

Teaching Practice Experience of Pre-Service Teachers, Challenges and Possible Solutions in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract : *The study focused on the challenges faced by pre-service teachers during teaching practice exercise and solution to it in the faculty of education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State Nigeria. The study was guided by the three research questions raised from the purpose of the study. A thirty items structured questionnaire was designed and personally administered to the respondents. The population of the study consisted of 2, 150 third year students of Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria. Simple random and stratified sampling technique was used to select 121 third year educational students. Instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed using mean and percentage score. A mean of 2.50 and above was used as an acceptance mark for an item. The result of the analysis shows that pre-service teachers encountered related challenges, university related problems and partnership school related challenges. The study also showed some possible solutions to curb these challenges. These include provision of instructional materials by partnership schools. Based on these findings, it was recommended that orientation should be properly organized for students before going on teaching practice exercise.*

Key Words: *Teaching practice experience, pre-service teachers, challenges.*

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I Introduction

A teacher as a professional and like any other professionals has prescribed services it renders to any human society. It is therefore absolutely necessary for many individual who want to become a teacher to acquire skills and demands. Teaching according to Hornby (2008) is the work of a teacher or ideas of a particular person or group. Teaching is the process of impacting knowledge and skills from a teacher to a learner. Hornby (2008) further stated that teaching is an act of experience that has a formative effective on mind, character or physical ability of an individual. Teaching is also an activity assumed with the homes, schools, churches, mosque e.t.c. and where someone who is more vast and knowledgeable in specific field (skills and understanding) tries to influence another person to acquire these skills, understanding, beliefs and thought so that his or her life will change (Maduabum & Abah, 2010). They sees it as a period of recertification teaching that is intended to offer opportunities for the acquisition, development and refinement of necessary knowledge, skills, behavior; attitudes and responsibilities that are basic for a successful teaching career. De-Villa (2010) stated that importance of teaching practice as the certification of professional teaching cannot be over emphasized because any pre-service teacher who has not successfully satisfied the requirement of practiced teaching cannot be certified as a qualified teacher irrespective of how excellently he or she has performed in the teaching subjects and the theory of education. The researchers have chosen faculty of education Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; Anambra State Nigeria to examine and find out these challenges encountered by pre-service teachers during teaching practice and its challenges and experiences. It is on this background that the researchers based their study.

Objectives of Teaching Practice Exercise

Teaching practice exercise is essential to teaching profession. The main purpose of teaching practice is to develop several inter personal, pedagogical, intercultural and psychological competences in the trainee teacher (Anupama, 2009). He outlined objectives of teaching practice as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for evaluating student potentials as a teacher and stability for teaching profession.

- To provide pre-service teachers an opportunity to put theory into practice and develop a deeper understanding of educational principles and their implication for learning.
- To develop skills in the use of fundamental procedure technique and method of teaching.
- To provide for exchange of ideas and methods between practicing schools and teacher training institutions by teachers training staff and student, perceiving new ideas, materials and equipment in use of practical schools and introducing new ideas, materials and equipment into the school.
- To provide an opportunity for self evaluation. Realization of these loudable objectives is dependent on the provision of adequate material resources and getting all stakeholders to perform their role effectively. Stakeholder in this context are: Learners, pre-service teachers, heads of co-operating schools and their teachers supervisors and teaching practice monitoring team.

In south Africa, every student in a teacher education programme is expected to do teaching practice. This refers to opportunity given to pre-service teachers in South Africa as stated by Ogonor and Badmus (2006). The conduct of teaching trials in the context of a school situation was in order to fine-tune the skills required of a teacher. Practice teaching is thus different to micro-teaching which involves teaching mock lessons to fellow students in a simulated setting. They consider practice teaching to be the most section of undergraduate teaching preparation programme. Practical experience at school is regarded by University of Forth Hare's Education department of been crucial to the successful completion of studies as well as the focal point of teacher education degree. This period is likened to an internship; the time to work as a professional in training pre-service teacher's knowledge, skills, insights and personality are brought to bear on the task of practical teaching. By allowing students to practice the skills of teaching, designing and implementing curricular activities as well as learning to get along with different types of learners, ,practice teaching can be deemed one of the most important areas of undergraduate teacher preparation.

