

## انطباع الطلبة حول التربية العملية والمشكلات التي يواجهونها

أ . هناء البشتي اللب - كلية التربية الزاوية - جامعة الزاوية

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة انطباع الطلبة حول التربية العملية والصعوبات التي قد يواجهونها أثناء أداء التربية العملية حيث تم اختيار العينة من السنة الرابعة من قسم اللغة الانجليزية بكلية التربية للعام الجامعي 2016/2017م ، وقد قامت الباحثة بإعداد استبيان وتوزيعه على 100 طالبة من الطالبات المدرجات في التربية العملية ، وأشارت النتائج إلى أن الطالبات قد استفدن كثيرا من تدريبات التربية العملية في اكتساب العديد من مهارات التواصل والحوار مع الطلاب في المدرسة ، وكيفية إدارة الفصل ، وأشارت الطالبات كذلك إلى أن تدريب التربية العملية كان له تأثير إيجابي ، وقلن أيضا أنهن واجهن بعض الصعوبات عند أداء التربية العملية وفي نهاية هذه البحث قدمت الباحثة توصيات للنهوض أكثر بهذا التدريب وكيفية تجاوز الصعوبات التي من الممكن أن تقف عائقا أمام إنجاز الأهداف المرجوة من هذا البرنامج .

### **STUDENT- TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHING PRACTICE AND CHALLENGES**

This study aims at investigating the student- teachers' perspectives of teaching practice. It also assesses the challenges that students encounter while in the schools that they are attached for teaching practice. The sample was taken from the forth year of English department at the Faculty of Education at university of Zawiya who had done teaching practice during the academic year 2016/2017. A survey design was used and a quantative questionnaire was administered to 100 student teachers. The findings of this research indicate that the participants have benefite from the teaching practice in many of teaching skills such as: communication with students and classroom management skills. The participants also indicate that the experience of teaching practice had made an impact on their perception of the teaching profession and they did experience challenges while on teaching practice. *Based on the findings of this study, recommendations are given on how to improve students' perspectives and challenges.*

#### **Keyword:**

- Student teachers, Perspectives, Teaching practice, Challenges.

## **Introduction**

Teaching practice is an exercise that is conducted by many universities in the world. For instance, Haigh(2001) said that teaching practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is considered to be one of the most influential aspects of pre-service teacher education.

In addition, Ezewu et al (1994) added that the term "teaching practice" has been accepted almost universally and uncritically by all concerned with the preparation of teachers and its use has embraced all the learning experiences of student teachers at schools. This concept has been used from the earliest days of the development of the training colleges.

Today, teaching practice is considered a valuable activity for the qualifications of a student teacher and it needs to be conducted effectively. Also, with increased demands being placed on teachers to meet the needs of diverse students, to design classrooms and use methods of teaching that are learner centered, the world of teaching has become complex. Therefore, universities and schools of education are exploring new approaches to teacher education. Because most of the influential pedagogies in teacher education are relating to supervised field experience such as teaching practice, there is a real need to study the challenges and possible solutions to these challenges that student teachers may encounter while conducting teaching practice and the effect of the experiences that may get on the teaching profession. It is also necessary to establish ways to assist student- teachers to transfer from the role of beginning teachers.

In view of this challenging and problematic nature of teaching practice, this study examines the student teachers' experiences during teaching practice and its impact on their perceptions of the teaching profession.

## **The Objectives of the Study**

Due to the rapid changes, the development of modern and learning theories, and the emerged issues related to students' performance in core subjects such as language, it is necessary to act in accordance with a new

vision to train student teachers and provide them with new teaching skills and experience in real school environment.

Allagany, et al (1990) indicated that student- teachers' perspective regarding the system of teaching practice is crucial. So this study aims to uncover the reality of teaching practice from the student- teachers' perspectives. It is very important to investigate student- teachers' perspectives because these students interact with all members in teaching

field such as cooperative teachers, academic supervisors, and students. Therefore, their insights can help stakeholders, cooperative teacher and academic supervisors to understand the trainees' needs to improve the teaching practice culture. Specifically, this study aims to understand the reality of teaching practice experience from the perspectives of student- teachers at faculty of Education at Zawiya University. It also aims to explore student- teachers' challenges during their teaching practice experience. In particular, the objectives of the study were:

1. To investigate the student- teacher's experiences during teaching practice and its effect on their perception of the teaching career.
2. To establish the challenges faced by student- teachers during teaching practice.

