

Attitude of the school teachers towards the B.Ed. practice teaching program

Dr. Vini Sebastian

Asst. Prof.,
St. Xavier's Institute of Education

Abstract

The practice teaching component is the main aspect of any B.Ed. program. It is here where a teacher trainee is trained to give lessons as well as manage a classroom set up. The school extends its co operation in terms of resources as well as extends the expertise of its experienced lot of teachers. These teachers act as cognitive apprentices for the teacher trainees who can mold them in a proper direction. The study is intended to understand the minds of the school teachers in terms of the aspects of the practice teaching program as perceived by them and make positive recommendations.

Introduction

Teaching is an art and a skill which can be mastered effectively through constant practice. There are several modules created by different Indian states to see that the practice teaching program goes on intensively and student teachers benefit out of it. Marais and Meier (2004:221) argue that teaching practice is a challenging task but important part of the practice teaching program. Menter (1989:460) notes that 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). Dewey and Vygotsky also promoted experiential learning and situational based learning respectively. Teaching practice forces the student teachers to throw themselves into the actual teaching situation and mold themselves into teachers who can breathe, think, act and sustain themselves in the teaching profession. It is in this kind of situation that a new budding teacher gains ample of experience and understands the context and focusses her attention on the vocation that she has entrusted on herself to carry forward. The merger of theory taught in class and the practice going on in school provides an excellent blend in the making of future teachers. All this is not possible with out the help and

guidance of the full fledged, experienced teachers who have already experienced several years of teaching themselves. Experience in a situation is valuable to understand the context and avoid mistakes which could be detrimental to the lives of the students. It is with this notion that the study was undertaken

Rationale of the study: The success of the practice teaching program depends on the collaboration of the school teacher and the teacher educators. It is the school teachers who really lead the student teachers and integrate them properly into the school system. Most of the time when teacher educators plan lessons they are devoid of the school situation. The student teachers plan in vacuum, and they are hardly aware of the multitasking that is involved in the teaching practice. Teaching does not involve the execution of the activities in the lesson plan. There is the physical component and the psychological component in teaching. The physical component would involve the collection of the unit, making of the lesson plan, and going to the school and delivering the lesson, whereas the psychological component involves a clear connection with the unit to be delivered as well as the students with whom the student teacher is interacting with. It is seen most often that the B.Ed. colleges are only dealing with the physical part of practice teaching and not paying much attention to its psychological component. In order to bridge this gap the study was undertaken to understand the school teachers' perceptions related to the practice teaching program.

Scope and delimitations of the study: The study focused on the school teachers directly involved with the practice teaching program of a B.Ed. college. These teachers were responsible to interact with the student teachers with regard to giving of the units, guiding them through their lessons, giving them information about the context of the teaching and also providing them insights on the workability of certain teaching methodologies. The teacher educators have encouraged the student teachers to be in touch with the school teachers for the practice teaching program. The teachers involved in this study are thus those who have given their time and energy for the success of the practice teaching program.

Significance of the study: The study will remove the isolation between the schools and teacher education colleges by improved communication between them. The suggestions of the school teachers are of paramount importance to B.Ed. colleges as they can partner with them for the effectiveness of the practice teaching program. The study will give an impetus to the school teachers as being the change agents in teacher education.

Statement of the problem: A study of the attitude of school teachers towards the B.Ed. practice teaching program.

Variable of the study: Attitude of the school teachers: The inner feeling of the school teachers, their predisposition and the outward behavior as a result of the attitude. The attitude is studied as their feelings, their insights and their behavior towards student teachers. It is also directed to their impressions about the practice teaching program.

Aim of the study:. To study the attitude of school teachers towards the B.Ed. practice teaching program.

Objectives of the study:To study the attitude of the school teachers towards the practice teaching program with respect to:

- Overall practice teaching program,
- Giving units for practice teaching program,
- School students' interest in the B.Ed. practice teaching program,
- Method of teaching used in practice teaching lessons,
- Use of lesson plans,
- Behaviour of student teachers during the practice teaching program,
- Observation of practice teaching lessons by the school teachers,
- Use of teaching aids in practice teaching lessons,

Methodology: Descriptive method of the exploratory type was used for the study.

Sample: 30 School teachers of practice teaching schools who are directly interacting with the student teachers for the practice teaching program were included for the study.

