
**Pedagogical Readiness and Pre-service Teachers Teaching
Practice Experience in Ogun State, Nigeria**

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Abstract

The need to equip teachers in training with practical skills that will make them to qualify as professional teachers makes teaching practice an important part of teacher education programme in Nigeria. This study examined the pedagogical readiness of teachers in training on their teaching practice experience. The study set out to assess the pedagogical readiness of pre-service teachers in terms of knowledge acquisition, lesson notes writing skills, method of teaching skills and handling of instructional materials before their teaching practice. One research question was raised for the study. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised students from the faculties of education of two public owned tertiary institutions in Ogun state. Seventy-six (76) students were selected to form the sample for the study using stratified sampling technique. The main instrument

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used to obtain information for the study was a twenty-one items (21) questionnaire titled “Pedagogical Readiness and Pre-service Teachers Teaching Practice Experience Questionnaire” (PRPTTPEQ) ($r = 0.81$). Data Collected were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings showed that pre-service teachers possessed average skills of writing lesson notes before embarking on teaching practice; pre-service teachers were not taught with different teaching strategies by their lecturers before their teaching practice experience; pre-service teachers have been exposed to proper handling of teaching aids and they possessed average knowledge of what they are to teach before their teaching practice experience. Based on the findings, it was recommended that pre-service teachers should be exposed to skills of writing lesson notes; lecturers should use different teaching strategies to teach the students and all teachers in training must undergo micro-teaching before their teaching practice experience.

Key words: Pedagogy; Pedagogical readiness; Teaching Practice; Teaching Practice experience.

Introduction

Teaching practice is an important part of teacher training programme. It represents the range of experiences which teachers in training are exposed to while working in the classroom and school environment during the course of their training (Marais & Meier, 2004). Teaching practice is an aspect of teacher education programme in Nigeria during which teachers in training are given the opportunity of putting theory into practice. It is the first model of teacher education where the teacher in training puts what he had learnt during the course of his study into practice in a real classroom setting and practices the pedagogical skills of becoming a professional teacher under the watch of a professional teacher.

Before the student teachers were posted into their schools of practice for observation by expert teachers and putting into practice the content, skills, pedagogy and classroom management techniques, the students would have been exposed to courses covering the contents, pedagogy, handling of resource materials,

classroom management and micro teaching. This is to prepare them theoretically on the rudiments of the profession. This training in the faculty of education or university of education always takes periods between 6 (six) to 7(seven) semesters in Nigeria. The teaching practice period for university education students in Nigeria covers about 4(four) to 6(six) months depending on the structure of the school programme.

This activity where student teachers are placed in schools in order to gain teaching experience is referred to as teaching practice. Teaching practice encompasses the entire learning experiences of student teachers in schools during the internship activities (Mokoena, 2017). Teaching practice is in-process training for teachers in training to show evidence of the knowledge, skills and pedagogy that have been acquired as a trained teacher. Andabai (2011) posits that, teaching practice is the period when teachers in training demonstrates teaching principles, pedagogy, handling of resource materials

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and practical exercise which involves different activities of daily school programme. The period provides for the real-life teaching experience within which the teacher in training observes the intricacy and affluence of the reality of being a teacher (Koross, 2016).

It's a period where teacher in training acquires attitudes that enlight him about teachers' activities, rights and responsibilities. Teaching practice gives teachers in training the opportunity of observing and experiencing the actual teaching and learning in a real environment where they take charge and translate theory into practice (Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). During the process of this internship teachers in training engage in the art of teaching and experimenting with different teaching techniques, as they are gaining their first teaching experience with aim of becoming professional teachers. Teaching practice helps to improve teachers in training's knowledge, skills and attitudes and affords them the opportunity of translating theory into practice under the watch of a professional teacher. Studies have showed that individuals learn through experience in collaboration with careful preparation, good mentoring, discussions with colleagues and well-designed courses (Basturk, 2016). It is believed that the more effective the teaching practice is, the better the opportunities for the teachers in training to develop their teaching knowledge and skills acquired in the attitude of becoming professional teachers. The major objectives of teaching practice is to ensure that teachers in training are placed in schools where they can put into practice their pedagogical skills and

