
**STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TEACHING PRACTICE EVALUATIONS BY SUPERVISORS AND
CO-OPERATING TEACHERS IN ENUGU STATE**

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Abstract

The problem centers around the suspicions that student teachers do not often heartily accept the marks awarded to them by their supervisors and the co-operating teachers, where the latter take part in the grading at the end of their teaching practice exercises. But some individuals hold the view that there are no ground for these state of minds. These necessitated the study to identify the student teachers beliefs about teaching and evaluation of their performances by the co-operating and supervising teachers. One hundred and fifty student teachers from Eha-Amufu college of Education and Alvan Ikoku College of Education Owerri were sampled. Questionnaire was used for the data collection. Statistical analysis used was the percentage. The study revealed that; student teachers believe that the co-operating teachers comments on their performances were not biased; student teachers recommended that supervisors be matched with students from their own disciplines only, also that they should be more frequently supervised to enable them received enough corrections before final gradings are made. The researcher recommended that; the co-operating teachers whose classes are usually taken over by the student teachers should physically witness every lesson delivered by the student teachers. This will enable proper guidance to be made. Also, that supervising teachers preferably should come from same disciplines as the student teachers. Finally, it is recommended that the evaluation sheets should be made available, at least for a glance to the student teachers for maximum corrections to be made.

Keywords: Student Teachers, Teaching Practice, Evaluations, Supervisors, co-operating Teachers.

Introduction

The society of the 21st century is making challenging demands upon the public schools in an effort for quality education. Education is seen as the process of learning to live as useful and acceptable members of the community (Farre, 2007). The school curriculum represents ideally an avenue for refining man's most important experiences, ideals, attitudes and hopes. Educational institutions therefore, demand more careful hands for its implementation.

If this process is to be successfully and uniformly done from generation to generation, a standard way of preparing those concerned (teachers) in guiding this process must be in existence. This gave rise for teachers' training colleges and facilities of education in higher institutions of learning. One school of thought has it that teachers are born while another has it that they are made (Fafunwa, in Daily Times, Feb.5, 1985).

Whether born or made, there is always a need for would-be teachers to be groomed in preparation for their actual works. During this period of grooming, it is always required for them to go out for try- out situations. The exercise is usually known as practice teaching. This is the first period that these students are exposed to the actual organized (formal) teaching situations. Teaching practices had been noticed as integral and important aspects in the training and preparation of would –be teachers' .During this period, the student teachers learn the practical applications of their arts by their own meaningful activities in the classrooms. Olaito (2013) expressed the purpose of practice teaching in this way: The paramount purpose of all teaching practices is that new recruits to the teaching profession should have the opportunities to learn their crafts by performing it under the guidance of experienced and professional teachers.

The exercise as a supervisory programme is one of instructional improvement; it is also a procession stimulating growth and a means of helping would-be teachers to help themselves. Supervision at teaching practice levels focuses on the development of the individual students. Ope (2014) maintains that, "supervision in teaching practice is aimed at helping the student- teacher to develop both as a person and as a teacher; While Okolie (2015) is of the opinion that; the main aim for supervision during students teaching is to offer assistance to the students in their developments of basic understanding and skills necessary in teaching.

Education students see teaching practice as important components of their programmes since it is a requirement for obtaining a teacher's certificate. Grades acquired in the practices not only affect the students' results but are also essential for their successes as teachers. From the expressions of some student teachers who have already gone through these practices, one tends to believed that these students look at the results of the supervisions with some suspicions. This suspicion might arise from fear

that the supervisors might be from different disciplines other than the students' or some other problems. Jones (2016) supports this feeling in this expression: "Special supervisors should develop and exhibit particular skills in their own areas of specializations. The aims of this study therefore, is to find out how student teachers see their teaching performances and the evaluations made on them by co-operating and supervising teachers.

Teaching practices according to Coka and joke (2013), is the period when the student teacher, first puts into application some of the psychology, methods and principles he has learned theoretically in lecture classrooms. Writing on what is teaching practices, Okolie (2015) quoted 'Hains' to have defined teaching practices as the period of time during which a perseveres teacher is assigned to a public school, for his college programme.

The Need for Teaching Practices: To the ill- informed, teaching practice is only a requirement to be fulfilled in a teacher training institution. But according to Hains (1971), the central purposes of students teaching is to order opportunities for prospective teachers to increase their professional competencies as they assume gradually fuller responsibilities of teachers under the guidance of experienced personnel and in as accordance with readiness and needs. Writing on the purpose of teaching practice, Okolie (2015) maintains that, all the psychology, philosophy, principles techniques, and methods learned by the students in the course of academic lectures cannot be complete until they are translated into teaching and related to children.

