

Exploring Challenges Faced by Student Teachers in Teaching Practice: A Research Inquiry

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ABSTRACT: *The study is a descriptive survey design, questionnaires was used to analyse the difficulties faced by the student teachers during their teaching practice and looks for common challenges faced by the student teachers in applying theoretical understanding to practical teaching setting. The findings of this research will contribute to a deeper understanding challenges inherent in teacher training programs and inform strategies for improving the preparation and support provided to aspiring educators.*

KEYWORDS: Student teachers, teaching practice, challenges, teacher training.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education is a critical component in shaping the future of education, with teaching practice playing a pivotal role in preparing aspiring educators. This study delves into the multifaceted nature of teaching practice, specifically focusing on the roles of students, challenges faced by educators during this phase, and the coping strategies employed. Understanding these elements is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of teacher education programs and ensuring that educators are well equipped to navigate the complexities of the classroom.

The exercise is a system unit compulsory course in school for all education students. It is a twelve weeks programme that can be splitted into a semester of the semi-final level (300L) and the final level (400L). Under this engagement initiative, teacher education institutions send teachers and students to different primary and secondary schools under supervision.

Many academics have characterized teaching practice from different angles. Davison (2010) described teaching practice as the process by which teachers in training are systematically expose to real classroom situations. Similarly, Haines (2015) described teaching practice as the time a pre-

service teacher spends as part of his undergraduate degree getting supervised teaching experience in both public and private schools.

According to Eze (2018) student teachers first chance to participate in activities related to teaching in a real word setting. Additionally, he claimed that it offers direction and chances for professional competences, personal characteristics, understanding, knowledge, and skills of a teacher in educational contexts. Teachers who have been in the classroom will pick up the necessary abilities based on their practical experience when they recognize their duty to the trainee.

A crucial part of becoming a teacher is putting teaching theory into practice by giving students hands-on experience in real teaching and learning environments, Ngidi & Marais 2020). Before entering the real word of teaching, both teachers and students are permitted to observe how to teach, (Kassandra 2016). As noted by Menter (2015), both educators and students recognize the importance of instructional practice. They perceive it as the ‘Crux of the preparation for the teaching profession, since it offers the actual link between student-hood and profession membership, they view it as the centerpiece of the training for the teaching profession. As a result, teaching practice creates a mixture of anticipation, anxiety, excitement and apprehension in the student teachers as they commence their teaching practice.

According to Quitaz (2014), teaching is a service that is professionally recommended for any human civilization. Because of this, obtaining skills and requiring students to teach is essential for many people who aspire to become teachers. This is one of the important component of teacher education programs. Teaching practice is an integral component of teacher education that takes up a separate phase. During this time, students teachers are dispatched by their training institution to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired under the guidance of an experience teacher .All students are taught that a teacher is only deemed qualified and certified if they have sucessfully completed both the required practical training exam and the theory paper .If the passes the teacher exam they are not deemed to be teachers until they have finished and fulfilled the require practical which is the fundamental course for teacher education programmes and help students teachers to to deal with the realities of their professional careers. The ever gives student teachers their ability to modify and go past some of the common practical teaching issues that apply in the classroom. A student who is able to look at a problem from multiple perspective is able to apply various strategies.

A skilled educators employ various pedagogical approaches to achieve success in the classroom. According to Boris (2016) and Afolabi(2010) teaching practice is a tool that helps student teachers gained certification in the teaching and learning process by providing them with real world experience .According to Ruaric (2016) putting teaching practice into practice is crucial to being a teacher .Student and teachers gain experience in the real teaching and learning environment

through teaching practice .During the time, teachers of pupils are expose to the act of teaching and giving the opportunity to practice the craft before entering the field of teaching fulltime. According to Kingundu and Nayimulis (2018) perspective student teachers experience arrange of emotions while they engage in teaching practice including enthusiasm ,worry, uncertainty and anticipation .Since I have been in charge of teaching practice for more than six years at my institution, as a researcher ,it become necessary for me to investigate some of the difficulties this students encounter when they go out to conduct their practical teaching and in the end offer suggestion for how teacher education can benefit from improved teaching practice, As menti0ned by Stone and Marries (2017) in Agogo et al (2018) there are some fundamental lesson that may be learned from teaching practice task, The lesson include

