

**PERCEPTIONS OF MENTEES ON THE ONE SEMESTER INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME OF UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Effective teacher training forms the bedrock of effective instructions and consequently higher educational outcomes in the various institutions of learning. This study examined the perceptions of Social Studies students on the effectiveness of the one semester internship programme of the University of Education, Winneba. The targeted population for the study was the 2014/2015 interns of the department of Social Studies Education of the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). Comprehensive sampling was used and all the interns of the department of Social Studies Education who were willing and able were involved in the study. Open-ended questionnaires were used to gather data for the study. The outcome of the study showed that the one-semester internship was not adequate to equip interns with the competencies of the teaching profession due to the brevity of the period amid extra-curricular activities in first and second cycle institutions which does not give them adequate time for practice. In addition, the study showed that interns faced various degrees of challenges among which were the unwillingness of mentors to mentor them, inadequate time to conduct action as demanded by the university among others. Respondents were therefore, of the view that the internship programme should be reversed to one year to give room for adequate practice.*

**KEYWORDS:** Internship, Interns, Novices, Mentors

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background to the study**

The student internship programme was initiated by the University of Education, Winneba to replace the traditional model of teacher training where student-teachers spent more than 90 percent of their training on theoretical aspect of teaching on campus and less than 10 percent on teaching practice. In the traditional model, the objective of the teaching practice was to evaluate student teaching rather than help the student teacher develop appropriate teaching skills, techniques and dispositions of teaching (CETDAR, 2009).

According to CETDAR (2009:6), it was realized by many educators that this model has failed to prepare teachers to exhibit effective teaching skills, techniques and right disposition towards teaching, resulting in poor student performance in schools. It was the deficiency of the traditional model in teacher preparation that prompted the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) in 1999 to model its teacher education programme into a four-year B. Ed degree where students spent three years on campus to learn the theoretical aspect of teaching and a one year field experience in internship schools and colleges.

The main objectives of the internship programme according to CETDAR (2009:9) are to:

- ✓ Apply and practice the principle of teaching and learning in the classroom setting and in the school context

- ✓ Develop practical understanding and appreciation of the major teaching roles as well as the skills that are required to perform these roles
- ✓ Broaden their experiences, understanding and awareness of the realities of teaching and working in a school
- ✓ Develop an understanding of children and young people, and skills to respond appropriately to their needs, interest and capacities
- ✓ Develop skills in professional decision-making and capacities for reflective learning and self-evaluation
- ✓ Develop professional attitudes and qualities of adaptability and sensitivity to the school and the students they teach.

These, the researchers believe are laudable objectives that should be realized in student-teachers as they are in line with the ultimate goal of the university, thus producing competent teachers for all levels of education in the country.

However, after a few years of undertaking the one-year duration of internship, the programme has been changed to a one semester internship programme. Paradoxically, the one-year internship programme was practiced at a time where majority of UEW students consisted of matured trained teachers who might have taught for several years before gaining admission to the University. While the one-semester has been introduced at a time where about eighty percent (80%) of the students admitted to the University are direct from the Senior High schools with no teaching background. The issues that are of concern to the researchers, which indeed propelled the study into this area were to explain from students perspective whether the one semester programme was adequate to help them apply and practice the principle of teaching and learning in the classroom setting as anticipated by the University, the challenges faced by interns in their schools of internship and what they think could be done to make the internship programme more relevant.

### **The internship programme**

A key element for successful learning is the opportunity to apply what is being learned in order to refine it where necessary (National Research Council, 2000). Cognitive psychologists have found that “deliberate practice” thus, purposeful and critical rehearsing certain kinds of performances is particularly important to the development of expertise (Ericson et al, 1993). Learning is therefore best when it is hands-on-deck (Gray, 2001). Gray adds that an individual can read and study all the books and journals available, but the ultimate test comes when the individual is actually in the trenches doing what must be done. Research on outcomes of teacher education efforts lends support to this idea that carefully constructed field experiences can enable new teachers to reinforce, apply and synthesize concepts they learn in their course work (Denton, 1983; Baumgartner, Koerner, & Rust, 2002 cited in Darling-Hammond). In line with this, Ball and Cohen (1999) assert that professional education must be education for professional practice if it is to be either professionally responsible or usable. Thus a conception of the practice itself, and what it takes to practice well, should lie at the foundation of professional education. As a result, the researchers admit that professionals need experience with tasks and ways of thinking that are fundamental to practice when learning anything relevant to performance and in this case teaching.