Teaching practice may be the first occasion on which some students are faced with the need for understanding children. Children are not adults and do not behave like them, nor is the behaviour of children in school like their behaviour at home and elsewhere.

Learning is associated with beahviour and involves changes in behaviour. By observation of the natural behaviours of children, the students gain deeper insight into and understanding of the children they will teach. Teaching practice serves as means of self criticisms to the student teachers, when the students finish their professional trainings and enter the classrooms as qualified teachers, there will be few opportunities for them to observe other teachers. They will, generally, receive little supervision or no further assistances. It is therefore, important that in their career they should get into the habit of examining themselves critically as teachers.

Usually, the students teaching practices are the only laboratory experiences provided for students in some teacher education institutions. Through this means, the students are given the opportunities to relate their studies to their future careers. The benefits of teaching practices are then brought into focus when theory is applied in classroom learning situations. Furthermore, one of the major purposes of teaching practices is the fact that the student teachers' personalities are revealed.

Supervision during teaching practices according to Wragg (1974) is a craft which most supervisors, whether they are teachers or college tutors have learned for themselves. Supervision at teaching practices level focuses on the development of the individual students. Opeola (1984) maintains that, “supervision in teaching practices is aimed at helping the student- teacher to develop both as a person and as a teacher’ While Okorie (1979) is of the opinion that; the main aim for supervision during students teaching is to offer assistances to the students in their development of basic understandings and skills necessary in teaching.

In order to achieve these, the supervisor works with each student in determining their strengths and weaknesses, and renders help when needed. Supervisors are considered as persons who are assigned to help the student teachers in their efforts to become competent teachers. Their jobs, according to Opeola (1984) are to reduce administrative barriers as well as personal inhibitions, doubts, fears and insecurities. The need for supervision in teaching practices therefore, is to ensure that children receive good education and to assist the student teachers in providing it.

Wragg (1974) believes that supervision styles are determined by two factors based on comparison by the evaluator of himself and the person being judged. The first of these factors is compensation. Here there is the tendency in exercising critical judgment to require the person under scrutiny to manifest a much greater amount of quality than the observer (supervisor) himself possesses. Take for examples, if the observer sub-consciously senses that he himself is untidy, badly organized, and ill prepared in their teaching he may compensate by insisting that the student should be neat, organized and well prepared for their lessons.

The second is that of projection, where the supervisor projects himself into the places of the students, imagining how he might be reacting in a similar situation. Projection sometimes leads the supervisor to take over the lesson and test the fantasy, as was identified by Wragg. Supporting Wragg views, Ano (2016) noted that what is wrong in the present situation for supervision does not rise from the lack of practical experiences of the supervising tutor or in their failure to value practical experiences highly. Rather, what is wrong is that the system within which he has to operate does not provide the conditions necessary for giving the students the most effective support and assistance in the acquiring of practical skills. He said, is because the supervising tutor has another role of an assessor or inspector which the student- teacher cannot be aware of.

Contrary to the views of Wragg and Tibble who noted that supervision and the methods of supervision can be a hindrance in teaching practices exercise to the student teacher, Okorie sees teaching practices more as a means of helping the student teachers to solve and overcome some personal and professional problems they encounter in their preparatory trainings to becoming teachers. Hence they seem to

believe more on the positive contributions of teaching practices to teacher training programmes than the negative contributions.

The importance of teaching practice to the professional success of student teachers cannot be over emphasized. After learners had been shown how, it is quite appropriate that they should perform the tasks themselves before they can become very skillful on the job. The learners are expected to follow the receiving of the information with a period of practices in their uses in order to gain mastery of the information themselves and its practical applications. Supporting this importance of teaching practices, Okolie (1979) is of the opinion that knowledge is of little value in itself unless the person who possesses it can make it serve him by knowing how to apply it to the solution of specific problems which confront him or the society in which he lives. Hence, the only way to establish confidence in what a person has learned is to put it into practice.

Teaching practices offer opportunities for students to understand human growth patterns. It also enables the students to gain valuable insights into themselves with regard to assessing their suitabilities for the teaching professions. Similarly, the students will have the opportunities to observe and study children and develop their own ways of working effectively with children and colleagues. They will, as well gain enough experiences, though student teachings facilitate their developments toward professional maturities with feelings of security.

A well- trained teacher has an edge over the untrained in matters of employment, as the trained teacher will be selected first before the untrained ones. Similarly, a trained teacher has an edge over the untrained teacher in terms of salary and other benefits.

