

TEACHING PRACTICE: TOOL FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN PREPARATION OF TEACHERS FOR NEW GENERATION IN NIGERIA



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Abstract

Teaching practice is the name of preparation of student teachers for teaching by practical training. It is a cardinal and indispensable aspect in the preparation of teachers in Nigeria. There must be quality assurance in the preparation of teachers for the new generation. This paper examined the concept of teaching practice, quality assurance in relation to teacher education in Nigeria, importance of teaching practice, strategies for quality assurance, problems and solutions associated with lack of quality in teacher education in Nigeria. Conclusion and Recommendations proffered include; more funds should be allocated to teaching practice exercise and micro-teaching laboratory should be well equipped to ascertain quality in preparation of teachers for new generation in Nigeria

Keywords: Teaching Practice, Quality Assurance, Teacher Education, Preparation of Teachers, Micro-Teaching.

Teacher education can be seen as professional education of teachers towards attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work in accordance with the needs of society. It can be referred to as a cyclic affair in which both the content area and pedagogical skills are

package for the student teachers in order to prepare them to meet the requirements of the teaching profession (Jekayinfa, 2001). This package can be intership, teaching practice or Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) and is often allotted a specific time during which student teachers are posted to schools to teach and to demonstrate practically the knowledge and skills already acquired during training. Teaching practice is an essential stage in the professional development of teacher. It provides an opportunity for student teachers to apply the knowledge and theories learnt in their various institutions to the real classroom situation. Teaching practice has been noted to be most challenging, rewarding and an important stage in preparation of teachers (Goethals & Howard, 2000) and it is generally agreed that it is the key for preparing of teachers (Guyton & McIntyre, 2010). As a result of the fact that teaching practice is relevant it should be organized in such a way that student teachers can continuously learn current knowledge, skills and develop professionally. Proper and adequate supervision of teaching practice should be done, so as to bring about quality assurance in teacher training programmes in Nigeria.

Concept of Teaching Practice

Teaching practice (T.P) is an essential component of the student's professional training. It is a core course in preparation of teachers in Nigeria. It is carried out in both colleges of education, faculties of education and institutes in Nigerian Universities. Teaching practice is internally and externally supervised for quality assurance.

Teaching practice goes beyond mastery of subject matter to be taught and knowing how to teach. The purpose of teaching practice is to develop several competencies in the student teacher which include: interpersonal, pedagogical, intercultural and psychological competencies (Zindi, Nyota & Batidzirai, 2005). The student teachers are prepared for teaching practice through course(s) in micro-teaching, observations of master teachers and peer teaching for quality output during teaching practice.

Various Colleges of Education, faculties and institutes of Education deploy student teachers for teaching practice and all effort is made to attach students to competent qualified teachers for supervision. An integral part of teaching practice is student teacher supervision and assessment. The supervision is done through coordinated partnership between the teachers in their school of practice and institutions' lecturers. In Nigeria, student teachers from colleges of education are to spend one term of thirteen weeks at their school of practice while undergraduate students spend six weeks for their teaching practice. Supervision of student teachers is the task of teacher training institutions as well as host school.

The concept of teaching practice is made clearer by looking at some of the objectives of teaching practice as highlighted by Nwaneku, Okoli and Mezieobi (2011:42) as follow:

- i. To provide prospective teachers with the opportunity of establishing an appropriate teacher-pupil relationship.
- ii. To provide an opportunity for evaluating the student potential as a teacher and suitability for the teaching profession.
- iii. To develop personal relationship with other administrators, teachers, parents and students.
- iv. To provide the future teacher with experience in school to overcome the problems of discipline and enable him/her develop method of control.
- v. To provide an opportunity to put theories into practice and develop deeper understanding of educational principles and their implication for learning.
- vi. To enable the student teachers effectively plan and prepare lessons.
- vii. To develop skills in the use of fundamental procedures, techniques and methods of teaching.
- viii. To develop desirable professional interest attitudes and ideas relative to teaching profession.
- ix. To enable student teacher acquire desirable characteristics/traits of a teacher and to display appropriate behaviour.
- x. To provides students teachers with opportunity to have teaching evaluation and to gain from constructive criticism.
- xi. To provide an opportunity for self evaluation and to discover ones strength and weaknesses.