Darling-Hammond, Gendler and Wise (1990) assert that the internship provides students the opportunity to apply knowledge, make decisions, reflect on performance and develop competence. They emphasized that

Written instruments for assessing teacher competence and skill cannot capture fully the complexities of teaching knowledge and the context-dependent nature of teaching judgment. And because the acquisition of teaching skill depends so much on developing judgment in complex, nonroutine situations, competence cannot be fairly assessed until after the prospective teacher has had an opportunity to encounter and work through many of the common problems of teaching practice (Darling-Hammond et al, 1990:v)

They maintain that other professions such as medicine, psychology, architecture and engineering go through structured internship programmes before being admitted to practice. Internship programmes provide training, safeguard the public from unskilled, unsupervised novices and give guidance and support to beginning practitioners. Darling-Hammond and her colleagues lamented on how beginning teachers in some cases are left to 'sink or swim' in the first year of teaching due to inadequate exposure to field practices (internship) and however, acknowledged the profound effects the internship programmes have on what kind of teacher a novice turns out to be.

Teaching practice has been established in many teacher education colleges and universities all over the world (Albasheer et al, 2008) to aid teacher trainees put to practice all the theories that have been learnt for several years at the schools of training. For teacher trainees to become competent, effective and useful in productive classroom discourse, it is crucial that those teachers are competent in the content, theoretical and practical aspects of the teaching profession (Mahende & Mabula, 2013). Teaching practice provides the opportunity for teacher trainees to feel engaged, challenged and empowered for the real profession (Nwanekezi et al, 2011). This opportunity exposes students to a range of real experiences that are very useful in preparing the aspiring teachers for the job.

For teacher trainees to be adequately and effectively prepared, it must take the collaborative efforts between academics and practitioners in the field. This is because individuals learn to teach by watching and imitating others (Mahende & Mabula, 2013) and from experience and reflection (Stuart et al, 2009). In the view of Elliot (1993), teachers learn through practice, acquisition of knowledge and reflection on their experience. Mahende and Mabula (2013) add that learning about teaching is also enhanced by making teacher trainees conduct research on their own practices that will further aid them improve their teaching. The vacuum to be filled here is whether the one semester internship gives students ample opportunity to acquire all these experiences that are required to make them effective teachers.

From literature, it appears that novices who have gained some experiences with teaching when they encounter course work are more prepared to make sense of the ideas, theories, and concepts that are addressed in their academic work. For example, in a study of 138 undergraduate teacher education students which compared those with thirty hours of field experiences (n=61) and those who had no early field experiences (n=78), Denton (1982) established that students with early field experiences appear to increase learning and understanding about the principles of how to teach within a content area. This underscores the importance of giving teacher-trainees the opportunity to acquaint themselves with professional

practice of what is learnt at school to make them proficient in their profession. The issue of great concern when it comes to internship programme of UEW is the duration with which students are given to practice. Is the one semester enough for teacher-trainees who are novices in terms of teaching to gain the real classroom experiences as professional teachers? This is one of the issues being addressed in this current study.

From the interns guide books of University of Maryland, Baltimore, Michigan State University College of Education, Western Carolina University among others, internship is a one-year programme with very useful activities for their students. For instance, the internship/student teaching hand book (2014/2015) for Western Carolina University states that the internship/student teaching experience is the capstone of Western Carolina University's teacher education program. The successful completion of this experience leads to recommendation for the North Carolina Standard Professional I license. The mission of the professional education programs at Western Carolina University is to prepare highly effective and ethical graduates who are inspired to be lifelong learners, engaged in the community, and empowered to become leaders who strive to transform the future. This shows the importance they place on practical session of the teaching profession. UEW also started as a one-year programme but have changed to a one-semester programme. What really informed the change? Is the change in favour of students' wishes? This is an issue that should not be relegated to the background since it is critical in making an impact on the effectiveness of teachers.

