

Effective Supervision of Teaching Practice Exercise in Nigeria Colleges of Education: Catalyst for Quality Teachers Production

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Abstract

Effective supervision has been regarded as the means through which teaching practice exercise and learning process can be more meaningful with good standard of teachers' production. The paper investigates the effective supervision of teaching practice exercise in colleges of education and any other higher institution awarding teaching profession. The paper attempts description of the concept of supervision, its purpose and the problems confronting supervision. Other issues examined by the paper were teaching practice as a concept, principles and strategies to adopt while supervising the student-teacher on the field. To this end, the paper suggested that principles and strategies suggested should be thoroughly applied e.g application of clinical supervision, dedication, self sacrifice and government intervention to release funds.

Keywords: Supervision, teaching practice, teacher education, education

Introduction

Education is an essential key factor for socio-economic and technological advancement in any modern society. Teachers who are responsible have the duty to impart skills, values and knowledge. They need proper training and progressive development in order to enable them render the educational services in the most appropriate manner. Hence the quality of teachers and their activities should be of paramount concern to the colleges of education administrators. Only those who possess competency in knowledge and skill have great achievement and success in life. Succeeding in life is all about recognizing and utilizing the opportunities from the assistance of others or skilled and expert tutors. Understanding or acquisition of knowledge can be achieved in the place of observing how others do things. In the teaching profession, performance skills gained through training and long practice is one of the basic assets that is needed for higher performance among teachers. Beginning teachers or student teachers need teaching and support to gain skills and confidence. This can be acquired through studying and being directed by the experienced leaders or expert in the profession. To have disciplined heart and professional mindset, there is a need to equip younger generation of upcoming teachers. This can be achieved through thorough supervision. To improve the quality of teaching practice and learning process in schools, supervision, internally or externally is an important basic component in teacher education. Ekyaw (2014) identified some strategies that enhance effective supervision of teaching practice exercise which includes good leaders, occupying leadership position, effective communication and improved curriculum. Supervision is seen as an administrative strategy aimed at achieving specific school goals and objectives, particularly, in the area of modelling new teachers.

To achieve educational goals, there should be someone to guide, direct and oversee teachers' activities to make sure that the expectations for standards are met. To accomplish this, there is need for an effective educational supervision. There is in-effectiveness and inefficiencies causing problem in education system in this country, from poor monitoring system to lack of adequate supervision on the part of the supervisors. Oke et al. (2015) perceive supervision as one of the basic requirements of administration and the tactics of efficient and proper management. It involves all activities to enhance the improvement of teaching and learning processes for the benefit of the learners. Bernand and Goodyear (2008) say supervision is very important and perform critical role in teaching and learning process. Its proper employment is known to play in the whole process of training and retraining of professional to attain and maintain required and acceptable levels of functionality, productivity and quality of their specific input, supervision is taken as an indispensable component of the whole process.

Teaching practice exercise is an essential component of teacher education and training program. It is very important in teacher education and training process because without it the whole process is rendered useless or incomplete. Nwanekezi, Okoli and Mezieobi (2011) remark that teaching practice is another name for preparation of student-teachers for the teaching profession by practical training. The exercise provides trainees the opportunity to

utilize the various teaching methods in actual classroom conditions under constant supervision of competent and experienced teachers (Nwanekezi, et al., 2011).

Concept of Supervision

Teaching profession views and values supervision as an indispensable component of the whole process of raising experts for the profession and making sure that the desired quality production is both attained and maintained. Adeyemo and Oke (2017) opine that supervision is a way of stimulating, guiding, improving and encouraging and overseeing certain group with the hope of seeking their cooperation in order for the supervisors to be successful in their task of supervision. It is the art of overseeing the activities of teachers and other educational workers in a school system to ensure that they conform with the generally accepted principles and practice of education and the stipulated policies and guidelines of education authority that control the system of education and provide professional guide to school personnel to improve the conditions that affected the growth and learning of students and teachers (Ogunu, 2005). Supervision is to oversee, superintend to manage, to administer or to have an over-sight, to see from above, and to look over (Omoike, 2013).

