



INTEGRATION OF SIX-MONTH TEACHING PRACTICE EXERCISE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF KASHERE GOMBE STATE

Onipede Omoleye (PhD),

Department of science Education,
Federal University of Kashere Gombe State
leyniped@gmail.com

And

Lawal, O. Isaac (PhD),

Department of science Education,
Federal University of Kashere Gombe State

And

Kunta Danyo

Department of science Education,
Federal University of Kashere Gombe State

And

Ibrahim Ahmed (PhD)

Department of science Education,
Federal University of Kashere Gombe State
ahmadkt21@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper explores the integration of a six-month teaching practice into the Teacher Education Programme at the Federal University of Kashere in Gombe State, with the goal of bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application for future educators. It reviews how this initiative will enhance the professional development of student teachers by providing them with extended, hands-on experience in real classroom settings. The six-month duration allows student teachers to gain a comprehensive understanding of pedagogical strategies, classroom management, and effective teaching methodologies. student teachers are placed in diverse educational environments, equipping them to tackle a variety of teaching challenges and address the unique needs of different students. This experience encourages the development of critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and reflective teaching practices that are essential for ongoing professional growth. Moreover, the extended practicum helps build both confidence and competence in aspiring teachers, preparing them to create engaging learning experiences. The programme also includes regular mentorship and feedback sessions, where experienced educators provide guidance to help refine teaching practices and integrate theoretical knowledge with practical skills. The anticipated outcome is a cohort of well-prepared, highly skilled teachers who are ready to make a positive impact on Nigeria's educational landscape. The paper concludes that the development of effective and efficient teachers through the teacher education programme is crucial for national progress, as graduates from these programmes serve as essential resources for cultivating a skilled workforce across all sectors of the economy. Based



on these the paper recommends that admission into the Teacher Education Programme should be strictly merit-based rather than necessity-driven, and that a six-month teaching practice exercise should be integrated into the Teacher Education Programme at universities throughout Nigeria, particularly at the Federal University of Kashere in Gombe State.

Keywords: Integration, Teaching Practice Exercise, Teacher Education Programme.

Introduction

A teacher is an individual who instructs students within a school system. According to Agwu and Dorgu (2015), a teacher is defined as someone qualified to teach in a school, particularly in a specific area of specialization. Similarly, the University of Mumbai (2019) describes a teacher as a person who provides instruction and guidance to students in formal settings, such as schools or universities. The authors further elaborate that teachers are responsible for creating and delivering lessons, evaluating student performance, and offering feedback to facilitate student learning and growth. Additionally, Britannica (2024) defines a teacher as someone who helps students acquire knowledge, competence, or virtue through the practice of teaching. Teachers play a crucial role in the educational system and the overall development of any nation. Education serves as a powerful tool for national development, acting as a dynamic weapon for economic, political, social, and technological progress. Given the significance of teachers in national development, it is imperative that teacher education receives the serious attention it deserves to achieve its full effectiveness.

The integration of a six-month teaching practice exercise into the Teacher Education Programme at the Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State, aims to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application for future educators. This initiative is designed to enhance the

professional development of student teachers by providing extended, hands-on experience in real classroom settings. The six-month duration will ensure that student teachers gain a comprehensive understanding of pedagogical strategies, classroom management skills, and educational methodologies essential for effective teaching (Kolb, 1984). During the teaching practice, candidates will be placed in diverse educational environments, allowing them to adapt to various teaching challenges and address different student needs. This invaluable experience fosters the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and reflective teaching practices, which are essential for ongoing professional growth. Furthermore, this extended practicum will help build confidence and competence in aspiring teachers, equipping them with the tools necessary to create engaging and effective learning experiences.

A teacher is an individual who instructs students within a school system. According to Agwu and Dorgu (2015), a teacher is defined as someone qualified to teach in a school, particularly in a specific area of specialization. Similarly, the University of Mumbai (2019) describes a teacher as a person who provides instruction and guidance to students in formal settings, such as schools and universities. The authors further elaborate that teachers are responsible for creating and delivering lessons, evaluating student performance, and offering feedback to facilitate both learning and growth. Additionally, Britannica (2024)



defines a teacher as someone who assists students in acquiring knowledge, competence, or virtue through the practice of teaching.