Standardization of teaching profession is very necessary and this should be done from the grass roots of teacher education. When teaching profession is placed to standard from grass root, it aims at achieving the following among others, the inculcation of permanent literacy numeral, ability to communicate effectively and laying of a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking. Despite the numerous efforts of pre-service teachers to achieve these aims during teaching practice processes, these are numerous challenges encountered. These challenges in most cases hinder the teacher trainee (pre-service teachers) from accomplishing its goals. The researchers therefore decided to take the investigation into some of the challenges that are encountered by pre-service teachers during teaching practice in the faculty of education Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra-State, Nigeria; its challenges and possible solutions.

Purpose of the Study

The study investigated the challenges encountered by pre-service teachers during teaching practice exercise, specifically the study seek to investigate:

1. the challenges encountered by pre-service teachers during teaching practice exercise.
2. the influence of these challenges on the performance of the pre-service teachers during teaching practice exercise.
3. determine the possible solutions of addressing these challenges

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the execution of the study:

1. What are the challenges encountered by pre-service teachers during teaching practice exercise?
2. What are the influences of these challenges on the performance of the pre-service teachers during teaching practice exercise?
3. What are the possible solutions of addressing these challenges?

II Method

The design of the study is a descriptive survey design. Nworgu (2015) in line with Akuezuilo and Agu (2008) described the survey research as one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or item considered to be representative of the entire group.

The study was carried out in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State which is located in south eastern part of Nigeria west Africa. The population of the study considered of 2,150 third year students of faculty of education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra-State, Nigeria. Simple random and stratified sampling technique was used to select 121 third year educational students. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire. A thirty (30) items structured questionnaire was developed by the researchers. The instrument was tagged teaching practice experienced of pre-service teachers, challenges and possible solutions (TPEPTCS) in faculty of education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka; Anambra State, Nigeria and was administered by the researchers to the respondents. The questionnaire was designed based on four point likert scale which were Strongly agree(SA), Agree(A); Disagree(D), Strongly disagree (SD). The instrument was

validated by two experts from the department of Educational Management and policy and science education from nnamdi azikiwe university awka; anambra state nigeria.

For the method of data collection, one hundred and twenty one (121) copies of the questionnaire were produced and distributed to the respondents by the researchers. Each copies of the questionnaire was retrieve from the respondent as soon as they finish filling the questionnaire.

The data for the study was analyzed using mean and percentage score. The data collected was presented in tables in order of the research questions. Any item ranging of 2.50 and above was accepted while items below 2.50 were rejected.

III Results

Research Question 1

What are the challenges encountered by pre-service teachers during teaching practice exercise?

The answer to this research question 1 was presented in three categories in line with the questionnaire as thus:

1. Pre-service teachers related challenges
2. Institutions related challenges
3. The school of teaching practice related challenges/problems.

Table 1: Mean Responses of Pre-service Teachers Related Challenges:

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	%	DECISION
1	There is accommodation challenges for the pre-science teachers in towns outside the university environment	37	44	21	19	121	2.2	2.33	Agreed
2.	Pre-science teachers find it difficult to instill discipline in the classes	40	41	25	15	121	2.88	2.38	Agreed
3.	Pre-science teachers have swallow knowledge of lesson note preparation	50	47	14	10	121	3.13	2.57	Agreed
4.	There is non-chalant of the pre-science teachers to give evaluation after teaching	52	40	20	9	121	3.12	2.58	Agreed
5.	Pre-science teacher reject at will where they are posted for teaching practice exercise	37	21	20	20	121	2.24	1.85	Disagreed
6.	Pre-science teachers feel nervous when they are being supervised by their lecturers/supervisors	60	40	20	1	121	3.31	2.74	Agreed
7.	Pre-science teachers do not use various methods of teaching in their exercise	64	40	10	7	121	3.33	2.75	Agreed
8.	Pre-science teachers do not make good use of instructional materials	55	31	25	10	121	2.55	2.55	Agreed

Data in table 1 shows that 2.74% of the respondents agreed that major challenges facing students during teaching practice exercise was that pre-service teachers feel nervous when they are supervised by their lecturers. Also, 2.33% of the respondents agreed that there is accommodation challenges for pre-service teacher in towns outside the university environment. Of the respondent, 1.85% disagreed that pre-service teachers were rejected where they are posted for teaching practice exercise. Beside, 2.75% of the respondent agreed that pre-service teacher do not use various methods of teaching in the exercise.

