. They are also responsible to communicating the subject matter content to learners in a good and understandable language (Shulman, 1986). As a result, members of this noble profession themselves are trained both academically and professionally

to enable them to conduct the task of teaching to the highest expectation of the educational body and the entire society.

### **Problem Statement**

For teachers to effectively take up the role of educating, they need to be adequately trained to acquire the functional prerequisite in teaching. Students undergo training in the various colleges of education and the Universities which offer education programmes. The programmes are meant to prepare students who are often called pre-service or prospective teachers. Among the training given to them are content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Specifically, students are introduced to the curriculum of the subjects they are being prepared for. After that the methods and strategies required to teach the content are taught. Pre-service teachers are further provided with knowledge on classroom management, ethics of the teaching profession, interpersonal relationships with students, teachers and administrators and many more. Having being exposed to these essential aspects of training, students are made to put them into practice through micro or on-campus teaching practice. The micro-teaching makes students to practicalize the methods and strategies learnt on their peers. The exercise also intends to prepare and equip them for the off-campus teaching practice where they would handle the category of students they are being prepared for. Thus, the off-campus teaching practice is also an avenue for pre-service teachers to put their ideas and skills into practice. Although institutions and faculties training teachers require their students to undergo off-campus teaching practice, not much systematic investigations seemed to have been conducted to unravel how they apply the knowledge gained in class and the challenges they encounter in the course of the internship. What they seem to be doing is assessing the teaching of the trainees for grading purposes. It is against this backdrop that this study was executed to find pre-service teachers' perception about their training programmes and challenges they faced during off campus teaching practice.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the perception of pre-service teachers about their training programme?
2. To what extent are student-teachers able to apply the knowledge gained to teaching?
3. What challenges do pre-service teachers face during teaching practice?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Concept of Teaching**

Teaching has been defined differently by many authors. According to Otsupius (2014), it is an interactive process through which knowledge, ideas, values are communicated from one person to another. This interaction involves creating an environment that is conducive to facilitate students' learning. For teaching to take place, there must be a teacher, a student and subject of study, which create a sustained dialogue between them. Teaching is also defined as an activity through which knowledge, beliefs, concepts, skills and values are imparted to learners (Kuranchie, 2015; Tamakloe, Amedahe & Atta, 2005). In this regard, it is expected that the educator (teacher) should be more knowledgeable and experienced than the learner (educand). The activities conducted between the teacher and the learners are aimed at inducing learning.

This makes teaching to be goal oriented with the purpose of bringing about change in the learner through learning.

### **Effective Teaching**

Effective teaching basically goes beyond mere impartation of knowledge to include creating good environment, arousing and sustaining students' engagement in learning. Teaching effectiveness largely depends on the quality of the learning environment and delivery system (Olatoye & Aanu, 2011). Effective teaching is undoubtedly a complex task which is achieved by combining many factors. Perrot cited in Afram (2001) contends that effective teaching is the ability to guide learners to achieve the intended learning goals. Every teaching must be purposeful to achieve some desired end often termed as learning goals to which the teacher directs classroom discourse to ensure its achievement. Effective teaching requires teacher understanding of some basic principles such as acknowledging the individual characteristic nature of learners and providing varied opportunities for development, designing instruction that is responsive to their learning needs and thought processes, focusing on desired academic outcomes, selecting broad range of activities that contribute to individuals' holistic development and for productivity (Glenda & Walshaw, 2009). With regard to learning environment, it is worth noting that no effective learning can take place in a threatening environment. Teachers, therefore, need to create a conducive learning atmosphere for students' learning since classroom climate has major impact on students' learning (Kyriacou, 1991). The author describes learning environment that facilitates student learning as being purposeful, task-oriented, relaxed, warm, supportive and has a sense of order (p. 65).

