

PROBLEMS OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS DURING TEACHING PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

The teaching practice is designed to smooth the transition from teacher to student. At the same time the teaching practice assignment gives the teachers training institutions an opportunity to evaluate the students teaching capabilities. It is one of the most important components of the teacher training program. It is an opportunity for student teachers to put their theoretical studies into practice. There may be some inconsistencies between what has been learned in college or university and the actual situation in the classroom. The teaching practice exercise should help student teachers to integrate theory and practice. It is the responsibility of teacher education institutions to provide such learning experiences to student teachers that they may be able to identify, select and innovate organize such learning experiences which may develop competence in the student teachers to teach the course of their specialization on the one hand and recreational activities and social useful production work on the other hand. As teaching practice is an important component of teachers training program, considerable attention must be given to make it more effective and fruitful. Keeping in view the importance of teaching practice, the study was designed to identify the problems faced by the student teachers during teaching practice. The study was delimited to teacher training institutions of Lahore city. Hundred B.ED students were selected by convenience sampling. A questionnaire comprising thirty-five questions was prepared and administered personally. The data was collected and tabulated. Major finding are: 1) Majority of the schools do not prepared the timetable for the pupil teachers. 2) Pupil teachers are not imparted practical training of different methods of teaching before they are sent for teaching practice. 3) Majority of the students are not informed about the rules and regulations of the practicing schools.

Key words: teaching practice, training, student teachers

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is an exciting and rewarding activity but like other professions it is demanding. It requires that its practitioners clearly understand what should be done to bring about the most desirable learning in the pupil and be highly proficient in the skills necessary to carry out these tasks. Teaching is not the simple matter of profession one's message. It is a complicated communication problem. Using different teaching methods, techniques and devices we can solve the communication problem. Teaching methods are means by which the teachers attempt to bring about the desired learning. A professionally trained teacher can use different methods of teaching successfully. It is really a very difficult task and only a professionally qualified teacher can do this. We cannot expect all this from a teacher professionally unqualified.

To provide professional education for teachers, colleges of education have been established almost all over the world. In Pakistan, teacher education programs in consonance with various levels of education i.e. B.Ed and M.Ed have been introduced at certain colleges and universities. All the teachers training

institutions are not only imparting theoretical but also practical knowledge and skill in teaching different subjects to prospective teachers. At the end of the session, teaching practice is carried out for practical application of theoretical understanding about different teaching methods. It is generally of one month's duration.

Whereas teaching is the process by which a person helps other people to learn. It is one of our most important activities. Teaching helps people to gain the knowledge and attitudes they need to be responsible citizens, earn a living and lead a peaceful life. It also provides a chief mean of passing knowledge to the next generation. (Encyclopedia, 1988: P/65)

Efforts to define "teaching" have centered on explorations of various facts of the concept of teaching rather than on the formulation of explicit definitions. Altogether there have been four attempts to define "teaching", but none has resulted in an explicit definition. One takes its substance from precedent, two pursue the task through the techniques of linguistic analysis, and the remaining one is controlled by ideological consideration. A fifth definition, a scientific one, is beginning to take shape and in all probability will supersede the others. These five definitions are: teaching in the conventional sense, or the descriptive definition; teaching as success; teaching as an intended activity; teaching as a normative activity; and the emerging definition. They may admit the accuracy of the historical definition of teaching but still turn to their own programmatic definition of teaching as inquiry.

The forgoing definitions of teaching are rooted in the ordinary language and while they clarify to some extent and various senses in which the word "teaching" is used in pedagogical discourse, they are not precise enough for everyone to agree on their application. For the study of an occupation to become scientific, it is necessary to some extent to abandon lexical definitions even though terms of the ordinary language are retained. Every field of scientific endeavor has its beginnings in primitive observations and experiences and goes forward, at least initially, with words adapted from everyday language, "Work", "Force" and "Horsepower" have precise meanings in mechanics, but each one had a history of use before it was defined in mechanics in ways not derivable from its daily uses.

While "teach" is found in everyday language, it is retained in pedagogical science where it is defined by empirically confirmed statements of the effects of teacher performance. For example, if a teacher gives a definitional rule and positive and negative instances in teaching concrete concepts, the probability that the student will master the concept is increased; or if a teacher gives corrective feedback to a pupil who makes a mistake, the chances that the student will learn are enhanced.