Teachers play a crucial role in the educational system and in the overall development of any nation. Education serves as a powerful tool for national development, acting as a dynamic weapon for economic, political, social, and technological progress. Given the significance of teachers in national development, it is imperative that teacher education receives the serious attention it deserves to achieve its full effectiveness. Integrating a six-month teaching practice exercise into the Teacher Education Programme at the Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State, aims to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application for future educators. This initiative is designed to enhance the professional development of student teachers by providing them with extended, hands-on experience in real classroom settings. The six-month duration will ensure that student teachers gain a comprehensive understanding of pedagogical strategies, classroom management skills, and essential educational methodologies for effective teaching.

During the teaching practice, candidates will be placed in diverse educational environments, allowing them to adapt to various teaching challenges and meet the needs of different students. This invaluable experience fosters the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and reflective teaching practices, all of which are essential for ongoing professional growth. Furthermore, this extended practicum will help build confidence and competence in aspiring teachers, equipping them with the

tools necessary to create engaging and effective learning experiences.

The programme includes regular mentorship and feedback sessions, where experienced educators offer guidance and support to student teachers. This mentorship component is crucial in helping candidates refine their teaching practices and integrate theoretical knowledge with practical skills. The anticipated outcome of this initiative is a cohort of well-prepared, highly skilled teachers ready to make positive contributions to the educational landscape in Nigeria. By incorporating a six-month teaching practice into its curriculum, the Federal University of Kashere demonstrates its commitment to advancing the quality of teacher education and fostering a culture of excellence in teaching and learning.

Agwu (2015) stated the objectives of teacher education in Nigeria, as follows; to:

- a. Provide highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the educational system;
- b. Further encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- c. Help teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals;
- d. Provide teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to changing situations; and
- e. Enhance teacher commitment to the teaching profession

The nation's pursuit of the aforementioned objectives underscores the necessity of an effective teacher education system that can produce competent educators capable of implementing the school curriculum. This, in turn, is essential for developing the skilled



workforce required for national building and fostering social and economic growth.

Teachers play a pivotal role in national development, as it is widely recognized that no nation can surpass the quality of its educational system, and the effectiveness of that system is directly linked to the quality of its teachers. Consequently, teacher training must adequately address both pedagogical methods and subject matter expertise. Another critical area of the teacher education programme that requires urgent attention to ensure the production of competent teachers is the teaching practice component.

Teaching practice is irreplaceable in teacher education, as it equips student teachers with the professional ethics necessary to become competent and effective educators. Odumosu, as cited in Adeniran and Bakare (2012), emphasizes that teaching practice introduces student teachers to practical experiences, which are essential for acquiring the skills needed to become professionally qualified. Similarly, Ekejiuba (2019) notes that teaching practice involves applying the knowledge gained in the classroom to real-world teaching situations. During this period, teacher trainees are expected to implement educational theories and principles, as well as the knowledge acquired throughout their studies. Furthermore, Samphina Academy (2022) defines teaching practice as a crucial phase where student teachers apply their instructional knowledge in a school setting, highlighting its importance as a key experience in teacher education.

Teaching practice is a fundamental event in every Teacher Education Programme in Nigeria Universities.

Teaching practice is a mandatory course lasting six (6) weeks for both third (3rd) and

fourth (4th) year students. The Teacher Education Programme at the Federal University of Kashere follows the general pattern observed in Nigerian universities.

At the Federal University of Kashere, the teaching practice exercise is extended to twelve (12) weeks, divided into two stages of six (6) weeks each for third and fourth year students. However, this relatively short duration does not provide student teachers with a comprehensive and in-depth teaching experience, which is detrimental to the effectiveness of the teacher education programme both at the institution and across Nigeria. In addition to the limited timeframe, the scheduling of the exercise can also pose challenges; in some instances, less than four weeks are effectively utilized for the teaching practice due to host schools not resuming from holidays or being preoccupied with examinations.