From all the definitions given above, there are certain key words that have been emphasized. These words are leadership, improving, advising, guiding, refreshing, encouraging, stimulating, overseeing and promoting (Adeyemo & Oke, 2017). It is day-to-day activities in educational operation and involves two persons or two things. Paramount in this concept is that there must be engagement and the level or degree needs to be specified between the supervisor and supervisee. Supervision is an activity stimulating professional growth and development of teachers or would-be-teachers, method or materials of instruction and strategic ways of teaching and steps to evaluate instruction selection and revision of educational objectives. Supervision is the bed rock of curriculum development in which the teaching profession relies upon for quality production in school organization. Ijaiya (2001) points out that supervision can be seen as all legitimate effort made by a designated professional to assist the classroom teacher to improve on his competence so that he or she becomes a self-propelling practitioner for effective teaching and learning. It has been revealed to us from the above assertion, that, it (supervision) involves utilization of all resources available for use in education in order to improve teaching-learning process, instructional programme, teacher's growth and leadership quality in the school administration. Inmhangbe (2017) says it involves the activities and relationship of coaching, mentoring, monitoring and guided control for compliance to standards and benchmarks. To achieve the stated objectives, there should be acquisition of right and desired skills, honing of already existing ones and assuring of compliance to standards and quality for the improvement in productivity. Oke and Olagbende (2015) say supervision is all efforts of designated school to the teachers and other educational workers for the improvement of instruction which involves the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers, a selection and revision of educational objectives, materials of instruction and methods of teaching and the evaluation of instruction. Also, Nwakwo (1980) defines supervision as the process bringing about improvement in instruction by working with people who are working with students. For supervision to occur, there must be interaction, that is

very important between or among the concerned people for effective survival of school setting or a given organization.

In education, the major concern here for supervision is the acquisition of desired skills for the improvement of the quality of productivity of education personnel in any of the educational institution. From this, supervision can be internal and external for two reasons. First, to indicate the difference between the major expressions of supervision in exercise. The second reason is to clarify the functions and extent of each of these expressions of supervision. The internal supervision exercise applied within the school premises or environment, where the supervisor and supervisee have meaningful professional interaction or relationship in order to engage the process for the effective acquisition of skills or to address and resolve an existing issue that impedes effective learning engagement from the educational personnel. In the case of external supervision, it is the supervision done outside of the educational institution. This external exercise is conceived and planned outside the institution and usually directed primarily at checking and enforcing compliance to set standards and also encouraging and controlling for greater commitment to the maintenance or sustenance of determined acceptable quality.

Approaches to Supervision

There are ways or approaches to improve the supervisor's skill of supervising the newly recruited teacher and those under training. The most likely models or ways are skill training model, counseling model and clinical supervision. Skill training model-supervisor, to have effective handling of teacher-in-training, there should be diagnostic and prescriptive approach to supervision. In this model, supervisor needs to think and determine with the concerned teachers, all the elements of teaching behaviour that can improve effective teaching. This skill can be developed through attending seminars, conferences, workshops and in-service programmes. Using or applying this method by the supervisor can perfect and model the teacher to discharge his/her duties effectively. Counseling way, this is another approach of making teaching to be thorough and effective. In this situation, the supervisor engages the teacher outside the classroom which is concerned about the teacher's self-awareness. This particular approach is based on the basic assumption that (i) self-expression of teaching (ii) teaching behaviour may change due to psychological changes (iii) having total security and confidence can help the teacher in the classroom with positive result. Clinical supervision – it is an intervention provided by the supervisor to supervisee within the same profession. The interaction is evaluative and enhances the professional functioning of the supervisees or the junior ones monitoring the quality of the professional services offered to the supervisees.

Ijaiya (2001) defines this approach as practicum-based supervision which draws data from first-hand-observation of actual teaching events and involves face-to-face interaction between the supervisor and the teacher (supervisee) in the analysis of teaching behaviour and activities of teaching, behaviour and activities for instructional improvement.

Apart from the mode taken into consideration by the supervisor for effective teaching for student teachers, there are some stages in supervision to have perfected and quality teaching. These are (i) pre-observation stage (ii) observation and (iii) feedback or post-observation.

Pre-Observation – This is where the supervisor first collects the student teachers' lesson note for vetting before the teaching starts. This helps to access whether the stated objective of the lesson plan is adequately catered for. It is also necessary to ascertain that the actual presentation covers all the skills identified in the lesson.

Observation –While awarding marks for lesson note preparation and teaching or impartation of knowledge, bias must be avoided to ensure fairness and thoroughness.

Feedback or post observation- For quality to surface in education, error or mistake identified after the supervision exercise need to be corrected by gathering all the concerned student teachers for briefing. This is to point out their strengths and weaknesses in order to improve their teaching skills. This stage is very important so as to have quality teaching.

Problem Confronting Supervision of Teaching Practice Exercise

1. Unqualified and untrained personnel found in the field of supervising student-teachers.
2. Inadequate funds for supervision of teaching practice.
3. Supervising styles used by the supervisors.
4. Lack of self-sacrifice through supervisors.