The term teaching practice embraces all the learning experiences of student teachers in schools. The term practice teaching has three major connotations: the practicing of teaching skills and acquisition of the role of a teacher; the whole range of experiences that students go through in schools and the practical aspects of the course as distinct from theoretical studies (Stone and Morris: 1907 P/19).

According to Thomas, the period spent by a student teacher in an actual classroom situation in order to teaching practice skills under the supervision of an experienced teacher. According to Thomas, the activity referred to as teaching practice or student teaching consists of student teacher giving instruction to a regular classroom of pupils. The amount of such direct teaching experience can vary from one or two lessons to an entire year of full time or half time service in a school.

Holden suggests that the extended period of more or less full time teaching in a school found in conventional initial training course. (Holden: 1987 P/52).

Teaching practice refers to the opportunity given to the trainee to develop and improve his / her professional practice in the context of the real classroom, usually under some form of guidance and supervision. School experience means the total experience of working in a school in which trainees have when they are on placement in schools. (Wallac: 1991, P/121).

Perry says that teaching practice refers to the period of time in which a student teacher gains firsthand experience in working with a particular group of children. (Perry: 1997, P/3).

A number of terms such as the teaching practice, student teaching, field studies, infield experience, school based experience or internship are used to refer to this activity. Niak writes about teaching practice as in practice the embryo teacher, under the direct and continuing supervision of experience master, begins to teach, to apply the theory learned into practice. (Niak: 1998, P/133).

Khan writes about the concept of internship as it is the responsibility to teacher education institutions to provide such learning experiences to students teachers that they may be able to identify, select, innovate and organize such learning experiences which may develop competence in the student teachers to teach the course of their specialization on the one hand and games, recreational activities and socially useful productive work on the other hand. The program of internship in teaching other than traditional teaching practice program can play an effective role in developing these concepts in the student teachers.

Internship is a new experience in the profession of teaching. In which trainees are able to observe the entire work of the school and to participate actively in all the important professional activities of a teacher both in and out of the classroom (Khan: 1993, P/19).

According to Dreeben this phase of training contributes not only to the development of occupational norms but also to reducing anxiety about taching and to learning classroom techniques. It also seems to contribute most of discover workable conduct, where “workable” becomes characteristically defined as classroom management, following fixed schedules of instructions, simplifying lesson plans, getting through the material and cutting back on the breadth and richness of the material presented. (Dreeben: 1970, P/18).

Gower and Walters write that someone can learn about teaching by discussing it and talking about materials and techniques but like most skills one cannot really learn it without doing it. It is one of the few opportunities for prospective teacher ever have for trying out a new idea and perhaps having a critical but supportive set of observers. To focuses on: a) Classroom sensitivity to problems of teaching, b) Classroom sensitivity to learning problems, c) Basic classroom management skills, d) Teaching technique. (Gower and Walter: 1983, P/40).

Cohen and Manion described the need of teaching practice in these words. The theory and training in college prior to first practice cannot possibly provide with answers for all the problems and contingencies, a future teacher is likely to encounter in the school and the classroom. (Cohen and Manion: 1983, P/14).

According to Goodings by exposing teachers in training to the realities of their future carriers in a controlled situation, enable them to eliminate a variety of weakness characterized beginning teachers. Not only they are better prepared to teach but posses a high level of confidence in their own abilities. (Goodings: 1983, P/43).

According to Brown and Brown the teaching practice period is one of the most important components of the teacher-training program. It is an opportunity for students teachers to put their theoretical studies into practice. There will undoubtedly be some inconsistencies between what has been learned

in college or university and the actual situation in the classroom. The teaching practice exercise should student teachers to integrate theory and practice and to resolve some of these apparent discrepancies.

It is also the time of try out some of the ideas which have been developed in college or university and to experiment with the different approaches strategies and techniques of teaching raised in the methods course.

Practice training provides:

- An opportunity to gain confidence.
- Chance to put theories into practice.
- An opportunity to learn the skills and attitudes of a competent and affective teacher.
- The chance to learn about children in real life.
- An opportunity to improve the knowledge of subject mater.
- The chance to gain from the benefits of constructive criticism.
- An opportunity for self-evaluation and to discover strengths and weaknesses.
- An opportunity for the teaching institutions to evaluate itself.

(Brown and Brown: 1990, P/2, 3).