Despite numerous contributions of teaching practices in the training of teachers, many problems are still associated with it. Some people have failed to see the justifications for continuous students teaching programmes. Usually, such expressions emanate from those who cannot visualize what good teaching practices can do for the student teachers. From all indications, such people regard teaching practices as personal matters. Opeola (1984) has also discussed some of the problems of teaching practices to includes:

- i. The selection of instructional materials and planning of any lesson may be made difficult by the staff of the school to which a student teacher on teaching practice is assigned .Many people have differing answers to the selection and choice which can be made on instructional materials.
- ii. While one may be well informed on the materials chosen for classroom presentation, the pupils may or may not show interests in exploring and interpreting the phenomena. They may or may not be willing and able to discuss and interact with others.

- iii. The teacher himself may find it difficult to be competent and confident when presenting their lessons because of several reasons. He may fail to accept the teacher's role as an adviser, a guide, and a helper to pupils who are actively engaged in learning. Their pupils may often rebel against fat-laden courses which obliged them to remember a large amount of isolated information at a time. There may be poor classroom. The social distance between the teacher and the pupils hinders spontaneous interactions and leaves both parties disappointed and little uneasy.
- iv. Very often, lack of, or inadequate provision for the use of relevant teaching side also create problems in teaching practice exercises.
- v. Hindrances to teaching also come in form of lack of adequate preparation for instruction on the part of the student teachers.

Objectives of the Study

- Whether the student teachers see the exercise as really essential.
- Whether they consider the supervisors evaluation results as the correct account of their performances.

Method

The design of the study was a survey research design. Sample survey gathers data and information from a percentage of the population to represent the entire population,. The source of data is primary data, which was gathered with the use of structured questionnaire. The choice of data is logically dictated by the fact that this study is a descriptive survey type. The study covered three major towns in Enugu local Government Area, namely, Enugu main town, Abakpa Nike and Emene

Population

The population for the study was made up of three hundred and twenty five student teachers. Two hundred from Eha- Amufu College of education and one hundred and twenty five from Alvan Ikoku College of Education Owerri.

Sample

Out of the given population, a sample of one hundred student teachers from Eha- Amufu college of education and fifty student teachers from Alvan Ikoku College of Education Owerri. The total being one hundred and fifty student teachers were used in the study.

Research instruments

The instrument used in collecting data for the study was the questionnaire. It contained twenty- five items and was divided majorly into three sections. The twenty five items used to elicit information from the respondents were developed from the two research objectives. Section A was designed to obtain a general information about the respondents. Section B sought to find out whether the student teachers

see their supervisors' evaluations as a real account of their performances. Section C was designed to find out suggestions that would lead to better assessment of student teachers by the co-operating ones. Section D attempted to find out means of enhancing a good level of relationship between the student teachers and their supervisors.

Methods of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered to the student teachers at their different schools of practices. The questionnaires were later collected by hand from the respondents. Oral interviews were also used to collect some other necessary information for the topic

Method of Analysis

Tables were drawn for the questionnaire collected, where columns for the answers given were entered. The frequency of the answers given to each questionnaire items by the respondents were computed in percentages and entered in the respective columns for easy comparison.

Decision Rule

A score of 50% and above should be regarded as having significant impact while any research item with a score below 50% will be disregarded.

Analysis, Findings and Discussions

The findings relevant to each section of the study were discussed after the table so that accurate interpretations could be made. This method of presentation was adapted since it facilitates the correlation of the data with the interpretations arising there from.

Table 1: Perception about Teaching Practice Evaluations Essentialities.

Items no	Response category	Positive		Negative	
		f	%	E	%
1	Do you think that you were expected by the co-operating school before your arrival?	99	66	51	34
2	Do you think that the teaching methods taught by your lecturers were adaptable to the class or classes you were assigned ?	141	94	9	6
3	Do you adapt and use any of such methods ?	150	100		
4	Any difference between what really goes on in the school and what you were taught to expect?	96	64	54	36
5	Do pupils take part in making teaching aids?	35			76.7
6	Do you live in the co-operating school's premises?	13	8.67	137	91.3
7	Do you take part in extra-curricular activities?	105	70	45	30

Findings

Highlight above shows that 66% of the student teachers agreed that they were expected before their arrival at the schools where they practiced while 34% of them disagreed. The table also shows that the teaching methods taught them at school were adaptable to classroom conditions while 6% disagreed. On whether they make use of such methods, 100% of them agreed that they use the methods. On the results obtained by the use of such methods, a good number of them commented favorably.