Teaching practice

In teacher education, teaching practice is a basic component that provides student-teachers with essential opportunity for the acquisition of important teaching skills through practical experience from the field. This experience will prepare them for efficiency and effectiveness in teaching after graduation. Teaching practice is an indispensable basic ingredient of the teaching education and training process. In teacher education programme, if there is no teaching practice exercise the process is incomplete and deficient. It is an exercise that is meant practically for the new entrants into the teaching profession. To have thorough teaching practice or acquisition of teaching professional skills, supervision is the only way out. Good teaching exercise or practice is a very paramount influence on student learning in order to have desired outcome. Teachers struggle to meet the principles of good practice in order to provide to have best learning experience for the learners. Recognizing teaching practice or practical training of new teachers or neophytes in teacher education programme is very important in order to have quality personnel in teaching profession. Likewise, it will gear up standard education. This recognition of training of teacher through thorough supervision will cause the neophytes to have firsthand practical knowledge and experience of the teaching and learning process. This could be in the area of preparation of lesson plan, presentation of lesson in the classroom, management of class, ways of communication in the class, evaluation of lesson etc. Okoli & Mezieobi (2011) said that teaching practice is another name for preparation of student-teachers for the teaching profession by practical training.

Practical training or student teaching programme at any higher institution is a well-organized and structured exercise that is designed as an opportunity to develop and evaluate aspiring teachers and ensure that they are competent in actual classroom within school setting. Aylazor (2011) identified that field-based experiences such as study abroad and student teaching are intended to bridge theory and practice. Teaching practice exercise is the point where the relationship among the major players like institution supervisor, the host teacher and aspiring teacher interfere and interact to determine the quality of experience the aspiring teachers will take away or acquire. Teaching practice has been observed in Nigeria as a school-based internship program with the purpose of introducing prospective teacher to teaching and to be under the guidance of qualified professionals to develop skills, attitudes and competence in the teaching profession. This training activity provides student teachers the opportunity to make use of the teaching methodology in the classroom with constant supervision of competent and experienced or knowledgeable teachers (Nwanekezi, et al., 2011). Teaching practice exercise has become the pillar on which the student teacher once certified and employed builds their professional identity. It is therefore essential and compulsory that the aspiring teachers need to be paired with competent, knowledgeable and concerned institution supervisors to guide them to have full range of duties of a teacher during this training. Cooperating teachers or host teachers also have roles to play for the growth and development of aspiring teachers. The need for quality supervision is an essential tool for quality for teaching practice exercise. This provides the student teachers or neophytes with the intellectual and professional background in order to make them adaptable to changing environment in Colleges of Education and Faculty of Education in Universities. Having practical experience by the student teacher helps to have basic knowledge in teaching which produces quality education. Adamu (2016) said quality education is a process of monitoring, assessing, evaluating and reporting objectively based on agreed quality standards in all aspects of school life to ensure that accepted standards are attained, maintained and improved upon continually.

Teaching practice exercise has been taken as both essential and compulsory in teacher education programme. It is a compulsory course and is a prerequisite for teachers' production in Colleges of Education and Faculties of Education in Universities. Low standard of education in Nigeria has been observed due to decline in the quality of teaching practice exercise caused by poor supervision of student teachers in colleges or universities. Teaching practice currently run in the concerned institutions is considered inadequate due to the poor supervision of student teachers. Not only this, the exercise is faced with many problems that connect to the student teachers, supervisors and arrangement of the programs.

To have quality teaching in teacher education, supervision should be the central and critical component of the teaching practice exercise. Inhangbe (2017) has seen supervision in teaching practice which is directed at offering guide and holding environment in appropriate professional relationship for helpful and most effective skills and potent methods for effective teaching and learning not only to be engaged, re-engaged, learned and honed but also to be carefully and properly applied. Teaching practice exercise coupled with effective supervision can improve the standard of education. It can be seen that the teaching practice experience is

deficient or has been taken away when compared with the past and for those that attended teacher's training college and colleges of education. All these teachers have complete metamorphosis in teaching practice and that helped them to acquire skills in teaching which helps them to excel and qualify for teaching.

Objectives of Teaching Practice

National University Commission (NUC, 2007), National Commission for College of Education (NCCE, 2015) have highlighted basic objectives of teaching practice exercise. These are:

- i. To expose student-teacher to real life classroom experiences under the supervision of professional teachers.
- ii. To provide the forum for student-teacher to translate educational theories and principles into practice.
- iii. To enable student-teachers discover their own strengths and weakness in classroom teaching and provide opportunities to enable them address their weakness and enrich their strengths.
- iv. To familiarize student-teachers with real school environment as their future work place.
- v. To provide student-teachers with an opportunity for further acquisitions of professional skills, competencies, personal characteristics and experience for full-time teaching after graduation.
- vi. To help student-teachers develop a positive attitude towards the teaching profession.
- vii. To serve as a means of assessing the quality of training being provided by teacher training institutions.

In Universities and Colleges of Education, supervision of teaching practice exercise is the major or an integral part of the teacher education process. Gordon (2004) says supervision is woven into the whole framework and exercise of the teaching practice exercise of the teacher education either in the universities or colleges of education, or other training institutes the component of supervision wherein education experts are involved in offering guidance and direction for both the teacher trainee and the whole exercise of both incorporate and provided for standard or quality to surface, supervision is expected to be involved at the planning, take-off, execution and termination of the exercise.

