

## TEACHING PRACTICE SUPERVISION IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

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### ABSTRACT

*Teaching practice (TP) is an important stage in student-teacher training. It is a process of producing a prospective teacher. One of the processes in preparing student-teachers to become master teachers is teaching practice supervision. However, at this time, there are some challenging issues with TP supervision, and as a result, the aim and objectives have not been met. Thus, this paper examines the objectives of teaching practice and TP supervision, as well as some of the contemporary challenging issues such as covid-19, the increase in student teachers' population, supervisors' attitudes, inconsistent supervisory visits, and time allocation for teaching practice programs, among others. Recommendations were made on how to ensure effective TP supervision. These include: The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should review the existing curriculum for our colleges of education on teaching practice and supervision for the achievement of Nigeria's sustainable development goals in teaching and learning. E-learning resources for developing and maintaining teaching and learning programs should be considered considering the present situation of the covid-19 pandemic.*

**Keywords:** Teaching practice, TP supervision, covid-19, E-learning and Studentteacher.

### INTRODUCTION

Teaching Practice, as a program, has been accepted as an integral part of the preparation of student-teachers in all colleges of education in Nigeria (Evans et al., 2017). It is through this exercise that teaching skills are acquired and developed both by practice and by reflection on pedagogy and theories of education. The college of education provides student-teachers with the necessary initiation into the teaching profession where consistent and continuous practice and the acquisition of experience are necessary for their improvement in the field and sustainable national development. The teaching practice provides the relationship between the intuition supervisor, teacher, and student-teacher interface to determine the quality of experience the student teacher will acquire (Aglazor, 2017).

Student-teacher supervision and assessment is a vital part of teaching practice exercise. The supervision is done through a coordinated partnership between school personnel and college lecturers. Supervision and assessment are indispensable tools in assuring quality in teacher training (Rosemary et al., 2013).

Teaching Practice Supervision is exclusively an activity for professional teachers. The required qualification for supervision shall be a first degree plus a teaching qualification not less than NCE or its equivalent (Babatunde, 2016). Each college should set up an internal/independent monitoring team for teaching practice to be chaired by the provost(National Commission for Colleges of Education [NCCE], 2012). A student-

teacher shall not be graded unless supervised and assessed by at least four (4) different assessors over a minimum of ten supervisions.

However, teaching practice supervision has been facing serious challenges in Nigeria. For example, it seems that student-teachers are not supervised frequently and timorously and can easily affect the overall quality of teaching practice supervision and assessment (Ayodele & Oyewole, 2012). Student-teachers are unable to apply their theoretical knowledge in the classroom. This is where the supervisor's abilities and experience as a successful facilitator and mentor come into play. Nevertheless, the supervisors' role is no longer there. Supervisors of teaching practices programs are thus expected to be equipped with adequate skills that will allow them to function optimally and prepare them to provide qualitative supervision in any teaching practice program to maintain a high quality of education for Nigeria's future development. Therefore, this paper reviews the concept of teaching practice and teaching practice supervision, challenges of teaching practice supervision, and solution for achieving sustainable development goals in Nigeria.

### **CONCEPTS OF TEACHING PRACTICE (TP)**

First and foremost, you need to understand the concept of teaching practice, the aim, and the objectives of teaching practice. Many educators interpret the word teaching practice in various ways. However, a few of these meanings are noteworthy. There are the following:

According to Oyekan (2000), Student Teaching Practice is an exercise that involves professional preparation for interested persons aspiring to become teachers with a good focus on sustainable human development. Teaching practice is considered as practice teaching, field studies, infield experience, and internship (Tanaja, 2000). Nakpodia (2011), states that teaching practice incorporates all the experiences in and out of the classroom which student teachers gather as they embrace real teaching in real classrooms. Teaching practice is a form of work-integrated learning that is described as a period when students are working in the relevant industry to receive specific in-service training to apply theory in Practice (Nnenna & Olanrewaju, 2015). According to the National Commission for colleges of education (NCCE), (2012), Teaching Practice is an important aspect of the teacher education program aimed at allowing student-teachers to put into practice their theoretical knowledge in a real school life situation. It allows teacher educators and educational administrators to assess the effectiveness of the teacher education program.

Considering these different concepts of teaching practice, teaching practice is therefore a period of exercise, in which student teachers get a golden opportunity to apply the theoretical aspect of teaching to practice for sustainable human development.

