



# Teaching Practice: A *Sine Qua Non* for Professional Growth of Business Education Students in Nigeria

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study focused on teaching practice: a *sine qua non* for professional growth of business education students in Nigeria. And that the only way to measure the preparedness of a trainee business teacher towards the profession is to expose him/her to actual teaching through practice teaching exercise. Education Students are therefore posted to primary or secondary schools with private schools inclusive for a stipulated period of practice teaching in order to gain experience in the field. Unfortunately, some students misconceive teaching practice as micro-teaching and therefore question the rationale for a repetition of the exercise. This study started with identifying the meaning of teaching practice and its relationship with learning and pointed out that effective teaching must go with effective learning. Thus, the student must be at the fore of any teaching activity. As a follow-up, the study also looked at pre-teaching practice activities, activities during the teaching practice, post-teaching practice activities and assessing teaching programme. Teaching and learning are basically, an individual affair. Every good teacher's aim when embarking on teaching, should lead the learners in learning as well as be a useful instrument for the achievement of the goals of education

**Keywords:** Teaching Practice; Trainee Student; Professional Growth; Business Education; Business Teaching and Prospective Teacher.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching practice provides opportunity for the student-teacher to test his/her knowledge of what was learnt at school as well as practical learning of the art of teaching in the classroom. This opportunity exposes the student to various learning experiences, from rural and urban schools, small and large schools, organised and disorganised schools. This exposure reveals, to some extent real-life situations in the teaching profession (Koko, 2006).

The professional business teacher's preparation does not begin with the teaching experience. The business teacher has to undergo some years of college preparation as a student. In Nigeria, an NCE-business teacher has to be exposed to a two-year academic work involving business and professional courses in a college of Education before thinking of his/her practical experience. For bachelor's degree business teacher, the period of academic work before the first teaching experience is usually two-year duration for a student in a four-year programme, but lesser time for one who had a direct-entry admission. On the whole the subject matter preparation and theoretical preparation, which typically precede students teaching, very greatly the programme involved (Enebe, 2005).

Teaching practice is a worth-while experience. There are several benefits derivable from it. It is a time for the business education teacher to match theoretical experience with practical or related their academic experience with the actual teaching.

Before teaching practice, lecturers make concerted efforts to teach their student teacher what they are supposed to know. To function effectively in teaching, the prospective teacher must have knowledge of child development and child learning, motivation and how to handle certain behavioural problems of children like bullying. The prospective teacher must also have a good knowledge of various teaching methods and classroom management and some other principles of education.

Specifically, the business-teacher must learn to write note of lesson, to prepare and use instrumental materials to break up the topic in the scheme of work into teachable units and to keep records required of him. The student-teacher must understand the concept of educational objectives and teaching learning evaluation and must be able to apply appropriate techniques and methods in the course of his teaching.

Besides, the above professional studies requirement; preparation before teaching practice demands competencies. Profession of adequate knowledge and a making of basic skills will enhance the student-teacher's performance in teaching practice. The student-teacher should, therefore, learn a lot of facts concerning the various business courses which are supposed to be related to school subjects in the school of practice.

A taste of the actual teaching will usually show whether the student-teacher is well equipped for the profession or not will reveal the area of strength and weakness in the student-teacher's performance. Some students think that the teaching practice period is a time for less work and freedom from work. These students feel that they have been released from the rigorous academic work and lectures assignment. When they move to their new environment, the school of practice, they begin to learn to direct and manage school affairs and guide their own students. Often times, they are over whelmed by the great responsibilities and enormous activities which they are compelled to undertake. An unprepared student-teacher will usually begin to encounter some difficulties in handling the various responsibilities. The essence of this research work on teaching practice, therefore, is to guide student teachers adequately so that they can solve those problems they may likely encounter during their first teaching experience. This investigation will look at meaning and purpose of teaching practice, pre-teaching practice activities, activities, post-teaching practice activities and assessing teaching practice programme.

### **Meaning of Teaching Practice**

Many authors have defined the terms "teaching practice", each according to his or her perception of the activities involved. Hence, Koko (2006) in Haires (1979) defined teaching practice as the period of time when a pre-service teacher is assigned to a public school for supervised teaching experience as part of his college programme. To Koko, teaching practice can be conducted in private schools as well as in public schools. It is an apprenticeship or internship, which constitutes the gate way to teaching. It could be contended that practice teaching is not a trial period but a preparatory period and an opportunity for a student to put into actual practice what he/she has learnt on effective teaching. Teaching practice is a college programme designed to enable an education student to inquire, discover and practice the theoretical ideas acquired in the training ground.

Enebe (2005) in Martin & Westcoot (1963) defined teaching practice as "all those experiences which a teacher preparing for active work with pupils encounter during assignment to a school". To him, teaching practice is all embracing and usually includes experiences within and outside the school.