Another important factor to consider in enhancing effective learning is teachers' methodological consideration. This is the medium through which knowledge, facts, values and many more are communicated to learners. All things being equal, it is assumed that effective learning would take place when teachers' method of teaching meets the learners' learning style. Although several factors may influence teachers' choice of teaching method, one that may be considered paramount is the learner characteristics. The constructivist school of thought, which advocates for learners' involvement in teaching and learning, believes that learners are not passive recipients of knowledge (Fletcher, 2009, Matiru, Mwangi & Schelette, 1995). Hence, knowledge should not be forced on learners, a situation where teachers are often considered as reservoir of knowledge and conduct teaching with little or no student involvement. However, teachers should rather facilitate knowledge development by choosing a purposeful learning tasks that enable learners to select, discover and create knowledge on their own (Larbi & Okyere, 2016) using learner-centred teaching methods such as activity, discussion, role play, dramatization, projects, discovery, simulation, among others (Kuranchie, 2015; Tamakloe, Amedahe & Atta, 2005). Research has shown that teaching that is dominated by lecture method only enables students to recall facts and information whiles teaching that relies on learner participation and discussion fosters understanding, self-confidence, leadership skills and ability to analyse, synthesise and apply the knowledge gained (De Caprariis, Barman & Magee, 2001, Gibbs, Lucas & Simonite, 1996). In addition, ensuring that all learners benefit most from classroom discourse requires that teachers to use more than one teaching method to enable learners with different learning styles equally make meaning of the teachers' interaction.

### **Developing Teaching Skills**

Developing skills for teaching is very crucial for teaching effectiveness. As a result, pre-service teachers are taking through a rich developed teaching programme. The issue of becoming a

successful teacher rests on knowing what to teach, how to foster students' learning and the ability to do it (Kyriacou, 1991). The desire of teachers to be successful in improving the outcomes of their learners is often the heart of the teaching profession. Several factors need to be considered in developing teaching skills necessary for teaching effectiveness. For instance, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2000) mentions (1) knowledge of the content matter, (2) knowledge of the learner characteristics and (3) ability to select tasks that promote learning as factors necessary for optimum development of the teacher.

Shulman (1987) argues that teachers' knowledge base for teaching should include the following: knowledge about the content, teaching particular content topics, learner characteristics, broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization, curriculum materials and programmes, educational contexts, ranging from the classroom group to aspects of the community, and educational aims and values. Shulman believes that teaching is a complex activity, which draws on several knowledge of the teacher for action. All these knowledge put together enable the teacher to plan and make decisions in the context of changing the circumstances of the learners (Kyriacou, 1991).

In the light of teaching skills, Kyriacou (1991) mentions three important discernable elements namely: (1) knowledge comprising teachers' knowledge of subject matter, curriculum, teaching methods, the influence on teaching and learning of other factors, and knowledge about one's own teaching skills. (2) decision-making-comprising the thinking and decision-making that occur before, during and after a lesson, concerning how best to achieve the educational outcomes intended and (3) action-comprising the overt behaviour that teachers undertaken to foster students' learning.

Knowing what to teach possibly may rank high in developing knowledge and skills for teaching. It is obvious that one cannot give what he/she does not have. It is needful therefore for pre-service teachers to be equipped with adequate content of the field of learning. Through the acquisition of content knowledge, pre-service teachers get to understand the structures of the discipline such as the concepts, principles, theories, philosophical basis of teaching and learning, among others (Bruner, 1966).

### **Micro Teaching**

Pre-service teachers cannot acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching through classroom teaching alone. One technique that is considered a promising tool in developing pre-service teachers' teaching skills is micro-teaching. Micro teaching is a training technique that enables a pre-service teacher to teach a lesson to small group of peers in a short duration under the guidance a supervisor (Kuranchie, 2015, Tamakloe, et al, 2005). In micro-teaching, after teaching, the supervisor discusses the lesson taught with the pre-service teacher to enable him/her to gain constructive feedback for further development. The strategy is adopted by trainees to enable pre-service teachers to put into practice the knowledge gained through taught course of their training. The reflective thinking component of the practice provides an opportunity to developing teaching skills. Through micro-teaching, pre-service teachers have the opportunity to reflect on their own teaching and those of others to enable them to develop better strategies of planning and conducting further lessons in a set of well-organized actions (Kyriacou, 2007).

