

# TEACHING PRACTICE AND THE EFFECTIVE USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

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## Abstract

*Teaching practice or school experience is an essential constituent of teacher training and should be granted due space in terms of time, financial resources, human capacity, material resources and other resources. Various teaching practice models were discussed and the concept on teaching practice or school experience. It attempts to unravel what teaching practice is, its purpose and how it is implemented. The instructional materials context and its relevance in teaching practice exercise is also highlighted in the paper, and some rationale and the use of instructional materials in teaching practice exercise. Recommendations were made based on conclusion drawn that student teachers need to be attached to mentors with proper qualifications who can guide them in their endeavour to achieve teaching skills in order to enhance a perfect teaching approach during teaching practice.*

**Keywords:** teaching practice, effective, instructional materials, teaching, learning and student-teacher

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## Introduction

The interpretation and implementation of educational aims and objectives is the responsibilities of all teachers in the society and to ensure that all educational programmes are properly carried-out to achieve the stated aims and objectives. In order to perform their roles effectively, teachers need to be adequately equipped and trained to meet the task ahead since quality of education is determined by the quality of the teachers.

There is no teacher education programme that can be said to be complete without an effective Student Teaching Practice programme. Although, there is school of thought, which says that "teachers are born, not trained", the overwhelming view today is that there is a need for professionally trained teachers to teach in most schools and therefore a good teacher education programme must seek to assist the individual teacher to grow and develop as a person, provide him with the necessary skills and professional abilities that will help him become an effective teacher. Teaching practice or school experience as it is commonly

referred to in the researchers' institution, is an essential and compulsory component of the student teacher's programme of study in teacher training (Ngara, 2018). It is offered by institutions of higher learning (teacher training colleges or universities). The literature review that ensues covers areas such as; the concept of teaching practice, the rationale for teaching practice, the implementation of teaching practice internationally and in Nigeria.

## The Concept of Teaching Practice

Teaching practice or school experience is an integral element of becoming a teacher (Ngara, 2018). It provides an opportunity for student teachers to gain knowledge in the real teaching and learning milieu (Ngidi and Sibaya 2018; Marais and Meier 2019; Quick and Sieborger 2015; Kiggundu and Nayimuli 2019). During teaching practice, a trainee teacher is given the chance to practice the skill of teaching before getting exposure in the real teaching vocation (Kasanda 2019; Kiggundu, 2019; Ngwaru 2020). Student teachers perceive teaching practice or

school experience as the core of their grounding for the teaching career since it provides for the actual encounter between student-hood initiation into teaching (Quick and Sieborger 2015; Marais and Meier 2016; Kiggundu 2017). Resultantly, teaching practice or school experience creates “a mixture of anticipation, anxiety, excitement and apprehension in the student teachers as they commence their teaching practice” or school experience (Quick and Sieborger 2015).

According to Salawu and Adeoye (2017), Student Teaching Practice is a practical teaching activity by which the student -teachers are given opportunities in actual school situation to demonstrate and improve training in pedagogical skill over a period of time. Also, it is a kind of apprenticeship stage during which the students are sent out to school to gain practical and professional experience by translating all the educational theories they have acquired or learnt during training into practice (Fagbulu, 2019).

Yee (2017) defines Teaching Practice and its processes as a prolonged period of laboratory experience in an actual classroom situation during which the student takes increasing responsibility for his/her preparation as a teacher under the direction of an institution supervisor representing his/her teacher –education centre and cooperating teacher who is responsible for the classroom situation. Caner (2018) also regards teaching practice as a course for Bachelor of Education students that is planned to offer “critical opportunity for pre-service teachers to demonstrate their ability to write lesson plans, deliver individualized instruction and manage the classroom. It is a triadic developmental process which involves pre-service teachers, university supervisors and cooperating teachers.” The cooperating teacher is also referred to as a host teacher (Heeralal 2014) or mentor (Du Plessis 2013). Each of these stakeholders has definite roles and responsibilities. Different terms are used to name the phenomenon such as practicum, field studies, in field experience, school based experience, teaching practice, student teaching and internship (Gujjar 2019).