### **The Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study emerges from the importance of teaching practice in Libyan teacher education programs and its role in teacher preparation. In addition, this study is crucial in that it studies the educational competencies of student- teachers, and its ability to establish the problems faced by student teachers during teaching practice experience. Moreover, the study results may draw attention to many problems and challenges faced by student- teachers during teaching practice.

So, this study aims at sharing these issues that may help the educational stakeholders to decrease these problems and challenges and their effect, and to facilitate the training process to achieve the goals of teaching practice

experience for prospective student- teachers in other higher education institutions that may have similar issues.

### **Limitation of the Study**

The study was administered on student- teachers enrolled in teaching practice in the fourth year of the academic year 2016/2017. Generalization of the study findings is limited based on the instruments used to collect data.

### **Research Procedural Definitions**

Teaching practice: A program that is applied as part of teacher preparation. It is designed to allow student – teachers to recognize the reality of the educational process through applying the theoretical courses taught at the university. In this study, teaching practice is the period that student- teachers spend at schools, and practice actual teaching. Teaching practice consists of three phases: observation, partially teaching participation, and solo teaching.

Student teacher: The student at Faculty of Education who practices teaching through teaching practice experience in the forth year of English Department.

The cooperative teachers: The teachers who work at the cooperative school and their role is to offer a help and guidance to student- teachers during the teaching practice.

Challenges: issues faced by student- teachers during their teaching practice experience in or outside the classroom, and effectively prevent the implementation of teaching practice experience.

### **Literature Review**

#### **What is teaching practice?**

The term teaching practice represents the range of experiences to which student- teachers are exposed when they work at schools. Emereole (2000) asserted that the term teaching- practice is an exercise of guided teaching in which the trainee teacher gets increased responsibility for teaching a group of learners for over a period of time.

According to Imart (2003), the term teaching practice includes three main components : the practicing of teaching, skills and acquisition of the role of a teacher and everything of experiences and practical aspects of the course as distinct from theoretical studies. Andabai (2010) asserted that teaching practice is concerned with the practical use of teaching principles, teaching techniques and practical exercise of different activities of daily school life.

Furthermore, Hassan (2000) explained that teaching practice is a period which provides opportunities under typical school conditions in selected cooperating schools for trainee teachers to secure experience in observing and practicing actively in diverse educational activities of teaching at school. All these definitions emphasise that the teaching practice is a crucial exercise that provides the opportunity to beginning teachers to become socialized into the profession.

At the Faculty of Education, teaching practice is an essential aspect of teacher education because it prepares teachers for their future teaching roles and assignment.

Teaching practice programs vary from an educational institution to another. For example, in China, the teaching practice starts at the beginning of the fourth year and for a period ranging from 8 to 10 weeks, and the number of credit hours ranging from 4% and less than 6% of the number of credit hours (Chen & Mu, 2010). In Singapore, a period of teaching practice is up to 22 weeks spread over the four years of the study ( Manzar – Abbas& Lu, 2013).

At the Faculty of Education at Zawiya University, the teaching practice consists of two sections: 1) theoretical teaching practice that discusses issues related to the practical issues from the field. It serves as an introduction to teaching practice (2) that spent by the student– teachers in schools. In this course the student– teachers spend about 10 weeks in the school to live the experience of teaching in the real world. Throughout this course, the university assign students to spend their teaching practice in specific schools. During the teaching practice the student – teachers are gradually involved in the teaching

process. They begin as observers in the assigned classrooms where they observe to capture the context and benefit from the cooperating teacher's daily practices. Then, they start to partially teach lessons under the observation of the academic supervisors from the university. At the end of the course, their performance is evaluated by the academic supervisors and the school.

### **The Strengths of Teaching Practice**

Many researchers have been attracted by teaching practice and most findings show that teaching practice has more strengths than weaknesses. Some of these findings indicate that teaching practice grants student- teachers experience actual teaching and learning environment( Marias and Meier, 2004). Perry (2004) showed that teaching practice makes student- teachers able to understand the real world of teaching and provides them a chance to know about problems and difficulties of teaching that may face them in the future. Moreover, teaching practice makes student-teachers able to transit from the role of student to the role of beginning teacher. Furthermore, Ajoku and Achuonye (2003), asserted that performance during teaching practice provides some basis for predicting the future success of the teacher and the quality of teacher education programs. Edem (2003), asserted that student – teachers are provided a high degree of emotional involvement of a mostly positive nature while working in schools during teaching practice.

