

A Study on Practice Teaching Programme in Teacher Education Institutions of Osmania University

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ABSTRACT

Practice teaching is the one of the key practical component of any pre-service teacher education training programme. The current study investigated preparation of lesson plan, cooperation from the school, feedback mechanism in practice teaching programme and problems faced by school Headmaster/Headmistress to organize the practice teaching in pre-service teacher education at secondary level. Multi-stage sampling was used. The data was collected using tools viz., Questionnaire, Observation Schedule and Semi-structured interview. The collected data was analysed by using both quantitative as well as qualitative techniques. The findings of the study revealed that demonstration of macro lessons given by subject teachers in the cooperating school and method teacher educators are very useful for novice student teachers. The cooperation from the Headmaster/Headmistress and subject teachers of the cooperating practice teaching school is one of the key successes of the practice teaching programme. Innovative lesson plans are to be widely used in practice teaching. The present study findings also revealed that written feedback is more effective than oral feedback. It can be concluded that, there is dire to need good collaboration in between University, Teacher education colleges, and practice teaching schools to success in the organization of practice teaching programme and the organization time of practice teaching also another key factor of school function.

Keywords: Practice Teaching, Lesson Plan, Cooperation, Feedback.

Introduction

Preparation of quality teachers is great demand over the years. To prepare a quality teachers, teacher training programmes are need to be properly designed. Practice teaching is one of the most important practical activities in pre-service teacher education. Cohen and Garner (1963, p.11) observed that student teacher school practice is most vital part of his/her professional training. Cohen, Manion, and Morrisson (2004, p.1) opined that a student teacher is faced with the exciting

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but challenge task of assimilating a variety of contexts very rapidly when embarking upon teaching practice, whether during a course of initial pre-service education. The Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education (CFQTE), (National Council for Teacher Education, NCTE, 1998) observed that the practice teaching require thorough preparation, detailed supervision and adequate time. Its gain would be acquisition of higher level of teaching competencies.

The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE), (NCTE, 2009, p.40) observed that it is common knowledge that practice teaching which constitutes the most functional part of the teacher preparation has suffered severe neglect and dilution in quality. The common complaint is that theory dominates the curriculum and practice teaching continues to suffer from inadequacies of different kinds.

Vision of Teacher Education in India Quality and Regulatory Perspective, Report of the High-Powered Commission on Teacher Education Constituted by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, Justice Verma Commission (Ministry of Human Resource Development, MHRD, 2012, Volume 1, p.14) observed that School experience, based on the model of 'practice teaching' provides piece-meal experiences of functioning as a teacher, mainly because teaching is 'practiced' as a mechanical 'delivery' of a given number of lessons, rather than reflective practice.

Teacher Education

The entire process of teacher education is changing very rapidly over the last decade of the years. To raise the quality of teacher education, various Commissions, Committee reports were formed from 19th Century to till today. The teacher education can be discussed broadly in two categories i.e. both pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher education.

Report of The Education Commission 1964-66 (National Council of Educational Research, NCERT, 1970, p.113) observes the major weaknesses in the teacher education was that; unfortunately, the professional education of teachers has been comparatively neglected in the post-Independence period. Its significance was stressed by the University Education Commission (1949), the Secondary Education Commission (1953), and the Inter-national Team on Teachers and Curricula in Secondary Schools (1954). Several seminars were held and study groups were appointed to discuss improvements in elementary and secondary teacher education. But their recommendations have not yet been implemented in any large measure. Report of the Committee for Review of National Policy on Education 1986 under the Chairpersonship of Acharya Ramamurti (RCRNPE, 1990, pp.266-67) had given the wider perspective that; there is need for revamping the existing teacher education programmes.

The Teacher and Society, Report of the National Commission on Teachers – I (NCT, 1983-85, p.82) observed that the training of teachers demands our urgent attention. National Curriculum Framework (NCF) - 2005 (NCERT, 2005, p.107)

observed that teacher education programmes today train teachers to adjust to a system in which education is seen as the transmission of information. Attempts at curricular reform have not been adequately supported by the teacher education. NCTE (1998) observed that teacher education is an integral component of the educational system. Consequently, education including teacher education largely remained isolated from the needs and aspirations of the people.

