

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Teaching Practice: Experience of Northwest University, Kano-Nigeria

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Abstract

Teaching Practice is an important component of teacher training program and the quality of supervision and duration are keys in achieving effectiveness. This paper evaluates the first organised teaching practice of Northwest University, Kano. A descriptive survey design was employed using a total sample of 237 comprising prospective teachers, supervisors, principals and teachers of cooperating schools. The instrument for data collection was a validated 45– items questionnaire with indicators of effectiveness as competencies acquired, supervision and attitudes developed by the researcher. Data collected through the instruments were analysed using SPSS 20; descriptive statistics (i.e Mean, and Standard Deviation) were computed to address the research objectives. Findings revealed that generally, the first organised teaching practice of the Northwest University, Kano was effective in terms of developing positive attitudes towards teaching and developing professional competencies of the students. However, supervision and duration are inadequate. Based on the findings, recommendations were made among which; Micro-teaching laboratory should be put in place and be used to prepare the students well before the actual practice, each student should be supervised by two or more supervisors to ensure objectivity and effective supervision. Similarly, the duration of teaching practice should be increased to meet the minimum required period as stipulated in the Benchmark Minimum

Academic Standard (BMAS) for Nigerian universities.

Keywords: *Teaching Practice, Teacher Education, Prospective Teachers.*

1. Introduction

The universal claim that education is a major, potent and sure instrument for the successful attainment of overall development in any given environment today cannot be overstated. Underdeveloped and developing societies, countries or nations are today being faced with a number of developmental challenges among which are illiteracy, abject and absolute poverty, insecurity etc. The solution to these problems, is of course the proper education of the citizens (Nwanekezi, Okoli and Mezieobi, 2011). Every community requires the presence of adequate resources (human and material) and education is the pre-requisite for quality human development and wealth creation, which is a sure path to realisation of quality life and service to the humanity (Musa and Bichi, 2015). The success of any educational program particularly in relations to its quality depends largely on the regular supply of adequate and quality teachers. National Policy on Education (FGN 2004) stressed that no society can achieve social, economic and technological advancement and self-sufficiency without a good education system to sustain its achievement.

The preparation and production of the human resources required for the attainment of country's goals and objectives should be bordered on the quantity and quality of teachers. Teacher education is an essential foundation of any educational enterprise. Through teacher education, the basis for good

education can be established because ‘*no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers*’. Teaching Practice is one of the key components of teacher preparation program. It is fundamental to the professional training of teachers (Gujjar, Naoreen, Saifi and Bajwa, 2010). If the literature of teacher education program agree on a single point, that point is the teaching practice is important (Farrel, 2001).

Teaching practice is the preparation of prospective teachers for teaching by practical experience. It involve the practical use of teaching strategies, principles, techniques and practical training and exercise of a number of daily school activities. It is a viatl and indispensable aspect in of professional teacher training.

Looking at the key objectives of teaching practice as enumerated by Akbas (2002), the idea of practical teaching is made more clearer. The objectives of teaching practice are: (i) To provide an opportunity for evaluating the students potentials and suitability for the teaching profession (ii) To provide the future teacher with experience in school to overcome the problems of discipline and enable him/her develop method of control (iii) To develop personal relationship with others administrators, teachers, parents and students (iv) To provide an opportunity to put theories into practice and develop deeper understanding of educational principles and their implications for learning. (v) To develop skill in the use of fundamental procedures, techniques and methods of teaching (vi) To develop desirable professional interest attitudes and ideas relative to teaching profession. (vii) To enable student teachers acquire desirable characteristics/traits of a teacher and to display appropriate behaviour.