Marais and Meier (2014) in Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2019) state that “the term teaching practice or school experience” represents the variety of practices to which trainee teachers are exposed to when they subsequently work in

school settings. Consequently, according to Marais and Meir (2004), there has been a shift in the literature from “the concept of teaching practice (associated with an apprenticeship model) to the concept of field/ school experience (associated with an experiential model)”. The “notion of teaching practice is rooted in experience-based learning initiated by Dewey (1938), Vygotsky's (1978) social cognitive theory and founded in the principle of situated learning” (Kiggundu 2019). Dewey postulated presciently that education is both theoretical and practical experience (Feiman-Nemser 2018) and hence, teachers should base learning on concrete life experiences of an individual that involve interaction, experimenting and have a purpose (Dewey 1938).

### **Purpose/ Rationale for Teaching Practice**

Ngara, (2018) aver that teaching practice offers pre-service teachers or teachers in initial teacher training with an opportunity to relate the knowledge and theories learned on campus to the actual classroom environment. During school experience teachers in training are expected to fuse theoretical knowledge gained in University lectures with the practical experience they gain in schools (Fraser in Ntsaluba and Chireshe 2018). Furthermore, the rationale for school practice is to cultivate the numerous capabilities in teacher training which include: relational, instructional, intercultural and mental proficiencies (Furlong, 2019 in Gujjar 2019). In attestation, the teaching practice period offers student teachers opportunity to develop their own personal and professional identity; develop their mission, forge relationships with other staff; identify with educational ethos of the school and the national education imperatives (Frick, 2016).

Likewise, Gujjar (2019) adds that teaching practice grants the beginning teachers with the chance to be socialized into the profession and make them connect with the culture of teaching. This implies that during school experience student teachers become initiated into the rigours of the multifaceted teaching profession. For example, student teachers are initiated or prepared for their role in the usage of teaching approaches, teaching strategies, teaching principles, teaching techniques, different activities and the general school life. They are given the chance to practice

teaching in an actual school environment (Ngidi and Sibaya in Ntsaluba and Chireshe 2018). One wonders if the trials do not reduce learners under the care of student teachers into guinea pigs used for the purpose of trying out new methods and would also question whether this does not dampen the children's chances for future success.

### **Skills in Management and Assessment of Learning**

An important area in teacher preparation is management and assessment of learning. A teacher may have good personal qualities and a good knowledge of the subject matter but he/she may lack the necessary skills to manage and assess learning. Subsection 4 Unit 3 of the Teaching Practice Manual describes what a student-teacher needs to know and do in the process of managing and assessing learning. The unit covers such areas as: Students' participation in class activities, teacher's distribution of questions/activities to students, teacher's assessment of learning through in class and out of class assignments (Salami, 2018).

In the assessment of the student-teachers, the level of students' participation in class activities should be noted by the supervisor. This is because instruction should be student-centred and the students must be actively involved in the lesson. Discussions, questioning, suggestions, etc. from students encourage progressive learning. Interactive environment should be encouraged by the student-teacher.

The student-teacher should be friendly, active and must respect the students' right. He/She should distribute the activities and questions in the class evenly to avoid chorus answers. Assessment of learners should focus on the amount and quality of work done by the learners in and outside the class.

Furthermore, an effective classroom management will require the student teacher to:

- (i) understand the purpose of his teaching is to help students to develop their academic potentials;
- (ii) display leadership qualities that will steer the class towards meaningful discussion of curriculum contents;
- (iii) create an atmosphere for students to achieve the goals set for them at their own pace;

- (iv) take care of individual differences of the students which may emanate from their background, family status, inheritance among others;
- (v) avoid partiality in order to meaningfully contribute to the development of each student;
- (vi) motivate the students to perform to their fullest capacity and give credits to students whenever an accomplishment is made;
- (vii) assess his performance in the classroom.

### **Effective Use of Instructional Materials During Teaching**

One important dimension in teacher education that is getting a lot of attention is related to the use of instructional materials. Instructional materials are those materials used by a teacher to simplify their teaching. They include both visual and audio-visual aids and could either be concrete or non-concrete. These instructional materials bring life to learning by stimulating students to learn. The use of instructional materials in the classroom has the potential to help the teacher explain new concepts clearly, resulting in better student understanding of the concepts being taught. However, they are not ends in themselves but they are means to an end (Kadzera, 2016).

Instructional materials are essential and significant tools needed for teaching and learning of school subjects to promote teachers' efficiency and improve students' performance. They make learning more interesting, practical, realistic and appealing. They also enable both the teachers and students to participate actively and effectively in lesson sessions. They give room for acquisition of skills and knowledge and development of self-confidence and self-actualization (Salami, 2016).