Kuranchie (2015) posits that micro-teaching comprises two parts, namely instructional and practical sessions. According to the author, the instructional session demonstrates to pre-

service teachers how to conduct teaching in a systematic and a more coherent manner. During this period, an experienced teacher, often, the supervisor presents a model lesson while students sit back and watch after which certain critical areas are explained and students allowed to ask questions on areas that need clarity. The second part is the practical session where pre-service teachers are given the opportunities to plan and teach short lessons on small groups of peers. This may give them the opportunities to reflect on the model teaching and design and execute his planned lesson in order to experiment main teacher behaviours (Uzun, 2012) to learn and be abreast with the skills of teaching.

With the advent of technology, there can be video recording of pre-service teachers' presentation for self-evaluation. Video recording can be an effective and reflecting tool in the preparation of pre-service teachers for the profession ahead. When their teachings are recorded, they can review them to obtain feedback on issues such as the pace of speaking, clarity of speech, hand writing, communication skills, how students' questions are handled, and many more (Kuranchie, 2015). Feedback from supervisors enables prospective teachers to identify and reinforce strengths, extinguish the wrong habits and work on areas that need to be improved

Prospective teachers greatly benefit from micro teaching. This strategy enables them to learn and practise quite a majority of teaching skills during the preparatory stage (Amobi, 2005). Prospective teachers also learn the importance of planning for a lesson. During this stage, prospective teachers need to consult syllabus and scheme of work to determine the appropriate topics to be treated, consult textbooks, assemble relevant teaching and learning materials and most importantly outline objectives to be pursued. They also learn the nitty-gritties of lesson presentation and how to assess the achievement of the stated objectives for any remediation, if any (Kuranchie, 2015, Kpanja, 2001, Gess-Newsome & Lederman, 1990). It is worthy to note that in planning for a lesson, considerable attention must be paid to the student in relation to their learning characteristics to maximize learning since teachers are only facilitators (Marlow & Inman, 2002).

### **Off-Campus Teaching Practice**

Off-campus teaching practice is another major component of teacher education training programme. Adequate preparation of pre-service teachers is essential for job performance and success in the profession. It is a training technique that enables trainees or pre-service teachers having been exposed to micro-teaching take increasing responsibility for directing the learning of a group of learners for a specified period. It is a means whereby pre-service teachers are provided with opportunities under typical school setting to experience the real taste of teaching and participate in diverse co-curricular activities in the school. Off-campus teaching offers pre-service teachers the opportunity during their training programme to put into practice the educational theories learnt in a school context in order to make further meaningful deductions from guiding principles of teaching.

Teaching practice period enables pre-service teachers to consolidate all knowledge, values, skills, and insights attained in both academic and professional studies to accomplish the task of teaching and learning under real school classroom condition.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The design used for the study was descriptive survey, using the mixed methods approach. The sample for the study comprised all level 400 education students of the Catholic University College of Ghana, Fiapre located in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana in the 2017/2018 academic year. They were 216 but 196 of them properly filled and returned the questionnaires giving it a return rate of 98 percent. These were students who had just completed their off-campus teaching practice as part of their training. The focus on these students was as result of their exposure to content matter knowledge and methodology as well as practical teaching via both on-campus and off-campus teaching practice. The students who had received adequate tuition on content and professional knowledge were appropriate to provide data on the link between course work and teaching practice.

Closed and open ended item questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Responses on the closed ended were prefixed for respondents to choose from. The open-ended, however, gave respondents the opportunity to provide their own responses to enable the objectives of the study to be achieved. The designed instrument was made available to colleagues in the education discipline to assess the quality of the items in terms of clarity and ambiguity. The feedback received was used to modify the instrument to suit the purpose of the study. In all, the 17 items on the questionnaire focused on the preparatory programmes on areas of content and methodology, practical component of the training programme and the challenges the interns faced during off-campus teaching practice.