There is no teacher education program anywhere that is complete without effective and supervised teaching practice program (NOUN, 2016). Rigden (1994) maintains that real world experiences beat any textual explanation of the classroom. So, one became a professional teacher until he is

professionally introduced into the teaching through teaching practicum.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Teaching Practice is one of the key components of teacher preparation program. It is fundamental to the professional training of teachers (Gujjar, Naoreen, Saifi and Bajwa, 2010). For teacher preparation programs to attain its set goals, it shuold provide a number opportunities for propectiver teachers to spend a quality time with pupils in classrooms under the guidance and supervision of an experienced teacher educator or mentor. Despite this vital requirement of teacher education programs, in many instances support for the propective teachers is often inadequate and uneven. Situation of this nature may occur when students teachers runs teaching practice concurrently with classes in their institution, as with the case of Northwest University, Kano. In situation like this, the experiences students acquire the quality of supervision and period spent on teaching practicum may be inadequate, consequently affecting credibility and quality of teachers being produced. In the light of these and many other concerns, it is critical to evaluate the effectiveness of the first organised teaching practice of the Northwest University, Kano as might have implications for quality in teacher education programs. The findings of such a study may serve as a basis for improvement in teacher training in Nigeria.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to evaluate the first organised teaching practice of Northwest University, Kano. Specifically, the study intends to:

- i Evaluate the effectiveness of teaching practice experience in term of developing Prospective Teachers’ positive attitudes and their professional competencies.
- ii Find out whether there was effective supervision during teaching practice
- iii Find out the attitude of the Prospective Teachers towards teaching practice as

observed by supervisors and cooperating schools

- iv To identify problems encountered during the teaching practice.
- v Identify strategies for improvement in the conduct of teaching practice.

1.4. Research Questions

- i Do Prospective Teachers developed positive attitudes and professional competencies during teaching practice?
- ii Was there effective supervision of Prospective Teachers during teaching practice?
- iii What is the attitude of the Prospective Teachers towards teaching practice?
- iv What are the problems encountered during the teaching practice?
- v What are the strategies to improve the teaching practice?

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Design of the Study

This is a descriptive study; descriptive survey design was adopted to collect the relevant data. In a descriptive survey design data are collected from the target population in order to identify their current views, status or perceptions.

2.2. Participants

The population of the present study comprises of all the 400 level students in the Faculty of Education who participated in teaching practice, all the faculty of education teaching staff who supervised the student teachers, teachers and principals of the cooperating schools. The study’s sample is made up of 140 Prospective Teachers from the two Departments who participated in the 2015/2016 teaching practice, 22 supervisors, 25 principals, 50 teachers of the cooperating schools. The entire sample used for this study was 237, selected using stratified random sampling technique.

Table 2.1: Distribution of Study’s sample

Principals	Teachers	Supervisor	Prospective
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		s		Teachers	
Mal	17	Mal	29	Mal	17(7
e	(68)	e	(69)	e	7)
Fem	08	Fem	13	Fem	5(23
ale	(32)	ale	(31)	ale)
Tot	25(1	Tot	50(1	Tot	22(1
al	00)	al	00)	al	140(1
					00)

2.3. Instrument for Data Collection

The Instrument used was developed by the researcher following the established procedure in the literature. The instrument was a 45 – items questionnaire comprising two parts. Section ‘A’ was designed to record personal information of the respondents. Section ‘B’ designed to elicit responses on the level of agreement with the statement presented in the instrument titled “Teaching Practice Assessment Scale (TIPAS)”. The scale was structured to elicit responses from the supervisors, teachers and principals of cooperating schools on student teachers’ attitude towards teaching practice (common items). Similarly, supervisors and Prospective Teachers responded to the common items on problems facing teaching practice and strategies to improve it. However, items on effectiveness of the teaching practice were responded to by Prospective Teachers alone. The modified Likert scales (four and five points) were used i.e Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD): and Always (A), Often (O), Sometime (S), Rarely (R), Never (N).

2.4. Validation of the Instrument

The instrument ‘Teaching Practice Assessment Scale (TIPAS)’ was face validated by two experts in teacher education who has many years of experiences in teacher training. They validated the scale in terms of clarity of language, ambiguity of the statement, relevance to the topic and appropriateness of the items. After scrutinizing the scale the expert made some constructive suggestions and corrections which were effected before producing the in the final draft of the scale.