According to Darling-Hammond (1999), there are programmes which have graduates who report significantly higher feelings of preparedness than their peers and are more highly rated by employers. These employers usually seek out these candidates because they believe such candidates are more effective in the classroom from their very first days of teaching. A study of seven of such programmes found common features among a group of large and small programmes located in both public and private colleges and universities. These features include:

- ✓ A shared vision of good teaching that is consistent in courses and clinical work;
- ✓ Well-defined standards of practice and performance that are used to guide the design and assessment of course work and clinical work;
- ✓ A common core curriculum grounded in substantial knowledge of development, learning, and subject matter pedagogy, taught in the context of practice;
- ✓ Extended clinical experience that reflects the programme's vision of good teaching, are interwoven with course work, and are carefully monitored;
- ✓ Strong relationships, based on common knowledge and beliefs, between universities and reformed-minded schools; and
- ✓ Extensive use of case study methods, teacher research, performance assessments and portfolio examinations that relate teachers' learning to classroom practice (Darling-Hammond, 1999)

The researchers' emphasis is on the forth point which states that such programmes with highly proficient teachers have an "Extended clinical experience that reflects the programme's vision of good teaching, are interwoven with course work, and are carefully monitored." This point

indicates the relevance of long period of practice under the supervision of seasoned professionals in attaining proficiency in teaching.

Darling-Hammond, Gendler and Wise (1990) argue that internship is to be an intensive, sustained exposure to the practice of teaching and must provide teacher-trainees with certain fundamental features: among which are abundant opportunity to conduct, use and analyse research, observe other teachers and reflect upon and analyse their own teaching experiences. Internship programme should allow for broad exposure that gives the teacher-trainee the opportunity to get immersed in the subtleties of the profession. They identified the following as some of the significant educational standards for internship programmes:

1. Interns must experience an adequate variety of teaching situations.
2. An internship programme must establish a formal and appropriate curriculum, based on the developmental needs of beginning teachers, and offering both formal and informal instruction throughout the year.
3. Interns must receive assistance necessary to perform as beginning teachers, including systematic and regular support, an appropriate and progressive degree of responsibility and an optimal teaching load.

The issues of concern centre on whether the internship programme organized by UEW gives the interns adequate opportunity to experience a variety of teaching situation. In addition, is the programme developed to suit the developmental needs of beginning teachers? Do the interns receive the necessary assistance that will make them perform as beginning teachers? All these issues are addressed in this work.

Challenges faced by interns as identified in literature are varied and with various degrees of effects on the professional development of teachers but teachers' motivation was the most outstanding of all the factors (Anangisye, nd). This talks about the fact that the teachers who are supposed to mentor the teacher-trainees are not motivated enough to do the work as demanded which affects the professional development of the student-teachers.

Time is one of the major barriers repeatedly mentioned in most of the organised professional development programmes due to competing work priorities and duties (Anangisye, nd). Usually, such programmes have been dogged by insufficient time for planning for and learning new approaches and interventions. It is therefore not surprisingly that professional development has been occurring inconveniently.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The design was a case study. It was a study of a specific instant in action (Adelman et al, 1980) designed to illustrate a more general principle (Nisbet & Watt, 1984). The university is made up of faculties and departments. The study considered only a single department under the Social Science faculty as the study area. This was to help get a rich and vivid description of events related to the case, provide a chronological narrative of events relevant to the case and blend the description of events with the analysis of them (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). The population for the study comprised all 2014/2015 internship students from the Department of Social Studies Education, UEW—Winneba campus. The sample encompassed all 2014/2015

interns from the department of Social Studies in UEW—Winneba campus. Out of a total class of 125 students, those who were willing and able to participate were 75 students. The sampling strategy was therefore on the basis of convenience. Data was collected from the respondents through open-ended questionnaires and analysed under various themes generated from the research questions.

## **FINDINGS**

This section deals with the presentation and analysis of data collected. Data was presented and discussed under four themes as described underneath.

### **Students Feeling about the one semester internship programme**

One of the cardinal issues the researchers were concerned with was the duration of the internship programme. Respondents were therefore asked to tell whether the internship programme was long enough to give them the needed teaching experiences or not. They were also asked to explain their responses. Out of the seventy-five respondents, sixty-six (66) said 'No' indicating that the programme was not long enough to equip them with the necessary experiences needed to make them competent teachers. Eight (8) of the respondents however said 'Yes' indicating that the programme was long enough and one (1) indicated that the one semester was adequate for those of them who went through the teacher training colleges but was inadequate for those who came from senior high schools without any teaching experience.