Further supporting this concern, researchers have noted that many principals of schools hosting Federal University of Kashere student teachers have expressed frustration regarding the brief duration of the teaching practice exercise. This limitation often prevents schools from having sufficient time to assign teachers to cover specific subjects until the end of the term, as the teaching practice concludes too abruptly. The brevity of teaching practice in Nigerian universities is particularly troubling when compared to other professions such as medicine, law, and engineering, where students are required to complete a minimum of six (6) months in practical settings like industrial attachments or clinical sessions.

The compressed duration of teaching practice in Nigeria reduces the content and activities associated with this exercise to only 18% of the Teacher Education



Programme. In contrast, countries like Chile, Cyprus, India, and Paraguay allocate teaching practice approximately 50% of their entire Teacher Education Programme, while countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and Bangladesh allocate about 30% (Ukeje & FCE Abeokuta in Imogie, 2010). This compression hampers the ability of student teachers to learn critical skills related to teaching, such as marking, compiling and closing school registers, completing report sheets, maintaining school diaries, and managing other essential school records.

Other problems emanating from the shortness of time for teaching practice exercise in teacher education programme are;

- a. Mismanagement of the teaching practice exercises by the University authorities due to non-payment of the allowances
- b. Some lectures visit the schools to register their presence without serious supervision of students
- c. Some lectures do participate in teaching practice exercise with a lassie-fair attitude
- d. Some other lecturers are in a hurry to finish their supervision due to shortness of the duration for the exercise
- e. Few lecturers do award grade to students without supervising any student, in this case marks are awarded to students that do not participate in the exercise.

Effective Teaching Practice Exercise

In order to attain effective teaching practice, exercise the following objectives of teaching practice as stated by Odumosu in Bakare and Adeniran (2012) must be achieved. The objectives are to:

1. Enable student teachers acquire first-hand experience of classroom teaching through supervision and monitoring.
2. Receive guidance on the skills required for effective teaching
3. Participate fully in all the activities of the school within and outside the normal curriculum.
4. Apply all the psychological, physiological, sociological and management principles been acquainted with theoretically during training in the classroom.
5. Encourage flexibility approach and creative thinking in the student teacher.
6. Develop in student-teachers positive attitude to teaching.
7. Help familiarize the student-teacher with the school programmes and learn some administrative tasks involved in a school system.
8. Give the school authority the opportunity to make necessary corrections on the competence of the student-teachers through skillful and careful assessment of their classroom teaching.
9. Guide the student-teacher in the preparation of lesson note, use of chalk/white board, use of instructional materials, mode of dressing, marking of student scripts, filling of school records and classroom-management.

Consideration to Attain the Objectives of Teaching Practice

The following must be taken into consideration in order to attain the stated objectives of teaching practice which will cumulate to effective teaching practice exercise.