2.5. Reliability of the Instrument

The Teaching Practice Assessment Scale (TIPAS) was trial-tested on 20 B.Ed students and five (5) teacher educators at F.C.E (T) Bichi, who did not constitute part of the sample for this real study. The internal consistency reliability of 0.82 was determined using Cronbach's Alpha procedure. This value (0.82) was considered appropriate for the study.

2.6. Method of Data Collection

The researchers distributed and retrieved the questionnaires from students and principals as well as teachers in the cooperating schools with the support of lecturers who supervised the prospective teachers on practical teaching.

2.7. Method of Data Analysis

The descriptive method of data analysis (mean and standard deviation) was used to address the research questions/objectives. The values or weightings of the responses were SD = 1; D = 2; A = 3; and SA = 4. And A = 5; O = 4; S = 3; R = 2; N = 1. The average of these points are $2.50 (4 + 3 + 2 + 1) = 10/4 = 2.50$ and $3.00 (5+4+3+2+1) = 15/5 = 3.00$.

Decision rule: Mean of 2.50 to 4.00 indicates agreement with the statement while

a mean of 2.49 to 1.00 indicate disagreement with the item (items with four point Likert scale). While on items with five point Likert scale, a mean of 3.00 to 5.00 indicates agreement with the item while a mean of 2.99 to 1.00 indicate disagreement with statement (Nwanekezi, et al., 2011; Endeley, 2014).

3. Research Findings

The result of this study as explained in the method of data analysis above is presented in the form of descriptive analysis. Similarly, all results were presented under each research question.

Research Questions: 1 and 2

- 1). Do Prospective Teachers developed positive attitudes and professional competencies during teaching practice?
- 2). was there effective supervision of student teachers during teaching practice??

To answer the above research questions (1 & 2); items administered to elicit the information from the respondents are tabulated and mean ratings are reported on table 3.1 below

Table 3.1: Teaching Practice Attitudes and Effectiveness

SN	Items on Teaching Practice Attitudes and Effectiveness	Mean	SD
1	Teaching practice is a very good experience and should be allowed to continue	3.77	0.42
2	Teaching practice is interesting and should be extended	3.46	0.77
3	Teaching practice sharpen my professional skills	3.66	0.47
4	Teaching practice motivate me to take up teaching job after my graduation	3.38	0.73
5	I am always regular to my school whether I have period to teach or not	3.60	0.65
Global Mean		3.57	0.35
6	I took part in giving tests, marking and recording	3.57	0.50
7	Teaching practice helped me apply the teaching skills I learnt in class	3.63	0.59
8	Teaching practice helped me acquire problem-solving skills	3.68	0.47
9	I learnt to use a variety of teaching methods	3.46	0.50
10	I have mutual understanding with my students and the school authority	3.89	0.32
Global Mean		3.65	0.29
11	I discussed with a cooperating teacher before preparing my lesson	3.57	0.60
12	My cooperating teacher insisted on the use of instructional materials	2.72	0.45
13	My university supervisor discussed with the school's authority on my progress during Teaching practice	3.36	0.95
14	My university supervisor came around three times to supervise me**	2.51	1.02
15	My university supervisor discussed with me on my lesson preparation and made some corrections and recommendations for improvements	3.58	0.90
Global Mean		3.15	0.46

The results of the attitude students gained from Teaching Practice are integrated in items 1-5. All the five items scored a minimum of 3 which are all above the decision point of 2.5. The overall (global) mean of the items is 3.57. This shows that the students developed positive attitude toward teaching during the six weeks exercise. Similarly, mean scores obtained on items measuring acquired professional competencies from Teaching Practice integrated in items 6-10. All the five items scored a minimum of 3 which are all above the decision point of 2.5. The global (overall) mean of these items is 3.65(SD 0.29).

Items 11-15 assess the effectiveness of supervision during teaching practice. Four items (11, 12, 13 and 15) scored a mean above the decision point of 2.5; while item 14

(My university supervisor come round three times to supervise me) scored 2.51, which is still within the decision point of 2.5. The global mean was 3.15(SD 0.46) indicating that there was effective supervision during teaching practice

Research Questions 3: What is the attitude of the prospective teachers towards teaching practice?