The instrument was administered to students after the purpose of the study had been explained to them. Data were collected in a duration of one week. The participants instantly completed and returned the questionnaires.

The quantitative data was scored and entered into SPSS version 20 for analysis. Mean of means of the responses was determined and used to answer research questions one and two. Conversely, the research question three was analysed qualitatively.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Data collected from the study were analysed and the outcomes are presented and discussed in accordance with the research questions.

Research Question 1: *What is the perception of pre-service teachers about their training programme?*

Research question one sought to determine the perception pre-service teachers hold about their training programmes prior to their exposure to real teaching exercise. The researchers wanted to determine how satisfied the trainees were with regard to practising their profession based on the content and professional knowledge offered in school. The research question was answered using mean and standard deviation statistical tools and the results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Pre-service Teachers' Perception about their Training Programmes**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
We had adequate tuition on content before teaching practice.	3.23	0.66
We received enough teaching on methods of teaching.	3.39	0.65
We were taught how to prepare lesson notes.	3.89	0.76
We were taught how to ensure effectiveness of teaching in class.	3.15	0.79
We were exposed to techniques of classroom management.	3.11	0.68
We were taught how to integrate assessment into instruction.	3.55	0.88
We were taught how to develop and use instructional materials.	3.03	0.67
We were introduced to ethics of the profession.	3.45	0.76
We were taught factors underlying the choice of teaching methods.	3.01	0.87
We were introduced to concepts of learning.	3.44	0.89
We were introduced to how to state specific and measurable objectives.	3.55	0.56
We had instructions on sequential and logical presentation of lessons.	3.78	0.51
We were taught how to encourage students' participation in lessons.	2.67	0.59
We were taught how to constantly assess students' learning progress.	3.12	0.68
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>0.63</b>

Interpretation: less than 2- poor, between 2 and 3 – good, greater than 3 – very good

Table 1 shows the pre-service teachers' responses to their preparatory programme in the teacher education. For the purpose of appraising the faculty work with regard to preparing pre-service teachers for the teaching profession, the following interpretations were adopted to the responses obtained. Mean responses less than 2 were assigned poor, those between 2 and 3 were assigned good and mean responses greater than 3 were given very good.

Most of the items in Table 1 indicate that pre-service teachers' responses based on their exposure in the university and experiences in the schools, signal that their preparatory programmes were very good. Out of the 16 items, which measured the variable, 13 of them had a mean response greater than 3. This, to a greater extent, indicates students' satisfaction with the level of training and exposure before embarking on teaching practice.

The teaching profession requires that prospective teachers receive specialized intellectual training for excellent job performance. The teacher education programme seems to have a rich curricular which serves as a guide for training prospective teachers. Notable among all the kinds of knowledge to be possessed by teachers is the content knowledge. This is the knowledge of beliefs, principles, theories and concepts one holds about a particular discipline (Bruner, 1966). Content knowledge is crucial to improving teaching and learning and hence it is important that teachers demonstrate high understanding of this knowledge base (Ball, Hill, & Bass, 2005). According to Shulman (1986), content knowledge is highly important to the establishment of teaching profession. As a result, he laid emphasis on role of content knowledge for teaching during his presentation and introduction of a special knowledge base of the teacher which he termed pedagogical content knowledge.

One of the critical decisions made in teaching is selecting the right method of teaching. Methodology, often called pedagogy, is the medium through which knowledge, concepts, facts and theories are communicated to learners. Responses from the respondents indicate that they had enough tuition on teaching methodology, an item with mean response of 3.39. The pre-service teachers seemed to be well equipped with such knowledge to enable them to develop basic skills in teaching, presenting lessons to learners in a systematic and coherent manner,

developing strategies of ensuring students' participation in the lesson through interactive teaching methods (Mgeni, 2013) and decide on the right method to be used based on the objectives and the nature of the topics to be treated to make lessons effective (Kuranchie, 2015).