- i. Selection of students into Teacher Education Programme in the



- University and other teacher training institution should be done with carefulness and integrity by maintaining the standard requirements for admission into the programme. Students should not be admitted into the teacher education programme out of necessity rather than choice.
- ii. Training in the teacher education programme should be relevant and adequate both in the subject matter and pedagogical content.
 - iii. Teaching practice exercise should be adequately prepared for through appointment of teaching practice committee (TPC) that should involve the Dean of Faculty of Education as the chairman, Head of Departments and subject methods lecturers as members
 - iv. Integration of six (6) month duration into the teaching practice exercise. This will be of great benefit to teacher education programme as it is in other professions as medicine, law and engineering, the six month duration for teaching practice will assist the student teachers to learn the rudiments and crucial aspects of teaching in a practical way. Moreover, it will afford the student-teacher guidance, support and mentorship of the host school which will result to anticipated outcome of a well-prepared, highly skilled and intellectually sound manpower that are ready to contribute positively to the educational system and all sectors of the economy of the nation. It is of no regret that Teacher Education Programme may become a five (5) years programme due to the integration of the six (6) month teaching practice exercise as proposed by National University Commission (NUC).
 - v. There must be serious maintenance of standard in teacher education programme through curriculum innovation and improvement and adequate human and material resources, staff development, effective administration and professional accreditation of the programme.
 - vi. Effective supervision of teaching practice exercise. Teaching practice must be effectively supervised by the teaching practice committee (TPC) who will carefully ensure even distribution of student-teachers to safe and secure communities that will ascertain high degree of proficiency and productivity of the student teachers during teaching practice.
 - vii. Adequate number of supervisors should be properly distributed and ensured that the actual visit of the student-teacher at the host school is carried out through effective monitoring by (TPC). Host school supervision through the cooperating teacher should also be monitored by TPC of the institution sending out the student-teacher.
 - viii. Micro-teaching should be taken as course by every student and must be passed with good grade before such student is posted out as a student-teacher.

Government Role in the Production of Productive Teachers from Teacher Education Programme

Effective and efficient teacher could be produced from teacher education programme of Nigeria institutions



particularly, Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State through the assistance of the government in doing the following;

- i. Adequate and regular funding teacher education programme.
- ii. Reduction of strike; closure of schools should be reduced to the minimal through the help of the government in meeting the needs of university lecturers.
- iii. Employment of adequate and good quality staff that is professionally qualified into the programme.
- iv. Prompt payment of staff salaries and allowances to boost the morale of the lecturers in order to perform optimally in the chosen career.

Integration of six (6) months at a time teaching practice duration into the curriculum of teacher education programme in Nigeria Universities.

Conclusion

The development of effective and efficient teachers through the teacher education programme is crucial for national progress, as graduates of these programmes serve as vital resources needed to cultivate a skilled workforce across all sectors of the economy. Therefore, it is essential for the government, teacher training institutions, and other educational stakeholders to implement adequate measures that enhance the nation's teacher education programmes. This is necessary to ensure the continuous supply of competent and productive teachers within the educational system. Achieving this goal requires a strong commitment to improving the quality of teacher training institutions across the country.,

Recommendations

it is therefore recommended that;

1. Selection of students to be admitted into Teacher Education Programme

should strictly be by merit and not of necessity.

2. There should be an integration of six (6) months teaching practice exercise into the Teacher Education Programme of Universities in the nation, particularly Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State.
3. There should be thorough and effective supervision of teaching practice exercise in the Teacher Education Programme of Nigeria Universities.
4. There should be prompt payment of staff salaries and allowances to boost the morale of the lecturers to perform optimally.

References

- Adeniran, F. A. & Bakare, K. M. (2012) *Advancement of the theory and practice in education in advancement of the theory and practice in education*. Edited by Alhassan, A.B.
- Agwu, S. N. & Dorgu, T. E. (2015) Towards effective teacher education for proper implementation of the secondary education curriculum in Nigeria. *Journal of curriculum organization of Nigeria*. 22(3), 33-47.
- Britanical (2024) Meaning and definition of a teacher <https://www.britanical.com>. Retrieved on 11th January 2025.
- Ekejiuba, P. (2019) Perceived insecurity among teachers on teaching practice: a treat to Nigerian university education, *Nigeria Journal of Education, Health and Technology Research (NJEHTR)*. 2(5)



Flores, M.A. (2022) Exploring variations in teacher education *European Journal of Teacher Education*. 45(2), 151-153

Imogie, A.I. (2010) A new paradigm for teacher preparation in the 21st century Nigeria: A paper presented at the 2010 annual National Conference of the Institute of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka on 26th-29th April 2010.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Prentice Hall

Samphina Academy (2022) Teaching practice: Definition and meaning <https://www.unijerps.org>. Retrieved on 15th January 2025

University of Mumbai (2019) Definition of a Teacher <https://archive.mu.ac.in>. retrieved on 11th January 2025.