To answer the above research questions (3), the attitude of Prospective Teachers as perceived by supervisors, principals and teachers of cooperating schools was assessed using common items. The mean ratings are tabulated on table 3.2 below

Table 3.2: Observed Attitude of the Student Teachers

SN	Observed Attitude of the Student Teachers	Supervisors (N=24)	Principals (N=25)	Teachers (N=42)
1	Student-teachers report promptly to the school location	3.91(1.11)	4.56(0.65)	4.69(0.64)
2	Student-teachers are diligent to duty	4.41(0.73)	4.56(0.65)	4.50(0.74)
3	Student-teachers are ready with their lesson plans and notes	4.09(0.97)	4.36(0.76)	4.62(0.76)
4	Student-teachers are punctual to school	4.32(0.95)	4.40(0.71)	4.45(0.80)
5	Student-teachers are resourceful	4.32(0.99)	4.64(0.49)	4.36(0.85)
6	Relationship between teachers and Students is cordial	4.32(1.04)	4.76(0.44)	4.48(0.74)
7	Students are obedient and respect the school authority	4.50(0.80)	4.92(0.28)	4.64(0.66)
8	Students are ready to take instruction and corrections	4.68(0.72)	5.00(0.00)	4.71(0.81)
9	Student-teachers appear neat and decent in dressing	4.50(0.91)	4.60(0.50)	4.69(0.56)
10	Student-teachers set learning objectives which are relevant to the topics and the class	4.14(0.77)	4.52(0.51)	4.60(0.54)
Overall Mean		4.32(0.75)	4.63(0.22)	4.57(0.48)

***Figures in parentheses are Standard Deviations (SD)*

The results presented on Table 3:2 shows that the mean scores of the attitude of the prospective teachers towards teaching practice as observed by Supervisors, Principals and Teacher of cooperating schools showed that, the respondents scored up to 3.50 and above indicating that the observed Attitude of the Prospective Teachers was positive attitudes in all the listed items. The global mean scored by supervisors, principals

and teachers were 4.32(SD 0.75), 4.63(SD 0.22) and 4.57(SD 0.48) respectively.

Research Questions 4: What are the problems encountered during the teaching practice?

The mean ratings of items administered to assess the problems encountered during the teaching practice are presented on table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3: Problem facing Teaching Practice

SN	Items on Problem facing Teaching Practice	Supervisors	Students
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1	Inadequate preparations of students for teaching practice by the university	2.82(0.73)	2.09(1.07)
2	Lack of necessary equipment, facilities and materials for preparation of the students before sending them out for teaching practice	2.77(0.97)	1.91(0.84)
3	Poor learning environment in the practicing schools, such as class congestion	3.18(0.59)	2.76(1.32)
4	Short teaching practicing period	3.50(0.74)	3.12(0.93)
5	Rejection of students by some schools	2.73(0.63)	3.40(0.82)
6	Lack of transportation (Difficult to get to school on time)	3.14(0.83)	3.20(0.88)
7	Inaccessibility of some school locations by students and supervisors	3.41(0.73)	3.31(0.94)
8	I sometimes miss teaching practice to attend classes in the university	3.32(0.48)	3.45(0.68)
9	Insufficient guidance from cooperating teacher and supervisor (lecturer)	2.05(0.65)	1.94(0.98)
10	Student-teachers were given a burdened time table	2.00(0.69)	2.76(1.14)
Overall Mean		2.89(0.21)	2.79(0.47)

***Figures in parentheses are Standard Deviations (SD)*

The results presented on Table 3:3 reveals that the mean ratings of items administered to assess the problems encountered during the teaching practice as observed by Supervisors and Prospective Teachers showed that the respondents scored higher (2.50 - above) indicating that the respondents agreed that the itemized problems were encountered during the exercise, except for item 9 where supervisors and Prospective Teachers scored below acceptable mean (2.05 and 1.94) Similarly, supervisors scored below acceptable mean on

items 10 while Student-Teachers scored below acceptable mean on items 1 and 2 (2.09 and 1.91) respectively. The global mean scored by supervisors and Prospective Teachers were 2.89(SD 0.21) and 2.79(SD 0.47) respectively.

