
Reevaluation of Teaching Practice Assessment Framework for Professional Development of Teachers in Nigeria: Teacher Trainees Perspective

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Abstract

Teaching practice is a mandatory and vital aspect of teacher education programme not only in Nigeria but globally. Mentoring, supervision and assessment are fundamental to the continuous development of appropriate skills, attitude, behaviour and instruction methods engaged by teacher trainees. Apprehension about the quality of teachers and their development raises contention about the propriety of assessment and supervision of teacher trainees during teaching practice exercises. The focus of this paper is to reevaluate the teaching practice assessment framework in teacher education in Nigeria based on teacher trainees perspectives. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The stratified random sampling technique was adopted to draw a sample of 400 final year students from the Faculty of Education of four universities in South-South, Nigeria. A questionnaire was developed to elicit teacher trainees' perceptions of the framework for teaching practice assessment and supervision. Items used for the questionnaire were adapted from the teaching performance assessment guide obtained from the institutions where participants were drawn for the study. A reliability coefficient of .80 was obtained using Cronbach's alpha from pre-administration of the instrument. The major result from the study showed that the level of preparation of teacher trainees before teaching practice posting is inadequate for undertaking non-cognitive responsibilities, Also lack of regular supervision, mentoring and feedback from supervisors hinders the professional progression of teacher trainees. Based on these findings, it was recommended that there should be collaboration among stakeholders (supervisors, cooperating teachers, teaching units and administrators of the practice schools) to enable effective assessment of teacher trainees.

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INTRODUCTION

The process, method or style of communicating information to a learner by teachers differs. Some teachers are charismatic, expressive, engaging and bring the object of their topic or lesson being taught to life for the students or learners. Teaching is an art, craft and involves skills. It requires a lot of dedication and devotion. A teacher must be teachable, willing to acquire more knowledge and improve on his/her skills.

Ipaye (1996) refers to teacher education as the exercise of advancing scholarship and proficiency as the foundation for practice with preparing trainee teachers for the teaching profession as well as the furtherance of professional teachers.

Teaching practice is the formal practical exposure of the teacher trainees to a teaching and learning environment. It is a process that involves systematic expression of teacher trainees' subject knowledge and ability to transfer learning judiciously to learners. In order to duly execute this task teacher trainees require training in lesson planning, preparation, lesson presentation, classroom management, communication skills and assessment procedures (Subedi, 2009).

The teacher training programme in most institutions prepares teacher trainees for the task ahead through exposure to compulsory courses in educational test and measurement, teaching method and microteaching. Therefore, the professional progression of teacher trainees would be strengthened through meticulous guidance, advice, direction and feedback from supervisors, cooperating teachers or mentors and school administrators.

The role of mentors and supervisors is very crucial to the professional development of teacher trainees. In this regard, Marais and Meier (2004) observed that teacher trainees relationship with supervisors is a major prerequisite for learning. Hence, deficiency in the supervisors' guidance and training reduces the efficacy of practical teaching and can lead to unfavourable experiences of teaching

practice. The cooperating teacher also plays a major role in the continuous assessment of the professional improvement of the teacher trainee in terms of guidance and assistance in the lesson plan, presentation, monitoring of assessment and grading of pupils, enforcing discipline among pupils, appropriate behaviour and ethics of the teaching profession. Altintas and Gorgen (2014) emphasize that the objective of teaching practice is to establish that teacher trainees are of the right disposition for the teaching profession. Supervision of students, therefore, involves keeping track of the evolution of the teacher trainees, grading, anticipating future accomplishments and inspiring students (Chase, 1999). In the same light, Anumaka (2016) aver that the task of the supervisor is to arm the teacher trainees with dexterity and capability to enable them to function effectively in the classroom.

