



Research Paper

## Teaching Practice as A Core Unit For Teachers Skill Development: The Challenges Of Student Teachers

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**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of this study is to identify the challenges of student teachers during teaching practice. The participant for this study consisted of 2031 students from the 8 departments in the faculty of education university of Benin, Nigeria. Questionnaires were admitted to 300 and 400 level students who had undergone teaching practices in determining the problems faced by teaching practice students. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient, which demonstrated its dependability.

Four major findings emerge from the data analysis; poor adherence of teaching practice duration by student teachers, insecurity in posted schools, negative effects of late posting on the performance of student teachers, poor physical working condition, are factors affecting teaching practice students in Nigeria.

**KEYWORDS:** Teaching practice duration, Insecurity in schools, late posting, Physical working condition and Student teacher performance.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The training of a teacher is one of the most important professional challenges in our educational system today. William glasser (1992) has frequently underlined that becoming a competent teacher is likely the society's most demanding occupation. The profession of teaching, has certain services it provides to society. Teaching refers to a variety of activities carried out by a more informed person to aid others in learning. Therefore, it is vitally essential for anyone who wants to become a licensed and competent teacher to obtain the abilities that the industry requires. One of the most important aspects of a teacher education program is student teaching experience, which occupies an integral phase where the student teacher is sent out by his or her training institute as they are given the platform to apply theoretical knowledge acquired in lecture halls to practical classroom settings.

Teaching practice is an obligatory requirement for teacher trainees in colleges of education, polytechnics; faculty of education in universities in Nigeria, the teaching practice program provides 8 weeks of practical teaching and learning experience or outcome, this is in conformation with the recommendation made at the first National Curriculum Conference held in Lagos on September 8th to 12<sup>th</sup> 1968, under the umbrella of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) and is carried out by student in 300 and 400 levels respectively under the supervision of an veteran teacher, According to the teacher registration council of Nigeria (TRCN), only those who are suitably qualified and trained should be trusted with the teaching and learning procedures.No student teacher is eligible for a passed grade in teaching unless they have successfully completed the outline practice regarded as a core course in teacher education program, which aid the trainee to face the reality of the profession. TRCN was established to ensure that teachers at all level of the educational system were registered, licensed as teachers, required to participate in ongoing professional development, it was believed that the council's diligent efforts would help bring teaching back to normalcy. Some of the observed practical problems encountered by student teachers during teaching practice include poor adherence to teaching practice duration; perhaps the teaching practice duration may have been abridged from 12 weeks due to changes in school calendar, federal and state holidays and shift in election dates and strike action. Rejection of students teachers, poor attitudes of teaching practice schools, late posting might be a probable cause for student's rejection as it gives little or no time for proper planning and preparation for teachers to get to know their student, poor attitude of practicing schools which is as a result of student's poor adherence to teaching practice payment

deadline, cultism and insecurity, the incessant fight among secondary school secret cult groups that share boundary, may not only refrain the student teacher from being a full time teacher even after graduation and the effect is more discovering of uncertified and unqualified teachers, which has become a hindrance in recent time and as well reduce the effectiveness of the program, poor academic counseling, poor physical working condition in school, in the form of lack of instructional materials, poor facilities and equipment, time table clashes, supervisors and teachers feedbacks. Some student teachers who have undergone teaching practice claimed that some of the supervisors and head teachers do not give feedbacks to the student teachers; this perhaps is the reason why they do not know if what they are doing is right or wrong, hence poor and nonchalant attitude among some student teachers in University of Benin.

The student educator who can evaluate a range of perspective, has the advantage of being in a position of authority to treat the problem differently and in cases where she cannot, channel it to the appropriate quarters. Based on this claims the researcher saw the need to bring before, prevailing problems faced by teaching practice students in order to proffer solutions and recommendations for an effective learning outcome.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Descriptive survey methodology was employed for this investigation. It described the opinion of the respondents on the challenges of student teacher during teaching practice in University of Benin.

The population of this study consists of 2,031 students from the 8 departments in Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Edo State. While 300 and 400 level students were the respondents.

The random sampling technique was used, the study was carried out to select (5) students each, from the 300 and 400 level students, making 10 students from each department, with a total number of 70 students from seven (7) Departments;

Curriculum and Instructional Technology (CIT), Department of Educational Management (DEM), Vocational and Technical Education (VTE), Department of Education Foundation(DEF), Adult Education(ADT), Human Kinetic (HKS) and Health, Safety and Environmental Education (HSE).

