

Student Teachers' Views on School Experience Preparation and Supervision

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Abstract

Using a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative paradigms, and based on three primary colleges of education, this study sought to capture final year student teachers' views pertaining to school experience preparation and supervision. The total sample consisted of 137 students, constituting 38 (28%) of students at college A, 28 (20%) students at college B and 71 (52%) students at college C.

Using broadly ranging questionnaire with open-ended questions, the study aimed at establishing and eliciting information from the respondents through the principals of primary colleges of education. The objectives were to: solicit students' views on their school experience preparation and supervision and ascertain how students' performance was evaluated.

The study findings revealed that generally, student teachers found the teaching experience beneficial in the following aspects:

- *planning schemes of work, weekly focuses and lessons,*

- *application of the real teaching process in the classroom,*
- *identification of learners with special needs, highlighting of student weaknesses and strengths, availability of teaching materials,*
- *academic and social interaction between lecturers and students and application of theories into practice,*
- *the classroom scale was explained to them by the lecturers,*
- *evaluation notes on their teaching performance were made available,*
- *they pointed out their dislikes during the school experience and also made suggestions on how they would like to be assessed,*
- *they also highlighted the extent of contributions class teachers made during teaching experience and wanted supervisors who were well versed in their subjects and supervisory skills.*

In conclusion, the student teachers recommended the following procedural aspects as being essential in the package of supervisory skills: arranging a brief observation meeting at which concerns about teaching are defined and performance criteria selected; class observation; analysis of the collected data; maintenance of desired teaching behaviours; recycling of difficulties encountered by student teachers in exhibiting desired teaching behaviours or ensuring closure once the problems are resolved.

Introduction

This research study was undertaken out of concerns raised in the 1980s in teacher training colleges in Zambia with the way student teachers were supervised during their School Teaching Practice by their college lecturers and the class teachers of the schools where they were attached. The research was planned and executed from 2011 to 2012. The final year students of the primary colleges of education were targeted for this research to solicit their views on their school experience preparation and supervision.

In the 1980s, college lecturers did not follow the criteria for evaluating student teaching in cooperating schools. The criteria established in the frame of reference were that colleges of education evaluated the student teachers' teaching performance by using an evaluation system which was objective and intended to expose students' weaknesses and suggested ways of improving with a grading system based on merit. An examination of documentary data at the time revealed that the basis of evaluating student teachers' teaching was not on merit. It was noted that supervising lecturers were giving destructive comments; they did not observe the lesson for a long time but issued a critique (i.e. evaluation note) any way, and so on. (Moyo, 1980).

In light of this problem, this research study investigated the student teachers' views on School Teaching Practice preparation and supervision.

Objectives of the Study

Thus the objectives of the study were:

1. To solicit students' views on their school experience preparation, teaching and supervision,

2. To assess how students' performance was evaluated.

Literature Review

In this section of the article, the existing literature that informed this research study was reviewed.

In 1982, Partington conducted a research which indicated that school-based supervisors were preferred by student teachers on school experience rather than college-based supervisors. The latter's evaluation was associated with anxiety on the part of student teachers. This research finding is corroborated by the earlier one done by Moyo in 1980. The reasons are drawn from Moyo's research study on the supervisory behaviours of the primary teachers college lecturers on their student teachers school experience.

According to research findings, lecturers in teachers' colleges did not objectively assess the student teachers performance for in most cases no prior arrangements were made on the observation of student teaching practice. Moreover, the research study by Moyo revealed that college lecturers observed students teaching pupils in the classroom through the windows without attaching importance to the process of supervising students' lessons. To this effect, Stone (1984:21) states that student teachers "consider school teaching practice the most useful aspect of their training". In other cases, lecturers observed part of the lesson and gave a grade. Some remarks made on the critique were disparaging and intimidatory as some of them bordered on personality issues rather than aspects to do with student classroom practice.