The concern about what is assessed during teaching practice is expressed in the assertion by Levine (2006) that one of the major risks confronting educators is preparing teachers who have theoretical knowledge and lack practical knowledge. The teaching practice process is multifaceted. In some institutions, teacher trainees are further sensitized at annual orientation programmes organized by the teaching practice unit of the institution. The assessment guideline developed by the institution during teaching practice is made available to participating lecturers prior to the supervision exercise. Some of the features of the current assessment guideline drawn from the institutions used for this study include;

- Lesson plan
 - (a) Statement of objectives
 - (b) Content
- Lesson
 - (a) Introduction
 - (b) Development
 - (c) Masters of subject matter
 - (d) Use of chalkboard
 - (e) Time management
 - (f) Questioning techniques
 - (g) Effective use of instructional materials
 - Reliance
 - Adequacy and
 - Variety

- (h) Class participation during a lesson
- (i) Summary and conclusion of lesson
- Class management
 - Class control
 - Class arrangement
 - Reactions and reinforcement of students responses
- Communication skills
 - Clarity of voice
 - Appropriate use of language
- Evaluation
 - Suitability of assessment
 - Attainment of stated objectives
 - Regular assignment/review of pupil's exercise books
- Teacher demeanour
 - Appearance (Neatness)
 - Professional conduct

Each feature has a distinct evaluation score assigned to it.

The minimum standard guidelines for teaching practice is twelve weeks based on the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in Nigeria. However, due to incessant strikes by academic staff, natural disasters, youth restiveness, pandemics and other related challenges, it is difficult for some institutions to adhere to the stipulated time frame. In a related study conducted in Nigeria, Nakpodia (2011) expressed dissatisfaction that students were supervised/assessed at least twice before the end of the teaching practice exercise. This assessment process is limited and may not adequately achieve the intended objectives.

Some scholars have declared that an examination of teaching practice assessment programmes reveal that assessment of the teacher trainees' performance in the teaching practice exercise is defective hence irrespective of the dedication accorded teaching practice, the process of assessment remains contentious (Brooker, Muller, Mylonas & Hansford, 1998). Similarly, in a study conducted by Parker and Volante (2009) in Canada, teacher trainees' noted that teaching practice supervisors should allot more time to observing the presentation of lessons and employ credible evaluation strategies in the preparation time of students before deployment to the demonstration schools. In the same light, the findings of Seumedia

and Mundalado (2012) revealed that feedback from peer assessors was superficial hence did not make any reasonable contribution to teacher trainees subject content knowledge and teaching skills. The feedback from cooperation teachers was directed at classroom management disregarding, subject matter knowledge and teaching skills. While the teaching practice supervisors dwelt more on teaching skills, classroom management, learners' knowledge and no feedback on subject matter knowledge. Consequently, Seumedia and Mundalado averred that subject matter knowledge and practical presentation of subject content advance to the assessment outcome of teacher trainees. However, in an investigation on teacher trainees' preferred assessment strategy, Leshem and Bar-Hama (2008) stated that teacher trainees prefer specific criteria aimed at delineating efficient teaching in order to determine the quality of their teaching. It is not surprising, that the findings of Yuksel (2014) revealed that teacher trainees averred that they are competent in subject matter mastery, engaging learners, proficient in teaching but are lacking in the utilization of teaching approaches for effective classroom management. This implies that teacher trainees' are more concerned about how they teach irrespective of the processes required for effective teaching, learning and professional development. Teacher trainees' have also identified that a teacher needs to exhibit good character as a model to learners (Tillema, Smith & Lessem, 2011). The responsibility of a teacher goes beyond teaching, it involves; subject mastery/delivery, modelling, creative thinking, appropriate conduct, discipline, tolerance, ability to empathise, solve problems, counsel, be proactive and accommodate the excesses of learners. The teaching profession is encompassing, thus must be viewed as a 'whole entity and not 'fragmented'. It is therefore expedient to assess to a reasonable extent teacher trainees' cognitive, psychomotor and affective domain throughout the teaching practice exercise. This would enable them to identify the aspects that need adjustment or enhancement preparatory for their professional growth and development. This is aptly posited in the findings of Ogono and Badmus (2006) on teacher trainees perception of their supervisors' feedback, that the teaching practice exercise enabled them to assess lessons taught, detect areas of strength and weaknesses to take remedial action. For Smith (2010) assessment of teaching skills or competence constitutes an area of deliberation and

development. This dismay with the current assessment strategy necessitates the reevaluation of the teaching practice assessment framework.