- 1.The entire spectrum of event that teachers in schools
- 2.The application of teaching technology and assuming the position of teacher in a practical setting
- 3.The course practical components differs from the school theoretical course work.
- 4.How do they deal with their students in real world scenarioduring the practical experience, student will encounter challenges related to teaching practice including this connotation which they must attempt to overcome

Examining a few of the goals of teaching practice as put together by Boris 2016 and Nwaneku , Okoh and Mazeobi 2011 clarifies the idea of teaching practice

1. To give aspiring teachers the chance to build a suitable rapport with students
2. To give aspiring teachers the chance to access each student potentials as a teacher and the long term viability of the teaching profession
3. To establish a personal rapport with teachers, parent, students and other administration
4. To give aspiring teachers practical teaching experience so they can address discipline issues and create control strategies.
5. To give student the chance to apply theories to real world situation and get a greater comprehension of educational concept and how they relate to learning
6. To help student teachers prepare and plan lessons in an efficient manners
7. To gain proficiency in using basic procedure method and instructional approaches
8. To cultivate idea professional attitude, concept and interest in relation to the teaching profession
9. To help student teachers develop the qualities that makes a good teacher and to show proper behaviour
10. To give teachers the chance to get constructive feedback and instructional evaluation
11. To give aspiring teachers to access themselves and identify their strength and weaknesses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researchers have different opinions regarding the difficulties that students have while they are practicing teaching, for example Al Monani(2016) looked into the difficulties student faced when practicing teaching at the faculty of education by maintaining teachers perspective and interviewing supervisors .The results showed that common problems included fear of teachers, communication skills and applying theory to practice

According to reports from Adeyanju (2012) and Ngala (2014), certain schools lacked the space and funding necessary for effective teaching practice conversely, though. According to Nakpodia (2011) six weeks is not long enough for teaching practices since it might not give teachers f the students the chance to obtain the necessary amount of practical experience which is what the exercise is meant to do

According to Osagie (2013), teachers of the students reported that certain lecturers with serving department continue to hold their lecture while they are on the loose end of a teaching practice exercise. Nwoke (2004) discovered that conflicts that arise between teachers and students during teaching practice exercises have a big impact on how well student teachers perform in the exercise. To solve these issues stakeholders, the school system and student teachers must work together

Maira and Meier (2004) discovered that certain mentors serve as excellent role models providing a valuable example for others to aspire to. According to their findings because teaching practice exposes students to the real teaching and learning environment, student teachers see it as a crucial part of their preparation. According to Maphosa et al (2007) mentors should get ongoing empowerment through seminars so they can effectively lead and guide teachers and students

While Ball et al (2008) and Scott (2015) added that managing a large class size, a subpar lesson plan and creating differentiated tasks were also common challenges. Sarocobana (2010) listed a number of challenges that student teachers face in their teaching including putting theories into practice, choosing the appropriate method of teaching and checking whether the learning objectives were achieved or not, lack of facilities and supplementary materials in schools and misinterpreting the role of the school administration.

According to Nasir and Zafar (2018) found that the management of the school must make sure that they receive assistant during their teaching practice. Mosaic (2019) learned that students were complaining to their supervisors about not receiving enough feedback. sThis is consisted with what Nakpodia (2011) reported which stated that some supervisors do not even have time to meet with the teachers of the students to discuss their observation and remarks. According to Aldabbus (2020) survey, four out of twelve student teachers stated that some supervisors would merely dance over the lesson plan and textbooks without making any in-person inspections. Additionally, he

noticed that there was poor classroom management. This is in line with what was said in a study carried out by Masa (2019) which showed that classroom management is one of the major challenges identified by student teachers during their teaching practice.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Teaching practice is an integral component of teacher education, it is often accompanied by various challenges for student teachers. These challenges may hinder the ability to effectively translate theoretical knowledge into practical classroom teaching. Despite the importance of identifying and addressing these challenges, there's limited empirical research focusing specifically on the experiences of student teachers during their teaching practice. Therefore, this study aims to explore the specific challenges faced by student teachers and their implications for teacher training programs.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What specific challenges do student teachers encounter during their teaching practice placements?
2. What strategies can be employed to overcome these challenges?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research adopts a descriptive survey method using questionnaire based approach to gather data from student teachers currently undergoing teaching practice. The questionnaire consisted both close ended and open ended questions, designed to elicit insights into the challenges encountered during teaching practice, as well as potential factors contributing to these challenges and how solutions can be proffered to those challenges.

