

**TEACHING PRACTICE IN THE TEACHER EDUCATION
TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR EFFECTIVE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 9-YEAR UNIVERSAL BASIC
EDUCATION (UBE) IN NIGERIA.**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This paper underscores the relevance of the teaching practice exercise of the teacher training education programme in Nigerian Universities and the other teacher training institutions. It is done with the purpose of preparing the universities in the production of teachers for the effective implementation of the 9-year UBE programme. The 9-year UBE programme is in response to the current reforms in the country as illustrated in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) which has placed education at the core of its framework initiative. Thus, the paper examines and critically identified some of the factors that accentuate the teaching practice exercise as a relevant process in the production of efficient teachers for the 9-year programme. Strategies are evolved in order to improve on the exercise.

INTRODUCTION

The current school curriculum reforms in Nigeria are based on the eighth Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the Education for All (EFA) goals. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria is thus, based on these goals. The MDG goals according to Obioma (2006) include:

- i) Improve the quality of education at all levels;
- ii) Ensure and sustain unfettered access to education for total development of the individual;
- iii) Promote gender equality and empower women;
- iv) Reduce the spread of HIV and mitigate AIDS;
- v) Promote Information and Communication Technology (ITC);
- vi) Improve quality of life through skill acquisition and poverty reduction.

While the EFA goals include:

- (i) The expansion and improvement of the early childhood care and

education especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

- (ii) That all children should be accessed to education by the year 2015. This applies to particularly children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities.
- (iii) Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
- (iv) Improving every aspect of the quality of education, and ensuring their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life.

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) which is a response to the current reforms in the country has four main goals to do with wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction

and value reorientation. One instrument to achieve these goals is through education. Accordingly, improvement in the educational system has become quite imperative.

Nigeria thus, adopted a 9 year Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme. This 9-year basic education programme is free and compulsory and geared towards the achievement of the relevant targets of MDG, EFA and NEEDS.

The ambit for the programme implementation implies that an increased number of qualified teachers will be required to manage the anticipated enormous increase in enrolment as well as quality of teaching and learning processes. In response to this, government has embarked upon massive comprehensive capacity building programmes with the aim of raising the quality and quantity of teachers. Such programmes are also meant to enhance their status and working conditions.

The mechanism for the efficient training and capacity building of teachers is a responsibility of the Universities and other related teacher education training programmes. Teachers at the other tertiary institutions where teacher education training programmes are mounted are ultimately prepared by the universities. Thus, it becomes exigent to examine the state of preparedness of universities and these other related teacher training institutions to cope with the new challenge in the ambience of the current reforms in the school curriculum.

THE IMAGE OF TEACHING PRACTICE

Olaitan and Agusiobo (1981) described teaching practice as a means of providing opportunities under typical school conditions in selecting cooperating schools for student-teachers to secure experiences in observing and participating in diverse educational activities of teachers in school. It is an opportunity for student-teachers to acquire practical experience in classroom teaching. This is an essential aspect which confers the teaching professionalism on the students when they pass the test and eventually graduate.

In the exercise, the student is assigned to a school and given specific functions to perform as a teacher under the supervision of more experienced teachers.

In affirmation to this, Oyekan (2000) stated that it is a practical teaching activity by which the student-teacher is given an opportunity in actual school situations to demonstrate and improve training in pedagogical skills over a period of time. Teaching practice is based on the practicalization of principles, theories, information, ideas and techniques which have been acquired by the student teacher in the classroom. Oyekan (2000) agreed that, teaching practice is a kind of apprentice-ship stage during which the students are sent out to schools to gain practical and professional experience by translating all the educational theories acquired during classroom interaction into practice. It is aimed at inculcating various skills and habits in the student- teachers to enable them guarantee success in teaching while achieving learning objectives in the classroom when they become qualified teachers.

Nwoke (2004) quoted Oyekan (2000) as having summarized the objectives of teaching practice thus:

- (i) Inculcating in the student-teachers the basic teaching skills and ethics which facilitate the teaching-learning process;
- (ii) Provide the student-teacher an opportunity to imbibe practical classroom life experiences;
- (iii) Expose the student-teachers to the dynamic social life system of the school as they interact with the learners and staff, use physical facilities and participate in co-curricular activities;
- (iv) Identify their strengths and weaknesses in lesson presentation while thinking of possible means to improve their teaching capacities;
- (v) Inculcate the ability to use instructional materials to explain and illustrate basic concepts and processes for greater understanding;
- (vi) Develop healthy relationships towards the learners, community and members of the teaching profession;
- (vii) Enhance the supervisory capacity of the cooperating teachers;
- (viii) Facilitate the exchange of innovative educational ideas between the student-teachers and educators from the participating

- teacher training institutions and the cooperating schools;
- (ix) Provide an avenue for the student-teachers and their supervisors to translate theory into practice; and
- (x) Expose the weaknesses in teacher training programmes to the educators for prompt correction and improvement.

STRATEGIES IN THE CONDUCT OF TEACHING PRACTICE FOR THE PRODUCTION OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

An effective conduct of teaching practice has to address some pertinent issues thus:

(1) Period of Teaching Practice

A minimum of twelve weeks practical teaching period is required for an effective introduction of the prospective teacher to the schools and children. This was one of the recommendations of the National Curriculum Conference of 1969 on the practical training of teachers.

With the present challenge in the education sector, it has become imperative to agitate for an extension of the minimum to a longer period of time. This agitation can be supported by the general perception of the dispositions of a great majority of our teacher trainees not having the rudimentary skills to efficiently impart knowledge to the children. Some universities admit diploma and the Interim Joint Matriculation Board (IJMB) graduates who have no basic teaching qualifications directly into the two hundred level (200 level) teacher training programmes. This category of teacher trainees require much longer period to acquire the basic skills for effective teaching. Thus, production of effective teachers for the 9-year programme may require a full session of teaching practice as Nwoke (2004) quoted Okojagu (1988) who said, it makes it mandatory for all students to go on teaching practice for a full session during their second year.