Research Questions 5: What are the strategies to improve the teaching practice?

The mean ratings of items administered to assess the respondents view on the strategies to improve the teaching practice are presented on table 3.4 below

Table 3.4: Strategies to Improve the Teaching Practice

SN	Items on Strategies to Improve the Teaching Practice	Supervisors	Students
1	Student teachers should be well prepared before posting to schools	3.64(0.49)	3.91(0.28)
2	Micro-teaching laboratory should be put in place and be used to groom the students well enough before teaching practice	3.68(0.65)	3.58(0.58)
3	Student teachers should be sent to good schools, considering the accessibility and nearness to the university	3.18(1.01)	3.29(1.01)
4	The university buses should be used to convey the students to their various school locations	2.41(1.19)	2.48(1.14)
5	Each student should be supervised by two or more supervisors to ensure objectivity and effective supervision	3.32(0.78)	2.99(1.02)
6	Lecturers should not collect gifts either in form of money or materials from the students	3.64(0.58)	3.88(0.42)
7	Teaching practice handbooks should be made available to students	3.36(0.49)	3.64(0.76)
8	Students should be briefed before reporting to their school locations	3.59(0.67)	3.49(0.77)
9	school locations/addresses should be given to students and supervisors	3.59(0.67)	3.60(0.58)
10	Teaching practice should be organised during end of session break to avoid missing classes posted school and the university	3.55(0.80)	3.84(0.48)
Overall Mean		3.40(0.47)	3.48(0.39)

***Figures in parentheses are Standard Deviations (SD)*

The results presented on Table 3:4 reveals that the mean ratings of items

administered to assess the respondents view on the strategies to improve the teaching practice showed that the participants scored

high (2.50 – above) indicating that, the participants agreed that the enumerated strategies should be adopted to improve the exercise; except for item 4 where supervisors and Student-Teachers scored lower than the acceptable mean (2.41 & 2.48) respectively. The global mean scored by supervisors and Student-Teachers were 3.40 (SD 0.47) and 3.48(SD 0.39) respectively.

4. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are discussed under each research question and in relation to the findings of similar studies, experts' opinions and other validated assertions.

The findings on the effectiveness of TP on developing prospective teachers' positive attitudes revealed that, the student teachers developed favourable attitude toward teaching during the six weeks exercise. This finding is consistent with that of Nwanekezi, et al. (2011) whose finding revealed that the students developed positive attitude towards teaching during their practice. The result is not surprising because, the Northwest University prospective teachers irrespective of their gender, level of study and subject stream have favourable attitude towards teaching profession (Musa and Bichi, 2015).

The findings on the effectiveness of TP on developing prospective teachers' professional competencies revealed that, students developed professional competencies during the TP as majority of them participate in giving tests, marking and recording; acquired problem-solving skills; learnt to utilise a range of teaching approaches and have mutual understanding with their pupils and authority of the cooperating schools. This finding is consistent with findings of Abdullah, Omar, Embong and Abu Bakar (2015); Nwanekezi, et al., (2011) and that of Endeley (2014). This shows that the purposes of the teaching practice implementation are being attained as it permits student teachers to get competencies to a large extent (Noun, 2016; Akbas, 2002).

The findings on the effective supervision of students during teaching practice revealed that, there was effective supervision of students during teaching practice. Except that, *some students were not supervised three times*, as stipulated in the supervision guidelines of the teaching practice. This finding is consistent with that of Endeley (2014) whose finding revealed the teaching practice supervision was effective in University of Buea. A mean of 2.51 on item 14 is only average and should be enhanced to make the teaching practice supervision effective. Also, effective evidence on students' performance is acquired only through supervision of live teaching (Gujjar, et al., 2010). Without live supervision of teaching, adequate training and mentoring may not be successfully completed (Akbar, 2002). Though findings reveals that students acquired professional competencies, with effective supervision and good mentoring, the acquisition of professional competencies by students may be better.