Questionnaire was used in the process of the study, it consists of four (4) research question, each section is made up of five questions, making it a total of twenty (20) questions, The questionnaire was designed to collect data from the respondents.

## III. RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENT

The test-retest method was used to assess the instrument's reliability. This was carried out during a pilot (prior) study by the researcher using 15 respondents, who were not sampled in the study, but were part of the populace studied. The same group was administered the instrument twice, and the responses were gathered and the Pearson product moment correlation was used to determine the degree of the reliability, which gave a figure of 0.75 This shows that the instrument is reliable.

## IV. RESULT AND DICUSSION

The questionnaire was given to the applicant and I waited tolerantly for the respondents to fill in the distributed instruments, before collecting them back on the spot. Mean and standard deviation was used, to analyze the data.

The analysis of data collected from self-administered questionnaires to seventy (70) randomly selected 300 and 400 level students across seven (7) Departments in the Faculty of Education. Frequencies, percentages and mean (̄) was used to evaluate the information in the tables, whereas t-test statistics at a 0.5 threshold of significance was used to assess the research hypotheses. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was used to conduct the analysis (IBM SPSS) version 22.0. Consequently, the four (4) research questions of the study were duly analyzed.

**Table 4.1** Effect of poor adherence of teaching practice duration

This table contain responses from the respondents as regards the effect of poor adherence of teaching practice duration by student teachers in University of Benin. The responses from the respondents were used to answer research question one (1).

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	The reduction of teaching practice duration affects or poses a problem for the student teachers (22.9%)	16	27 (38.6%)	24 (34.3%)	2 (4.3%)	2.80	Accept
2	There was a reduction of teaching practice from 12 weeks	10 (14.3%)	6 (8.6%)	41 (58.6%)	13 (18.6%)	2.19	Reject
3	The reduction of teaching practice duration affects the efficiency (productivity) of the program (18.6%)	13	35 (50%)	19 (27.5%)	3 (4.3%)	2.83	Accept
4	The reduction of teaching practice duration	24	32	11	3	3.10	Accept

	affects the effectiveness (success) of the program	(34.3%)	(45.7%)	(15.7%)	(4.3%)		
5	The reduction of teaching practice duration have negative effect on the performance of student teachers	26 (37.1%)	37 (52.9%)	3 (4.3%)	4 (5.7%)	3.21	Accept

Respondents' response to the 5 items in table 4.1 showed that the mean response to each of the items is above 2.50 except item 2 which is below 2.50. This demonstrate that vast majority of those surveyed concurred to all items in the table except item 2. Hence, from the respondents' responses, there is an effect of poor adherence of teaching practice duration by student teachers in University of Benin. This is due to the fact that majority of the respondents indicated that the poor adherence to teaching duration affects the efficiency and the effectiveness of the program as well as having a negative effect on the performance of student teachers. The result is consistent with that of Nakpodia (2011) whose study noted that the 12 week period is too short because it did not give the student teacher the needed experience, which the exercise is designed to foster.

**Table 4.2**To what extent does Insecurity in posted schools affects student teachers

This table contain responses from the respondents as regards if insecurity in posted schools a problem faced by student teachers in University of Benin during teaching practice programme. The responses from the respondents were used to answer research question two (2).

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	The schools are fenced for the security of student teachers	13 (18.6%)	31 (44.3%)	23 (32.9%)	3 (4.3%)	2.77	Accept
2	The schools are safeguarded by security personnel for student teachers	16 (22.9%)	41 (58.6%)	10 (14.3%)	3 (4.3%)	3.00	Accept
3	Inadequate security may prevent student teachers from teaching in posted schools	31 (44.3%)	24 (34.3%)	9 (12.9%)	6 (8.6%)	3.14	Accept
4	Lack of security personnel in posted schools leads to intimidation of student teachers by learners	8 (11.4%)	36 (51.4%)	23 (32.9%)	3 (4.3%)	2.70	Accept
5	Sexual harassment affects the output (performance) of the student teachers	19 (27.1%)	18 (25.7%)	17 (24.3%)	16 (22.9%)	2.57	Accept

Respondents' mean responses to the 5 items in table 4.2 revealed that the mean response to all 5 items were above 2.50, thus indicative that the respondents generally agreed to all 5 items in the table. Hence, the respondents are generally in agreement with the item statements in table 5. Thus, the respondents are of the opinion that insecurity in posted schools affects student teachers in University of Benin during teaching practice programme. The insecurity in posted schools is a problem faced by majority of student teachers in University of Benin during teaching practice programmes. The respondents generally agreed that inadequate security may prevent student teachers from teaching in posted schools. In line with this findings, Ojukwu and Nwanma (2015) remarked that insecurity has grown to be a serious concern for every resident in Nigeria after the country's democratic transition in 1999. In another study, Lawani (2014) found that the academic achievement of pupils is significantly impacted by the school environment.