In explaining why they feel the one semester internship programme was inadequate, twelve of the respondents attributed it to the numerous school activities that take place during the first term in the second cycle schools in the country. For instance, one of the twelve respondents said, "No, because due to sporting activities during within the internship period, we could not learn much from our mentors about teaching". Another said, "No, this is because the one semester is choked with a lot of activities in the schools of practice and we were not able to get much contact with the students". Still, one of them said, "No, because we did not get enough periods to teach. Besides, other extracurricular activities delayed and limited the number of times to be in class, so there is less exposure". In the same vein, another said, "No, because it did not give us enough time to learn from our mentors. The term was full of activities". In addition, one said, "The one semester internship was not long because of the numerous co-curricular activities and less time is used in class".

The above respondents were of the view that the one semester internship was not adequate because of the various school activities that are performed within the first term of the academic calendar of the second cycle institutions. The first term of the second cycle institutions in Ghana is usually marked with various activities such as admission of first year students, inter-houses sport competitions, inter-schools within various districts among other activities. Sometimes, it takes almost two months within the term for the form ones to get settled for classes since the admission sometimes last for more than one month within the term. The admissions go on amid sporting activities which render normal classes ineffective. The respondents were therefore of the view that these activities do not permit them to have adequate instructional contact hours with their students and mentors to give them the needed exposure that could acquaint them with the needed competencies in the teaching profession. These students are found in a context described by Darling-Hammond et al (1990) when they lamented on how beginning teachers

in some cases are left to 'sink or swim' in the first year of teaching due inadequate exposure to field practices (internship) but however, acknowledged the profound effects the internship programmes have on what kind of teacher a novice turns out to be. These students may face serious challenges in the field due to insufficient exposure needed to toughen them for the job.

The other respondents (39), expressed their feelings in a similar manner, even though, they did not mention specifically the issue concerning numerous school activities. The following are excerpts from the respondents: one of them said, "The answer is no and the reason is that the duration is too small to enable us acquire the necessary practical skills in the classroom." Another said, "No, because there was limited time for the interns to learn what actually they suppose to learn or go through and acquire the experience." One of them also said, "I don't think so, because I was not given enough time to experience how teaching is done since I am not a trained teacher. It didn't enable me to have experience on the field."

Nine of the respondents attributed the inadequacy of the internship period to the fact that some of them were direct from Senior High Schools (SHS) and needed more practical sessions of training to make them more proficient. For instance, one of them said the period was "not enough because some of us who came direct from SHS have little or no experience about teaching." Another said, "This is woefully inadequate because unprofessional teachers form the majority of the students hence we need one full year to prepare efficiently." In same way, one said, "No, one semester is not enough because direct students from SHS needed to adequately practice for various teaching techniques before completing the graduate course at the university." Another said, "No, because it does not help the students to receive the requisite skills especially we the SHS students."

The above statements from the respondents in the preceding paragraph make it very clear that the duration was not enough to prepare novices from the Senior High Schools (SHS) to acquire the skills that could make them proficient teachers. The paradox of the programme can be seen in the fact that at its inception where the programme was one year, the teacher-trainees in the institution were matured veterans who have completed teacher training colleges and might have taught for five or more years before coming to the university for further studies as against the one semester programme comprising novices who have never taught before. If veterans were given the opportunity to practice teaching for one year before they were posted to teach in schools, it is out of place to give these novices just a semester which they do not even get the chance to teach consistently for more than five weeks due to various activities within that period of the academic calendar of the second cycle institutions.

The eight students who responded "Yes" indicating that the programme was adequate explained that they were already trained teachers and therefore did not need more than a semester to practice. For instance, one of them said, "For we the already trained teachers, I think is enough but for the people who are not professional is not." Another said, "Yes, this is because I have some experience concerning teaching." In the same vein, one other said, "Yes, because I was trained at the college, the aspect of education and I also did on-campus teaching so I think it is enough." Another said, "I feel it was enough in the sense that I have gone through the training during my teacher training college period. On the other hand no, because it is too short to prepare the SHS graduates." It is very clear that those who said the duration for the internship was long enough to prepare them with the competencies were all professionally trained teachers who have had some years of teaching experience before entering into the university.

The issue of contention lies in the fact that when the University of Education dealt primarily with the preparation of veteran teachers in the past, they offered them a one year internship period for practice but has suddenly changed to one semester at a time they now deal mostly with novices in the teaching profession who need more practical sessions to acquaint themselves with the competencies of the profession. It is therefore no surprise as majority of the students clamour on the brevity of the internship period.