In the same study, Edem(2003) added that during teaching practice, student- teachers feel engaged, challenged and even empowered. In another study, Osuala (2004), asserted that student- teachers are involved in the realities of effective teaching and it helps them to try out methods of teaching and get practical classroom experience under experts. This aspect was asserted by Itejere(1998) stated that teaching practice is the most vital part of student- teacher's career training , this is because it is during this experience that the trainee teachers apply the methods. Overall, it plays a key role in bridging the gap between theory and practice as it is commonly said that"

theory without practice is empty, and practice without theory is blind"( Morrison and Werf,2012).

Finally, we can say that through teaching practice the student- teacher realizes his/her professional responsibility as a teacher to learn how to deal with it. During this experience they are provided an opportunity to discover their abilities and creativities that help them in their future teaching processes.

### **The Challenges that Students Experience During Teaching Practice**

Challenges that student- teachers may face during teaching practice experience have been concerned by many researchers. Marrias and Meier (2004), for instance, indicate that teaching practice is a challenging but an important part of teacher training, especially in developing countries. In Libya, and according to the results of this study, student- teachers encounter challenges during teaching practice. Studies conducted in Zambia and south Africa indicate the following challenges that student- teachers encounter during teaching practice; inadequate preparation of the trainees, geographical distance, low and uneven levels of teacher expertise, a wide ranging lack of resources as well as a lack of discipline between a wide cross section of students and teachers, lack of finances and accommodation facilities, noninvolvement in other school activities, very little support and lack of trust from the cooperating teachers(Kasanda 1995, Kiggundu and Nayimuuli 2009). These challenges of not argued, may have an effect on student- teachers' performance during teaching practice and may also affect their perceptions of the teaching profession.

Another research was conducted by Yassin (2004). The researcher studied the difficulties faced by the students at the Faculty of Education in Gaza during their teaching practice and established the following: the long distance between the assigned schools and the students' houses, the lack of guidance given by school principles considering the school systems, regulations and participation in the school activities, and the lack of respect showed from the cooperating teachers towards the student- teachers.

In the same field and while investigating the challenges that student- teachers encounter during teaching practice in South Africa, Bechuke et al (2013) showed that university assessors are not well informed of their responsibilities as mentors to student- teachers during teaching practice. Mentors consider their responsibilities as being a university assignment to supervise.

With all these disadvantages in some of these schools that mentioned previously, the objectives of teaching practice are not achieved and this paper sought to establish these challenges.

### **Methodology**

The descriptive analytical methodology was followed in this research by implementing a developed questionnaire for achieving this purpose.

### **Participants**

This study included a 100 student- teachers at the Faculty of Education.who enrolled in the forth year of English Department of the academic year2016/2017. The sample was chosen randomly and all participants were females.

### **Instruments**

The researcher reviewed related literature and also interviewed a group of student- teachers who enrolled in teaching practice experience to learn about their perspectives about teaching practice, and the expected challenges that they may face in this experience. As a result the researcher developed a quantitative questionnaire which consists of 26 items distributed into two dimensions.

The first dimension focused on the student- teachers' perspectives of teaching practice. This dimension included 15 items. The second dimension focused on the challenges that may be faced by the student- teachers. This dimension included 10 items. The questionnaire used Likert scale (strongly agree= 4, agree= 3, disagree= 2, strongly disagree= 1). All the items of the questionnaire were written in the positive form.



## Procedures

To achieve the aims of this study, the following steps were taken:

1. The researcher gave an account and background about the teaching practice experience.
2. The researcher gave an account of relevant literature and relevant studies.
3. Administering the questionnaire.
4. Analyzing the data statistically.
5. Recommendations and suggestions

## Results and Discussions

To facilitate judging the extent of the teaching practice challenges, the percentage of each item was calculated and presented in the following items.

The first aim is to investigate the student– teacher's experiences during teaching practice and its effect on their perception of the teaching career. To do this, percentage of the items were calculated as shown in table (1).