Tool for the study: A questionnaire consisting of 21 statements with a 4 point scale (Always, Frequently, Sometimes, Never) with a space given for open ended responses were given. The statements included areas mentioned in the objectives of the study.

Hypothesis:There were no hypothesis formed for the study as it was exploratory type of study.

Data collection: The school teachers were requested to answer the tool made for the study. The instructions were provided and a brief orientation to the study was given to each teacher.

Results of the study:

The major themes identified in the data were as follows:

- Giving the units to the student teachers
- Student teachers' seriousness towards teaching & their behavior during the practice teaching program
- Use of teaching aids and lesson plans in the practice teaching lessons
- Adapting to the teaching –learning needs during the practice teaching lessons with respect to methods of teaching and school students' interest
- Observation of practice teaching lessons by the school teachers

The data were then subjected to percentage analysis for the purpose of understanding the school teacher's attitude towards practice teaching.

The overall score was obtained and the mean was studied with respect to the ranges poor attitude, average attitude and very positive attitude. It was found that 13% of the teachers have poor attitude towards the student teachers and overall the conduct of the practice teaching program. 63% of the teachers have a moderate attitude towards practice teaching and student teachers. 14% of the school teachers have a very positive attitude towards teaching practice.

Regarding the themes of the data arrived at, 81% of the school teachers believe that they do not have a problem giving the required units to the student teachers. 87% teachers believe that the student teachers teach better than the teachers in school and school students are more interested when the student teachers teach as compared to the school teachers. 82% of the school teachers believe that the method of teaching that is student centered teaching is helpful with respect to the school examination. 66% of the school teachers make use of the B.Ed. lesson plans to improve their own lessons in schools. 86% of the school teachers believe that the student teachers behave in a disciplined manner in the school. 30% of the school teachers have admitted that they observe the lessons of the student teachers in order to learn new methods of teaching and these also believe that the student teachers use the teaching aids effectively. It must be noted here that 70% of the school teachers do not admit to the fact that use of teaching aids by the student teachers is effective. 57% of the school teachers believe that the student teachers appear serious about their teaching.

Discussion and Suggestions for the study: Although the school teachers are extremely busy in their own schedule it is seen from the results that they have taken great interest in the practice teaching program not only for the improvement of the student teachers but also to further their own improvement in the teaching-learning process. The keen observation of the student teachers by the school teachers have helped them answer the questions in a confident manner asserting their own participation in the practice teaching program. It is advisable to get the college of education and the experimental schools much closer where ideas are exchanged to improve the practice teaching program which is the backbone of any B.Ed. program. It is the effective participation of both teacher educators as well as the school teachers that enhances the effectiveness of teaching in student teachers. Much has to be done as the focus shifts from an 'apprenticeship based model' to an 'experiential model'. The theories of 'experiential learning' and the theory of 'constructivism' explains direct and indirect learning experiences must be provided in the classroom for learning to take place. They also assume that with the right kind of experience, learning can become permanent.

It is seen from the study that school teachers considered the situation as a learning experience and also behaved as mentors for the student teachers. The feedback obtained from school teachers was considered valuable as the program is always in a dynamic state aiming towards an overall growth of the teacher trainee.

The theory of the importance and use of learning resources is taught to student teachers in the B.Ed. course. After realizing the importance of learning resources in order to provide near to direct experience, all student teachers want to use them to enhance their teaching. The practice teaching schools are partners in the B.Ed. course. These schools are also equipped with learning resources which are extended to the teacher trainees. The school teachers have observed that the student teachers have not mastered the skill of using learning resources or teaching aids. The teacher educators must pay much attention to this aspect as it provides a concrete learning situation.

The collaboration of the student teachers and school teachers in terms of sharing lesson plans must be encouraged. The exchanged ideas can be recorded for future reference. The lesson plan can be discussed with the coach in college as well as can be assessed by the school teacher. This practice can encourage easy flow of ideas ultimately benefitting all those who are associated with the lesson, that is the student teacher, school teacher as well as the school students. Practice teaching program must be effectively planned in order to ultimately achieve the aims of education in an effective manner. The college of education must provide a context based teaching experience to the student teachers. An input on the context of teaching is of utmost importance to the student teachers as they enter into the practice teaching schools.

The study has thus highlighted few aspects considering the practice teaching program from the school teachers' point of view with an idea of providing insights into the total organization of the practice teaching program in colleges of education. Some of the teacher training institutions conduct it as a ritual to be completed and this must be avoided. They must realize that the practice teaching program must transform the 'raw' student teacher into a 'prepared' teacher. A 'prepared' teacher must have a mental readiness for teaching as well as transferring the practical components into the teaching situation.