In some cases, Moyo points out that half the lesson was observed leaving the other half under guesswork. Further, he states that grades given were based on the popularity of the student teacher and not on merit. The college lecturers moved around the class thus disturbing the lesson. When making comments and giving grades in most cases they did not tally with the performance of the student teachers. Moreover, written comments were destructive and therefore demoralising on the students concerned. Since the method of evaluation was not objective, it was associated with favouritism. In contrast, school-based evaluation of students' teaching identified weaknesses and offered solutions with full involvement of the student teachers and the cooperating teachers or supervisors. On the other hand, it can be stated that this practice is seen as assisting the student teachers sharpen the teaching skills such as gaining class attention, asking and adapting questions, encouraging pupil responses and recognising pupils' difficulties.

What was deduced from the findings was that the college lecturers lacked supervising training. For this reason, it was recommended that they be trained in supervisory skills, such as supervisor and student teacher relationships, planning the lessons with the student teacher, participation of the student teacher in his or her lesson evaluation.

Banja (2016), in his PhD descriptive survey highlighted challenges faced by newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in secondary schools in selected districts in Zambia. His argument was earlier rightly echoed by Lankau and Scandura (2007), stating that the needs of NQTs are many and can be traced back to their time during initial training. This view is of relevance to the present study pertaining to 'Student teachers' views on school experience preparations and supervision'. In this study, the student teachers were able to bring out suggestions on how they would like to be assessed

during school experience. They also outlined their dislikes during the school experience and strongly highlighted that they wanted supervisors who were versed in their subjects and supervisory skills.

There has been a number of concerns in the area of teacher education, yet there has been very little attention given to supervision as teaching in teacher education setting (Renwick, 2007).

Newly qualified teachers tend to lack additional knowledge and support in the areas of classroom management, lesson planning, comprehension of curriculum and curriculum implementation strategies, school policies and procedures, and effective communication skills with students, parents and fellow teachers, modelling of skilled teaching and creation of higher order teaching strategies beyond what they learnt during training (Brock & Grady, 2007).

In order to attend to this problem they propose that specific teaching behaviours must be described. Also valid and reliable instrument for collecting and analysing data on those behaviours must be developed. To this effect, educational researchers developed and tested instruments for objectively recording and analysing interactions in the classroom. They have produced classificatory systems for describing the interactions. Current studies of classroom interactions are rich in potential suggestions on how supervisory teaching behaviour might be more systematically studied.

In 1970, Ned Flunders developed a system for recording and describing the climate of primary school classrooms and for determining the sequence of teaching behaviour. Teacher Talk and Pupil Talk are the two large divisions of the system. Within Teacher Talk are categories of Indirect Influence and Direct Influence. Sub-categories under Indirect Influence are: Accepts feelings, Praises or Encourages. Uses ideas of children, and Asks Questions. Sub-classifications under Direct Influence are Lecturing, Giving Instructions/Directions, Criticising or Justifying Authority. Pupil Talk is sub-classified by Response or Initiation. A category referred to as Silence or Confusion is included. A matrix for recording interactions by observers provides the framework for gathering information about the sequence of teacher and pupil talk.

In 1989 and 1990, Chipeta and Mannathoko undertook an evaluation research on school experience of the University of Botswana students. The data were collected using questionnaires. The evaluation questions relevant to this study were:

1. To what extent did the students understand the aims of teaching practice?
2. To what extent were the preparations for teaching practice done?
3. To what extent were the facilities for training students adequate?
4. How much assistance did the students get from their supervisors?
5. Was the students' teaching practice successful?

The Aims of teaching practice

These were outlined as follows:

1. To provide the student teachers with the learning environment where they can study the children under the supervision of an experienced teacher.
2. To reflect the strengths and weaknesses of student teachers.
3. To assess the subject matter skills of student teachers.