### **OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING PRACTICE**

Teaching practice is of great importance in teacher education. It is a component of training leading to the award of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) in Nigeria. According to the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE, 2012), the following are the main objectives of teaching practice for preparing students for teacher training:

1. To expose student-teachers to real-life classroom experiences under the supervision of professional teachers.
2. To familiarize student-teachers with the school environment as their future workplace.
3. To provide the environment for student-teacher to translate educational theories and principles into practice.
4. To provide student-teachers with a chance for further acquisition of professional skills, competencies, personal characteristics, and experience for full-time teaching after graduation.
5. To help student-teachers develop a positive attitude towards the teaching profession.
6. To enable student-teachers to discover their strengths and weaknesses in classroom teaching and provide opportunities to enable them to address their weaknesses and enrich their strengths.
7. To serve as a means of assessing the professional competence of student-teachers by the teacher-training intuitions.

### **CONCEPT OF TEACHING PRACTICE SUPERVISION**

Teaching practice is a critical stage in the training of prospective teachers as it is a process of producing a master teacher. Nevertheless, its aim and objective cannot be attained without evaluation. This evaluation is referring to as teaching practice supervision.

Contemporary writers have slightly different perceptions of the concepts of teaching practice supervision. Most of them, however, appear to agree that TP supervision is an organized, democratic process involving the supervisor and student-teacher for the achievement of desired objectives; see TP supervision as a process of stimulating growth and a means of assisting teachers in helping themselves, and some describe TP supervision as a constant and continuous process of personal guidance based on frequent visits. Hence, TP supervision is a modern idea that should assist student teachers in improving instruction in the classroom (Ayodele & Oyewole, 2012).

Supervision of Teaching Practice involves meaning assessment for the award of marks and giving feedback to student-teachers to guide their future performance and professional development as teachers.

Specialists in the students' areas of specialization are the most qualified to supervise the students in their subject areas. Where this is not possible, teachers in related areas may be used to supervise them.

### **CHALLENGES OF TEACHING PRACTICE SUPERVISION IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION**

COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the total closure of schools in about 192 countries all over the world, including Nigeria, with 91.4% of the total number of enrolled learners in these countries temporarily forced out of school (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2020). According to the report of UNESCO (2020), over 1.6 billion students worldwide are currently being forced to stay home from school due to the Coronavirus, as physical and social distancing is being imposed around the world, both locally and regionally, to contain

and curtail the spread of the pandemic. shows that the lockdown of schools is more prominent in some continents such as Africa, South America, and some parts of Europe. A United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund(UNICEF) report states that 10.5 million Nigerian children aged 5-14 years are not in school, only 61% of 6 to 11-year-olds regularly attend primary (Oluka et al, 2020). The lockdown of schools has set back to TP supervision which is a trait to education sustainable development goal. In addition to the lockdown, the following are impediments to TP supervision

1. **Increase in Student-Teachers Population:** In recent times, the population of student teachers in our colleges of education has increased so much without any corresponding increase on the part of supervisors. Waite (1994) opined that the supervision may also be inadequate if there are many students in training and a shortage of tutors in the training colleges. This makes it more difficult to effectively supervise a student's teaching as efforts are made to supervise a reasonably high number of students within a very limited time. This has led to ineffective supervision and evaluation and consequently has resulted in producing half-baked teachers whose competencies in the teaching profession are doubtful.
2. **Time Allocation for Teaching Practice Programme:** The time allocation for teaching practice is usually too short. According to Afeesakanni (2017), a period of six weeks is allocated for the first teaching practice at the 200 level, followed by another six weeks for the second teaching practice at the 300 level in university while colleges of education are only one semester. This period is not enough for the supervisors to effectively supervised all students and, at the same time, prevent students from getting used to the profession (Ayodele &Oyewole, 2012). Although in the United States, according to the Victorian Institute of Teaching, the minimum practicum (supervised teaching practice) requirements for an approved program made all four-year undergraduate programs to include at least 80 days of supervised teaching practice, which is equivalent to twelve weeks of Teaching Practice Supervision in Nigeria but broken into two periods – (200 Level and 300 Level). Also, in the United States, one-year postgraduate teacher education programs must include at least 45 days of supervised teaching practice (Victorian Institute of Teaching, 2010), while in Nigeria, it is only six weeks (40 days). According to Awoniyi (1979), "an enthusiastic student – teacher once lamented that he had hardly begun to enjoy teaching, acquiring skills, and gaining confidence when his practice had finished," insufficient time has caused many supervisors to do the work in haste, resulting in very shoddy supervision of teaching practice in Nigeria.
3. **Attitude of Supervisors:** Most supervisors exhibit a poor attitude towards supervision and evaluation of students' teachers. They neither give proper guidance to the students they come to supervise nor practically access students' presentations from the beginning of the lesson to the end. They hastily read through trainee teachers' lesson plans, award marks without indicating detailed shortcomings in the lesson plan.