Importance of Teaching Practice in Teacher Education in Nigeria

Teaching practice enhances the student teachers' professional development in the follow ways:

- i. It provides the time and avenue for student teachers to acquire competencies that are required in their teaching professional development.
- ii. It brings student teachers into a programme of cooperative and interactive guidance by experienced teachers (Young & Edward, 2006)
- iii. Practical experience affords student teachers the opportunity to reflect on their own actions in the classroom and to acquire valuable skills, knowledge and attitude which are required in management of student learning experience in the classroom (Imogie, 2009).
- iv. It affords the student teachers the opportunity to reflect not just on matters associated with professional life and growth but also know who they are and are to become in the new generation (De Ville, 2010).

- v. It allows student teachers to have ample chance and the real life situations to apply theories and principles of education they have been taught in their institutions (Olaitan & Agusiobo, 2000).
- vi. It enables the student teachers to become more familiar with variety of instructional materials and resources, evaluate and select those appropriate for the objectives in a teaching unit of lesson (Adekunle, 2006).
- vii. It provides the trainer the opportunity of both assessing and guiding the trainee for both formative and summative evaluation purposes (Afolabi, 2005).
- viii. It enables the student teachers to organize syllabus contents around major concepts and generalizations in the development of sequential learning in a unit or a course of study (Adeniran, 2007).

Concept of Quality Assurance

Quality can be seen as meeting performance requirement. It is also characterized by the level of excellence in performance on the strength of context, inputs, process and output (Onocha, 2002). Quality in relation to education refers to standard or conformance to certain minimum standards (Onuma, 2008). Ojerinde, (2007) viewed quality in education to factors such as well articulated national goals, well planned curriculum at each level, assessment procedures and instruments, capacity for processing examination data, utilization of assessment outcomes and quality of students enroll.

Quality assurance is the management of goods, services and activities from the input stage through process to the output stage of production (UBE, 2002). Assurance revolves around meeting certain acceptable criteria of minimum standards of quality to be achieved in production of good and services.

Quality assurance which involved provision and maintenance of the conditions determined to guarantee a high standard of outcome and products of teacher training institutions in Nigeria (European Student Handbook, 2005). Quality assurance also employs services of teacher education to train qualified personnel to enhance their performance in their various work places (educational institution). The philosophical objective of quality assurance in education is the acceptance or decision of education institution to train student teachers to achieve competence in a given discipline.

Okebukola, (2005) highlighted some factors that contribute to quality assurance in education as follows:

- i. Provision of information to public on quality and standards.
- ii. Credibility to award of certificates,
- iii. Engendering confidence in a programme,
- iv. Ensuring accountability, and

v. Enhancing quality and standards.

From the above, quality assurance in education includes supervision of the school plant, ascertains effectiveness and efficiency of the teacher, adequacy and accessibility of facilities and teaching resources needed for effective teaching and learning and how to prepare teachers to meet the challenges of the new generation and ever changing world of today.

Strategies for Quality Assurance in Preparation of Teachers for New Generation

There are some strategies for quality assurance in preparing teachers in Nigeria. Ijeoma and Osagie (2005) suggested some strategies for quality assurance in teacher education in Nigeria. They are:

i. Monitoring: This is a strategy implementation framework which is of importance to the success of teacher education beginning with a quality policy mission statement and establishment of organizational frame work. Monitoring in quality assurance in teacher education involves various monitoring process, control feedback mechanism and agencies among which include:

- a. Monitoring admission policy
- b. Assessment of students through test, summative examination (moderated and subjected to external assessor).
- c. Guidelines for recruitment, promotion of teaching staff.
- d. Review of existing curriculum
- e. Regular auditing of the institutions (Onuma, 2008)

ii. Evaluation: It is important to evaluate the educational system periodically to solve problem related to low staff morale, poor students performance and students failure, in examination, dropout rates and growth in community relationship. Evaluation could be formative and summative (UBE, 2002). Both formative and summative evaluation should be systematic, valid, reliable and scientific in nature. The knowledge of evaluation components helps to improve the quality of student teachers in Nigerian teachers' institutions.

iii. Inspection and Supervision: These are very important in quality assurance because it involves input factor, course design, teaching process, assessment and evaluation, environment, learning approaches, teaching skills with learning outcome as central piece. These considerations should be harmonious with quality improvement in teaching and learning. Also reports of inspections are used for reinforcement and improvement purposes.

- iv. Agencies of Quality Assurance:** The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for higher education in 1977 was established with the following objectives:
- a. Monitor the quality of programmes offered in higher institutions;
 - b. Promote public confidence;
 - c. Support continuous enhancement in the standard;
 - d. Develop and manage qualification frame work;
 - e. Advise on the grant of degree awarding power and university status;
 - f. Determine codes of practice and examples of good practices e.t.c and
 - g. Make the desire for quality an overreaching principles in very operation.

Some of the major agencies established to foster quality assurance in Nigerian education enterprise and teacher education in particular are:

- i. The National University Commission (NUC).
- ii. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE).
- iii. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE).
- iv. The National Teachers Institute (NTI).
- vi. The Joint Consultative Committee on Education (JCCE) (Onuma, 2008).

Problems and Solutions Associated with Lack of Quality in Teacher Education in Nigeria

The following are the problems associated with lack of quality in teacher education in Nigeria:

- i. Proliferation of low quality graduates
- ii. Low or poor productivity
- iii. Poor job performance, the threat occasional by certification racketeering and qualification inflation.
- iv. Inadequate numbers and quality of teaching and non-teaching staff (Nwatuluak, 2003).

Nwankwo (2008), highlighted solutions for ensuring quality assurance in teacher education in Nigeria.

- i. Availability of adequate and qualified teaching staff.
- ii. Availability of adequate and modern technological facilities.
- iii. Regular staff development programmer and supervision.
- iv. Continuous appraisal of teacher educational programme and personnel.
- v. Adequate planning
- vi. Adequate funding of teacher education in Nigeria.

If all these could be applied in all ramifications there will be quality assurance in teacher preparation for the new generation in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This paper summarizes the concept of teaching practice; quality assurance and the importance of teaching practice in preparation of teachers in Nigeria were extensively discussed. Various strategies for using quality assurance in preparing teacher in Nigeria for new generation were looked into. Also, problems and solutions associated with lack of quality teacher education in Nigeria were highlighted and discussed. It is expected that quality assurance is essential for the preparation of teachers for the next generation.

Recommendations

In order to enhance quality in the preparation of teachers for the new generation, the following recommendations should be looked into by all stakeholders in preparation of teachers in Nigeria

1. Workshops on teaching practice supervision by the training institutions should be organized regularly for all supervisors to clarify issues that will affect quality of teaching practice supervision such as proper interpretation, supervision instruments so that there is supervision consensus in dealing with similar student issues and supervisor bias is check.
2. More incentives should be provided by the committee organizing teaching practice to the supervisors.
3. Provision of new Information and Communication Technologies facilities should be used to train the student teachers as this will enable them to meet the global challenges of the new generation.
4. Adequate monitoring of the entire educational system should be carried out regularly and reports should be submitted to appropriate quarters for adequate implementation.
5. All teacher training institutions should have a well equipped micro-teaching laboratory where students will be well exposed to the rudiments of teaching before the actual teaching.
6. More funds should be allocated for the preparation and running of teaching practice exercise so as to enhance quality.
7. Supervisors should endeavour to visit the student teachers regularly and supervise the actual teaching process.

All hands must be on deck during teaching exercise to enhance quality assurance in the preparation of teachers for the new generation in Nigeria.

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