Statement of the Problem

A thorough and effective assessment/supervision of teacher trainees during teaching practice by their supervisors that would foster their professional development requires time and repeated measures. It is therefore disheartening that due to constraints such as high workload, high enrolment in teacher education programmes, inadequate employment of academic staff, time frame for teaching practice process, distance in the location of schools assigned to supervisors and lack of remuneration for supervisors in some institutions, teacher trainees do not receive adequate and appropriate assessment in a twelve (12) weeks teaching practice exercise throughout a four year B.Ed regular teacher education programme. Lecturers are assigned to supervise teacher trainees irrespective of their teaching subject. In some instances, teacher trainees are compelled by the principals of their assigned schools to teach subjects exclusively beyond their area of competence/specialization where permanent teachers are not available. This implies that the assessment of such teacher trainees might not be a true rating of their ability and aptitude.

Assessment of teacher trainees by their lecturers in some Colleges and Faculties of Education in Nigeria from the observation of the researcher is mainly cognitive and content knowledge centred while the psychomotor /affective domain are overlooked. Teacher trainees are expected to understudy their cooperating teachers in the following areas: entries in school dairies, class attendance, computing/summary of weekly/ termly attendance as well as participation in extracurricular activities. Hence, it is expected that the teaching practice assessment should reflect teacher trainees proficiency in these areas because these are vital aspects of a professional teacher's responsibility and job specification. Unfortunately, the terms of reference for assessment/supervision of teacher trainees based on the aforestated guideline does not consist of these important aspects. The inputs of the cooperating teachers who spend more time with the teacher trainees are also not taken into

consideration in the summative assessment process. The decision on the final assessment grades of teacher trainees on a four(4) or six(6) credit unit programme which would determine the future professional endeavour of the teacher trainees lies squarely on the decision taken from a few visits by one or two supervisors.

Beyond the cognitive and content knowledge, a teacher trainee is expected to reveal his/her ability to impart knowledge to learners he has acquired practically in observable forms through teaching practice. The problem of the study therefore to reevaluate the teaching practice assessment framework for the professional development of teachers in Nigeria based on teacher trainees perspectives.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to reevaluate the teaching practice assessment framework for professional development of teachers, based on teacher trainees perspectives.

Specifically, the study sought to;

1. Find out teacher trainees' perspectives on the preparation process before the teaching practice exercise.
2. Determine teacher trainees perspective on the current teaching assessment process.
3. Ascertain the perceived shortcomings in the current assessment framework of the teaching practice exercise.

Research Questions

To direct the study the following questions were asked:

1. What are teacher trainees perspectives on the preparation process before the teaching practice exercise?
2. What are the teacher trainees perspective on the current teaching practice assessment process?
3. What are teacher trainees perceived shortcomings in the current assessment process in the teaching practice exercise?

Methodology

The procedures that were used to execute the research are discussed as follows:

Design

A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study.

Study Population

The population of the study comprised all final year students in Faculties of Education from Universities in South-South, Nigeria. This study targeted final year students who had concluded the teaching practice process in the course of their degree programme in the institutions used for the study.

Sampling procedure

A stratified random sampling technique was adopted to draw a sample of 350 teacher trainees from four (4) Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Instrument

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled: “Perspective on Teaching Practice Assessment Framework” (PTPAF) designed by the researcher. The instrument consists of three categories: Section A, is structured to obtain information on teacher trainees perspective process before the teaching practice exercise; Section B, sought teacher trainees perspective on the current teaching practice assessment process, while Section C is to ascertain the perceived shortcoming in the current assessment framework of teaching practice exercise. The questionnaire was duly vetted by the researcher's colleagues and modified based on their inputs. The instrument was pilot tested on 50 teacher trainees who were not involved in the research. A reliability coefficient of .80 was obtained via Cronbach alpha. Items were rated on a modified four-point Likert of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Administration of instrument and analysis

The instrument was administered by the researcher and four research assistants to the respondents. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

Research Question One:

What are the teacher trainees perspective on the preparation process prior to the teaching practice exercise?