classroom management and interact with the realities of the classroom and school environment (Mokoena, 2017). The whole essence of teaching practice in Nigeria is to: develop positive attitude in the teachers in training towards teaching profession; expose him to real life classroom experience; help the teacher in training to translate theory into practice; acculturate the teachers in training with school environments, equip teachers in training with appropriate knowledge, skills, competence, disposition, attitude and consciousness that prepare the teacher in training for full time teaching (Oparah, Nwoke, & Ikwanusi, 2017).

The word pedagogy comes from the Greek word which means art of teaching children. Pedagogy simply means teaching and what we receive in education is called pedagogical training. Pedagogy is concerned with the theory and practice of learning and how the process influences all round development of learners (Rajendra & Sanothimi, 2021). Pedagogy requires meaningful classroom interactions and respect between educators and learners. The goal is to help students build on prior learning and develop skills and attitudes and for educators to devise and present curriculum in a way that is relevant to students, aligning with their needs and cultures. Shaped by the teacher's own experiences, pedagogy must take into consideration the context in which learning takes place, and with whom. It isn't about the materials used, but the process, and the strategy adopted which leads to the achievement of meaningful cognitive learning. To Leach and Moon (1999), pedagogy simply means the

practice that a teacher, together with a particular group of learners creates, enacts and experiences. It is an act of teaching together with its attendant discourse. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which teaching is constituted. pedagogy is a joint activity in which the learner has an active role. Moreover, even when “pedagogy” in teacher education is discussed, the term is used as a substitute for method or technique (Grossman, 2005). Loughran (2008) defines pedagogy in teacher education as knowledge of teaching about teaching and a knowledge of learning about teaching and how the two influence each other in the pedagogic episodes that teacher educators create to offer students teaching experiences that might inform their developing views of practice.

Vahide (2009) examined the effectiveness of a teaching practice course using the micro-teaching methods. Findings showed that the student teachers achieved a better performance in their second teachings in terms of explaining basic theories and principles, identifying and observing necessary teaching roles and behaviors, preparing lesson plans, and conducting more effective teaching practices. Koross (2016) examined students’ experiences and its impact on their perception of the teaching profession and assessed the challenges that students encounter while in the schools that they are attached for teaching practice. The findings of the study indicated that students’ experiences had an impact on their perception of the teaching profession and they did

experience challenges while on teaching practice. Göçer (2016) assessed the effectiveness of micro-teaching, a training technique used to help student teachers establish a strong pedagogical background. Findings showed that micro-teaching, which was conducted in consideration of instructor feedbacks, was helpful in overcoming the fears and concerns of student teachers and that micro-teaching represented a significant opportunity for gaining experience. Mokoena (2017) examined the experiences of student teachers towards teaching practice in an open and distance learning (ODL) institution in South Africa. The findings showed that student teachers experienced challenges with regard to on –time placement in schools, supervision and mentoring. Oparah, Nwoke, and Ikwuanusi, (2017) investigated the influence of teaching practice exercise on pre-service teachers’ professional development with regards to sustaining quality assurance of teacher education. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The result of the study revealed that teaching practice is very essential in pre-service teachers’ professional development irrespective of gender.

The theoretical foundation that supports this work is experiential learning. Kolb, (1984), explains that "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience". Northern Illinois University, (2013) describes experiential learning as learning through action, learning by doing, learning through experience, and learning through discovery

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and exploration. By exposing teachers in training to practical skills it will help them to experience practical teaching in the real environment.