The Justice Verma Commission (MHRD, 2012, Volume 1, p.95) recommended that teacher education should be a part of the higher education system; the duration of programme of teacher education needs to be enhanced, in keeping with the recommendations of the Education Commission (1966), the implementation of which is long overdue.

The NCF (NCERT, 2005, pp.109-110) observed that major shift in teacher education programme would provide adequate scope for viewing a theoretical understanding and its practical aspects in a more integrated manner rather than as two separate components. It enables the student-teacher and the teacher in the class room to develop a critical sensitivity to field approaches. Thus, once tried out by self and others, it will lead to evolving one's own vision of an ideal setting for learning. Such teachers would be better equipped for creating a learning environment, would try to improve existing conditions rather than merely adjusting to them with the necessary technical know-how and confidence.

The NCFTE (NCTE, 2009, p.6) observed that the training of teachers is a major area of concern at present as both pre-service and in-service training of school teachers are extremely inadequate and poorly managed in most states. Pre-service training needs to be improved and differently regulated both in public and private institutions, while systems for in-service training require expansion and major reform that allow for greater flexibility.

Practice Teaching

The Teacher and Society, Report of the National Commission on Teachers – I (NCT, 1983-85, pp.87-88) observed that the professional preparation of teacher education falls into three categories: a). The study of education as a discipline. b). Practice teaching or internship in a school system, and c). Learning other practical skills.

According to the CFQTE (NCTE, 1998), practice teaching is essentially a joint responsibility of teacher training institution and the school involving teacher educators, prospective teachers and school teachers. The Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education 2006 (NCTE, 2006, p.30) discuss the significance of feedback in practice teaching is that, availability, appropriateness and sufficiency of *feedback* to the practicing teacher/intern assume even greater importance in learning to be a reflective practitioner. Though the amount of practical experience in terms of the number of lessons taught by an intern is of significance in deciding the sufficiency of learning experience in learning the complex art of teaching, more

important is the *quality feedback* received by the interns. Visual feedback in the form of video recordings of the performance of student-teachers would be of immense help in providing quality feedback.

The NCFTE (NCTE, 2009, p.45) proposed the curricular provision of school internship is 4 (Four) days of teaching for a period of 12-20 weeks, including an initial one week of classroom observations; case studies, classroom research, development of learning resources.

The Education Commission 1964-66 (NCERT, 1970, p.117) observed that, yet another method of breaking this isolation is to make student-teaching a comprehensive internship in which trainees are able to observe the entire work of the school and to participate actively in all the important professional activities of a teacher, both in and out of the classroom. Such comprehensive and fruitful internship will be possible only when there is a systematic collaboration and cooperation between the schools and training institutions and when student-teaching is regarded as the joint responsibility of the producers (i.e., the training institutions) and the users (i.e., the schools and State Departments). Departments of Education should develop such collaboration by giving special recognition and status to schools selected for the programme as 'cooperating schools' and by providing them with adequate grants for equipment and maintenance (i.e. to meet the entire cost of allowances to the supervising teachers).

Richards and Farrell (2011, p.52) opined that the cooperating teacher will play a crucial role in practice teaching. The cooperating teacher will help student teacher to prepare for teaching, share teaching suggestions and strategies, provide feedback on student teacher teaching, help to deal with problems that may occur during teaching, and encourage and motivate during teaching learning. It is important to establish good channels of communication with cooperating teacher to ensure that the relationship is positive and constructive.

Rai (1995, pp.20-22) observed that cooperation from schools is expected at different levels. They are: (A) from the administrator or management, (B) from the principal, (C) from the teachers, and (D) from students.

Concept of Practice Teaching

The term practice teaching, teaching practice, student teaching, school experience programme, school internship words are used synonym for referring practice teaching by various scholars. But most of the scholars recognize the term as practice teaching. Some of the scholar's prefers the term practice teaching, comprehensively as an internship. Stones and Morris (1972, p.7) defined the term teaching practice (practice teaching) has three major connotations: The practising of teaching skills and acquisition of the role of a teacher; the whole range of experiences that students go through in schools; and the practical aspects of the course, as distinct from theoretical studies. Souza and Chatterjee (as cited in Damodar, 1976, p.3) stated that practice teaching means a student is given actual experience of teaching and practical training in the elements of his craft. Perry