One other important issue that was of interest was whether the period was long enough to make the interns identify a research problem and conduct the research as demanded by the university before coming back to school. Out of the seventy-five respondents, seventy-two admitted that it was not possible to conduct an action research within the stipulated one semester period which was full of various activities other than teaching. The interns attributed their inability to conduct research within the one semester due to the brevity of the period. For instance, in response to whether the period was long enough for them to identify a research problem and conduct research as demanded by the university or not, one of them said, "Not really. Problems could be identified but to carry out the research, one semester is very short". Another said, "No, the time I was able to identify a problem that was the time I was also preparing to conduct my exams and preparing to leave". One other said, "No, the time was too limited for an intern to get acquainted with the school's environment and be able to identify a research problem and be able to solve it. We came back to forge from mind" he remarked. One of the respondents also said, "No, in the sense that some of the learning problems needed some time for proper observation before taking decision." In addition, one of the respondents said, "No, it only allows for the identification of the research problem but conducting and implementing interventions do not occur." One added that "No, the research process takes a lot of time and effort to finish" and that time was too short to enable him do any meaningful research.

From the above we realize that majority of the interns were not able to conduct their research work before coming back to campus. Information gathered from interns indicates that most of them came back to school to start their research work. This shows that most of what was written by students as research work was mere fictions. This when not checked will defeat the essence of making interns conduct an action research. Action research by interns is meant to improve instruction and learning among students. As it stands today, many students do not conduct the research work as it is supposed to be done and that has the tendency of denying the students the real skills needed to conduct research.

However, three of the respondents (interns) who have taught for some years before coming to the university said the period was long enough for them to identify and conduct an action research. They explained that because they have been in the teaching field for some time, they were aware of the peculiar problems students usually face and such problems could be identified within a week or two for research to commence. For instance, in response to whether the one semester was long enough to make them identify a research topic and conduct research or not, one of them said, "Yes because as a teacher before, I already know some of the problems likely to arise in various schools." Another said, "Yes this is because I was once a student in that school and knew the problem already." The third respondent in this category said, "Yes because when I stepped into the class the first day I was able to know what problems they had."

From the above submissions from those who said it was possible, it appears they do not have enough knowledge on the intricacies involved in an action research. It is not every classroom problem that requires an action research. So entering the class for just a day is not enough to identify an action research problem worth investigating. An action research problem should be



that which is persistent or recurrent and has the tendency of affecting the academic life of those affected and not just a one shot problem that can be solved within a day or week. There has been a hallow effect on others which should not be so. For instance, the one who said as a teacher, he already knows some of the problems that were likely to arise. The possibility of this teacher investing problems before reaching the school of internship is very high. This therefore confirms the submission of earlier statements of forging other than doing the real work.

With all these reservations about the internship programme, the respondents were asked whether the programme should be changed to one year duration or one semester should be maintained. Seventy-two out of seventy-five of the respondents indicated that the programme should be reversed to one year instead of the one semester and only three agreed that the one semester should be maintained. In explaining why it should be reversed to a one year programme, various explanations were given by the respondents. These responses were grouped into three categories. The first were those who argue that it should be extended to make room for more practice for proficiency especially those novices in the teaching profession. Second were those who argue that one year internship will make them identify a research problem and conduct a meaningful research. The third were those who argued on accommodation related challenges as they come to meet the regular students who have already occupied the available places on campus.

Among those who argue for extension to one year to give room for practice especially for the novices were fifty-eight respondents. In this category, one of the respondents said, "I feel it would be appropriate to extend the programme to two semesters since it would grant those who are not teachers among us the opportunity to learn more." Another said, "For the purpose of making the interns well vested in teaching process especially the direct students, it should be extended to one year." One other said, "Because, interns will have been equipped with the necessary skills and also make them to conduct research that will go a long way to solve students problems." In a similar vein, one said, "It will help the less experienced students (SSSCE graduate or the direct applicant) to learn more teaching to get the experience." One also said, "Interns would be able to have a very good experience since many are direct from SHS and have no teaching experience and would curb inconveniences when they come back to campus."