4. To evaluate the teacher education programme.

With respect to aim no. 1, 31 respondents representing 57.4 percent of the total number of respondents said the aim was clear. Regarding aim no. 2, 42 student teachers representing 73.7 percent out of a total 57 stated that the aim was clear. As for aim no. 3, 32 respondents representing 62.7 percent rated the aim as clear. With respect to aim no.4, 24 student teachers representing 46.1 percent out of a total 52 stated that the aim was clear while 12 student teachers representing 23.0 percent out of a total of 52 rated the aim as fairly clear. From these results, it is evident that most student teachers understood the aims of teaching practice. There are a few student teachers who did not find the aims so clear.

Preparations for teaching practice

As for use of a syllabus, 18 student teachers (i.e. 33.4 percent) out of 53 students in total rated this aspect of preparation for teaching practice as well. Regarding preparation of schemes of work, 24 respondents representing 47.1 percent out of a total of 51 said this was well done. With respect to making of lesson plans, 35 student teachers out of a total 58 representing 60.3 percent stated that it was well done. As for formulating objectives, 30 student teachers (i.e. 53.6 percent) out of a total of 56 students rated this aspect as well done. Regarding preparation of teaching/learning aids, 25 (i.e. 43.9 percent) out of a total of 57 stated that this aspect was well done. Making self-evaluation was not well rated by 20 student teachers. In a similar vein, the aspect of making records of work was not well done. This was stated by 19 students (i.e. 33.9 percent) and 16 students (i.e. 28.6 percent) said it was fairly done. Finally, few student teachers stated that they were not adequately prepared in teaching practice, such as demonstration, question and answer, experimentation, project work, role-play, field trip, group work and contest.

Training facilities

The supervisors were asked to rate the adequacy of the facilities used in the training of student teachers. School syllabuses were adequately supplied (i.e. 85.5 percent); textbooks were also adequate (i.e. 72.6 percent); specimen schemes and records of work were adequately supplied (i.e. 66.7 percent); and specimen lesson plans were adequately made available (i.e. 50.0 percent). However, films on teaching for students' observation were not adequate (i.e. 7.3 percent). Also teachers' guides were not adequately supplied (i.e. 44.4 percent).

Assistance student teachers got from supervisors

The student teachers were requested to rate the level of assistance they had received from the supervisors during school experience. In the area of lesson plan preparation, the majority of the student teachers (60.8 percent) stated that they did not receive adequate assistance. The other responses that student teachers gave ranged from just adequate to not applicable. Therefore, we can safely say that most of the student teachers did not think that they had enough assistance from the supervisors in these areas: (a) file record keeping (b) lesson introduction; (c) lesson development; (d) lesson closure; (e) classroom management; (f) constructing and marking tests; and (g) extra-curricular work.

Success of teaching practice exercise

Student teachers were asked to rate the success of teaching practice. Out of a total of 21 students, 13 students rated teaching practice exercise as successful representing 61.9 percent. A few students stated that it was not successful 8 (39.0 percent).

The students' perception of success or unsuccessful of the teaching practice exercise depended on their readiness they had received from the supervisors.

Methodology

The qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this study. The target population comprised final third year student teachers of the three primary colleges of education. The total sample consisted of 137 students (a breakdown of 38 (28%) students at college A, 28 (20%) students at college B and 71 (52%) students at college C).

A broadly ranging questionnaire with open-ended questions was used to elicit information from the respondents. Copies of the questionnaire were sent to principals of primary colleges of education requesting them to administer the questionnaires to final year students in the colleges who undertook school teaching experience.

Findings and Discussion

Benefits of School Teaching Experience

The 47 percent of respondents of a total of 137 students, 64 (47 percent) stated that the school experience was beneficial in these respects: planning schemes of work; weekly forecast and lessons; applying the real teaching process in the classroom; identifying learners with learning difficulties; weaknesses and strengths of pupils were pointed out; able to put into practice what was taught in the college; the head teachers and mentor guidance; academic and social interaction strengthened the student teacher outlook; became a holistic teacher; teaching materials were available; teaching competence and confidence were boosted; learnt classroom management; applied theories into practice. The discussion of the key benefits school experience and mentorship within the educational system has been well captured in the literature. The paramount interest in the discourse on school experience is the potential impact on student achievement, and increasingly on which forms of support are the most effective. Balthazar (2010) attests to the well-known fact that in education on-going mentoring has a positive impact on both teachers and students.