The first year in the university is usually one of exposition to the teaching theories, principles and ideas while the second year should be completely devoted to the practicalization of these theories and principles.

(2) Supervision of Students on Teaching Practice

Nwoke (2004) posited that, supervision of student-teachers requires the services of professionally qualified and experienced teachers who can identify and specify the skills required for effective teaching. Qualified and experienced teachers who are usually selected for the purpose of supervision are drawn from the training institutions and the cooperating schools. Teachers who may be qualified but without adequate experience should not be selected for the exercise. This is because trained teachers without adequate teaching experience may find it difficult to effectively assess and evaluate the student-teacher.

The supervisor should during the exercise consider carrying out the following:

- (i) Examine the teaching records of the student-teacher before entering his class and be sure of what to expect during the teaching. These may include the instructional materials and behavioural change which signifies the achievement of the objectives.
- (ii) Offer assistance to the student-teacher in his efforts to apply the teaching theories and skills necessary for effective teaching.
- (iii) Offer useful advice to the student-teacher as this will stimulate his professional growth and help him to check his patterns of teaching. This aspect is taken care of during the post supervision conference between the supervisor

and the student-teacher. This conference provides a very useful opportunity for the discussion of issues that arose during the lesson where suggestions are offered for improvement in subsequent lessons. This should be carried out in a relaxed atmosphere where the student teacher can ask questions and answers provided.

(iv) It is better for supervisors to supervise only student teachers who are majoring in courses that they are specialized in. For instance, students majoring in geography education should be supervised by qualified and experienced teachers in geography education. Methods of teaching the various courses are slightly different and the students are exposed to these different technicalities of the disciplines during classroom instructions. However, experienced teachers can cope with the supervision of students from the

different disciplines due to the many years of experience which they have. They can therefore be used where specific experts in the various areas are not available.

(3) Evaluation of Student Teachers

Different Universities provide formats for the evaluation of their students during teaching practice. These formats may differ but all must specify the competencies expected to be demonstrated by the student teacher, making explicit criteria to be applied in assessing the student's accountability in meeting these criteria. In assessing the student-teacher, it is important to also assess the learning outcomes of the pupils being taught. In the drawing of an effective assessment format for teaching practice, the following should be considered:

- (i) Lesson preparation
- (ii) Instructional materials
- (iii) Lesson presentation
- (iv) Questioning skills
- (v) Class participation
- (vi) Subject mastery
- (vii) Class management.

AN EXAMPLE OF TEACHING PRACTICE ASSESSEMENT FORMAT

Based on the objectives of teaching practice, various perceptions are held by experts in teacher training institutions. The following format is thus presented as one with a comprehensive coverage of the objectives of the exercise.

STUDENT'S PERSONAL DATA

Name:.....Mat. No:.....
 Level (Year of Study):.....
 Name of Host Institution:.....
 Subject Taught:.....
 Area of Specialization:.....
 Class Taught:.....
 Topic Taught:.....
 Date:.....

(A) Preparation of Lesson		5	4	3	2	1	0
1	Are the instructional objectives stated in measurable terms?						
2	Are the instructional objectives relevant and attainable?						
3	Are the lesson notes well structured?						
4	Does the introduction clarify objectives and provide motivation for the day's activities?						
5	Are the teacher's questions relevant?						
(B)							
5	Are the teacher's questions relevant?						
6	Are the questions well distributed in the class?						
7	Are the questions answerable?						
8	Are the teacher's responses to the student's questions adequate?						
(C) Instructional Materials							
9	Are the instructional materials suitable and adequately used?						
10	Is the blackboard presentation neat and orderly?						
(D) Progression							
11	Does one ideal lead to another in the lesson?						
(E) Communication							
12	Is the teacher's use of language correct and adapted to the level of the students?						
(F) Class Participation							
13	Are students actively involved in the lesson or just passive listeners?						
(G) Timing							
14	Does the time budget provides for complete and balanced coverage of the topic?						
(H) Subject Mastery							
15	Does the teacher show that he is the master of what he/she wants the students to learn?						
(I) Teachers Demeanour							
16	Does the teacher have any distractive mannerism in terms of dressing, speaking and gestures?						
(J) Class Management/Control							
17	Does the teacher ensure that the class is well-arranged, controlled and rendered conducive for learning to take place?						
(K) Application							
18	Are opportunities provided for students to practice newly acquired skills to utilize new knowledge or strengthen old ones?						
(L) Evaluation							
19	Are appropriate activities included in the lesson to determine how well students are achieving expected outcomes?						
20	Is the correction of student's work appropriate?						
(M) Conclusion							
21	Is the lesson well concluded/blackboard summary?						
22	Is the assignment given adequate and relevant?						

Score obtained:..... Grade:.....

Date:.....

Name of Assessor:.....

Signature of Assessor:.....

Designation of Assessor:.....

Comments of Assessor:.....

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CONCLUSION

No meaningful learning can be achieved without the efforts of well prepared teachers in the school system. This type of preparation should be meticulously carried out in order to inculcate in the teacher trainees those relevant skills. The most effective teaching practice is the one which recognizes the cooperating teacher's role in both assessment and the subsequent allocation of grade. Apparently, assessment of teaching practice is centred on lesson preparation, instructional materials, lesson presentation, questioning skills, class participation, subject mastery, class management and lesson evaluation.

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