(1977, p.1) opined teaching practice (practice teaching) refers to the period of time in which you, as a student teacher, gain first-hand experience in working with children. Srivastava (1997, p.100) viewed that practice teaching, we have observed, is a compulsory item of all teacher training programmes and it comes usually at that phase in the sequence of the professional preparation of teachers where attempt is made to bring theory and practice together. NCTE (1998) observed that practice teaching in pre-service teacher education for secondary stage mainly comprises three components, i.e., pedagogical analysis of two school teaching subjects, practice teaching in schools, and observation of model lessons. Mohanty (2009, p.15) opined practice teaching programme is carried on in schools. It aim is to help the student teachers apply and perfect the skills on which they have been oriented at the preparation stage for practice teaching. Practice teaching is also known as 'Internship', teaching rounds, etc. NCTE (2009, p.45) observed that the curricular aspect of school internship deals with sustained engagement with schools; internship as a partnership model; teaching and participating in school activities; recording observation of learners, analysis and reflection on teaching; developing and maintaining teaching-learning resources; developing unit plans and maintain reflective journals. Batra (as cited in NCTE, 2014, p.30) observed that School internship consists: 1. A sustained contact with the school through internship would help teachers to choose, design, organize, and conduct meaningful classroom activities. 2. Critically reflect upon their own practices through observations, record keeping, and analysis, and develop strategies for evaluating children's learning for feedback into curriculum and pedagogic practice, and 3. The school would benefit from such an alliance in terms of witnessing possibilities on non-conventional pedagogies. Thus, on the basis of all above concepts, practice teaching is known as, "A student teacher who goes professional preparation course where theory and practice combined together under the supervision of experienced subject cooperating teacher and subject method teacher educator in a real school situation".

Research Questions

1. How far the practice teaching programme fulfils the objectives of practice teaching?
2. What extent the school cooperate/support the practice teaching programme?
3. What are the problems faced by student teachers during practice teaching session?
4. How far feedback helps student teachers during practice teaching session?
5. What are problems faced by school management to organize practice teaching session?
6. What are the supervisory practices in the organization of practice teaching programme?

Statement of the Problem

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Objectives of the Study

1. To study the process of practice teaching programme with respect to
 - a. Preparation of lesson
 - b. Cooperation from the school
2. To study the transactional process of the prepared lesson plan by student teachers
3. To study the feedback mechanism followed by the supervisor during the practice teaching session
4. To study the problems faced by school Headmaster/Headmistress for the organization of practice teaching

Methodology of the Study

As per objectives of the study, the researcher adopted survey method. For present study the researcher adopted descriptive survey method.

Population

The Teacher Education College, Student Teacher, Teacher Educator, Practice Teaching School, and Headmaster/Headmistress constituted the population of the study. Osmania University has 91 Teacher Education Colleges for the Academic Year 2012-13. The total population for the present study is presented in Table No: 1

Table 1: Population for the Present Study

S. No.	Name of the Population	Total Population
1	Teacher Education College	91
2	Student Teacher	9975
3	Teacher Educator	637
4	Practice Teaching School	910
5	School Headmaster/Headmistress	910

Sample

Educational Colleges offering Pre-service B.Ed. Course under the Jurisdiction of Osmania University for the Academic Year (2012-13) in 91 Teacher Education Colleges are distributed in Three Districts namely Hyderabad (22), Ranga Reddy (47), and Medak (22).

For the present study the researcher followed Multi-stage Sampling. The detailed description of Multi-stage Sampling is given below.

- Stage 1:** Out of Ninety one teacher education colleges, 20 percent teacher education colleges were selected randomly from each district (18 Teacher Education Colleges).
- Stage 2:** Two practice teaching schools (20 percent) were selected randomly for each of the 18 selected colleges (36 Practice Teaching Schools).
- Stage 3:** Six student teachers were selected randomly from each of the thirty six practice teaching schools (216 Student Teachers).
- Stage 4:** Ten percent (10 percent) teacher educators selected randomly who observed their student teachers classes in practice teaching schools (64 Teacher Educators).
- Stage 5:** Ten percent (10 percent) Headmaster/Headmistress in practice teaching schools were selected randomly (91 Headmaster/Headmistress).