Table 2: Mean Responses on Institution Related Challenges:

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	%	DECISION
1	The teaching practice period is rather too short.	38	45	13	25	121	2.79	2.31	Agreed
2.	There is inadequate preparation of students for teaching practice exercise. .	70	30	20	1	121	3.40	2.81	Agreed
3.	Pre-science teachers are often posted to primary schools when they are being trained for secondary schools.	20	35	30	36	121	2.32	1.92	Disagreed
4.	Proper orientation is not always conducted for the students before they go on teaching practice exercise.	84	24	37	0	121	3.98	3.29	Agreed
5.	Micro-teaching that can help pre-science teachers gain confidence during teaching	90	30	1	0	121	94.98	78.50	Agreed

	practice is not always conducted for the pre-science teachers.									
6.	Some supervisor/lectures do not discuss their observations and comments with pre-science teachers.	76	30	10	5	121	3.46	2.86	Agreed	
7.	Pre-science teachers do not have the opportunity to interact with partnership schools before the real teaching practice exercise.	40	60	20	1	121	3.15	2.60	Agreed	

Data in table 2 shows that among the institutions related challenges that face students on teaching practice is that pre-service teachers do not have the opportunity to interact with the partnership schools before the real teaching practice exercise begin. This was attested by 2.60% of the respondents. Also 70.50% of the respondents agreed that micro teaching that can help pre-service teachers gain confidence during teaching practice is not always conducted for the pre-service teachers properly. Then, 2.81% of the respondents agreed that there is inadequate preparation of students for teaching practice exercise. While 2.86% of the respondents agreed that some supervisors do not discuss their observation and comments with the pre-service teachers. It was also revealed in table 2 that 3.29% of the respondents agreed that proper orientation is not always conducted for the students before they go on teaching practice exercise.

Table 3: Mean Responses on Teaching Practice Related Challenges:

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	%	DECISION
1	There are reported cases of pre-science teachers being rejected by schools where they are posted.	70	30	20	1	121	3.40	2.81	Agreed
2.	Some schools are willing to distribute their schedule according to the need of the pre-science teachers.	20	40	39	21	121	2.47	2.04	Disagreed
3.	Instructional materials are not readily available in schools.	25	30	6	0	121	3.65	3.02	Agreed
4.	There is poor learning environment in the practicing schools such as congestion, poor ventilation.	70	40	10	1	121	3.48	2.88	Agreed
5.	Some teachers in partnership schools do not perform the role of mentor.	45	55	15	6	121	3.15	2.60	Agreed
6.	Schools do not give pre-science teachers subject outside their area of specialization.	81	10	20	10	121	3.34	2.76	Agreed
7.	Students in partnership schools show uncomparative attitude towards pre-service teachers.	72	40	10	1	121	3.51	2.90	Agreed

Data in table 3 shows that among the challenges being faced by pre-service teachers in the partnership schools that pre-service teachers are often being rejected in the schools where they are posted. This was attested to 2.81% of the respondents. Beside, 3.02% of the respondents agreed that instructional materials are not readily available in schools while 2.88% of the respondents agreed that there is poor learning environment in the practicing schools. Then, 2.04% of respondents disagreed that some schools are not willing to distribute their schedules according to the needs of pre-service teachers as well as schools do not give pre-service teachers subject outside their areas of specialization.

Research Question 2

What are the influences of these challenges on the performance of pre-service teachers during teaching practice exercise?

Table 4: Mean Responses on the Influences of Challenges on the Performance of Pre-Service Teachers:

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	%	DECISION
1	Poor performance	73	45	3	0	121	3.58	2.58	Agreed
2.	Indiscipline	80	41	0	21	121	3.66	3.02	Agreed
3.	Neglect on responsibility	63	40	18	0	121	3.37	2.79	Agreed
4.	Laziness	98	20	3	0	121	3.83	3.17	Agreed

Data in Table 4 revealed that items 1, 2, 3, and 4 agreed that these challenges has been responsible for pre-service teachers poor performance during teaching practice.

Research Question 3

What are the possible solutions of addressing these challenges?