The questionnaire consists of 25 questions indicating 23 challenges to be answered using the five linker-scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly disagree (SD) Disagree (D) and Neutral (N). Questions 24 and 25 are to give other challenges different from the ones mentioned and to proffer solutions to the other challenges mentioned by the students.

Population

The population of the study consist of all semi-final (300) and final (400) year education students of Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti, Ekiti State

Sample and Sampling Technique

Thirty (30) students were randomly selected from the semi-final and final year education students for the study.

PRESENTAION OF RESULTS

Summary of responses of student teachers to the questionnaie

s/n	Questions	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	S.D	Remark
1.	Emotional/ stress was a major challenge during the teaching practice.	3	10	5	12	0	3.13	2.79	Agreed
2.	Adequate training was provided before going to the field.	5	15	5	3	2	3.60	3.24	Agreed
3.	Maintaining motivation was a kudos to my teaching.	5	10	8	5	2	3.36	3.04	Agreed
4.	Good rapport and relationship was established between me and my students during teaching practice.	10	14	0	6	0	3.93	3.56	Agreed
5.	Ensuring obedience to the serving school was a challenge to me during teaching practice.	14	4	5	7	0	3.83	3.52	Agreed
6.	Ensuring incorporated feedbacks from my supervisor was a challenge to me during teaching practice.	10	12	5	3	0	3.96	3.56	Agreed
7.	Ensuring incorporated feedbacks from my students about my teaching was a challenge during teaching practice.	8	7	6	8	1	3.48	3.14	Agreed
8.	Accessing student’s progress was a challenge to me during teaching practice.	3	5	10	12	0	2.97	2.61	Agreed
9.	Cultural and linguistic differences among my students was a challenge.	8	5	10	7	0	3.47	3.13	Agreed
10.	The teaching practice experience shaped my professional growth and development.	12	13	3	1	1	4.13	3.72	Agreed
11.	Cooperation from my cooperating teacher was a challenge to me.	8	9	4	9	1	3.56	3.22	Agreed
12.	Translating theory into practice was a challenge to me during teaching practice.	2	3	15	10	0	2.90	2.49	Disagreed
13.	Classroom management issues was a challenge during teaching practice.	12	7	8	3	0	3.93	3.57	Agreed
14.	Managing disciplinary issues was a challenge.	12	10	2	6	0	3.93	3.57	Agreed
15.	Teaching some specific subject areas was a challenge.	8	12	4	6	0	3.73	3.37	Agreed

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16.	Classroom technology/equipment was a challenge during the teaching practice.	5	8	10	7	0	3.37	3.00	Agreed
17.	Effective time management was a challenge.	10	11	3	5	1	3.80	3.64	Agreed
18.	Inadequate staff room was a challenge.	6	8	8	8	0	3.40	3.05	Agreed
19.	Male student teachers are better preferred than female student teachers.	3	3	12	6	3	2.60	2.45	Disagreed
20.	High work load was a challenge	12	10	6	2	0	4.07	3.65	Agreed
21.	Inadequate instructional materials for teaching was a challenge.	4	2	9	12	3	2.73	2.46	Disagreed
22.	Teaching of large classes was a challenge.	10	7	3	10	0	3.57	3.28	Agreed
23.	Preparing lesson plan for my teaching was a challenge.	10	10	2	8	0	3.73	3.41	Agreed
24.	Give one more challenge you've encountered that is not listed above.	Lack of students cooperation; students are found of disrespecting student teachers and they pay less attention to their teaching in the classroom.							
25.	Proffer solution to the challenge.	Proper enlightening should be done by the school authority to ensure students pay absolute respect and compliance to the student teachers, even in the classroom.							