It can also be seen that 46% of the student teachers agreed that there are differences between what really goes on in the schools and what they were taught to expect. The result also shows that 76.65% of the student teachers agreed that their students do not help them in preparing teaching aids while 23.3% of them held a different view. Also 8.67% of the respondents live in the co-operating school premises while 91.3% stayed outside the compound. 70% of the respondents took part in extracurricular activities while 30% did not.

Table II: Student Teachers Perceptions about Supervisors' Evaluation -The Correct Account Of Their Performances

Item no	Responses category	Options	F	%
8	Is your supervisor from a field of specialization other than your own?	Positive	96	64
		Negative	54	36
9	If yes to (9) knowing very well that he is not fully informed about your fields, do you think that he can fairly evaluate / supervise you?	Positive	26	27
		Negative	70	72.9
10	Supervisors Approach on Corrections	On the spot	4	1.33
		Group conferences	80	53.4
		Individual corrections	68	45.33
11	Frequency in Lesson Notes Corrections	Dally	4	2.7
		Once in two weeks	20	13.5
		Weekly	6	4
		Occasions	120	80

Findings

Highlight above shows the response patterns to item nine which seeks the views of the student teachers about supervisors from fields other than this. It shows that 64% of the respondents had their supervisors come from areas of specializations other than theirs . 79.9% of the ninety- six respondents whose supervisors came from different fields expressed doubts on the competencies of these supervisors. It was only 27% of them that had firm confidence on the evaluations of their supervisors. On the type of methods preferred for corrections, 53.33% of the respondents favoured group conferences, while 45.33% preferred individual corrections. Also 80% of the respondents had their lesson notes corrected occasionally.

Discussion of Results

Based on the responses gotten from the respondents, some interesting findings were made. The findings of this study as deduced from the tables in this work revealed shows that 66 of the student teachers agreed that they were expected by the co-operating schools before they arrived for practicing. The 34% which shows otherwise indicates that some co-operating schools do not make proper arrangements for the accommodation of the student teachers sent to them. On whether the methods taught by the lecturers are adaptable to the classes where the student teachers were assigned to, table one still shows that 94% of the respondents agreed that the methods were adaptable to classroom situations. This gives an indication that the students were reasonably equipped with teaching techniques before being posted to their various practicing schools. It can further be inferred from here that the teaching methodology course should be maintained in our teacher training institutions if our educational system is to progress. Also from the same table, 64% of the student teachers agreed that they noticed some differences between what goes on in the school and what they have been taught to expect. This shows that most of the happenings in our schools are not fully exposed to the students teachers during their preparatory periods by their lecturers. This suggests for continual renewal of our school curriculum for it to match pace with the societal changes. The findings also show that 76.7% of the student teachers agreed that the pupils do not help them in making teaching aids. A situation like this indicates that the students' lessons in the classes are almost based on theoretical works. Thus, denying the students of the opportunities of acquiring technical and vocational skills at their early stages of development. Item seven further comments on this by 70% of the respondents took part in extracurricular activities. On the student teachers perception about supervisors evaluation, table II shows that 64% of the respondents had their supervisors come from areas of specializations other than theirs . 79.9% of the ninety- six respondents whose supervisors came from different fields expressed doubts on the competencies of these supervisors. It was only 27% of them that had firm confidence on the evaluations

of their supervisors. On the type of methods preferred for corrections, 53.33% of the respondents favored group conferences, while 45.33% preferred individual corrections. Also 80% of the respondents had their lesson notes corrected occasionally.

One would have expected that since these co-operating teachers are often almost entirely relieved of their teaching periods, they would help and even attend the classes of those student teachers. This will enable full comments to be made on their teachings.

In summary, the students teachers held the view that the supervisors and co-operating teachers should come closer to them for maximum results.

That is why Tibble (1971) noted that; What is wrong in the present situation of supervision is that the system within which the supervisors have to operate does not provide the conditions necessary for giving the student teachers the most effective support and assistances in the acquiring of practical skills .

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of this study the following conclusions were arrived at :

1. Student teachers expect more cooperation from the co-operating teachers. This is particularly in the areas of classroom control and lesson plannings.
2. Student teachers believe that the co-operating teachers' comments on their performances are not biased and therefore should be accepted.
3. Supervising teachers from areas of specializations other than that of the students are not happily received, hence the marks they award to students may be doubtful .
4. Students should be given the evaluation sheets used in evaluating them so that they may take corrections.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made following the results of the findings of the study.

1. The co-operating teachers whose classes are usually taken over by the student teachers should physically witness every lesson delivered by the student teachers. This will enable proper guidance to be made.
2. Supervising teachers preferably should come from the same disciplines as the student teachers.
3. The evaluation sheets should be made available, at least for a glance to the student teachers for maximum corrections to be made.

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