Table 5: Mean Responses on the Possible Solutions of Addressing These Challenges:

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	%	DECISION
1	Discipline and classroom management should be handled by both the school authorities and the pre-science teachers.	121	0	0	0	121	4.00	3.31	Agreed
2.	The partnership school authority should provide adequate instructional materials to aid teaching and learning.	84	30	7	0	121	3.64	3.01	Agreed
3.	The partnership school should perform the role of mentors to ensure that pre-science teachers gain the necessary experience during teaching practice exercise.	100	10	10	1	121	3.73	3.08	Agreed
4.	The supervisor should be friendly with the pre-service teachers as well as interacting and discussing with the pre-service teachers.	99	81	2	2	121	3.77	3.12	Agreed

Data in table 5 revealed that respondents agreed to all the items which indicated that all the items are strategies of addressing these challenges encountered by pre-service teachers during teaching practice exercise.

IV Discussion of Results

Based on the result of the study, the researchers found out that one major problem or challenges facing the pre-service teachers is that, they feel nervous and unstable when they are being supervised by the lecturers. The implication is that students may not gain anything from the teachers whenever the latter’s supervisor is around. This findings was in consonant with Capel (2007) and Bhargava (2009) who submitted that pre-service teachers become restless when they are being observed.

The study further showed that pre-service teachers faced accommodation problem when they are posted outside university town. This may account for why they reject their posting most especially when they are posted to schools outside university environment. This was inline with Afolabi (2013) who opined that students always find it difficult to secure accommodation outside university town. The result further reveal that pre-service teachers do not have the opportunity to interact with partnership school before the real exercise begins. Beside, micro teaching is not always organized for the students. All these account for the inadequate preparation of the students for the exercise. This finding support Ogonor and Badmus (2006) when they submitted that pre-service teachers are not properly groomed to put into practice current pedagogy and interactive skills that have been theoretically leant. The study revealed that pre-service teachers are often being rejected in schools where they are posted. This seem to dampen the moral of the prospective teachers in schools where they are finally accepted. The study further showed that instructional materials are not readily available in the schools. This might not be unconnected with the level of findings of the schools. Besides, the findings revealed that teachers in partnership schools do not perform the role of mentor to the pre-service teachers. The submission agrees with Ogonor and Badmus (2006) who earlier remarked that teachers of partnership schools do not provide specific aid to pre-service to improve their teaching skills and strategies. This seems not palatable for the system as mentioning received from the teachers goes a long way to increase the level of confidence and training by the prospective teachers.

In addition, the study showed that there are some influence of these challenges on the performance of pre-service teachers and such influence includes; poor-service teachers and such influence includes; poor performance, laziness, neglect to duties and responsibilities as well as indiscipline. This was in line with the views of Capel (2007) on the influence of teaching practice challenges on pre-service teachers in Africa. Similarly, the findings of this shows some of the strategies for addressing these challenges include: supervisor

interaction and discussion with the pre-service teachers, provision of instructional materials by partnership schools for pre-service teachers as well as classroom management by both pre-service teachers and partnership schools authority. This is in line with Nayimuli (2009).

V Conclusion

As revealed by the study, it can be concluded that there are multifaceted challenges and problems that face students on teaching practice exercise which have made the exercise ineffective as regards achieving the goals for which it was set up. Beside, the inadequate preparation of the pre-service teachers towards the programme will not make the prospective teachers gain the necessary experiences, skills and confidence they need when they eventually take up the teaching job.

Educational Implications of the Study

The implication of the findings of the study is that application of theory in practice require an understanding of concept association with teaching and learning and to use these concept in actual classroom teaching. It shows the relationship between theory and practice appears to be a continuing issue of concern for the pre-service teachers. The implication is that if the programme is well planned and organized, prospective teachers would have produced national educational system.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be proper orientation for pre-service teachers before going on teaching practice exercise. During this orientation exercise, micro-teaching could be organized for pre-service teachers. This will make them gain enough confidence during real exercise.
2. The university authority should give the pre-service teachers some financial support for their upkeep during the period of teaching practice exercise. This will ease their accommodation problem and as well as reduce the rate at which students reject the school where they were posted.
3. Partnership schools should be given proper orientation on the need to fully integrate the pre-service teachers during the internship exercise.
4. Preparation of feasible timetable for the pre-service teachers in collaboration with school administration should be provided.
5. Pre-service teachers should be trained practically for lesson planning in advance and allow to use different teaching methods and other available facilities. Regular supervision and guidance will increase the quality of output.

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