Much has been said by education committees and commissions on the isolation of the practice teaching schools and colleges of education. This study has tried to get the school teachers believe that they are an important component of the practice teaching program. The Kothari commission report 1964-1966 has emphasized on the isolation of teacher training institutions from the developments in schools as well as the university life. The point no. 4.06 of the document says that each teacher training institution must possess an extension department attached to it to orient all levels of teachers with new teaching methodologies. A comprehensive internship has been suggested by the commission which is now a part of the two year program where the teacher trainee observes the entire situation in the school and learns from the day to day functioning. And the last of the suggestions put forward is an interesting one where school teachers could be deputed in teacher training institutions where the principles of teaching can be tried, school teachers could also assist in the daily functioning of the institute and actively participate in research work. This could be for a period of atleast a month.

The suggestions mentioned here requires a serious consideration by the colleges of education. The two year B.Ed. program has been introduced with large dreams for teacher education and promulgated for greater changes in the field of education. It must be realized that teacher educators must transact the curriculum with a positive attitude keeping in view the aims and objectives it is meant for. The focus of the course has been more on hands on experience and much involved practice teaching program with a greater participation of the practice teaching schools. Thus we can hope that we bring in the much needed benefits to the children entrusted to our care.

References

- Buchner, J & Hay D 1999. Learning to teach: a framework for teacher induction. South African Journal of Education, 19:320-326.
- Dewey J 1938. Experience and Education. New York: Collier.
- EDUCATION AND NATIONAL PROBLEMS, VOL 1, REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION, 1964-1966, http://www.teindia.nic.in/files/reports/ccr/KC/KC_V1.pdf
- Farrell MA, Walker, Bower A & Gahan D 2000. Researching early childhood student teachers: Life histories and course experience. International Journal of Early Childhood, 32:34-40.
- Gujjar, A.A.: Teaching Practice: Concept, stages, Objectives and Suggestions, <http://www.articlesbase.com/college-and-university-articles/teaching-practice-concept-stages-objectives-suggestions-749974.html>
- Holloway J 2001. The benefits of mentoring. Educational Leadership, 58:85-86
- Ishmael N, Halse C & Buchanan J 2000. Teaching practice in the republic of Maldives: Issues and challenges. Pacific Asian Education, 12:40-56. 358
- Kiggundu & Nayimuli Kasanda CD 1995. Teaching practice at the University of Namibia: Views from student teachers. Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research, 7:57-68.
- Kiggundu E 2007. Teaching practice in the Greater Vaal Triangle Area: The student teachers experience. Journal of College Teaching and Learning, 4:25-35.
- Lave J & Wenger E 1991. Situated learning. New York: Cambridge University Manion L, Keith RB, Morrison K & Cohen L 2003. A guide to teaching practice. Available at <http://www.books.google.com/books>. Accessed 18 July 2007.
- Maphosa C, Shumba J & Shumba A 2007. Mentorship for students on teaching practice in Zimbabwe: Are student teachers getting a raw deal? South African Journal of Higher Education, 21:296-307.

Marais P & Meier C 2004. Hear our voices: student teacher's experience during practical teaching. *Africa Education Review*, 1:220-233. Menter I 1989. Teaching Stasis: Racism, sexism and school experience in initial teacher education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 10:459-473.

Ngidi DP & Sibaya PT 2003. Student teacher anxieties related to practice teaching. *South African Journal of Education*, 23:18-22. Republic of South Africa 2000. Norms and Standards for Educators. Government Gazette, No. 20844.

Perry R 2004. Teaching practice for early childhood. A guide for students. Available at <http://www.Routledge.com/catalogues/0418114838.pdf>. Accessed 18 July 2007.

Pretorius FJ 2002. Changing the curriculum: Outcomes-based education and training. In: FA Rios (ed.). *Transforming education: The South African experience*. New York: SUNY Press.

Quick G & Sieborger R 2005. What matters in practice teaching? The perception of schools and students. *South African Journal of Education*, 25:1-4 Vygotsky L 1978. *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

OECD, 2009: Teaching practices, Teachers beliefs and Attitudes, Chapter 4 <http://www.oecd.org/berlin/43541655.pdf>

...