It is held that good teaching resources can never replace the teacher but the teacher uses them to achieve their teaching and learning objectives. Some of the instructional materials necessary for effective teaching and learning in schools include the chalkboard, models, graphs, charts, maps, pictures, diagrams, cartoons, slides, filmstrips, radio, and television. Also the use of visual, audio visual and other multisensory materials could help to achieve the stated objective in teaching practice exercise and the importance of the use of these materials cannot be underscored (Kochhar, 2019).

This has been emphasized by different

scholars (Salawu and Adeoye, (2017) & Sampath (2019). Kochhar, (2019) says that instructional materials are critical ingredients in learning and that the curriculum could not be easily implemented without them. Kochhar (2019) adds that a teacher who has adequate and relevant teaching facilities is more confident, effective and productive. Similar sentiments are shared by Steel (2019) who asserts that relevant instructional materials enable the learners to have a clear understanding of Conflict and Conflict Resolution.

Instructional materials are essential since they help the teacher and learners avoid overemphasis on recitation and rote learning that can easily dominate a lesson. Resource materials allow learners to have practical experiences which help them to develop skills and concepts and to work in a variety of ways. The work of Sampath (2019) graphically explain that people learn more through the senses of sight and hearing compared to other senses. According to Faize and Dahan (2016) instructional materials are print and non-print items that are designed to impact information to students in the educational process. Instructional materials include items such as prints, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, slides, pictures, workbooks, electronic media, among others. Instructional materials play a very important role in the teaching-learning process the availabilities of textbook, appropriate chalkboard, Mathematics kits, Science kit, teaching guide, science guide, audio-visual aids, overhead projector, among others are the important instructional materials (Yusuf, 2015), However many facilities are missing in approximately almost all secondary schools in the state.

According to Raw (2016) the first instructional material is the textbook. Various definitions to textbook emphasize the role of textbook as tool for learning. Textbook is the nucleus to all the learning activities related to a particular curriculum. Textbook plays a vital role in imparting knowledge to the students in the third world countries. From Yusuf (2015) further said that, the next instructional materials are the chalkboards. The chalkboard is the teaching aid that teachers frequently used; particularly during the lectures and discussions. There are different kinds such as, blackboard, marker board, write board, felt board and magic board. The teachers

use it in classrooms to write the important words, statement, to draw diagrams, figures and maps. Other prominent instructional material include; mathematics kits. This is usually study kit; it is a box containing a variety of visual aids artistically assembles and displayed pertaining to a single topic (Nichollos, 2020).

There are varieties of instructional materials available in world today. These could be classified into three (3) categories namely. Audio, visual and multi-sensory materials.

**Audio Materials:** This is a medium of instructional practice that appeals to the sense of hearing only, and such gadgets for magnifying and reproducing audio sound include radio set, record player, reel to red audio tape, cassette player/recorder (Uto, 2014).

**Visual Materials:** This could be regarded as a medium that appeals to sense of sight in teaching/learning situation. These are things that one can see, feel, or touch either projected. They could be either dimensional, or 3- dimensional, 2-D visual include charts, flannel graphs still or flat pictures slides and 3-D visual includes realia and models. The non-projected visuals neither need the use of battery nor electricity to function adequately well.

**Audio:** This deal with transmission of voice and usually with telephone with the use of quality voice transmission technology.

**Video:** Each participant here will be in a well-equipped room at different locations having in the room microphone, studio camera, TV monitor screen and all necessary studio broadcasting gadgets.

**Video Conferencing:** This deals with the use of mobile phone in exchange of discussion between the participants at different locations which serve different purposes and can be well adapted into our educational system.

**Audio-visual materials or multi-sensory materials:** Audio-visual materials enable learners to hear and see detail of instructional process at the same time, which enhance their learning. It is a medium in instructional practice that appeals to more than one sense organ at the same time, with a view to motivate and sustain learner's attention, thereby improving their learning capabilities. They are materials, which make it possible for involvement of at least two of the sense of sight, hearing smelling testing or torching while

decoding a message. These categories of materials include message transmitted via television set, video tapes motion film/picture, computer base learning, CDR are included in audio visual or materials.