Table 1: Frequency count and percentages of teacher trainees' perspective on preparation process prior to the teaching practice exercise

S/No	Items	Responses	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	N
1.	Orientation was conducted for teacher trainees before teaching practice posting	Agree Disagree	215 135	61.4 38.5	350
2.	During orientation, teacher trainees were taught how to take attendance in the class register	Agree Disagree	61 289	17.4 82.6	350
3.	Teacher trainees were taught how to enter information into the subject register during orientation	Agree Disagree	86 264	24.6 75.4	350
4.	Two-semester course work in teaching method is sufficient for teacher trainees' professional development	Agree Disagree	133 217	38 62	350
5.	A semester course work in educational test and measurement is sufficient for teacher trainees' professional development in assessment strategies.	Agree Disagree	158 192	45.1 54.9	350
6.	The time allotted for microteaching is sufficient to prepare teacher trainees for the teaching practice exercise.	Agree Disagree	124 226	35.4 64.6	350
7.	Most teacher trainees lack basic knowledge in handling counselling issues among pupils due to inadequate exposure to courses in counselling prior to teaching practice exercise	Agree Disagree	230 120	65.7 34.3	350
8.	The teaching practice school organized an orientation on appropriate conduct expected of teacher trainees before the teaching practice exercise	Agree Disagree	360 -	100	350

Table 1 reveals that in preparation before the teaching practice exercise 61.1% of the respondents agree that orientation was conducted by their institutions, 65.7% asserted that most teacher trainees lack basic knowledge in counselling issues due to inadequate exposure to counselling courses, while 100% agree that the teaching practice school organized an orientation on appropriate conduct expected of teacher trainees.

The table also shows that 82.6% of the respondents disagree that teacher trainees were taught how to take attendance in a class register, 75.4% indicated that teacher trainees were not taught how to

enter information into the subject register during orientation in their institution, 62% stated that exposure in two-semester to a course in teaching method is not sufficient for teacher trainees professional development, 54.9% disagree that exposure in one semester to a course in test and measurement is also insufficient for teacher trainees professional development in assessment strategies, while 64.6% asserted that the time allotted for microteaching is insufficient to prepare teacher trainees for the teaching practice exercise. The result indicates that the level of preparation of students before teaching practice posting is inadequate.

Research question two

What are the teacher trainees perspective on the current teaching practice assessment process?

Table 2: Frequency counts and percentages of teacher trainees' perspective on assessment practices during teaching practice

S/No	Items	Responses	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	N
9.	Throughout the teaching practice were you assigned to a cooperating teacher (subject teacher)	Agree Disagree	315 35	61.4 38.5	350
10.	Were you assessed by the cooperating teacher?	Agree Disagree	138 212	39.4 60.6	350
11.	Did the cooperating teacher(s) sit in the class throughout your lesson?	Agree Disagree	135 215	38.6 61.4	350
12.	Did the cooperating teacher guide you through comments and advice on how to improve your teaching?	Agree Disagree	61 289	17.4 82.6	350
14.	Did the form teacher(s) direct the teacher trainee on how to take students attendance in their class register?	Agree Disagree	133 217	38 62	350
15.	Are the assessment grades (scores) by the cooperating teachers used as part of the teaching practice evaluation?	Agree Disagree	158 192	45.1 54.9	350
16.	Supervisors do not visit regularly to direct and mentor teacher trainees	Agree Disagree	124 226	35.4 64.6	350
17.	Throughout your teaching practice, how many times did your supervisor(s) visit and observe your teaching?	Twice (Agree) Once (Disagree)	230 120	64.6 34.4	350
18.	Is the period of observation of lessons by supervisor(s) too short for appropriate assessment of teacher trainees' performance?	Agree Disagree	360 -	100	350
19.	Assessment scores used for grading teacher trainees are obtained only.	Two Supervisors (Agree) One Supervisor (Disagree)	217 133	362 36	350
20.	Teacher trainees' participation in non-cognitive activities such as: (punctuality to	Agree Disagree	198 158	54.9 45.1	350