Only 4 (3 percent) of the respondents stated that school teaching experience was not beneficial because the format for preparing lesson plans was not the same as in schools. OBE formats had not been introduced in colleges. When students came back from teaching practice that is when they were shown how to prepare an integrated lesson plan in social, spiritual and moral education. Students were also taught adequately on how to organise the files.

Explanation of the Rating Scale

Regarding the explanation of the classroom observation rating scale prior to proceeding to school teaching practice, 68 percent of the respondents answered in the affirmative representing 93 out of 137 the total number of students that took part in the research.

The respondents indicated the characteristics of the classroom observation rating scale as follows:

- A good classroom organisation should have proper materials, lesson presentation, starting time; learning activity, group sharing time, time management, gender awareness, assessment, progress chart, special education needs and individual support.
- Classroom management, availability and relevance of teaching and learning resource, time management and relevance of the methodology used, teaching and learning aids, and up to date preparation of schemes of work, weekly forecasts and lesson plans.
- Good talking walls, clean environment, sitting arrangement, gender balanced group.
- How to introduce the lesson, how to deliver the lesson with appropriate methodologies, how to apply the lesson to real life situations, how to conclude the lesson and how to evaluate it after delivery.
- Conduct of the teacher dress code and professional attributes.
- Identification of learners with special education needs.
- How to formulate outcomes.
- The abilities of the learners.
- Inclusion of 25 competencies with each one worth 4 scores adding up to 100 marks. Competency areas covered like lesson preparation, lesson procedure, classroom organisation, gender awareness, special education needs, assessment, evaluation, teachers' professional attitudes, co-curricular activities and how to handle children, how to manage the class and time keeping.
- Lesson plans to be marked by a mentor before delivery.
- Observation of class teaching done 4 times by the school authorities and once by the college lecturer. The head teachers to carry out teaching file observation and to make general report about student teacher conduct and teaching performance.

Issuance of Lesson Evaluation Notes

With respect to the issue of being given the evaluation notes of the lessons they taught, 133 respondents representing 82.4 percent stated that they received the evaluation notes. These indicated their teaching performance and areas which needed improvement. On the other hand, 20 respondents representing 14.5 percent of 137 respondents said they were not given the evaluation notes. Four respondents did not answer the question representing 2.9 percent. Most respondents moreover stated that the evaluation notes indicated a true picture of their teaching performance; strengths and weaknesses were pointed out. Other respondents said it was sad that the evaluation notes on the lesson presented were supposed to reflect attributes of the lessons that were presented. They were blamed because of the poor state of the chalkboards which affected their handwriting. Some points written in the evaluation notes were true while others were not. A few competency areas needed attention for effective teaching and learning. For slow learners, remedial work was recommended. Marks for each competency achieved were not shown in the evaluation notes given to the respondents. The ways of concluding lessons were not known by a few respondents. Moreover, the evaluation notes did not specifically point out the true

shortcomings of the lessons and did not suggest appropriate classroom interactions. Further, the cooperating teachers' comments were true in that lesson introduction was weak such that learners could not be motivated. Also, the slow learners were ignored during the lesson presentations. Time management was also an area in which a few respondents needed to improve. The college lecturers held a conference with the student teachers on all the mistakes and weaknesses made during lesson presentations. In addition to praising the students for the good work done, the evaluation notes indicated the areas they should improve.

