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*FACTORS INFLUENCING THE MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING PRACTICE: A  
CASE STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN*

*BY*

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**Abstract**

*This paper is a report of an investigation into the factors influencing the management of teaching practice, using University of Ilorin as a case study. It focused on the adequacy of planning and assessment of teaching practice exercise towards an effective implementation in the university. The sample comprised 200 -100 level students of the Faculty of Education. The Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 40 students each from the five Departments in the faculty. An instrument lagged "Factors of Effective Teaching Practice Management (Questionnaire" (FETPMQ) was used to collect relevant data. The data collected were analysed using simple percentage and ranking. It was found that the theoretical preparation of student-teachers was adequate; teaching practice exercise were adversely affected by inadequacies in planning and supervision by the University and in the techniques of classroom management by the student-teachers. Suggestions made include: earmarking more money for the exercise to ensuring the posting of student-teachers to places outside the immediate environment of the University; adequate time and qualified staff for teaching practice assessment.*

**Introduction**

Like other forms of professional training, teaching has theoretical and practical components. The theoretical component deals with knowledge about the teaching subject(s), teaching methodology and related disciplines to education. such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, and management. The practical component deals with the application of theories and concepts learnt in these disciplines to real school situations in an exercise termed teaching practice.

Teaching practice is thus an important part of teacher education in which the student-teacher brings together educational theory and actual teaching practices and procedures under component supervision and guidance. Teaching practice is the first opportunity for the student-teacher to participate in activities involved in school situations under typical school conditions. The importance of this opportunity, as elucidated by Olaitan and Agusiobo (1981), is to enable the student-teacher gain experiences in observing and participating actively, in all the diverse educational actions of teachers in the schools. One of the important aims of teaching, practice, therefore, is students' professional articulation. This is achieved through adequate exposure of the student-teacher to develop in himself professional competencies and the personal characteristics, understanding, knowledge and skills of an effective teacher.

Teaching practice can be viewed as the most important part of teacher education programme and, in fact, the focal point of all other trainings a student-teacher receives. This is so because all the psychology, philosophy, principles, techniques and methods learnt by the students in the course of academic lectures cannot be complete until they are translated into teaching, and related to children (Cohen and Gamer. 1982). For teaching practice to achieve its aims there is the need for proper management right from planning through implementation to evaluation stage. Teaching practice requires an extensive preliminary administrative work and other administrative procedures to the last stage of evaluation.

The preliminary stages of teaching practice involve activities such as:

- 1) Student-teacher theoretical preparation by the institution through lectures and micro teaching: and.
- 2) Posting of students to participating schools.

In addition adequate provisions need to be made for:

- 1) duration of teaching practice exercises;
- 2) participating schools;
- 3) qualified cooperating teachers; and,
- 4) teaching practice materials such as lesson plan format, assessment format, supervision" recording format, etc.

Subsequent administrative procedure include:

- 1) visiting the participating schools by supervisors to assess the student-teachers. This involves pie-active interactive and feedback stages; and
- 2) assessment of student-teachers by host principals and cooperating teachers.

The degree of professional experience gained by student-teachers will, therefore, to some extent depend on the ability of the training institutions to identify the major factors influencing successful teaching programmes, and carefully managing them.

It thus become imperative to identify the factors that can influence effective teaching practice exercise with a view to managing them towards developing in the student-teachers effective teaching skills. This is the focus of this paper, using University of Ilorin as a case study.

### ***The Problem***

Teaching practice is the vital link between theory and practice in education. It is therefore important to identify and manage factors that can bring about the desired teaching practice effectiveness. This study is concerned with assessing the influence of the following factors to effective teaching practice exercise:

- 1) theoretical preparation of student teachers;
- 2) planning of teaching practice activities; and,
- 3) assessment of students' teaching.

The significance of this study lies in the recognition of the important role of teachers in students' learning. It is a recognised fact that no school can be greater than its teachers (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1989). Therefore, management of teacher training Programmes towards acquisition of the relevant teaching skills should be constantly investigated to bring about

continuous improvements. In fact, teaching as presently practised in Nigeria can be regarded as a 'quasi-profession'. This fact is buttressed by the submission of Ajayi (1997) that teaching in Nigeria is only being grudgingly regarded as a profession, consequently, there is an urgent need to improve the professional training of teachers as an important step towards upgrading teaching to a full-fledged profession.

### **Research Questions**

The underlisted research questions were raised for investigation:

- 1) Are student-teachers adequately prepared theoretically for teaching practice?
- 2) Is teaching practice exercise adequately planned by the University in terms of duration, posting, accommodation and materials?
- 3) How adequately supervised are student-teachers during teaching practice exercise?
- 4) What problems do student-teachers encounter in the classroom?