Assessment is another course that students offered in their preparatory programme. Attaining education goals is the dream of every nation as well as educational institutions. This goal needs to be assessed by teachers during and after instructions for remediation, where necessary. Assessment ought to be conducted hand in hand as teaching progresses. This enables teachers to determine students' learning progress and also make accurate decisions about students' learning (Okyere, Kuranchie, Larbi & Twene, 2018). The participants seemed to have received very good preparation in assessment during their course work as their responses on assessment of students' learning during the internship received favourable response. The two items on that yielded mean scores of 3.55 and 3.12. The responses indicate that the pre-service teachers assessed their lessons throughout.

*Research Question 2: To what extent are pre-service teachers able to apply the knowledge gained to teaching?*

Research question 2 sought to determine pre-service teachers' ability to apply the knowledge gained in their course work into real classroom practices. This exercise was divided into three components; planning, implementation and evaluation stages. Pre-service teachers' performance on this is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Pre-service Teachers' Performance on Knowledge of Teaching**

Variable	Item/Theme	Mean Score
Planning Stage	Objectives	4.55
	Core Points	4.36
	Teaching and Learning Activities	4.12
	Teaching and Learning Materials	2.91
	Subject and Pedagogical Knowledge	4.35
<b>Mean Score</b>		<b>4.06</b>
Delivery Stage	Introduction and Review of Previous Knowledge	4.34
	Presentation of lesson	3.45
	Pace of lesson	2.61
	Questioning and Feedback	3.11
	Communication	3.01
	Student Participation	3.99
	Assessment for Learning	3.88
<b>Mean Score</b>		<b>3.42</b>
Evaluation Stage	Establish Lesson Objectives	3.99
	Given Exercises	4.17
	Given Assignments	3.22
<b>Mean Score</b>		<b>3.79</b>



Table 2 shows the average rating performance of pre-service teachers' application of knowledge to real teaching exercise during the off-campus teaching practice. Results are presented in the three components.

Results from the table indicate that pre-service teachers demonstrated adequate planning for their lessons. Planning or preparing for a lesson is a necessary factor for ensuring effective and systematic presentation of lesson. In the preparatory stage, pre-service teachers need to consult syllabus and scheme of work, relevant textbooks, assemble teaching and learning materials and finally, prepare lesson notes. Pre-service teachers' performance in this stage during the internship was very good as most of the aspects of the preparatory stage had average score above 4. An aspect of lesson notes preparation that steers almost every stage of its preparation is the 'statement of lesson objectives. Lesson objectives need to be measurable and observable. They are statements that indicate what teachers want learners to do or demonstrate at the end of instruction or course of study (Okyere, *et al*, 2018). They are statements that express the expected capability of learners and are often expected to be specific, measurable and achievable and hence stated using behavioural words (Ubi, 2014). Instructional objectives guide teachers to develop teaching and learning activities, select teaching and learning materials and write summary or core points in the lesson preparation (Nitko, 2001). Alorvor and El Sadat (2010) add that instructional objectives guide in selecting content to be studied and keep the teacher in focus in order not to wander away from what is being taught.

Pre-service teachers who took part in the study performed excellently well as most of them stated lesson objectives that are specific, measurable and could be achieved within the duration of the lesson (an item with mean score of 4.55). Results in Table 2 also indicate that pre-service teachers had the potential of developing activities that had the capability of directing students' learning (item with mean score of 4.12).

Another component of teaching that is emphasized during supervision exercise is lesson delivery. The items of interest are shown in Table 2. The results show that the pre-service teachers performed creditably well with most of them indicating that they introduced lesson to be treated, reviewed the relevant previous knowledge of students and linked it to the current topic, presented lessons in a systematic and logical manner to ensure a balance between students and teachers' activities. The pre-service teachers also indicated that they constantly assessed students' learning progress and offered constructive feedback to students with lesson developing on a good pace. Every lesson needs to be introduced. Providing introduction to a lesson enables students' interest to be developed and hence respond positively as the lesson progresses. Lesson introduction can be offered in a form of overview of the lesson, its importance to self-development and application of learning to other disciplines. It is also important that lesson expectations or objectives are made known to students in course of the introduction. Ubi (2014) argues that objectives made available to learners at the start of a lesson give learners a clear direction they need to succeed. Instructional objectives therefore help both the teacher and learners. It is observed from Table 2 that most the pre-service teachers reviewed learners' previous knowledge to ensure that skills and knowledge they needed to cope with the topic were well established. This result supports Larbi's (2017) assertion that review of students' previous knowledge in connection with what is to be treated is a teaching technique needful for effective teaching and learning. The item mean score of 4.34 shown in Table 2 indicates that most pre-service teachers introduced their lessons, shared lesson objectives with learners and reviewed students' previous knowledge to serve as a foundation for the new topic to be developed.