Despite the exposure of the students to different degrees of courses before embarking on practical teaching in primary and secondary schools to demonstrate the content, pedagogy and classroom management, experiences have showed that as a supervisor of students during teaching practice and a one time member of the University Teaching Practice Board many teachers in training still find it difficult in teaching the right contents, selecting appropriate teaching techniques, properly handling resource materials, write good lesson notes and filling some important school records. This calls to question the readiness of the student's teachers before embarking on teaching practice. However, in the course of their training, in addition to their specialized courses student's teachers are taught general culture and professional teaching knowledge (pedagogy). Within

this framework, student teachers are provided with adequate levels of competence in the field, particularly as it applies to classroom management, the use of strategy/method/technique, the use of materials, assessment and evaluation, and so on. It is also essential for student teachers to obtain experience by converting such knowledge obtained from their training into respective skills during the teaching practice exercise (Göçer, 2016). As teachers play a decisive role in the functioning of educational environments and in improving their own effectiveness, the following questions instantly come to mind: Are teachers exposed to adequate training before embarking on teaching practice? Does the training given ahead of the teaching practice provide student teachers with the necessary experience? It is against this background that this study examined the impacts of pedagogical readiness of pre-service teachers on their teaching practice experience.

Statement of the problem

Exposing pre-service teachers to practical teaching for specific period of time is an important aspect of teacher educational programme. Pre-service teachers are posted to schools for practical experience after they have been groomed theoretically. The essence of teaching practice is to make the pre-service teachers put into practice all what he had learnt in the classroom. Experiences have showed that teaching practice teachers find it difficult to perform some tasks during their teaching practice session. Factors such as new environment, ability to transform theory into practical, non cooperation of the teaching practice schools staffs have been ascribed to teaching practice teachers' low performance in teaching practice. However, not much has been illustrated on the adequacy of the preparedness of the students for their teaching practice exercise. This study therefore examines the pedagogical readiness and pre-service Social Studies teachers' teaching practice experience in teachers educational institution in Ogun state.

Objectives

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Assess the pedagogical readiness of pre-service teachers in terms of knowledge acquisition, lesson note writing skills, method of teaching skills and handling of instructional materials before their teaching practice.

Research Questions

How ready are the pre-service teachers in-terms of knowledge acquisition, lesson note writing skills, method of teaching skills and handling of instructional materials?

Method and Materials

The study employed descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised of students from the faculties of education of two public owned tertiary institutions in Ogun state. Seventy-six (76) students were selected to form the sample for the study, using stratified sampling technique. The main instrument used to obtain information for the study was a twenty-one item (21) questionnaire titled “Pedagogical Readiness and Pre-service Teachers Teaching Practice Experience Questionnaire” (PRPTTPEQ). The content and face validity of the questionnaire was established by presenting two copies of the draft questionnaire to two experts in the field of test and measurement for further scrutiny and modification. This was to ascertain the suitability of the instrument in terms of language, presentation, clarity and applicability. Based on their comments necessary modifications were made. Also, a field trial of the instruments was trial tested among the randomly selected faculty of education students outside the area of study. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instrument which was found to be 0.93. Data collected were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics.

Results

Table 1: Distributions on the opinions of respondents on their skills of writing lesson notes acquired ahead of their teaching practice exercise.

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
Skills of writing lesson notes					
1.	I have been tasked to write lesson notes and assessed by my lecturer before the teaching practice period.	75	3.17*	1.545	Agree
2.	I found it very easy to write lesson note before my teaching practices	76	2.28	1.001	Disagree
3.	I often found some items difficult during the Preparation of lesson notes during my teaching practice because I do not understand the steps very well.	76	3.58*	1.508	Agree
4.	The instruction given in school and the guidance from the cooperating teachers in the teaching practice schools are confusing	76	1.801.096		Strongly Disagree

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5. I found it difficult writing lesson notes	76	1.53	1.000	Strongly	Disagree
Grand Mean		2.46	2.664		