**Table 4.3**Effect of late posting on the performance of student teachers

This table contain responses from the respondents as regards the effect of late posting on the performance of student teachers in University of Benin. The responses from the respondents were used to answer research question three (3).

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Registration of teaching practice should be done on time so that student teachers can go for posting in their various schools	24 (34.3%)	24 (34.3%)	13 (18.6%)	9 (12.9%)	2.90	Accept
2	The student teachers encountered the problem of late posting	20 (28.6%)	27 (38.6%)	19 (27.1%)	4 (5.7%)	2.91	Accept
3	The problem of rejection of student teachers in posted school	21 (30%)	31 (44.3%)	12 (17.1%)	6 (8.6%)	2.96	Accept
4	Late posting leads to a reduction in student teachers experience in posted schools	7 (10%)	33 (47.1%)	27 (38.6%)	3 (4.3%)	2.63	Accept

5	Lateposting affects student teachers relationship with learners	14 (20%)	40 (57.1%)	13 (18.6%)	3 (4.3%)	2.93	Accept
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This table revealed that the mean responses to 5 items were all above 2.50 which indicate that the respondents generally agreed to such items in the table. Thus, the respondents are of the general opinion that there is an effect of late posting on the performance of student teachers in University of Benin. Majority of the respondents indicated that they encountered the problem of late posting and that affected their relationship with learners. The respondents therefore agreed to the item statement of item 1 which states that “registration of teaching practice should be done on time so that student teachers can go for posting in their various schools”. In line with the finding, Jekayin et al (2012) that the current exercise been carried out is insufficient.

**TABLE 4.4:** Effect of poor physical working condition on the performance of student teachers

This table contain responses from the respondents as regards the effect of poor physical working condition on the performance of student teachers in University of Benin. The responses from the respondents were used to answer research question four (4).

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	There are equipped library so that student teachers can consult textbooks for teaching	12 (17.1%)	40 (57.1%)	15 (21.4%)	3 (4.3%)	2.87	Accept
2	The environment is conducive for student teachers for teaching	10 (14.3%)	3 (4.3%)	17 (24.3%)	40 (57.1%)	1.76	Reject
3	The student teachers were faced with lack of equipment in the laboratory	20 (28.6%)	44 (62.9%)	3 (4.3%)	3 (4.3%)	3.16	Accept
4	Non availability of staff rooms for student teachers	16 (22.9%)	31 (44.3%)	13 (18.6%)	10 (14.3%)	2.76	Accept
5	The absence of instructional materials for teaching hinders student teachers effectiveness	10 (14.3%)	51 (72.9%)	6 (8.6%)	3 (4.3%)	2.97	Accept

Respondents’ response to all 5 items in table 4.4 revealed that the mean response to items 1, 3, 4, and 5 were all above 2.50 while that of item 2 is below 2.50, thus indicating that the respondents generally agreed to 4 out of the 5 items in the table. As can be seen from results displayed in table 4.4, majority of the respondents agreed that there are equipped library but however indicated that poor physical working condition such as non-conduciveness of the environment, lack of equipment in the laboratory, non-availability of staff rooms for student teachers, and the absence of instructional materials for teaching in the posted schools have an effect on the performance of student teachers. poor physical working condition such as non-conduciveness of the environment, lack of equipment in the laboratory, non-availability of staffrooms for student teachers, and the absence of instructional materials for teaching in the posted schools negatively impact the effectiveness of student teachers. In line with the findings of this study, Idowu (2000) commented that the teaching practice program is plagued by a variety of issue and that the cooperating teachers, student teachers, cooperating schools, and the supervisor all face significant challenges. According to Kennedy, (2001) when teachers decide whether or not to stay in the profession, the quality of the school facilities is thought to have an impact on their decision.

## V. CONCLUSION

The quality of teaching, education, research, as well as the interaction between students and student teachers, can all be improved with the help of teaching practice program. A major factor affecting teachers’ productivity is their teaching practice. An investigation into the challenges militating student on teaching practice is therefore important.