### **Methodology**

This study was a descriptive survey on the factors influencing effective management of teaching practice, using university of Ilorin as a case study. Purposeful sampling technique was used to select 200 students from the Faculty of Education. The students were in 400 level, and had undertaken two teaching practice exercises, namely peer teaching and real teaching practice at the end of their 200 and 300 levels, respectively.

A questionnaire tagged "Factors of Effective Teaching Practice Management Questionnaire" (FETPMQ) was designed to collect relevant data for the study. It had 28 items to assess the influence of factors relating to planning, implementation, and evaluation on effective teaching practice exercise in the University of Ilorin. The validity of the instrument was ascertained by incorporating the views and suggestions of teacher educators in the final draft, while its reliability was determined through a test-retest method, using ten 400 level education students who were not part of the sample, within a three-week interval. A reliability coefficient of .79 was obtained.

### **Data Analysis and Results**

The data for the study were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, and rank ordering. The results of the analysis are presented as follows:

*Table I:*

**Percentage Analysis of the Adequacy of the Theoretical Preparation of Student-teachers**

Variable	Very Adequate	%	Fairly Adequate	%	Not Adequate	e
1. Subject matter	165	83.0	33	17.0		1.0
2. Principles of Education	136	68.0				
3. Teaching Methodology	102	51.0	69	26.5	13	7
4. Educational Philosophy	106	53.0	55	28.0	39	20
5. Educational Psychology	109	55.0	53	27.0	38	19.0
6. Educational Sociology	141	71.0	49	25.0	10	5.0
7. Educational Management	144	72.0	45	23.0	11	6

8. History of Education	126	63.0	59	36	15	8
Overall %		67		26		10

Student-teachers in the university were adequately prepared in the theoretical aspects of their training. These aspects relate to the teaching subjects and other disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, sociology and management of education.

Research Question 2: How adequately planned is teaching practice by the University in terms of duration, posting and materials?

Table 2:

**Percentage Analysis on the Adequacy of Teaching Practice Preparation (Planning)**

Variable	Very Adequate		Fairly Adequate <sup>c</sup>		Not Adequate	%
1 6- Week duration	101	51	90	45.0	9	5
2. Available participating schools	69	35	76	38.0	55	28
3. Teaching practice materials	57	29	61	31	82	41.0
4. Good access roads to practising schools	96	48.0	84	42.0	20	10.0
5 Accommodation at practising schools	27	14	16	8.0	150	79
Overall 5		35.0		33		32

The results in Table 2 showed that teaching practice activities were not adequately planned for, except the 6 - week duration for the exercise. This calls for a review of the planning process, especially in the areas of available participating schools and teaching practice materials.

Research Question 3: How adequately supervised are student-teachers during teaching practice exercise?

Table 3:

**Percentage Analysis of the Adequacy of Teaching Practice Assessment**

Variable	Very Adequate	%	Fairly Adequate	%	Not Adequate	%
1. Assessment by qualified cooperating teachers	48	24.0	61	31	91	46
2. Assessment by host principals	11	6	29	15	160	80.0
3. Assessment by subject supervisors	97	49	61	31	42	21.0
4. Time allocated to observation of each lesson	46	23.0	66	33.0	88	44.0
5. Feedback on teaching performance	86	43.0	53	27	61	31
6. Good rapport with the supervisors	89	45	65	33	46	23.0
Overall %		3,		28		41

Feedback information from the teaching practice assessment is very important for the professional development of the prospective teachers. Thus, these obvious inadequacies in the assessment procedures are disadvantageous to the achievement of teaching practice objectives.

Research Questions 4: What problems do student-teachers encounter in the classroom?

In order to make useful suggestions for improvement, problems encountered by student-teachers in the classroom during teaching practice were looked into. The result of the investigation revealed the rank order of the ten most prominent problems of classroom encounter presented in Table 4.

Table 4:

**Rank Order of the Ten Most Prominent Problem Areas in Classroom Teaching**

Problem	Problem Statement	%	Rank
1.	Lesson Plan/Note Preparation	7.0	5
2.	Introducing the lesson	27.0	2
3.	Use of appropriate written language	10.0	4
4.	Use of appropriate spoken language	27.5	1
5.	Use of relevant teaching aids	12.5	3
6.	Involvement of students in the lesson	1.0	9

7.	Class management and control	5.0	7
8.	Orderly presentation of chalkboard	0.5	10
9.	Equitable distribution of time	6.5	6
10.	Assessing students' work	3.0	8

### ***Discussion of Results***

The results on Table 1 indicate that student-teachers in the University were adequately prepared in the theoretical aspects of their training. These aspects include the teaching subjects, principles and methods of education, philosophy, psychology, history and management of education (ranging from emphasis on theory. This is heartwarming, considering the fact that effective teaching cannot take place in a vacuum; the theoretical knowledge must be sound for appropriate practical applications.