The detailed description of Multi-stage Sampling in each stage is shown in Figure 1.

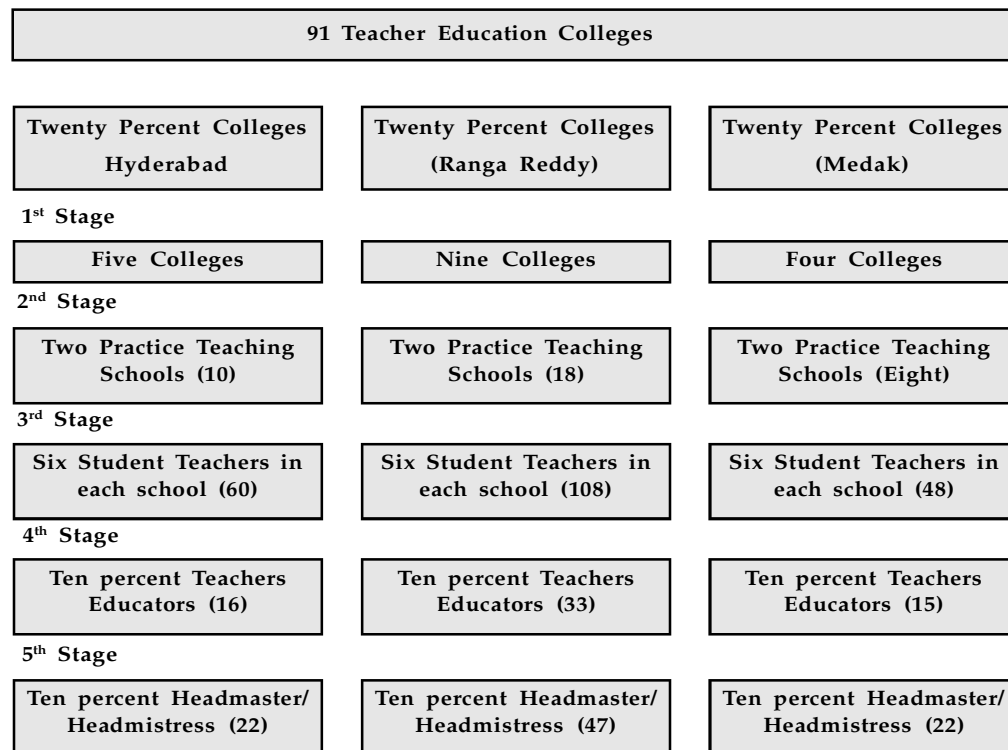


Figure 1: Description of Multi-stage Sampling

Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

Considering the objectives of the present study five tools and techniques were used. They are: 1. Questionnaire for Student teachers, 2. Questionnaire for Teacher Educators, 3. Observation Schedule, 4. Semi-structured Interview for Student Teachers, and 5. Semi-structured Interview for School Headmaster/Headmistress

Data Collection

The data collected from Teacher Education Colleges of Osmania University and Practice Teaching Schools. Practice Teaching Session started in the month of January, 2013 (3rd week) during the Academic Year 2012-13. The data were collected in two phases, i.e. during and after the Practice Teaching Session. The researcher collected the data with the help of Questionnaire, Observation Schedule and Semi-structured Interview from the following Table No: 2

Table 2: Sample for the Present Study

S. No.	Sample Unit	Total
1	Teacher Education College	18
2	Practice Teaching School	36
3	Student Teacher	216
4	Teacher Educator	64
5	School Headmaster/Headmistress	91

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed by using the both quantitative as well as qualitative techniques. The data collected by Questionnaires were analyzed through Frequency, Percentage and Content Analysis. The data collected by Observation Schedule and Semi-structured Interview were also analyzed through Frequency, Percentage and Content Analysis.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data was collected using tools viz., Questionnaire, Observation Schedule, and Semi-structured Interview. The collected data was analysed by using the both quantitative and qualitative techniques of analysis.

Major Findings

1. Majority of the student teachers (94.44 percent) responded that the teacher educators conducted workshop on teaching aids before the commencement of practice teaching programme.