Another important area which is of interest to supervisors is the methods used in the lesson delivery. The Table shows that most learners participated in the lesson (item mean score of 3.99) indicating that the method employed by most of the pre-service teachers in their lesson delivery was more of learner centred. Using learner-centred approach to teaching follows the philosophical perspectives of the constructivists who believe that knowledge is created by the learner (Bruner, 1966). The teachers' role therefore is to facilitate knowledge creation by designing activities that are purposeful and encourage learners to explore and exchange ideas in a friendly atmosphere (Fletcher, 2009). Table 2 shows that pre-service teachers used more of learner centred approaches to learning as opposed to teacher centred which often encourages passive learning (Mgeni, 2013) and sometimes make students develop negative attitude toward learning. It is also observed that pre-service teachers used diverse assessment techniques to assess students' learning progress in course of instructions. This might have been done using questioning techniques constantly in the lesson development to determine students' understanding and offer them with constructive feedback to enhance learning. Frequent monitoring of students' learning enhances their development and prevents them from carrying learning difficulty to end of term test (Larbi, 2017). Assessing students for leaning is an integral part of teaching activity.

The last component of teaching delivery observed every supervisor during teaching practice is a teacher's ability to establish the achievement of lesson objectives leading to ascertaining the effectiveness of the entire teaching exercise. Table 2 shows that the pre-service teachers were able to determine learners' knowledge gained at the end of their instructions. The aim was to ascertain what learning had taken place. This technique of assessing knowledge gained at the end of instruction is known as summative assessment often called 'assessment of learning' (Okyere *et al*, 2018). This is done through such techniques as assigning students tasks to be done in class or at home. It could also be done through oral questioning and answer technique. The main aim is to assess the extent to which lesson objectives have been achieved and how effective the lesson has been. This supports the view of Ubi (2014) that an effective lesson is an achieved desired learning goal. Thus, pre-service teachers seem did not end their lesson abruptly but took pains to consolidate or reinforce the major points learnt through summary, exercises and assignments.

Research Question 3: *What challenges do pre-service teachers face during teaching practice?*

Pre-service teachers' interaction with a group of students for the first time during teaching practice can be daunting. However, the teaching practice is an exercise meant to expose pre-service teachers to actual teaching under supervision to give them the opportunity to experiment the art of teaching before being independent in the profession (Abongdia, Adu & Foncha, 2015). According to Perry (2004), teaching practice can create a blend of anticipation, anxiety, excitement and apprehension in pre-service teaching at the start of the exercise.

Research question 3, therefore, sought to find out challenges that the trainees faced during the teaching practice exercise. Students' responses to this question were analysed qualitatively categorizing their responses into themes. Below are the responses from the respondents on the challenges faced during the exercise.

## **Resources**

Some of the pre-service teachers claimed that there were no resources at their disposal, making teaching very difficult. Some also complained that there was no internet facility in the schools

and as a result, practical aspects of Information Communication and Technology lessons could not be taught. Again, some participants complained of inadequate textbooks for disciplines such as Mathematics, English Language and Literature in English. There was also a complaint about lack of syllabus for reference in the schools practised. Some responses on this issue are:

*There were insufficient teaching and learning materials in my school. Because of this, I had to always buy cardboard to prepare instructional aids. There were limited textbooks for students' use, so I had to put about 3 or 4 on a table for them to use the book in turns.*

A participant said:

*The biggest challenge I faced was using my laptop to teach a class of about 45 students. Simply because the school had no computer laboratory, meanwhile the topic I was to treat was supposed to be more hands-on activity than classroom work which delays if you want everybody to have a feel with the laptop.*

### **Little support from mentors**

Another challenge indicated by the pre-service teachers was that the practising teachers were not offered assistance in any form. Most of the teachers were even not coming to school hence there was difficulty of whom to contact in times of need or problem.