McJohnson (2013) stated that teaching practice is "first opportunity for the student-teacher to participate in activities involved in teaching in actual situations. It is also recognised as an experience of guided teaching in which the student-teacher assumes increasing responsibilities for directing the learning of a group of pupils over a specific period of time". He further explained that teaching practice is a means of providing opportunities, under typical school conditions in selected co-operating schools for student-teachers to secure experiences in observing and participating activities of the teacher in the school. From the foregoing one easily understands that teaching practice is the period when students undergoing training as teachers are giving the opportunity to perform all the activities of the teacher in a school other than their own institution. It is because of this that teaching practice is defined as that part of a teacher-preparatory programme which provides students the opportunity to gain practical experience in teaching in their chosen school under expert supervision (Gateway, 2012; Abdullahi, 2010; Jubril, 2014). The

above definition takes into consideration what is obtainable in Nigeria context. According to Jubril (2014) “It is primarily the aim of student teaching to learn about the actual work of the teacher in the classroom as well as in out-of-class experience”.

### **Purpose of Teaching Practice**

Adogbeji (2013) in Olaitan & Agusiobo (1981) pointed out that practical teaching seeks to help the student-teacher to:

- ❖ Apply principles of learning to particular situation to bring about meaningful changes in the experiences of the learners.
- ❖ Identify objectives of teaching and to see the relations of a day’s lesson to the long-range plans for a week or a term.
- ❖ Use knowledge of human growth and development of children and adolescence in providing effective teaching-learning situation.
- ❖ Become familiar, with a variety of instructional material and resources; evaluate and select those appropriate for the objectives in a teaching unit or lesson.
- ❖ Identify factors that influence the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process and finding ways to direct or control them.
- ❖ Apply the principle of evaluation and use of the result of evaluation as means for improving instruction.
- ❖ Develop efficient and effective practice for carrying out the routine management of a classroom.
- ❖ Communicate and work effectively with pupils, staff and other members of the school.
- ❖ Establish rapport and appropriate means of interaction with individuals and small and large groups.
- ❖ Have the opportunity to participate in community activities, which will enhance the professional growth of a teacher.

However, the above points raised by Adogbeji (2013) in Olaitan & Agusiobo (1981) may be seen as specific objectives obtained from teaching practice because they are expressed in details. The purpose of teaching practice is therefore:

- (a) *To Practical Experience:* Teaching practice provides opportunity for students teachers to put their knowledge; the theories and educational principles which they have learnt into practice. The experience student-teacher may, therefore, confirm that those theories or principles are workable or the extent to which they are workable.
- (b) *To Increase Professional Competence:* Teaching practice provides additional opportunity for student-teachers to learn from their colleagues, the subject teachers of the school of practice or the supervisors thereby becoming able to do those things they have not known to do before (Abenga, 1997; Enerson & Plank, 1996; Kwairanga, 1999).
- (c) *To Have a Test of What the Profession is:* Teaching practice enables-student-teachers relate their studies to their future career. Thus, student-teachers become aware of what activities the business teachers undertake in the school and outside the school (Eneke, 2005).
- (d) *To Evaluate the Entire Business Education Programme:* Teaching practice is the period for exposing student teachers to teaching activities and thus compel them to perform various and sometimes difficult rules. Eneke (2005) in Okorie (1979) maintained that the student-teachers may examine himself/herself in relation to the following selected traits or sensitivities:
  - (i) Personal appearance
  - (ii) Tolerance of stress
  - (iii) Poise and confidence
  - (iv) Empathy for pupils
  - (v) Enthusiasm
  - (vi) Attitude towards criticism
  - (vii) Sense of humour
  - (viii) Absence of dogmatism

- (ix) Dependability
  - (x) Respect for the opinions of others
  - (xi) Imagination
  - (xii) Respect for the right of others
  - (xiii) Creativity
  - (xiv) Adaptability
- (f) *Do Improve Communication and Social Skills:* Teaching provides an opportunity for student-teaching to improve the communication and social skills through constant use of teaching practice periods call for much speaking, listening, writing and reading as student-teachers had never done before. It also calls for good relationships with colleagues and staff of the cooperating school.