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The fundings of the result showed that emotional stress was a major challenge during the teaching practice as agreed by seventeen (17) of the students out of (30), Adequate training was provided before going to the field as responded by twenty students SA (5) A (15). This helped in translating theory into practice as seen in their responses D (15) SD (10) as not been a challenge to them. This is in contrast to Al- Monani's (2016) research that claimed that putting theory into practice was a challenge to the student teachers. The students teachers were able to motivate their students during teaching as responded by fifteen of them SA (5) A (10), like -wise, good rapport and relationship was established between the student teachers and the students. Ensuring obedience to the serving school was a challenge to the student teachers during teaching practice as agreed by them SA (14) and A (4). Feedback incorporation into teaching by the student teachers either from supervisors and the students were challenges to the student teachers as seen in their responses SA (10) A (12) and SA (8) and A (7) respectively. This is in line with Mosas(2019) who found out that student teachers were not getting adequate feedback from the supervisors, also in line with Nakpodia(2011) who revealed that some supervisors do not even have time to sit down and discuss

their observations and comments with the student teachers. It was also observed that assessing students progress was not a challenge just like the cultural and linguistic differences of the students. The students teacher reported that the teaching practice experience shaped their professional growth and development as responded by twenty five (25) of them and that they received cooperation from their cooperating teachers, This is similar to the findings of Marais and Meier (2004) that revealed that teaching practice exposes the student teachers to actual teaching and learning environment.

Classroom management issue was a challenge to the student likewise disciplinary issues as responded by the student teachers SA (12), A (7) and SA (12), A (10) respectively, This in line with Al dabbus(2020) and Mosas (2019) that revealed that student teachers lack classroom management in their teachings in addition, teaching some specific subject areas was a challenge, this could be that in most schools, once the student teachers resume some of the cooperating teachers will hand over all he/she has been doing to the student teacher, therefore the student teachers ended up having heavy load of work to be done, this was actually reflected in the research question 20 where the student teachers said high work load was a challenge to them with high responses of SA (12) A (10).

Classroom technology/equipment was a challenge to the student teachers, whereas inadequate instructional materials for teaching was not a challenge to them, this could be that absence of original material, the students were able to improvise nevertheless, student teachers should get acquitted with technology/equipment in their subject areas.

Time management, teaching of large classes and preparation of lesson plan was not a challenge as seen in their responses SA (10), A (11) and SA (10), A (7) and SA (10), A (10) respectively . Whereas Ball et al(2008) and Scott(2015) saw dealing with a big number of students were seen among their teaching practice students as a challenge, however Nasir and Zafar(2018) findings revealed that student teachers had challenges in managing class time. However Staffroom inadequacies in our schools was not a challenge to the student teachers and that male student teachers are not preferred to female student teachers as shown in their responses of SD (12), D (6)

Other challenges stated by the students in the questionnaire were;

1. Visibility of student teachers to place of teaching practice exercise in terms of location and assessment to the school especially in the era of insecurity should always be considered
2. Adapting to individual learning needs of students was also a challenge to them.
3. Communication skills according to them was a challenge where some of the students are used to their local dialect, this occur when it comes to some specific concept
4. Some supervisors do correct them publicly in front of the students causing them to loose their morale

5. Lack of student cooperation
6. Students are found of disrespecting student teachers
7. Students pay less attention to their teaching in the classroom.

Recommendation

1. Students should be allowed to state the school they want to go, this could be close to their homes or not too far for security and economic reasons
2. Different instructional techniques should be adopted and providing various learning materials.
3. Students teachers should try to improve on their communication skills and try if possible to understand other language
4. Students teachers should be called privately and be corrected or the supervisor can use maturity in correcting them in the presence of students.
5. Student teachers should use different instructional techniques and provide various learning material for the student.
6. Student teachers should try to inculcate discipline in his class
7. Student teachers should establish strong rapport with the mentor teachers
8. Student teachers should always consider what work well, what could be improved and how lesson learned can inform future teaching practice
9. Student teachers should take advantage of educational technology tools to enhance teaching effectively
10. Unique strength and challenges of each student in the class must be recognized
11. Effective classroom management techniques should be established to facilitate student success
12. Student teachers should also engage in activities that promote relaxation and stress reduction.
- 13 Student teachers should share experiences, strategies and resources to enhance effective teaching.
- 14 Student teachers should maintain organization and time management skills effectively/

CONCLUSION

Navigating teaching practice can be a challenging yet rewarding experience for student teachers. By embracing guidance from mentors, reflecting on experiences and prioritizing self-care. Student teachers can overcome obstacles and grow into effective educators. It is essential to utilize resources, celebrate diversity and continuously seek opportunities for professional development. With dedication, collaboration and effective communication, student teachers can make a positive impact in the classroom and contribute to the success of the students. Finally, coping with failure

and setback can be emotionally challenging but developing resilience and persistence is key to overcoming this obstacle.

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