Suggestions to improve Teaching Experience

As for the question in what ways were suggestions given to improve your teaching performance, the majority of the respondents stated in the following ways:

- After being observed by either the college lecturers, the head teacher or the deputy head teacher, they were called to the office to discuss how the lesson went, achievements and challenges.
- They were always advised to adhere to the prepared lesson plans in order to achieve the intended goals and on how to administer assessments and homework regularly to improve the performance of learners.
- Lessons should be applicable to real life situations; activities should be gender sensitive; the voice should be audible and there should be clarity by explanation of main points of the lesson.
- By allowing them to express their feelings. The suggestions were given in privacy on a one to one basis.
- By considering the pupils with special learning needs.
- By managing time properly via lesson plans done in advance; and by studying the learning speeds and abilities of learners.
- By teaching pupils in small groups and controlling noise.
- By encouraging them to undertake action research and secure professional confidence when delivering lessons.
- By improving on teacher-pupil relationships.
- By making good and constructive comments by college lecturers during lesson observations.
- By helping them to prepare the lesson plans and explanation of main points of the lesson.
- By holding a discussion with the supervisors after lesson presentation.
- By advising them to write the topic of the lesson on the chalkboard in advance.
- Where there were weaknesses, they were advised to use teaching methods and education aids that should be clear and visible.
- By advising them to formulate lesson outcomes while reflecting on real life situations.
- By asking questions pausing them to the whole class. Then pick on the less participating learners to answer. By avoiding chorus answers.
- By considering learners with special learning needs.
- By integrating lessons with cross cutting issues.
- By studying the content of the lesson before teaching it and by giving more class work and promoting girl child education through child centred approach.
- By involving learners in class discussion so that they do most of the talking. They should interact.
- By giving suggestions on lesson delivery keeping in mind the time allocated to each segment of the lesson.

- The college lecturer should discuss the weaknesses that happened in the class lesson and suggested solutions for them.
- By oral and written comments to improve teaching practice.
- The college lecturers suggested that the student teachers' voice projection should be mobile and also should be gender sensitive.
- Through discussion with the mentor after class observation. By performance of the learners and giving extra work to learners who finish assigned work fast so that they do not start making noise or misbehaving. Advised to know the pupils' names.
- A few respondents complained that although they held discussions with the supervisor after presenting the lesson, they were not given chances to express themselves. They also stated that the supervisors stopped them from using the local language when explaining concepts.
- By advising them to use clear and visible teaching aids and also to give remedial exercises to help slow learners.
- On giving adequate time during group work, they were not afforded chances to express their views.
- They lacked technical knowledge on the issue of evaluation.
- By improving on the lesson introduction; involving all learners in the educative process. being time conscious always, helping the slow learners and improving on the classroom organisation.
- By letting the learners read for themselves instead of the teacher doing the reading even though the class readers are inadequate. Involve all learners and not just point out clever ones.
- Most of the time, the class teacher should observe the student teachers teach the pupils and control them where necessary. However, respondents stated that they should not over load them with class work because they were students who needed time to study.
- By advising them to pay attention to slow learners and to change the sitting arrangement to circular form.
- By giving suggestions to prepare lesson plans fully anticipating unexpected questions and sticking to allocated time. The respondents were sceptical with respect to these suggestions on the grounds that they could never be ready for things that could occur unexpectedly and use of time went with learner centred teaching.
- The respondents stated that the suggestions were not so much and they were told to improve on the use of real teaching and learning resources and consider the connection between the lessons and reality and to help special education needs learners to grasp the concepts.
- The respondents pointed out that head teachers gave their advice only once in a while. A few of them were told that their voices were not audible enough and were reminded to give learners homework every day as per policy. They were told to improve on learners' interaction, time management, and avoidance of possible work when formulating outcomes.

Dislikes during School Teaching Experience Supervision

As to dislikes during school teaching experience supervision, the student teachers said that they did not like being corrected in the class in the presence of pupils and other staff. Further they said that on each occasion they were supervised, monitors came with different evaluation instruments. They did not like abrupt and inconvenient times for observation. The behaviour of a few teachers was not helpful at all. Sometimes they were ignored when they wanted to consult them. They also did not like being observed by class teachers who were their friends. They did not like co-curricular activities because there were no resources and materials to use. Moreover, they did not like the supervisor to mark the teaching file alone with comments without their participation. They

did not like to be observed alone in the absence of the class teacher. At one class observation they were blamed for the way the classroom was arranged. At another, they prepared number cards as teaching aids, but the supervisors did not take note when cards were being distributed in class. Consequently, they were told that they did not use the suggested teaching aids and were given low marks. Further, they were given adverse comments such as “you are not ready to be a teacher”. Moreover, they did not like being given low marks on the display of teaching and learning aids. Sometimes they were not informed of the supervisors’ coming.