Some participants said,

*Some of the teachers only gave us topics to be treated and that was all. They did not avail themselves to us so as to seek assistance from them when the need arose.*

Response from a respondent is:

*My mentor was very happy to have me in the specialty of his teaching discipline. I taught I would be offered some initial assistance. I was however given teaching notes and a pamphlet to make reference when necessary.*

### **Classroom management and students' control**

Responses from the pre-service teachers show that some of them found it difficult managing their class. They claimed students made lots of noise while teaching was ongoing. All efforts to control them proved futile. Some of the students did not even pay attention to the lesson.

Response from a respondent is:

*Some students sometime can be so difficult to control, most especially when they are tired or hungry.*

*Some of the students thought that we were student teachers and as a result, we could not discipline them in class whenever they misbehaved. Hence, they often distracted others' attention during teaching.*

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The overall aim of the study was to ascertain pre-service teachers' perception about their training programme while in school and their ability to apply the knowledge gained into teaching. Data collected about the views of the pre-service teachers on the variables of study indicate that most of the pre-service teachers are satisfied about their preparatory programmes offered them to join the teaching profession and enable them execute their duties effectively.

The pre-service teachers also demonstrated high ability to apply the knowledge acquired into actual teaching as most of them put into practice the nitty-gritties of teaching effectiveness. In spite of the good perception of the pre-service teachers about their training programmes and the demonstration of competence in teaching, they still faced some challenges which need to be addressed to make them derive optimum benefit from the teaching practice exercise. A problem they encountered was not having enough resources to aid teaching, difficulty in controlling students who made noise in class and had little or no support from their mentors. It is recommended that schools of practice need to make resources available for pre-service teachers to use in instructional delivery. Heads of schools of practice need to encourage their teachers to avail themselves to practising teachers for assistance.

Future research could examine assessors' reports about the pre-service teachers as well as their lesson notes to triangulate and authenticate their response provided on questionnaire. The current study relied on only self-report instrument. Again, further research is needed to inquire from head of schools of practice and mentees for their side of the story about challenges the mentees encounter in the schools during the exercise.

In spite of the few limitations of the research, it has unveiled very useful lessons that universities and faculties offering education programmes could utilise to strengthen their programmes. The research has provided very useful data to beef up the scant literature on teaching practice. The work is also a useful guide to future researchers. Grey areas in the subject have been highlighted for teacher educators to take them up. In addition, the study has disclosed challenges that teacher trainees encounter during teaching practice which are a great lesson for universities and schools of practice.

## REFERENCES

- Abongdia, J. A., Adu, E. O., & Foncha, J. W. (2015). Pre-service teachers' challenges during teaching practice in one University in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. *Int J Edu Sci*, 11(1), 50 – 56.
- Afram, K. T. (2001). *Appraisal of the effectiveness of teaching practice in preparing student-teachers in training colleges: The case of training colleges in the Central Region of Ghana*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Cape Coast.
- Alorvor, L. K., & el Sadat, A. M. (2010). *Effective teaching strategies for teachers*. Accra: Spirit Soul & Body Ltd.
- Amobi, A. A. (2005). Preservice teachers' reflectivity on the sequence and consequences of teaching actions in a microteaching experience. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 32(1), 115 – 130.