The results on assessing the attitude of student-teachers towards the TP indicated that, the prospective teachers during teaching practice as observed by Supervisors, Principals and Teachers of cooperating schools have a favourable attitude towards teaching practice. This manifested in the rating of the students teachers on their relationship with teachers and Students, obedient and respect to the school authority, readiness to take instruction and corrections; their appearance in a neat and decent in dressing as well as setting learning objectives which are relevant to the topics and the class. This finding is consistent with that of Nwanekezi, et al., (2011) whose finding revealed that, the teachers and principals shown largely that the student teachers have favourable attitude towards teaching practice.

Findings in respect to the problems encountered during the teaching practice as observed by Supervisors and Student-Teachers showed that the participants agreed that the itemized problems were encountered

during the exercise. However, This was in addition to the fact that, supervisors and Student-Teachers commonly disagreed that *Insufficient guidance from cooperating teacher and supervisor* was among the problem faced, Student-Teachers was also in disagreement with *Inadequate preparations of students for teaching practice by the university and Lack of necessary equipment, facilities and materials for preparation of the students before sending them out for teaching practice*, while supervisors was in disagreement with item statement that, Student-teachers were given a burdened time table. This finding is consistent with that of Nwanekezi, et al., (2011) that a significant number of problems were encountered by student-teacher during teaching practice in Nigeria. However this is contrary to the finding of Abdullah, et al., (2015) who found that trainee teachers did not encounter any significant problems during teaching practice exercise.

The results of the necessary strategies to improve the teaching practice revealed that, the supervisors and Student-Teachers agreed that the listed strategies should be adopted to improve the teaching practice exercise. However, this was in addition to the fact that, supervisors and Student-Teachers commonly disagreed with item statement that, *the university buses should be used to convey the students to their various school locations*.

5. Conclusion

The successful attainment of quality education in any society will be a mirage without sufficient preparation of teachers who will dispense the knowledge. The results of this descriptive survey indicate that, the purposes of the teaching practice are being attained as it permits student teachers to get competencies to a large extent. The Northwest University prospective teachers are motivated towards their profession and they participated in the school academic activities enthusiastically. This is very encouraging as it gives the profession hope and can also bring

about professional competencies and acceptance in the future practices.

6. Recommendations

The first organised Teaching Practice of the Northwest University, Kano is effective to some extent, but could be enhanced to make it more effective. The classroom experience is a vital component in the initial teacher certification program and it is an essential element of teacher quality. This research has identified specific issues that may act as a deterrent to an effective Teaching Practice program. Based on that, the researchers make the following recommendations:

- a) A micro-teaching laboratory with facilities should be provided to prepare the prospective teachers adequately before posting to schools for the exercise
- b) Prospective teachers should be sent to good schools, accessibility and nearness to the university should also be considered.
- c) Each student should be supervised by two or more supervisors to ensure objectivity and effective supervision.
- d) Prospective teachers should not be made/allowed to know their supervisors
- e) Lecturers should try to avoid collection of gifts in form of either cash or kind from the prospective teachers.
- f) Teaching practice handbook which should incorporate rules and regulations of practical teaching should be made available to prospective teachers and the supervisors.
- g) School locations/addresses should be given to prospective teachers and supervisors for easy accessibility
- h) Teaching practice should be organised during end of session break or a better period to avoid missing classes in both posted school and the university.
- i) The duration of teaching practice should be increased to 8 – 10 weeks or complete semester as stipulated in the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standard (BMAS) for Nigerian universities.

- j) University should liaised with the appropriate authorities before posting prospective teachers to various schools to minimised the rate of rejection of students by some cooperating schools
- k) Further assessment of teaching practice experience should include interviewing students/pupils in the cooperating schools to ascertain the effectiveness of instruction given by the prospective teachers.
- l) The University should work towards developing a sustainable model of teaching practice which should be different from that of other teacher training institutions in Nigeria

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