In the supervision of teaching practice program in training institutes, some factors beset the qualitative education. In Nigeria, the practices that have almost become norm exist and that are against or contrary to the basic or minimum expectation of the supervision of teaching practice, these are:

- There is no interactive engagement between the supervisor and the student teachers through the whole process.
- It is the usual practice of supervisor today solely setting the agenda and focus of observation visit.
- Fixing of dates and times of supervision without the consent or input and involvement of the student teachers.

- Lack of feedback during and after the observation phase of the process.
- No more post observation phase between the supervisor and supervisee.

Teaching practice committee

Committed and efficient personnel should be involved in this body. It is a vital tool for success and to achieve the goals. The teaching practice committees are the advisory board for decision making, therefore selection or appointment of members should be balanced. This can be done to have a faculty member from every department in the faculty of education and members from each school in colleges of education. The Roles to be assigned to committee members include; coordinator of T.P, secretary, members and social secretary. The one for searching for and securing schools for teaching practice, field supervision and provide solution in times of crises. The committees are responsible to supply information to student on the field.

Roles of Teaching Practice in Teacher Education

There is no controversy that teaching practice is an integral part to teacher education programme everywhere in the world (Peny, 2004). Teaching practice provides opportunities for student teachers to:

- Work with individuals, small groups and the class as assigned by mentor teacher.
- Help to develop a communication plan with mentor and field supervisor.
- Taking over daily classroom and school responsibility.
- To attend staff and school meeting.
- Help to plan for co-teach with mentor teacher as scheduled.
- Help to take complete responsibility for classroom.
- Help to know the school community which includes mentor teacher, school administrators, students, classroom and school routines.

Remodeling Supervision of Teaching Practice

The existence of some of the negative practices challenging the supervision of teaching practice which invariably affect the quality of teachers need to be addressed. There is need to recognize all these negative impacts or challenges facing supervision of teaching practice in Nigeria to take away these deficiencies for the purpose of making the aims of teaching practice to be achieved.

The component of supervision as an integral part of teacher education programme need to be set right for supervising the teaching practice exercise to produce quality and productive teacher and even to have persistence and meaningful teacher education, the supervision must be remodeled, realigned, engaged and applied well. These are the following ideas or suggestions for success of the exercise:

- i. The approaches to the supervision of the teaching practice in Nigerian institutions must be remodeled and restructured in order to accommodate new approaches.

- ii. The interaction or contact between the supervisor and new teachers (neophytes) during teaching practice exercise should be structured to provide the opportunities for them to have their concerns and confusions on issues and theories related to effective engagement of teaching and learning in the real environment.
- iii. To have quality personnel in teaching profession, supervision of teaching practice should adopt clinical supervision approach where both the supervisor and the student teacher will be considered equally important with adequate attention.
- iv. The grades awarded should not be emphasized too much during observation process but the exercise should emphasize the skills, and methods learning engagement.

Strategies or Principles for Effective Supervision of Teaching Practice

- Achievement or success of the exercise depends on how environment looks like. The supervisors should make the environment free of tension and emotional stress for the student teachers to acquire the skills needed for the exercise.
- Proper orientation is necessary for the student teachers through the coordinator of supervision. There should be schedule or awareness for the new teachers to assess information and materials to assist them to be well satisfied with their work.
- Constructive criticism should be made on observation of poor work. Giving advice and personal relationship should be allowed.
- Motivation and encouragement of student teachers through recognition of their good work. The acknowledgement of any good work done need to be immediate and publicly known to others in order to serve as incentive to others.
- Supervisors should possess the knowledge of the work, knowledge of their responsibility; have the skill in teaching the work and skill in improving the work.
- Supervisors should be democratic. The student teachers should be given freedom to give ideas freely.
- Supervision should be seen as evaluating and planned activities.
- Supervision should be in form of human relation.

Conclusions / Recommendations

Supervision of teaching practice or instruction is concerned with the quality, improvement of teaching and learning process. Supervision of teaching practice exercise needs to be strengthened at all awarding institutions. The paper has examined some basic principles of supervising, the instruction or teaching practice exercise to have effective learning process. The paper has attempted an engagement of the supervision of teaching practice as a concept and an exercise or intervention.

The paper did a critical consideration of supervision as an essential ingredient of teacher education. In this way, the paper suggested that supervision of teaching practice needs to be overhauled. That supervision techniques should be strictly adhered to. It also suggested that adequate supervisory facilities should be provided. At all cost, Government should provide funds at appropriate times. Supervisors' dedication is essential and needed to be emphasized, as clinical supervision is very useful.

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