### **Pre-Teaching Practice Activities**

For a student-teacher, preparations toward teaching begin with the practice teaching, which is a mini-learning process before actual professional teaching. Even though there are no guaranteed procedures, a good plan before embarking on practice teaching will enable a student-teacher build confidence towards his/her first experience. This preparation includes:

1. *Orientation of Student-Teachers:* The orientation may start a few weeks before assigning students to school or after they have visited the school of practice-teaching for the first time. The orientation may be a day or two and guest speakers or teaching practice committee members may be asked to talk to students on what are expected of them during the teaching practice period. During such orientation, students' questions are answered to clarify areas of doubt. The date of resumption of the teaching practice will be indicated.
2. *Student-Teachers have to be assigned to Schools:* The assignment of student-teachers to schools is the responsibilities of the teaching practice committee in the educational institution. Sometimes, a list of selected schools for the practice teaching is pasted on the notice board or the students are informed about this school. Students are provided with letter of introduction or identification letter to principal of the schools of their choice. When a principal accepts students for teaching in his/her school, he/she endorses the letter of introduction and writes the subject the student has been asked to teach. The part containing the endorsement and subject to teach is detached and giving back to the students to submit to teaching practice committee. In this way, each student selects the school of his or her choice (Akpojotor, 2015).
3. *Assignment of Supervisors:* After the choice of school for teaching practice has been made by the various students concerned, the teaching practice committee will prepare a list showing the student on each school and also assign specific and general supervisors to each student in these schools. It is the usual practice that students are not made to know them before hand.
4. *Students Visit Schools of Practice:* Students are meant to visit the school of practice earlier before the start of their teaching to acquaint themselves with what obtains in the school. During this visit the student-teacher should see the subject-teacher or the subject he has been assigned to teach. The form teacher or the head of class or section if any, the principal, vice-principal and the dean of studies. The thing to do is to report first to the principal on arrival. The principal will then permit the student-teacher to see the subject teacher and others he may wish to discourse with.
5. *Requirements from the School of Practice:* The first thing the business teacher should obtain from the school of the practice is the scheme of work or curriculum or syllabus, textbooks on the subject, the time-table showing the lesson period for the subject teacher's guide on recommended text. The subject of the school will assist the student-teacher obtain these items. The student-teacher will also find out what instructional materials are available for the subject in the school. He can complete the available material with the one he can provide.
6. *Accommodation Arrangement:* The subject-teacher should arrange for where to live near to the school of practice. This is necessary where the students' educational institution is not near the school. On the alternative, there should be transport facilities which will provide an easy means

of going to school (Nkweke, 2012; Nkweke, Loveday & Obodoegbulom, 2013; Eyanake, Ekanem & Uwak, 2013).

7. *Preparation of Note of Lesson:* Business teacher should write their note of lesson before ever going to teach. Writing note enables the teacher to know what to teach, how to teach it, when to teach it, and all the why and what of the subject-matter one should not teach without having prepared the note of lesson.

### **Activities During the Teaching Practice**

The business teacher should greatly be involved in the teaching-learning activities of the school as well as in all extra-curriculum activities within the school, he should endeavour to be regular and punctual to school at all times. The following activities are important.

1. *Orientation:* This may be organised in group for the new arrivals-the student-teacher or may take the form of being introduced to the members of staff and student on individual basis, student-teacher will be shown their staff room and other necessary facilities in the compound.
2. *Teaching:* Each student-teacher had to know when he/she will enter class to teach his/her lesson. He/she should enter the class early enough at the time his/her lesson period starts. The teacher is the primary creator of the type of human/social environment that can promote learning in the class. The teacher starts creating this as he is about to enter his classroom. The teacher's appearance should be the first thing to impress the students. He must be neatly and simply dressed. He must neither look shabby or over dressed. He should bring genuineness into his class and he must wear a cheerful look, no matter the state of mind. The student-teacher should create a good impression on the first day of entering the class. This impression has a long lasting effect. He should try to handle the learning situation with the competencies acquired and should continue in this way.
3. *Morning Assembly:* Student-teacher should come to school on time so as to participate on the assembly. During the assembly, some vital instruction and pieces of information are passed to the students. Parts of the assembly are the prayer session, which is necessary when starting the school activities.
4. *Sports Activities:* As much as possible, business student-teachers should take part in organising sporting activities for students. Business education teachers may not participate in these activities themselves, but should contribute in whatever way they can to make these activities successful. The business teachers of today are a happy highly respected and well-known leader in his school and community. Besides, teaching in his classroom he is an object active member of local, social and civic clubs and organisation. Apart from sports, the student-teachers should also participate in out door activities involving students, except if it is an outdoor lesson which is other subject like Agriculture, Introductory Technology, Physical Education to mention but a few. Some teachers think that responsibilities are limited only to classroom teaching. According to Okereke (2010) in Okorie (1979), teachers have other extra-curricular responsibilities as well. He went further to state that: "Many extra-curricular activities are regarded as part of the curriculum, because the skill, concepts or the aptitude learnt through such activities may be as valuable as those gain in former courses. Some of the extra-curricular activities include this outdoor activity like social events day when schools go for matching exercises, school dances and parties involving staff, school sponsor trips for leisure or tourism".
5. *Meeting:* The student-teachers should participate in staff meetings except if the principal excludes them. In any case, since they are considered as part of the school staff they are always included. These meetings include staff meeting, PTA meeting and committee meetings.
6. *Record Keeping:* There are a number of records that are necessary in the schools, administration apart from the diary and assessment records; one may keep inventory records item kept under one's custody. The subject teacher or the school will guide the student-teacher on matter pertaining to record.