The other group was those who argued that the extension was necessary to enable them conduct their action research as demanded by the university. In all, twelve respondents were in support of this argument. For instance, one of them said, "Interns will get more experience on the field and will be able to have enough time to find research problem and have adequate time for research." Another said, "To offer the teacher-student enough time to acquire the practical skills in the classroom. Also, it will help the intern complete their project." One of them also said, "If the school wants every student to have a genuine research work done, then they should extend the time." One of them added that "It will help those who are not trained to get experience and have time to come out with better research."

The last group was made up of two respondents. They argued that the extension was necessary to avoid some challenges regarding accommodation. One of them said, "Financial burden in terms of renting a room on campus in order to come and stay for one semester and renting accommodation over there at the school of practice." The other said the extension was necessary "Because when we came back, we had problem with accommodation. As all the halls

were full to the fullest capacities.” For them, the one semester internship programme poses serious financial burdens on them and accommodation related challenges.

### **Challenges faced by students on internship**

Issues of concern here were on challenges regarding the classroom instruction, their mentors and the school environment in general. In view of this respondents were asked to point out the challenges they faced in respect of teaching. Twenty-three of the students said they did not encounter any teaching challenge since they were trained teachers and have taught for some years before coming to school. For instance, in response to the instructional challenges faced by interns, one of them said, “Because I was a trained teacher before getting admission into the university I had no challenge.” Another said, “No such challenge because I am already a professional teacher.” In like manner, one other respondent in this group said “Actually I did not face any challenge because I was a teacher I know the do's and don'ts of the work so no problem.” From the above responses, it is very clear that those who came to the university as professional teachers did not experience instructional challenges since they are veterans in the teaching field. It is not surprising the SRC in 2004 advocated for a change from one year to one semester internship duration since about ninety percent of the students at that time were professional teachers.

With regards to challenges associated with classroom instruction, twenty respondents admitted that they had classroom management related challenges. For instance, one of the respondents in this category asserted that “Classroom management was my greatest challenge because most of the students were stubborn.” Another said, “Sometimes I found it difficult to introduce my lesson, because it was my first time of teaching.” In the same vein, one other said “The class size was too large and class control was somehow difficult.” This group of respondents had difficulty in managing their classes effectively.

The other group of students was those who had problems with lesson note preparation. Fourteen of the respondents had challenges with lesson note preparation. One of them said “Lesson plan preparation, tutors should take their time to teach us well, since some of us are direct students with no experience in teaching.” Another said “Aside the inadequate preparation on the lesson note, there was no other difficulty.” One other said “Lesson notes preparation and lesson presentation especially introduction.” This category of students had deficiency in lesson note preparation and wished conscious measures are taken at the institution of training to teach them lesson note preparation. Eighteen of the respondents however did not respond to the question posed.

One other issue was on the cordiality of mentee—mentor relationship. Respondents were asked if they experienced any challenge with their mentors in their schools of practice. Fifty-one of the respondents said they had no challenge with their mentors which implied that the mentee—mentor relationship was cordial enough to promote teaching and learning of the mentees on the field.

However, fourteen of the respondents did indicate that they had some challenges with their mentors. Ten of the students admitted that their mentors did not give much attention to them. For instance, one of them in responding to the challenges encountered with their mentors said “Yes, he did not have much time to supervise my teaching.” Another said “Yes. He did not come to supervise my work since he believed that I was already a trained teacher.” One other said “Yes. She had less time to attend to me as an intern.” Yet another said “Yes, he was not

always around and hardly do I see him to discuss with him my problems.” The concerns raised by these respondents are issues of concern for the holistic professional development of the interns and must be addressed.

Four of the students said they were overloaded with more teaching hours by their mentors. For instance, one of them said “The challenge I encountered was doing extra classes for her (the mentor) to collect the money without sharing with me because they were not paid by the University for the work done.” Another said “I taught the extra classes for her to collect money because she was not paid by the university as it out to be.” One other said “Yes, he at times abandoned the work on me due to the fact that they were not promptly paid by the university as promised.” So it is clear from these respondents that some of the mentors used the interns for their parochial interest at the expense of the intended purpose for which the interns were sent to the school. Six of the students did not respond to this question.

Interns were asked to state any other issue that has not been addressed by the questionnaire if any. Majority lamented on the difficulty in getting schools for internship since most partnership schools asserted that the mentors were not paid. One of the interns said, “I went several times to get a school for internship and was not accepted. I had to pay an amount of money before I was taken.” Another said, “I went to several partnership schools and was not taken because they were not paid by the University until one finally accepted me after begging profusely.” Others simply said the schools complained that the University was not paying them. This issue if not solved could have a great effect on the subsequent interns as they will find it difficult getting schools for internship. Those who even may get such schools may not be given the needed attention by their mentors which can defeat the essence of the programme.