2. Majority of the student teachers (74.56 percent) did not plan innovative methods of teaching for transacting lessons during the practice teaching.
3. The student teachers have opined that demonstration lesson was given by method teacher educators were useful with regard to how to teach students, managing the class and time, improving their teaching skills, effective use of teaching aids, to create interest among students, build self-confidence, how to interact with children, bringing humour in classroom, and how to teach innovative lesson.
4. The student teachers had faced problem of preparation of lesson plan with regard to innovative lesson plan, and consuming more time.
5. Majority of the student teachers (97.22 percent) did not use ICT in transaction of a lesson.
6. The student teachers were observed below 15 minutes (19.54 percent), below 30 minutes (49.43 percent), and whole period (31.03 percent) of the student teacher practice teaching class while transacting lesson.
7. The method teacher educators were observed below 15 minutes (40.24 percent), observed below 30 minutes (41.26 percent), and observed whole period (18.29 percent) of the student teacher practice teaching class while transacting class.
8. The student teachers faced the problems with regard to feedback given by supervisors were not observe the lesson whole period of class and did not give the feedback immediately after completion of class, talk weaknesses in front of other student teachers, and teacher educators did not observe the class daily.
9. Majority of the Headmaster/Headmistress cooperating practice teaching school were opined that the practice teaching programme shall conduct at the beginning of the academic year.
10. The Headmaster/Headmistress of the cooperating practice teaching school had faced problems with regard to the organization of practice teaching programme was inappropriate time, allotment of unequal number in all method subjects, and student teachers did not work according to expectations.

Discussion of the Findings

Before the commencement of practice teaching session, the concerned teacher training college has to give proper orientation for student teachers with regard to preparation of teaching aids, lesson plan, and model demonstration lesson. The student teachers who participated in this study opined that the teacher educators given orientation programme on teaching aids with main focus on 2 – Dimensional teaching aids, 3 – Dimensional teaching aids, based on learning experiences and improvised teaching aids. The findings of the study pinpoints that focusing on inculcation of use of ICT based teaching aids and every teacher education college

must give the orientation on teaching aids before beginning of practice teaching session.

To make effective organization of practice teaching session, the cooperation from the Headmaster/Headmistress and subject teacher of the cooperating practice teaching school is one of the key successes of the practice teaching programme. It was found that majority of student teachers opined that the Headmaster/Headmistress of the practice teaching school cooperate in terms of allotting the time-table, allotting the classes, and managing the students and subject teacher cooperates in terms of preparation of lesson plan, correction of lesson plan, providing teaching aids, feedback, and showing high concern and care. This study also revealed the importance of cooperation from Headmaster/Headmistress and subject teacher. The similar findings also revealed by Akbar (2001), Akcan and Tatar (2010), Alkhwaldeh (2011), Azeem (2011), Ntsaluba and Chireshe (2013), and Ekundayo et al. (2014).

In the practice teaching session feedback given by supervisors is most crucial part of the programme. Findings of this study indicates that subject teachers and method teacher educators given feedback while student teachers transacting the lesson and regarding the weaknesses and strengths. This study results showed that both individual and group discussions is the effective feedback session. Further the present study findings revealed that written feedback is more effective than oral feedback. The study results indicate that subject teacher feedback is essential component in practice teaching. These similar findings are revealed in Dholakia (1979), Akcan and Tatar (2010), Kothari, Shealt & Mistry (2012), Ali and Al-Adawi (2013), Percara (2013), and Rosemary et al. (2013).

The organization time of practice teaching is also another key factor of school function. All the Headmaster/Headmistress opined that practice teaching programme was not organized in appropriate time of the academic year. The similar findings also revealed in studies of Sharma (as cited in SERD, 1979, p.447), Mtika (2008), Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009), Komba and Kira (2013), and Menlah (2013).

Conclusions

To make effective organization of practice teaching session, there should be good collaboration in between University, Teacher Education Colleges, and Cooperating Practice Teaching School. Before sending the student teachers for practice teaching session, the teacher education college/institute must cover the theoretical syllabus with regard to practice teaching. The concerned University/Institution will be conduct regular orientation programmes/workshops for teacher educators, subject teachers in the cooperating school, and School Headmaster/Headmistress. Practice teaching programme should be organized at the appropriate time of the academic calendar of the cooperating practice teaching school.

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