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	school, morning assembly, social interaction with staff/students preparation of time table for the term, record-keeping in the school diary, marking of the class register, maintaining discipline around the school, games/sports and other extra-curricular activities) are not assessed by supervisor(s)				
21.	Teacher trainees are not given the opportunity to reflect and implement the comments and criticisms made due to the summative assessment approach used by supervisor(s)	Agree Disagree	226 124	64.6 35.4	350
22.	What was the duration of the teaching practice exercise?	12 Weeks (Agree) 10 Weeks (Disagree)	124 226	35.4 64.6	350

Table 2 indicates that 90% of the respondents agree that they were assigned cooperating teacher during their teaching practice exercise, 79.7% aver that the cooperating teachers sometimes sites in the class throughout the duration of their lesson 53.4% stated that the cooperating teachers sometimes guide teacher trainees through comments and advice on how to improve on their teaching, 82% agree that supervisors do not visit regularly to direct and mentor teacher trainees, 58.9% noted that throughout the duration of the teaching practice the supervisors visited only twice, 82% confirmed that the period of observation of lessons by supervisors is too short for appropriate assessment of teacher trainees performance, while 79.1% stated that assessment scores used for grading teacher trainees are obtained from two supervisors, 89.4% opined that teacher trainees participation in non-cognitive activities are not assessed by supervisors, 90.9% assert that teacher trainees are not given the opportunity to reflect and implement the comments and criticisms made due to summative assessment approach used y the supervisors, 41.1% attest that the teaching practice duration was twelve weeks. The table also shows that 60.6% agree that they were not assessed (graded) the cooperating teachers, 67.4% and 64.6% of the respondents contend that the cooperating and from teachers did not direct teacher trainees on how to enter information into the subject diary and take students attendance in their class register respectively. The table further reveals that 64.6% of respondents object that assessment grades (scores) by cooperating teachers are used as part of the teaching practice evaluation, while 92% stated that their peers never observe their lessons to give feedback on their area of strength and weakness. From the percentages of assertion and

dissension of respondents, it could be inferred that teacher trainees are dissatisfied with the current assessment process during teaching practice.

Research question three

What are teacher trainees' perceived shortcomings on the current assessment process of the teaching practice exercise?

Table 3: Frequency counts and percentages on teachers trainees perceived shortcomings in current teaching practice assessment process

S/No	Items	Responses	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	N
23.	Teacher trainees are not assessed collectively by supervisors and cooperating teachers	Agree Disagree	196 154	56 44	350
24.	Assessment scores are assigned by university supervisor(s) only	Agree Disagree	222 128	63.4 36.6	350
25.	The assessment might be biased because only one supervisor is at liberty to grade teacher trainees.	Agree Disagree	205 145	58.6 41.4	350
26.	There is no collaboration during assessment among cooperating teachers, university supervisors and school administrators to guide, counsel and direct teacher trainees.	Agree Disagree	198 152	56.6 43.4	350
27.	Teacher trainees hardly receive mentoring and feedback from cooperating teachers.	Agree Disagree	141 209	40.3 59.7	350
28.	Cooperating teachers (subject teachers) hardly sit in every lesson to give feedback on teacher trainees professional progression.	Agree Disagree	245 105	70 30	350
29.	Teacher trainees are not given the opportunity for peer assessment through lesson observation.	Agree Disagree	203 147	58 42	350
30.	Due to the high workload of supervisors, teacher trainees do not receive immediate feedback on their areas of weakness/strength.	Agree Disagree	214 136	61.1 38.9	350
31.	Exercise books of pupils are not checked to ascertain the quality of assessment administered by teacher trainees.	Agree Disagree	216 134	61.7 38.3	350
32.	Adequate attention is not given to the psychomotor and affective domain of teacher trainees during teaching practice assessment.	Agree Disagree	225 125	64.3 35.7	350
33.	More emphasis is given to the cognitive domain during teaching practice assessment.	Agree Disagree	222 128	63.4 36.6	350
34.	Assessment based on the observation from two visits by supervisors is inadequate for the professional progression of teacher trainees.	Agree Disagree	205 145	58.6 41.4	350
35.	The use of observation is not reliable and valid for grading teacher trainees' performance.	Agree Disagree	196 154	56 44	350
36.	The time frame (12 weeks) stipulated for the teaching practice process is not enough for the professional development of teacher trainees.	Agree Disagree	218 132	62.3 37.7	350