Results on table 2 reveal inadequacy in the planning of teaching practice activities. The activities to be planned for include the duration, making available adequate participating schools, teaching practice materials (such as lesson plan notebooks, assessment formats and supervisor' attendance sheets and accommodation at practising schools). Except the six-week duration which was adjudged adequate (15%), other activities were not adequate in provision. Though, the duration could be increased, if possible, since teaching practice takes place twice during the training period of student-teachers in the University, it is considered a long period enough for considerable competence development to take place.

The problem of inadequate participating schools, resulting in rejection of student-teachers might not be unconnected with the occurrence of teaching practice exercises with other nearby teacher education institutions such as Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. Another possible reason is the likely disruption in the normal school programmes, since teaching practice takes place for only six weeks out of the 12 01 13 weeks in a term in the secondary schools.

It is an attempt to solve the problem of inaccessible roads and lack of accommodation that the exercise has been limited to Ilorin Township and its very immediate number of willing participating schools. This problem might become out of control in the nearest future with more education students without a corresponding increase in the number of secondary schools.

Evidence from Table 3 shows serious inadequacies in the assessment of teaching practice by the host principals, cooperating teachers and *CM*-supervisors from the University. The reason for this might not be unconnected with the large number of student-teachers posted to each school and allocated to each supervisor (up to 50 students to a lecturer and within a maximum assessment period of 3 weeks). Consequently, too little time was given to the observation of each lesson (23%) and feedback on teaching performance was inadequate (43%) as well as poor rapport with the supervisors (45%). A supervisor with as many as 20 or more students to supervise in a school might not be favourably disposed pre-lesson conference, detailed written feedback on lesson notes and post-lesson conference.

Table 4 shows the rank order of the ten most prominent problems of classrooms encounter. The two highest ranked problems - the use of appropriate spoken language and introduction of the

lesson are inter-related. Since language is the vehicle for conveying messages, fluency in spoken English is needed by the teachers to introduce and develop the lesson. The same is true of written language to prepare the lesson notes (ranked 4<sup>th</sup>). One other problem was using relevant teacher find it difficult to prepare relevant teaching aids, especially in subject on affective domain. Some who prepare relevant aids render them useless by either not being readable or not properly displayed to learners. The inequitable distribution of time might stem from short time allotted to each lesson by the supervisors. The normal duration of a lesson in secondary 40 minutes (35 minutes on Fridays). However, in order to assess as many students as possible, this duration might be reduced to as small as 10 minutes. The resultant effect might include insufficient time to deliver the lesson by the student-teacher.

Class control and management were not a serious problem (7<sup>th</sup>) probably due to the fact that students would have been pre-warned to behave before the arrival of the supervisor(s), rendering the environment unnatural.

### ***Conclusion***

The results of this study clearly showed that the theoretical preparation of student-teachers was adequate. However, teaching practice exercises were adversely affected by inadequacies in planning, supervision and techniques of lesson delivery. These conclusions are a pointer to the need for concerted effort to be made by the University to review the planning and implementation of teaching practice exercises towards the achievement of the set goals.

### ***Recommendations***

Based on these conclusions, the following suggestions are made: Since there is always room for improvement, the theoretical preparation of student-teachers might be reviewed periodically, especially in the areas of teaching methodology. Specifically, under the teaching methodology for each subject matter, attempts should be made to incorporate the teaching of the use English, in addition to that of General Studies. Also, to prepare students for the main teaching, they should be taught the practical applications of the theoretical disciplines. This could be done through micro-teaching where specific teaching skills are developed.

On the planning of teaching practice exercise, more money should be earmarked for the exercise by the University. This is to ensure posting of student-teachers to places outside the immediate University environment. To achieve this, provisions should be made for drivers and vehicles to convey supervisors to schools.

Considering the importance of adequate supervision to an effective teaching exercise, there should be adequate qualified staff to supervise students' teaching. Instead of earmarking the last 2-3 weeks for assessment it should cover at least four weeks to allow the supervisors spread their time to cover the students allocated them. This would also allow the supervisors to stay long enough with each student-teacher so as to observe and assess all the crucial stages of teaching-introduction, development and conclusion. Moreover, having enough time would ensure giving adequate therapeutic feedback to students on their teaching performance. This

feedback could be either with individual students or in a post-lesson conference with all students in a particular school.

To make the final teaching practice grades a better measure of student-teacher's performance, there is the need to incorporate assessment by either the host principal or subject teachers or both, possibly through some incentives. Where this is difficult, each student-teacher should be assessed by at least three supervisors. The average scores obtained would increase the reliability of such assessment.

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