The respondents found it difficult to adapt to the school lesson plan format. The colleges gave them a different one. They remarked in this connection, “The issue of lesson plan format differs from what we were taught at the college and those being followed at schools. There is need to improve the uniformity of lesson plan format”. Moreover, the respondents did not like the late coming of supervisors which caused some lessons to delay. They also observed that they were not observed several times as per policy. Further, they did not like the lecturer being in a hurry so that they could observe the next student teacher at the nearby school. Also, they did not like marking of their teaching file in the head teacher’s office without consulting their mentors as well. Their mentors lacked seriousness because they had to be pushed to supervise the lessons and they did not give student teachers suggestions to improve their teaching performance. The student teachers were not allowed to express themselves during school teaching practice after observing their classes by lecturers. They just gave comments and marks. The mentors did not supervise or observe student teachers teaching. To this effect, the respondents stated, “we did not like the fact that we were not supervised by any teachers from the schools we went to”.

Student teachers said some lecturers were rude during supervision while others were good. Also, they stated that a few students were awarded marks not genuinely by lecturers. Teaching the class the whole term without the help of the class teacher was a challenge to the student teachers, particularly that the classes were large (125 pupils per class). In this connection, they remarked “The class teachers were resting giving us more work to do. We were overloaded”. Further, they stated that “the senior teachers were sarcastic and negative to us. They only supervised us for evaluation once the whole term”. When supervisors came to observe the lessons, the lesson plans, weekly forecasts and schemes of work were not strictly followed to see the order of work covered. Lesson observation was incomplete in that it was less than the stipulated time of 40 minutes. The respondents did not like unnecessary criticisms from their supervisors which did not take into account other factors that affected their teaching. In general, the student teachers stated that they did not have the time to discuss how the lessons went and how to improve where mistakes were made.

How the student teachers would like to be assessed

Regarding how they would like to be assessed during school teaching practice, the student teachers stated that 75 percent of their teaching practice should be assessed by the mentors while 25 percent should be by college lecturers. After class observations, the students preferred to have a conference with the lecturers or supervisors on all competences. Also, the supervisors should assess them by asking pupils how they are learning. The teaching file should be checked and that the assessment should be done more frequently (2-4 times by lecturers; 4-5 times by senior teachers and 2-4 times by the head teachers). Also, they stated that assessment should be on-going in order for the students to become well versed with the profession. After being assessed, marks must be shown on the observation sheet for it motivates the student teachers. Further, the students said that

the coming of the college lecturers to observe them should be known in advance. And the lecturers should tell the students about their weaknesses so that they can improve on them. They stated that assessment should be based on appraisal form.

Further, the student teachers were interested in being assigned to mentors that were committed to duties. They preferred mentors of the same school to observe them to provide or ensure continuity. Also, they wanted to be assessed by district education standards officers because these officers are responsible for maintaining education standards in schools. Most of them also liked to be assessed in all subjects. A few of them however, wanted to be assessed in subjects of their choice. Moreover, they wanted to be assessed every month so that they improve on teaching methods. Also, they wanted lecturers to assess them in their areas of specialisation. Moreover, they said since their colleges are affiliated to the University of Zambia, lecturers from there should make an effort to assess their teaching.