Table 3 indicates that all the respondents perceive all the items stated as shortcomings in the current assessment process of the teaching practice exercise except one (to enhance teaching and learning,

teacher trainees hardly receive mentoring and feedback from cooperating teacher(s))

It can be inferred that a larger percentage of respondents perceive that the current assessment process of the teaching practice exercises is defective.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from Table 1 revealed that teacher trainees perceive that prior training to teaching practice exercise is inadequate as ___ in terms of exposure to courses in teaching method and test and measurement. The time allotted for microteaching is also insufficient to prepare teacher trainees adequately for the teaching practice exercise. Teacher trainees are also not properly prepared to tackle basic counselling issues among pupils in their practice schools.

The findings from Table 2 shows that there is a general perception among respondents that cooperating teachers, guide, direct and mentor teacher trainees. However, on the contrary, there is a perception that supervisors do not allow teacher trainees to reflect and implement feedback due to the summative assessment approach used by supervisors. Teacher trainees deduce that cognitive assessment is emphasized over non-cognitive activities (affective and psychomotor).

The findings further revealed that observation of lessons and assessment processes by supervisors are not given appropriate attention due to irregular visits by supervisors. Teacher trainees are also not sufficiently mentored by supervisors.

The findings from Table 3 indicate that teacher trainees perspectives are that the current assessment process of the teaching practice exercise is flawed in terms of grading, lack of collaboration among cooperating teachers, university supervisors and practice school administrators, lack of input of final assessment scores from cooperating teachers, lack of feedback from peers, lack of access to supervisors for post-lesson reviews, lack of guidance on teacher trainees assessment of pupils, inadequate assessment of psychomotor and affective domain of teacher trainees, overemphasis on the cognitive domain, irregular supervision by university supervisors and

the time frame of twelve (12) weeks is also perceived as insufficient for professional development of teacher trainees.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusion was drawn based on the findings:

The level of preparation of teacher trainees before teaching practice posting is inadequate for undertaking non-cognitive responsibilities, lack of regular supervision, mentoring and feedback from supervisors hinders the professional progression of teacher trainees. The use of summative assessment scores from irregular visits by supervisors is not reliable in determining the improvement in teacher trainees performance.

The defects perceived in the current assessment process are mainly concerned with the irregular visits of supervisors, lack of collaboration among stakeholders (cooperating teachers, university supervisors and practice school administrators).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations among others were made:

1. There should be collaboration among stakeholders (supervisors, cooperating teachers, teaching units and administrators of the practice schools) to enable effective assessment of teacher trainees.
2. Assessment scores from the cooperating teachers should be considered and reflected in the final grades of teacher trainees.
3. Supervisors should be assigned for supervision based on teacher trainees area of specialization.
4. Retired principals and seasoned teachers should be used as resource persons during the orientation of teacher trainees.
5. To check irregular and insufficient time for observing lessons, a video conference between the supervisor(s) and the teacher trainee could be facilitated by the cooperating teacher.
6. The teacher training programme should be extended to five years so that the teaching practice process would run for one session in the fifth year of trainees. This would enhance the professional development of teacher trainees.

7. Supervisors should be adequate remunerate for the teaching practice supervision because in most instances the teacher trainees' demonstration schools are located outside the state or state capital and supervisors need financial resources for transportation and accommodation.

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