### **Solutions to the challenges encountered by interns**

With all the challenges encountered, respondents were asked to suggest how those challenges could be resolved. Three things emerged strongly. One was on the need to give more training to mentors highlighting on the role of the interns and that of the mentors. The second was on the need to pay the mentors promptly so that they will be motivated to do their work effectively. Finally, respondents highlighted on the need to extend the internship programme to give much room for novices in the teaching profession to learn on the job.

To avert these challenges raised above, fourteen of the interns argue that the mentors should be given adequate training to make them do their work appropriately. For instance, one of the respondents in this category said “I think the mentors should be retrained especially the old ones to keep them abreast of the new things involved in supervision.” Another said “UEW should educate the mentors on things that mentees will do at the programme.” One other said “UEW must educate heads of school (partnership schools) about the internship program.” In addition, one said “Mentors need to be trained enough about what they are supposed to be doing.” The respondents in this category were of the view that retraining of mentors will help in the effective supervision of the interns.

The second category was those who asserted that mentors should be paid their allowances by the university promptly for them to do the mentoring with joy. In this category, one of the respondents said “The promise attached to the training should be fulfilled unto the mentors to make them to put up their best.” Another said “Pay the mentors on time and try to secure accommodation for students.” In addition, one of the respondents said “Payment of mentors’ allowances which the UEW deliberately refused to do could help in making the internship

programme effective.” This group of students believes that the mentors do not do their work effectively because they are not given the token promised by the university promptly. It implies that some of the mentors opened up to the mentees on some of the grievances they have regarding the programme. Probably, that might be the reason for which some of the mentors had to make their mentees teach their extra classes only for them to come and take the money without sharing with the mentees or even abandoning the interns without supervising them.

The last group of respondents was those who argue that the internship programme should be reversed to one year as it used to be. This group was made up of thirty-three respondents who asserted that in order to solve the problems faced by novices in the teaching profession raised earlier, the programme should be reversed to one year rather than a semester as it stands now. For example, one of the respondents in this category said “The period for internship should be extended from one semester to two.” Another said “The institute must go back for the two semester internship and also proper training and admonishing of mentors.” One other said “UEW should extend its internship programme to two semesters.” Still, one other respondent said “Restoring two semester internship programme back” was the way to go in resolving problems associated with novices. They believe by so doing, they will get the opportunity to practice for proficiency which will go a long way to producing quality teachers congruent to the mission and vision of the university.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

From the study, it is very conspicuous that majority of the students are not in favour of the one semester internship duration and wished that the period was extended to one year to promote effective practice and proficiency development. The position of the students is akin to the main objectives of the internship programme and the mission of the university in general. This is because the student internship programme was initiated to replace the traditional model of teacher training where student-teachers spent more than 90 percent of their training on theoretical aspect of teaching on campus and less than 10 percent on teaching practice (CETDAR, 2009). Extending the programme will make the attainment of the objectives of the internship programme as stated earlier in the work a reality.

## **Policy implications**

With regards to the brevity of the internship duration, various approaches can be adopted to solve the problem aside extending the programme to one year. One, the introduction of compulsory school attachment scheme where students spend two long vacations at various first and second cycle institutions to observe and practice before the internship period. To make it effective, introduction letters should be given to each student to send to their schools of attachment and they should be made to write reports on their observations, their practices and the new skills learnt as part of their portfolio. This will make students take the attachment sessions serious which will enable them acquaint themselves with relevant skills appropriate for the profession.

Furthermore, there is the need to strengthen the on-campus teaching practice to allow each student to teach for not less than three times for at least an hour at each occasion. This will help identify some of their challenges in order to help address them before the internship programme.

Emphasis should also be placed on the preparation and presentation of lesson. Here, methodology teachers should teach lesson note preparation using the accepted formats, ways of effective classroom control and ways of dealing with difficult or stubborn students. With all these expertise, student-teachers will be prepared enough to face reality.

The university should motivate the mentors to do their work effectively. Whatever has been promised the mentors should be given promptly as proposed and agreed upon in order to make mentors have nothing to complain about other than doing their work as mentors passionately.

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