Results in the study revealed that the poor adherence of teaching practice duration by students, insecurity in posted schools, problem of late posting and lastly, poor physical working conditions are the major challenges of student teachers during practicum. This study thus concludes that teaching practice is a laudable program and all efforts aimed at strengthening the program should be sustained.

**APPENDIX I**

**SECTION A: (Demographic Data)**

**Department:** VTE [ ], CIT [ ], DEM [ ], ADT [ ], HKS [ ], HSE [ ], DEF [ ]

**Level:** 300 [ ], 400 [ ]

**SECTION B:**

<b>RQ1</b>	<b>What is the effect of poor adherence of teaching practice duration by student teachers in University of Benin?</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>ITEM</b>				
1	The reduction of teaching practice duration affects or poses a problem for the student teachers				
2	There was a reduction of teaching practice from 12 weeks				
3	The reduction of teaching practice duration affects the efficiency (productivity) of the program				
4	The reduction of teaching practice duration affects the effectiveness (success) of the program				
5	The reduction of teaching practice duration have negative effect on the performance of student teachers				
<b>RQ2</b>	<b>To what extent does insecurity in posted schools affect the student teacher in University of benin?</b>				
6	The schools are fenced for the security of student teachers				
7	The schools are safeguarded by security personnel for student teachers				
8	Inadequate security officer's may prevent student teachers from teaching in posted schools				
9	Lack of security personnel in posted schools leads to intimidation of student teachers by learners				
10	Sexual harassment affects the output (performance) of the student teachers				
<b>RQ3</b>	<b>What is the effect of late posting on the performance of students teachers in University of Benin?</b>				
11	Registration of teaching practice should be done on time so that student teachers can go for posting in their various schools				
12	The student teachers encountered the problem of late posting which affects their performance				
13	The problem of rejection of student teacher's in posted school which affects their performance				
14	Late posting leads to a reduction in student teachers experience in posted schools				
15	Late posting affects student teachers relationship with learners				
<b>RQ4</b>	<b>The effect of poor physical working condition on the performance of student teachers in University of Benin</b>				
16	There are equipped library so that student teachers can consult textbook for teaching				
17	The Environment is conducive for student teachers for teaching				
18	The student teacher was faced with lack of equipment's in the laboratory for teaching				
19	Non availability of staffrooms for student teachers				
20	The absence of instructional materials for teaching hinders student teachers effectiveness				

**APPENDIX II**

Reliability test using a self-structured instrument of 20 questionnaire items where X and Y is the mean response of first and second test to 15 respondents

<b>X</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Y<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>XY</b>
2.70	2.75	7.29	7.56	7.43
2.96	2.81	8.76	7.90	8.32
3.20	3.20	10.24	10.24	10.24
2.78	2.74	7.73	7.51	7.62

2.04	2.04	4.16	4.16	4.16
2.96	2.99	8.76	8.94	8.85
3.40	3.41	11.56	11.63	11.59
3.67	3.67	13.47	13.47	13.47
3.37	3.31	11.36	10.96	11.15
3.53	3.53	12.46	12.46	12.46
2.65	2.60	7.02	6.76	6.89
2.40	2.20	5.76	4.84	5.28
3.20	3.20	10.24	10.24	10.24
3.27	3.16	10.69	9.99	10.33
3.19	3.17	10.18	10.05	10.11
3.07	3.07	9.42	9.42	9.42
3.40	3.40	11.56	11.56	11.56
3.60	3.56	12.96	12.67	12.82
3.47	3.47	12.04	12.04	12.04
2.99	3.01	8.94	9.06	9.00
<b>ΣX=61.85</b>	<b>ΣY=61.29</b>	<b>2</b> <b>ΣX =194.61</b>	<b>2</b> <b>ΣY =191.46</b>	<b>ΣXY =192.99</b>

$$N = 15$$

$$N\Sigma XY - (\Sigma X)(\Sigma Y)$$

$$R = \frac{N\Sigma XY - (\Sigma X)(\Sigma Y)}{\sqrt{\{N\Sigma X^2 - (\Sigma X)^2\}\{N\Sigma Y^2 - (\Sigma Y)^2\}}}$$

$$R = \frac{15 \times 192.99 - (61.85 \times 61.29)}{\sqrt{\{15 \times 194.61 - (61.85)^2\}\{15 \times 191.46 - (61.29)^2\}}}$$

$$R = \frac{895.94}{1194.49}$$

$$R = 0.75$$

**Figure 1**

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