The respondents wanted supervisors to consider the learners' ability to read, low levels of literacy should be attended to. Further, they said that supervisors should be discussing the evaluation after observing the lesson so that the student teachers can accept the results. They also wanted supervisors to brief them on criteria used during supervision of student teaching. They preferred that the lecturers from colleges should consult the mentors on the performance of the student teachers before they finalise the evaluation form. Further, they preferred mentors to observe their lessons from beginning to the end, and that they should arrange to hold discussion with the student teachers on the teaching performance. Moreover, they stated that the supervision of student teaching at school level should outweigh that at the college lecturers' level. And there was no need of calling for mentors to be present whenever the college lecturers were observing student teachers teaching. Further, the respondents said that supervisors should be flexible, friendly and transparent in working with them. To this effect, they wanted to be assessed by supervisors who had the experience of observing students in any subject. They also liked the supervisors who could show them how to teach subjects in an integrated fashion and who could make effective strategies for teaching.

The Contributions of class teachers

With respect to the extent to which class teachers contributed to their school teaching experience activities, the respondents said class teachers showed them class management and the display of talking walls. Also, they stated that the class teachers provided guidance where needed and helped them on how to conduct lessons and helped them select appropriate teaching and learning aids for use in the classroom. On the other hand, a few student teachers stated that class teachers contributed to their teaching practice activities, for instance just showing them where they had ended in terms of preparations of schemes of work. A few student teachers said they were allocated classes that had no teachers and this proved difficult in terms of mentorship and consultations. Otherwise other teachers were on hand in giving advice in terms of lesson planning and presentation and also in providing information of the classes that had no teachers (the teachers were on leave doing distance education studies). They reported that class teachers observed their lessons and afterwards they had time to reflect on weaknesses and strengths. Whenever they encountered problems in terms of preparations, teaching and learning materials, they were assisted by class teachers. Moreover, they were shown how to conduct co-curricular activities. They also pointed out that they were provided with outdoor activities materials by class teachers.

Further, they pointed out that female teachers were very helpful. Remarking in this connection “They advised us, praised us and put much confidence in us that we were going to be powerful and effective teachers, who are dedicated to work”. They also said these class teachers contributed in classroom management and organisation and facilitated in getting resources and materials for teaching. The class teachers made student teacher achieve expected outcomes during their teaching practice. The class teachers showed student teachers how to handle learners and be hard working and to arrange the teaching file. The class teachers made suggestions to improve the teaching experience. They also conducted teacher group meetings where a number of teaching strategies were discussed and rectified. They also engaged the student teachers in a lot of co-curricular activities.

Moreover, a few student teachers stated that some class teachers never contributed in any way. They were left on their own with the classes and were treated like permanent teachers. “Also, class teachers were not so helpful due to the poor relationship and misunderstanding which came about because of the diploma course we were undertaking”. On the other hand, most student teachers reported that class teachers contributed to their school teaching experience by controlling the noise in classes. Also, the class teachers showed student teachers how to prepare it. They also showed the student teachers how to implement class activities, such as group work, role play and so on. Further they helped student teachers in delivering the lessons, managing their classrooms, and how to resolve disputes. On the other hand, a few student teachers reported that some class teachers did not contribute to teaching experience. The class teachers shifted all the responsibilities of their classes to the student teachers even when they had proposed to share subjects. They were not present to teach the subjects they had chosen. The student teachers did most of the term’s work alone. Moreover, the class teachers overloaded student teachers with work to be done. Also, they gave them many responsibilities to do in schools. The class teachers contributed less to the student teachers’ teaching experience.

The extent to which class teachers contributed to the student teachers teaching experience was to a high degree. For instance, student teachers reported that the class teachers used to go and assist them whenever they encountered difficulties. At their request, class teachers would go and observe student teachers teach. The class teachers contributed to the student teachers school teaching experience a great deal in many aspects of classroom requirements which included the display of teaching and learning resources, academic assessment of learners, and pupil-teacher interaction. Class teachers taught student teachers how to handle learners who seemed to be difficult in behaviour. Class teachers encouraged student teachers by providing almost all the materials needed such as manila and reams of paper. The class teachers encouraged student teachers to participate in all the school activities as this would mould them into effective teachers. They made them feel welcome and assisted them with schemes of work, weekly forecasts and how to interact with learners. The class teachers were open and sociable, supportive and motivating. They acted as role models for student teachers. They taught them how to use the chalkboard and even how to use different types of teaching methods.