Table 1 showed the opinion of the respondents in respect to the adequacy of skills of writing lesson acquired by the students before being exposed to teaching practice. Item 3 which stated that I often found some items difficult during the preparation of lesson notes during my teaching practice because I do not understand the steps very well has the highest mean score of 3.58 (SD=1.508) followed by item 1 which stated that I have been tasked to write lesson notes and assessed by my lecturer before the teaching practice period with mean score of 3.17 (SD = 1.545). However, item 5 which stated that I found it difficult writing lesson note recorded the lowest mean score of 1.53 (SD = 1.000) followed by item 4 which stated that the instruction given in school and the guidance from the cooperating teachers in the teaching practice schools are confusing with mean score of 1.80 (SD =1.096). Total mean score of 2.46 which is lower than 2.5 average levels showed that most of positive statements were not agreed to by the respondents. This implies that students sampled possessed average skills of writing lesson notes before embarking on teaching practice.

Table 2: Distributions on the opinions of respondents on their teaching techniques acquired ahead of their teaching practice exercise.

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
Teaching Technique Skills					
1.	I have been exposed to micro-teaching before my teaching practice.	76	3.32	1.472	Agree
2.	I have been made to use different methods of teaching during my micro teaching	76	3.66*	1.502	Strongly Agree
3.	Corrections made during the micro teaching session had prepared me for my teaching practice experience	76	3.84	1.452	Strongly Agree
4.	I was never exposed to micro teaching before my teaching practice	76	1.89	1.448	Disagree
5.	My teaching practice period is the first time I have Practical teaching experience.	75	3.31*	1.577	Agree
6.	Our lecturers do not teach us with different teaching methods before my teaching practice.	77	4.31*	1.103	Strongly Agree
7.	I found it difficult teaching with different teaching	76	1.99	1.343	Disagree

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techniques.

Grand Mean 3.15 5.483

The result of table 2 showed the respondents' opinions on the teaching techniques acquired before embarking on the teaching practice exercise. Item 6 which stated that our lecturers do not teach us with different teaching methods before my teaching practice recorded the highest means score of 4.31 (SD= 1.103), followed by item 3 which stated that corrections made during the micro teaching session had prepared me for my teaching practice experience with mean score of 3.84 (SD=1.452). However, item 4 which stated that I was never exposed to micro teaching before my teaching practice recorded the lowest mean score of 1.89 (SD = 1.448) followed by item 6 which stated that i found it difficult teaching with different teaching techniques. The grand mean score 3.5 showed the level of agreement of the respondents to most of the items on the questionnaire. Students were not taught by their lecturers with different techniques which had effect on the proficiency of the students to effectively utilize the techniques during their teaching practice.

Table 3: Distributions on the opinions of respondents on instructional materials acquisition skills acquired ahead of their teaching practice exercise.

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
Instructional Materials Application Skills					
1.	I know that usage of teaching resources is for effective teaching.	77	4.79*	.713	Strongly Agree
2.	I have practiced with different teaching aids under the guidance of my lecturer before teaching practice.	77	3.64	1.423	Strongly Agree
3.	I have never practiced with any teaching aids before my teaching practices.	75	3.56	1.188	Strongly Agree
4.	I did not have access to teaching aids before teaching Practice.	77	3.74*	1.281	Strongly Agree
5.	I do not understand the usefulness of teaching aids in teaching and learning	77	1.34	.883	Disagree
	Grand Mean	3.39	3.663		

Table 3 showed the opinions of respondents on acquisition of the application of instructional materials skills ahead of their teaching practice period. Item 1 which stated that I know that usage of teaching resources is for effective teaching recorded the highest mean score of 4.79 (SD=.713), this is followed by item 4 which stated that i did not have access to teaching aids before teaching practice with mean score of 3.74(SD=1.281). The lowest mean score in

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the distributions was recorded by item 5 which stated that i do not understand the usefulness of teaching aids in the teaching aids with mean score of 1.34. The average mean score of 3.39 was recorded which showed that respondents have acquired necessary skills relating to handling of instructional materials before their teaching practice experience.