In a bid for supervisors to finish supervision on time and save cost, they often tell students to skip some stages of the lesson, move to the evaluation stage and

summarize the lesson, thereby compromising supervision. Another emerging problem is that the supervisor's comments only the use of skills. e.g., Chalkboard writing, introducing lessons, class discipline, and media use. Less emphasis is given on gradual development of student teachers, new approaches adopted and stimulus variation, whether they are being used effectively or not (Rosemary et al., 2013) Invariably, some student teachers imitate their teachers' teaching style and, consequently, they come out of the mold without originality in their teaching style.

4. **Inadequate Orientation for Supervisors:** The orientation for supervisors of Teaching Practice is inadequate (Kanu & Anikweze, 2020) as this program is not organized from time to time. The new college lecturers at times commit several mistakes in the field because of a lack of experience and orientation before the commencement of the exercise. For instance, in the University of Botswana, one of the guidelines for lecturers supervising teaching practice is that all staff members in the department must attend the orientation workshops of their student teachers so that they are aware of all that is required of the student teachers once they are in the field (Ayodele and Oyewole, 2012). Supervisors of teaching practice programs in Nigerian universities are not required to attend student teacher orientation. At times, no special orientation is organized for these supervisors before going to the field. This problem needs urgent attention and immediate action in Nigerian universities for the sustainable development of teaching practice programs.
5. **Lack of commitment on the part of Supervisors:** Based on our experience, it has been observed that some supervisors of teaching practice programs are not committed to the exercise (Ayodele and Oyewole, 2012). Many have been found to assess only the lesson plans of the student teachers, look at their institutional materials and evaluate them without following them to the class to teach. Some do not go to the various schools where the student teachers are placed but gather them together in a school that is convenient for them to locate for the teaching practice. This makes the student teachers teaching to be mechanical as they are not used to the school environment and the students they teach in the class during the process of supervision. Hence, this makes the performance of student teachers in teaching practice superficial at times since the conduct of the exercise is closely linked with examinations.
6. **Inconsistent Supervisory Visit:** According to the Nigeria Certificate in Education, the minimum standard for general education courses, Teaching Practice should last for a full semester and should run from the start of NCE III first semester to the end. Before calculating a student's TP score, a minimum of ten supervision should be performed on that student during Teaching Practice (NCCE, 2012). However, most student teachers are supervised, and they are only visited three times during the exercise (Vintenaba & Alhassan, 2021). This may not be sufficient to determine the performance of student teachers in the teaching practice program.

## CONCLUSION

The role of teaching practice supervision in preparing student teacher training cannot be overemphasized. However, it has been facing serious challenges in Nigeria. COVID-19 pandemic, increase in student-teacher population, short time allocation for teaching practice program, supervisor attitude, inadequate orientation for supervisors, lack of commitment on the part of supervisors, and inconsistent supervisory visit are some of the issues highlighted in the literature. Based on the issues raised, NCCE should review the current curriculum for our colleges of education on teaching practice and the supervisor the sustainable development goals in teaching and learning are achieved in Nigeria. To fit the current situation of the covid-19 pandemic, e-learning tools for creating and sustaining teaching and learning activities should be considered. Last but not the least, colleges of education, governments, and non-governmental organizations should collaborate to ensure effective teaching and learning in Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATION

1. There is a need for the adoption of digital learning tools in teaching practice supervision.
2. Student-teacher and TP supervisor/tutor ratio should be considered for effective supervision and evaluation.
3. Time Allocated for Teaching Practice Programme in the college of education should be reviewed by NCCE. Considering the importance of teaching practice in student-teacher training, ample time is needed. Thus, one year or two semesters would be appropriate as suggested by Ayodele and Oyewole, (2012) to develop the professional competencies of prospective teachers. This will provide the supervisors the opportunity of having more time to stay with individual studentteacher in the classroom.
4. Supervisors must exhibit a good attitude to supervision and evaluation of students' teachers.
5. Satisfactory orientation to Supervisors should be given from colleges, governments, and non-governmental originations to achieve sustainable development goals in education.
6. Experience and committed supervisors should be used as teaching practice supervisors in the exercise.

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