According to Merry field teaching practice provides the opportunity to students:

- To apply knowledge and skills acquired in teacher education course work.
- To demonstrate attitude consistent with good teaching.
- To apply multiple principles of learning and multiple teaching strategies.
- Begin to identify with the role of a teacher.
- Develop entry-level competence in the full range of teaching function.
- Demonstrate professional and ethical behavior. (Merryfield: 1997, P/124).

Perry narrates that teaching practice experiences contribute in some way to under standing of teaching. It helps to learn to use teaching experience it involves:

- Developing specialized knowledge
- Using the knowledge to access and make decisions
- Acquiring high standards of practice
- To develop knowledge and abilities in relation to each of these aspects.

(Perry: 1998, P/23).

Meetings are held to give the students the necessary information about their teaching practice. The teaching practice organizer together with the supervisors give out the necessary information of such as matters as procedure for observation days, on assessment, on appropriate dress, on learning aids etc. Students can ask questions about any aspect of teaching practice that concerns them. The students should be told about their transport and about the times they are supposed to board the buses to and

from the school. All the students going on teaching practice should attend teaching practice programs. (Macharia and Wario: 1994, P/8).

One of the principles of learning is to know the learners and start working with them. Student teacher is deeply concerned about knowing the situation in which he/she will work and the people with whom he / she will associate. He/she has also concern to know about the curriculum plans of school. Student teacher will need to become familiar with the particular units of work in which the pupils be engaged when he / she begins his/her student teaching.

The concept involved and the instructional material being used. Another whole area of concern is his / her relations to other staff members and the school administration to parents and school community. Students must know: School calendar, school hours, Reporting accidents, first aid service, health services, Playground rules, Lost and found articles, Duties of safety patrol, Passing in corridors, ground movement within the building, Use of library, auditorium, gymnasium, audio-visual materials, Use of duplicating equipment, requisitioning supplies and equipment, Testing program, Testing program, Teachers meeting, other professional and in-service meetings, Teachers library, Parent – Teachers meeting, Report to Parent, Central Record Office, Supervisory policy, principal central office personnel, Reporting pupil and teacher absence, Special school services, store, bank etc. (Stratemeyer and Lindsey: (1969, P/205).

Stratemeyer suggested a few tasks for students, which are as follows: a) To observe the work of other teachers (cooperating teachers) and of classes other than the one with which he / she is concentrating, b) To participate in all school projects in the total program of an educational unit and to develop a feeling for the responsibility and get the feel of the teachers work load, c) To participate in planning for and presenting school assembly programs, d) To observe the work of several clubs of different types and to share in the responsibility for guidance of and of special interest to him / her or to which he / she brings special competence, e) To study how administration affects teaching and teachers. To get a picture of the activities of school administrators a student might spend two or three days working full time with the school principal. It is important that the students do more than sit passively in an office and watch people come and go, f) Attending the regular faculty meetings in school. The nature of the meeting, its purposes and probable procedures and one's planning for contributing to the discussion at hand, g) Include to getting the responsibility for the guidance of pupils in dealing with their personal and education problems. (Stratemeyer: 1969, P/84).

Whereas Johnson and Deprin recommended the following tasks of students teachers: a) Observe the teaching procedures followed by the cooperating teacher, taking note of the general routine, b) Become familiar with available instructional materials, c) Make a special effort to become acquainted with the pupil's learning as many names as possible, d) Identify areas in which plans can be made for immediate participation with individual or small groups, e) Acquire background information on the pupils with whom he will be working, f) Attaining an understanding of school situation; the school program, physical surrounding and facilities and the responsibilities of the teacher to the school, community and profession, g) Obtaining experience in performing satisfactorily the routine tasks, which are normally the responsibilities of classroom teacher, h) Engaging in a wide range of professional activities like using available instructional media, arranging bulletin board, classroom and management, keeping attendance register etc, i) Making daily plans and unit plans. (John and Deprin: 1971, P/29-31).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The followings were the objectives of the study:

1. To know the preliminary arrangements made by the supervisors for the students before the commencement of teaching practice.
2. To collect the information regarding the assistance of the supervisors, Headmistresses and concerned class teachers to prospective teachers.
3. To enlist the problems faced by the prospective teachers during class room teaching.
4. To highlight the need of teaching practice in different subject.
5. To present the suggestions for further studies.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study would provide useful information about the actual practice of the supervisors towards the training of the students. The study would reveal the problems faced by the students during the teaching practice. It would provide useful information for the improvement of the system of teaching practice.

PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY

It was a descriptive study. The survey technique was used for the collection of data. B.Ed students from teacher training institutions of Lahore constituted the population of the study. Through convenient sampling hundred students were selected. A questionnaire comprising thirty five items was prepared. The questionnaire had only closed questions. It questionnaire was distributed to the selected students by the researcher. After getting the responses from the students the data was tabulated and analyzed in the form of tables. On the basis of analysis of data, findings and conclusion were drawn and recommendations were made. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher to the entire respondent included in the sample. Almost all the students were cooperative except a few. A brief introduction about the purpose and nature of the questionnaire was made before the distribution of the questionnaire. Each respondent was given a reasonable time limit to tick mark question. The collected data had been tabulated form. Responses to each question were recorded in percentage of each response was calculated and presented in tabular form.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of the study was to get information about the problems faced by the prospective teachers during teaching practice. The study was of descriptive nature. Survey method was used for getting data. A questionnaire comprising 29 items was prepared and administered to one hundred B.ED students of University of Education, Lahore. The data was collected, arranged and analyzed. Simple percentages were used as the standard measure of statistics.

FINDINGS

Following findings were prepared as a result of analysis of data:

- 85% the respondents were sent for teaching practice under proper planning.
- 45% of the respondents were consented before sending them for teaching practice.

- 40% respondents were provided with transport facility.
- 100% respondents were of the opinion that selected schools were informed of the expected arrival of the prospective teachers beforehand.
- 30% respondents indicated that an orientation was conducted for them before leaving for teaching practice.
- 22% respondents were informed about the rules and regulations of the schools.
- 100% respondents were not informed of the existing facilities available in the selected schools.
- 12% respondents were introduced to the academic and administration staff.
- 20% respondents responded that the administration of the schools prepared the timetable for them before the commencement of teaching practice.
- 64% respondents were offered the classes of their choice.
- 60% respondents were of the opinion that duration should be one half month.
- 100% respondents were not imparted practical training of different methods of teaching in various subjects before they were sent for teaching.
- 65% respondents taught the same subjects for whom they were imparted training.
- 73% respondents were given practical training for lesson planning before the commencement of teaching practice.
- 100% respondents responded that their supervisors were present during school hours and they pointed out their weaknesses in the lesson planning.
- According to 80% respondents their lessons were checked regularly by the concerned supervisors.
- According to 23% respondents, the class teachers were present in the classes during teaching.
- According to 15% respondents the class teachers guided and encouraged the pupil teachers and cooperated with them concerning the required teaching material.
- According to 78% respondents, there were proper arrangements for sitting in the school.
- 80% pupil teachers were allowed to use school library and laboratory.
- According to 18% respondents, students of their classes considered them their teachers.
- 89% of the respondents have given positive response towards the prepare planning before the teaching.
- 93% of the respondents used A.V aids during the teaching practice.
- 54% of the respondents reached in time during teaching practice.
- 57% of the respondents selected the class according to their own choice.
- 60% teachers cooperated with the pupil teachers during the teaching practice.
- 75% of the respondents planned activity during the teaching practice.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of analysis of data and findings the important conclusions were:

- a) Prospective teachers were sent for teaching practice under proper planning.
- b) Consent of the majority of the students regarding the choice of the schools were not considered important.
- c) Majority of the students were not provided with transport facilities.
- d) Schools selected for teaching practice were informed of the arrival of the prospective teachers beforehand.
- e) An introductory gathering of teaching practice was not arranged for the pupil teachers before the commencement of teaching practice.
- f) Majority of the students were not informed about the rules and regulations of the practicing schools.
- g) Pupil teachers were not informed of the existing practical facilities available in the schools.
- h) Majority of the schools had not prepared the timetable for the pupil teachers.
- i) Majority of the students were offered the classes of their choice.
- j) Pupil teachers were not imparted practical training of different methods of teaching before they are sent for teaching practice.
- k) According to hundred respondents, the season selected for teaching practice was suitable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Proper planning for teaching practice may be made before its commencement as like consent of students, transport facility, orientation of teaching practice, available facilities, and school rules and regulations.
- ii. Preparation of a feasible timetable for the pupil teachers in collaboration with school administration.
- iii. Pupil teachers should be imparted practical training in using different methods of teaching. They may particularly teach those subjects for which they have received training.
- iv. Pupil teachers may be trained practically for lesson planning in advance and allowed to use the available facilities. Regular supervision and guidance will increase the quality of output.

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