Table 4: Distributions on the opinions of respondents on knowledge acquired ahead of their teaching practice exercise.

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
Knowledge Acquisition skills					
1.	I have good knowledge of all the subjects I taught during my teaching practice	76	1.80	.994	Disagree
2.	The courses I did in school have prepared me for the subject I taught during my teaching practice.	76	4.20*	1.143	Strongly Agree
3.	I found it difficult to teach the subject I was given to teach during teaching practice.	76	4.26*	1.147	Strongly Agree
4.	I was sometimes faced with strange topics different from what we were taught in school	76	1.43	.899	Disagree
	Grand Mean		2.93	1.721	

Table 4 showed the respondents' opinions on knowledge acquired ahead of the teaching practice exercise. Item 3 which stated that i found it difficult to teach the subject I was given during teaching practice has the highest mean score of 4.26 (SD=1.147), this is followed by item 2 which stated that the courses i did in school have prepared me for the subject I taught during my teaching practice with mean score of 4.20 (SD=1.143). The lowest mean score in the distribution was recorded by item 4 which stated that i was sometimes faced with strange topics different from what we were taught in school with the mean score of 1.43 (SD = .899). The total mean score is 2.93 which showed average agreement with the statements put forwards in the questionnaire. This showed that students only have average knowledge of what they set out to teach in their teaching practice.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the respondents' opinions on the acquisition of lesson note writing skills before embarking on teaching practice showed that students sampled possessed average skills of writing lesson notes before embarking on teaching practice. This supports the findings of Vahide (2009) who concluded that the student teachers achieved a better performance in their second teachings in terms of explaining basic theories and principles, identifying and

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observing necessary teaching roles and behaviours, preparing lesson plans, and conducting more effective teaching practices. This might be due to large number of students in a level which makes it difficult for the lecturers to mark several lesson notes of the students and make appropriate corrections which might have helped the students to develop lesson note writing skills before their teaching practice

The result of the opinions of the students on the acquisition of appropriate teaching techniques before their teaching practice experience showed that students were not taught by their lecturers with different techniques which had effect on the proficiency of the students to effectively utilize the techniques during their teaching practice. This is in line with the findings of Gocer, (2017) who concluded that micro-teaching presents significant opportunity for gaining experience. This might be due to the fact that lecturers mostly adopt direct instruction in teaching the teachers in training but taught them other methods theoretically without practicalizing it. It doesn't make the students to master it before they embark on their teaching practice. The result of the respondents' opinions on students' acquisition of instructional materials skills showed that pre-service teachers have average skills of handling instructional materials skills before embarking on teaching practice. This is in line with the findings of Koross (2016) who stated that students' experience had impact on their perception of teaching and the challenges they undergo while on teaching practice. This finding might be due to that most of the students do not experience the usage of teaching aids during the lecture period before embarking on teaching practice. This showed that students only have average knowledge of what they set out to teach in their teaching practice. This might be due to the fact that most of the pre-service teachers are made to teach in their teaching practice schools courses that are relevant to their courses of study and not the exact courses they did in school.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that lecturers have not been using different strategies to teach the students. Most the lecturers concentrated in using lecturing method and teachers teaching methodology aspects of different courses only identified strategies for the students without demonstrating its usage. Students going for teaching practice will need to be exposed to different teaching methods by their lecturers; exposed to micro teaching and as well as to write lesson notes that must be marked and returned to the students. Based on the above conclusion the following recommendations are put forward that; lecturers should endeavour to use different methods during their lecturing period so as to help the students to learn all the steps that will be involved in using such methods when they are doing their teaching practice; teaching methods should be theoretical oriented alone but the lecturers must learn to demonstrate how the methods could be applied during classroom teaching; pre-service teachers should be exposed to proper handling of teaching aids during the course of their study; all departments in teacher training institutions should have demonstration rooms equipped with modern resource materials for pre-service teachers training and pre-service teachers during their teaching practice periods must be made to teach subjects within their area of study.

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