- Amuche, C. I., & Kukwi, I. J. (2013). An assessment of stakeholders' perception of the implementation of universal basic education in North-Central Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4(3), 158 – 167.
- Ball, D. L., Hill, H. H., & Bass, H. (2005 ). Knowing mathematics for teaching: Who knows mathematics well enough to teach third grade, and how can we decide? *American Educator*, Fall, 14 – 46.
- Bandele, S. O. & Faremi, Y. A. (2013). Early childhood education: Implication for sustainable national development. In M. Fabunmi (Ed.), *Explorations in education*, (pp.1 – 13). Nigeria: His Lineage Publishing House.
- Bruner, J. S. (1966). *Towards a theory of instruction*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press.
- De Caprariis, P., Barman, C., & Magee, P. (2001). Monitoring the benefits of active learning exercises in introductory survey courses in science: An attempt to improve the education of prospective public school teachers. *The Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 1 – 11.
- Fletcher, J. A. (2009). Learning algebraic concepts through group discussion. *Journal of Science and Mathematics Education*, 1(4), 31 – 47.
- Gess-Newsome, J., & Lederman, N. G. (1990).
- Gibbs, G., Lucas, L., & Simonite V. (1996). Class size and students performance: 1984 – 94. *Studies Higher Education*, 21(3), 261 – 273.
- Glenda, A., & Walshaw, M. (2009). Characteristics of effective teaching of mathematic: A view from the west. *Journal of Mathematics Education*, 2 (2), 147 – 164.
- Joshua, M.T. & Bassey, B.A. (2004). Teachers' perception of student evaluation of teachingeffectiveness. *African Educational Research Network*. Retrieved on June 10, 2007. Available at: <http://findarticles.com/article/mi-qa3765/is-2002.assey> (2004).
- Kpanja, E. (2001). A study of the effects of video tape recording in microteaching training. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 32(4), 483 – 486.
- Kuranchie, A. (2015). *The educator's guide*. Kumasi: Bookworm Publications.
- Kyriacou, C. (1991). *Essential teaching skills*. Padstow: T. J. Press.
- Kyriacou, C. (2007). *Essential teaching skills*. United Kingdom: Nelson Thornes Ltd.
- Larbi, E. & Okyere, M. (2016). The use of mathematics in mathematics education. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(9), 53 – 61.
- Larbi, E. (2017). Analysis of senior high school mathematics teacher characteristics and utilization of assessment practices. *International Journal of Education, Learning and Development*, 5(9), 21 – 31.
- Marlow, L., & Inman, D. (2002). What pre-service teacher professional development must become in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Journal of Thought*, 37(3), 45 – 51.
- Matiru, B., Mwangi, A., & Schelette, R. (1995). *Teach you best*. University of Kassel: German Foundation for International Development (DSE)
- Mgeni, E. M. (2013). Teacher perceptions on effective teaching methods for large classes. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 3(2), 114 – 118.
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. (2000). Principles and standards for school mathematics. Reston, VA: Author.
- Nitko, A. J. (2001) Educational assessment of students. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Okyere, M., Kuranchie, A., Larbi, E. Twene, C. (2018). *Essentials of assessment in schools*. Kumasi: Great Impressions.

- Olatoye, R. A., & Aanu, E. M. (2011). Senior secondary school science teachers' perception of using students to evaluate teaching effectiveness. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 2(3), 164 – 170.
- Otsupius, I. A. (2014). Micro-teaching: A technique for effective teaching. *African Research Review*, 8(4), 183 – 197. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/afrrrev.v8i4.15>
- Perry, R. (2004). Teaching practices for early childhood: A guide for students Retrieved on November, 13 2017, from [http://www. Routledge.com catalogues./0418114838.pdf](http://www.Routledge.com/catalogues/0418114838.pdf)
- Prahalad, C. K. (2009). *Sustainable development and the bottom line*. Retrieved from <http://educationforsustainabledevelopment.com/blog/>
- Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15(2). 4 – 14.
- Shulman, L. S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1 – 22.
- Tamamkloe, E. K., Amedahe, F. K., & Atta, E. T. (2005). *Principles and methods of teaching*. Accra: Ghana University Press.
- Ubi, I. E. (2014). The power and purpose of instructional objectives in social studies education. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(20), 150 – 153.