Suggestions for improving evaluation of Teaching Experience

As for suggestions for improving the evaluation of their teaching experience, the student teachers stated that assessment instruments should be given to them prior to going for teaching experience. Colleges and schools should communicate on the availability of teaching and learning resources in advance. After observing them teach, the college lecturers should hold private discussions at

which they should be given a chance to explain themselves on certain aspects of their performance before they leave the school to which they were attached for teaching experience they should be given an opportunity to discuss and experience, the challenges faced and the solutions. Also, they stated that the colleges should send experienced observers and that marks should be given according to the teaching performance. Further, they said that the subjects to be observed on should be selected by them in order for them to feel comfortable. The college should communicate with schools indicating that student teachers need the help of class teachers during the school experience. Student teachers should be asked to buy teaching materials.

Further, the student teachers proposed that the college and schools should be in touch on the format of writing lesson plans, weekly forecasts and schemes of work that was prevalent in schools so that they follow the practice when they go for school experience. Moreover, they suggested that evaluation of their teaching should be done after the school term so that lecturers check if there was improvement or not. The college lecturers should ensure that all documents for the student teachers are checked before they go to another school for observation.

The respondents suggested that college lecturers should not have negative attitudes towards the student teachers. The lecturers should consult the mentors or class teachers on the performance of student teachers. They should also visit student teachers who do home based teaching practice twice. To permit more school experience, the period for it should be extended. Marks should not be given in advance before discussing the teaching performance with the student teachers. The lecturers should understand the student teachers' opinions. Supervisors should not be intimidating. The respondents moreover suggested that they be properly oriented before being sent on school experience. In addition, they stated that they needed adequate preparations in teaching techniques for literacy. They suggested that they should be taught NBTL, RDC and SITE before embarking on school experience. They proposed that observation should be conducted in all subjects in more than one lesson. They suggested that the coming of lecturers for observing them should be communicated to them in advance. Class teachers should give adequate chances to the student teachers to participate in school extra-curricular activities. The mentors also did not plan remedial work with the student teachers. The student teachers suggested that class teachers should give them various methodologies to use in class for remedial work. They stated that comments on their teaching performance should be constructive and not destructive. They moreover, reported that some lecturers used bad language when they were observed during teaching. On giving them full classes, they suggested they share these with class teachers. They also proposed that senior teachers should closely monitor their teaching performance by working with mentors.

The respondents suggested that the college school experience committee and the school management should communicate sufficiently so as to know how to treat them. The school management and college committee should orient class teachers on handling of student teachers, for example how to assess their teaching and not to overload them with work. They proposed that the evaluation of student teaching should include the strengths and weaknesses of the learners as well as the lesson itself and not just themselves so that they know where to concentrate and to assist the learners and adjust certain methods to suit learners. They suggested that marks obtained should be given so that it is known how the evaluation went. Moreover, they proposed that when supervisors come to observe them teach, they must be friendly so that they do not become nervous. The college should show them how to arrange the teaching file. It should be orienting student teachers properly before sending them to various schools for their school experience.

Conclusion

The student teachers in the colleges stated that they found School Experience beneficial. The classroom teaching rating scale was explained to them by their lecturers. The respondents indicated having received evaluation notes on their teaching performance. Suggestions to improve teaching practice were given. Moreover, dislikes were pointed out by the student teachers during their school experience. They also indicated how they would like to be assessed during school teaching practice. Further, they indicated the extent of contributions class teachers made during teaching experience. Finally, they wanted supervisors who were well versed in their subjects and supervisory skills. The supervisory skills should entail the following process:

(1) arranging a brief observation meeting at which concerns about teaching are defined and performance criteria selected; (2) class observation done; (3) analysis of data collected (4) maintenance of desired teaching behaviours; (5) recycling if difficulties encountered by student teachers in exhibiting desired teaching behaviours; or (6) insuring closure once the problems are resolved.

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