7. *School Clubs and Association:* The student-teacher should be interested in assisting students, organise their club and association. He should advice them as appropriate but he should find out the school policy concerning the organisations/clubs included Business Education Students Association (BESA), dramatic society, debating society, literacy club responsible for school publication.
8. *Form Master:* In some schools, a student-teacher can be made a form master. This means that he is assigned to be in charge of a class, problems and complaints concerning members of the particular class are brought to the knowledge of the form master. The form master of the class takes the roll call of the class and keeps register of attendance. He also compiles the result of the members of the class.
9. *Relations with Others:* The student-teacher should relate well with those he/she friends in the school, he/she should relate well with other student-teachers, and members of the staff of the practice school, with the principal with the students and others which visits the school. The student-teacher will find the good relationship between him/her and the subject teacher very useful. It is the subject teacher that has to guide the student-teacher at all times.

### **Post-Teaching Practice Activities**

On completion of the number of weeks stipulated for the teaching practice, the student-teacher should inform the principal or vice-principal that his/her time for the practice is up. The student-teacher should ensure that the students' results, as it affects the subject he/she handled, have been prepared. He/she should ensure that he/she returns all property kept in his/her custody or borrowed from others, in the course of the teaching practice, to the right person.

Sometimes, it may happen that your supervisors have not come to supervise you. You should find out from other student –teachers if they had been supervised if they had, you should report to the teaching practice committee in your institution so that the committee can decide on what to do. Such report should be written.

### **Assessing Teaching Practice**

Every trainee student on teaching practice is still a learner who is inexperienced in effective teaching. The teaching periods affords him/her the opportunity to learn and be assessed on his/her progress in becoming a professional teacher. Teaching practice is part of the requirement for the award of a teaching certificate or degree. Therefore, performance during the exercise is assessed by the supervisors at the practising school and the training college. The focus is on real classroom performance of the student-teacher. The three areas of concern are:

- (a) Planning
- (b) Techniques and
- (c) Class interactions

#### *Planning*

Planning activities during teaching practice will involve the student teachers preparation of a lesson plan, which will indicate the method(s) and techniques to be adopted in teaching. Preparations will involve the identification of teaching aids for teaching as well as the periods and classroom for the lesson.

#### *Techniques*

The chosen techniques and method will be presented during the lesson. The supervisors in assessing the student-teacher's performance in class may observe the teaching techniques recommended and how they are used in teaching. For example, there is need to use questioning techniques to elicit student's participation in learning. This is to probing the student's level of understanding.

#### *Teacher and Student Classroom Interaction*

A cordial class relationship breeds better teaching and learning environment. The student teacher's level of English usage and voice control are important assets for classroom interaction. A high-pitch voice may sometimes portray anger than a means of communicating. Moderation is the use of English and speech will suffice (Koko, 2006).

Supervisors of teaching practice assess the student teacher's level of confidence in subject delivery and class control. Thus, they evaluate the extent to which a student teacher exhibits patience, tact, enthusiasm, sense of humour and awareness of the needs of his/her students.

### **CONCLUSION**

Experience shows that business teachers, face traumatic and apprehensive situations on first day in class. This study reveals those unpleasant incidences that incite fears for teaching and suggest a way out. The student or the beginning teacher is encouraged to consult other texts and periodicals in general and business teaching to update the knowledge in this area.

However, teaching in any educational system is an individual affair. What may be useful to one teacher may or may not work for another. The choice of a method is dependent on the teacher, the subject matter and the learning environment as well as the learners.

Teaching in secondary schools is a collaborative activity. Different teachers teach a subject at one time or the other and different teachers teach a student in a day. Therefore, every teacher should consider others in the use of the classroom, time and teaching materials. In addition, the views of students and peers must be respected for useful co-existence to thrive within the system

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations have been proffered.

1. The business trained teacher should have genuine interest in carrying out the teaching practice aspect of the programme, as this will help prepare him for profession he seeks to join.
2. The student-teacher should not shy away from responsibilities or else people will begin to recognise you as being irresponsible and unreliable.
3. The student teacher should appear very decent, posture, grooming and dressing should create good impression and he/she should develop a good sense of humour and bring happiness and joy wherever he/she is. Learn to assist others as much as possible when the need arises.
4. The student-teacher should be a good ambassador of his/her institution in the community where he/she has for gone for the teaching practice.
5. Any student that failed micro-teaching should not be allowed to go out for teaching practice exercise.

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