### **Instructional Materials and Its Relevance in Teaching**

In the modern world today, functional education provides the basic instrument for gainful employment, personality progress, economic prosperity, and development of moral built up, and positive interpersonal relationships; while lack of it signifies ignorance, underdevelopment, maladjustment, crime, poverty, frustration, among others. Effective teaching may be unavoidable without functional instructional materials to enhance innovative production in modern fields such as science and technology, among others Idris, (2018). Education is the focal point to a country genuine growth and development for every Nigerian child in whatever moral, mental, emotional, psychological and condition of health. The teachers, who are to implement the (U.B.E) curriculum, are also expected to use a wide range and quality instructional materials for effective and efficient teaching and learning classroom activities. What then is Instructional Material? Instructional materials are essential tools in learning every subject in the school curriculum. They allow the students to interact with words, symbols and ideas in ways that develop their abilities in reading, listening, solving, viewing, thinking, speaking, writing, using media and technology.

The student teacher in this technological age has a wide spectrum of resources available to use to provide conditions which help him reach his objectives. The most important rule for the selection of any medium of instructional media (Brown, 2016), medium of instruction must be selected on the basis of its potentials for implementing stated objective. This means that for any instructional medium properly selected, the objective is the reference point. In selecting any medium for classroom presentation, there are some factors that needed to be considered. Strauss and Frost (2016) identify nine key factors that should influence media selection: institutional resource constraints, course content appropriateness, learner characteristics, professor

attitudes and skill levels, course learning objectives, the learning relationship, learning location and time.

For the effective use of instructional materials to teach in schools, Oyesola (2016) highlighted the following points that must be borne in mind:

1. Aids must be placed or held where all can see
2. Identify points of difficulty and possible areas of misunderstanding before the aids are introduced
3. Give pupils or students a chance to study the aids before discussing them and direct the attention of the students to parts of the aids and so encourage observations and discussion.
5. Display at the beginning of the lesson unless the aid is to be used immediately, that is, only introduce the aids when they are relevant part of the lesson
6. Keep the aids until the end of the lesson to be introduced as a reward for good behaviour.

### **The Roles Played by Instructional Materials in Teaching Learning Activities**

Instructional materials played a very important role in the teaching-learning processes which include;

- i. Enhancement of the memory level of the students.
- ii. To facilitate the teaching-learning process.
- iii. For the improvement of student rate of accumulation.
- iv. Serve as tools used by the teachers to correct wrong impression and illustrating things that, learners cannot forget easily.
- v. Assist in giving sense of reality to the body of knowledge under discussions.
- vi. It gives lessons a personal look and encourages teacher's creativity.
- vii. Permit the students and teachers to experience in concrete terms the learning activities that can promote the idea of self-evaluation.

### **The Principle for Selecting Instructional Material during Teaching Practice**

Instructional materials: According to Ololobou, Jacob and Ndazhaga (2019), some of the things the teachers must consider before selecting instructional materials include;

- a. Consideration for the age and abilities of the learner: It is very important for the teacher to put into consideration the age and abilities of his students. If the instructional materials chosen and used are above the age and abilities of learners, it can affect learning rather than promoting effective learning.
- b. Instructional materials must be related to the lesson objectives: any instructional material that is not geared towards helping in the achievement of the lesson objectives is not worthy to be used in the lesson.
- c. Currency of information: any instructional materials that is worthy of use in the classroom must be current. In order to assist learners to assimilate easily.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, teaching practice or school experience is an essential constituent of teacher training and should be granted due space in terms of time, financial resources, human capacity, material resources and other resources. Various teaching practice models, both international and nationally, are noted in the paper. As a teacher under training (students on teaching practice), instructional materials should be varied and not limited to textbooks and atlases only as indicated in the list of approved books in most schools. Teachers in training (students on teaching practice) should also be provided with modern equipment like the televisions, computers and radios so as to enable them handle emerging issues in the present curriculum.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the discussions, the paper recommends that field researches be carried out on school experience of classroom teachers in relation to the use of instructional materials in order to contribute to the existing policy on teaching practice programme and thus improve on the quality of practice. The paper also recommends that more focus be put on provision

of resources by universities, colleges and the government to enhance service provision in Teaching Practice. For instance, student teachers need to be attached to mentors with proper qualifications who can guide them in their endeavour to achieve teaching skills.

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