Table (1): Percentage of the student–teachers' perspectives of practicum practices

No	Paragraph	SA	A	SD	D	Remarks
1	Teaching practice has helped me to learn the appropriate classroom management skills.	89%	10%	–	1%	Agree
5	Through teaching practice, I could learn how to plan, prepare and present my lesson topics appropriately.	88%	9%	–	3%	Agree
2	Teaching practice has helped how to develop my teaching strategies and methods.	87%	10%	–	3%	Agree
6	Teaching practice improved my skill of teaching	84%	12%	–	1%	Agree
9	Teaching practice developed my skills in communicating and	81%	16%	–	3%	Agree

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	interacting with students as well as controlling the class effectively.					
10	Through teaching, I learned how to use instructional materials when teaching.	79%	13%	–	8%	Agree
4	Teaching practice has improved my knowledge and respect for the school's laws and regulations.	76%	19%	–	8%	Agree
11	Through teaching practice, I learned how to use reinforcement and assessment skills correctly.	73%	36%	–	3%	Agree
7	Teaching practice is considered by student– teachers as a vital factor in preparing them for future teaching assignments.	69%	30%	–	1%	Agree
8	Teaching practice provided general experience in the teaching profession	59%	34%	–	7%	Agree
12	During teaching practice, I acquired the valuable personality attributes that are associated with an outstanding teacher.	50%	46%	3%	1%	Agree
14	Through teaching practice, I learned how to prepare educational software that support teaching	48%	42%	3%	7%	Agee
13	Teaching practice made me able to develop my way of working with students and colleagues effectively.	45%	45%	2%	8%	Disagree
15	Teaching practice focused on the theoretical knowledge more than on the applied knowledge.	18%	4%	50%	2%	Disagree

From table (1) we can see that, out of the responses collected from the respondents, questions 1–15 had majority of the students selecting strongly agree and agree and very few students disagreed with the given items. The

details of Table (1) indicate that the highest percentage (89%) was given to the paragraph that stated: "teaching practice has helped me to learn the appropriate classroom management skills". The following percentage was (87%): " Through teaching practice, I could learn how to plan, prepare, and present my lesson topics appropriately". Further, the following paragraph: " Teaching practice has helped me how to develop my teaching strategies and methods", was in the third rank with a percentage of (84%). When it comes to the item : " teaching practice improved my skill of teaching", the percentage was (81%). The lowest percentage (5%) was for " teaching practice focused on the theoretical knowledge more than the applied knowledge".

These results indicated that teaching practice gave the students many experiences and these experiences had an impact on their perceptions on the teaching profession. Teaching practice was very beneficial in the course of this research work because it gives an opportunity for the student –teachers to teach and improve their professional competence.

The results indicated that student–teachers benefited greatly in participating in teaching practice because they learned how to use the appropriate classroom management skills and they got the opportunity to try out ideas and theories in a practical classroom situation. They learned to plan, prepare and present lesson topics appropriately. They acquired those valuable personality attributes that are associated with an outstanding teacher and to perfectly use instructional materials when teaching. Further, the results showed that teaching practice is a vital factor in preparing them for further teaching assignments because it helps them to learn how to use reinforcement and assessment skills correctly. Also, student–teachers asserted that they got general experience in the teaching profession and gained the chance to communicate and interact closely with learners and control the class effectively.

All these results indicated that the teaching practice is a vital exercise that provides the opportunity to beginning teachers to become socialized into the profession. These results agreed with previous literature that assured it is in

teaching practice that student- teachers baptized with the experience to gain the knowledge of how teachers go about the many and complex tasks involved in actual classroom practice (McGee and Fraser, 2001).

The second aim is to establish the challenges faced by student- teachers during teaching practice. To achieve this aim percentage of each item of the difficulties was calculated. Table (2) presents the details.

Table(2). Percentage of the challenges faced by student-teachers during practicum experience

No	Paragraph	SA	A	SD	D	Remark
1.	There was no effect of my character on dealing with others in the field	89%	10%	-	1%	Agree
30	Some schools do not have enough instructional materials that are needed for effective teaching	88%	9%	-	35	Agree
6.	School students do not respect student- teachers	87%	10%	-	3%	Agree
5.	Student- teachers meet some rude students who are difficult to deal with and they have very little control over them.	84%	14%	-	2%	Agree
9.	Student- teachers are allowed to interact with the cooperating teachers and are assigned a different classroom	80%	18%	-	2%	Agree
2.	Permanent teachers ( cooperating teachers) do not want to interact with student- teachers	77%	15%	2%	6%	Agree
10	Supervisors do not do regularly observations and do not give	73%	20%	2%	5%	Agree

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	enough feedback					
7.	Student- teachers are unsatisfied of being uninvolved in all school activities	70%	12%	6%	12%	Agree
8.	Student- teachers are given overload of classes by the operating teachers by being assigned some of their duties	24%	13%	22%	41%	Disagree
4.	Student- teachers are given more lessons than required in the university regulations	22%	11%	27%	50%	Disagree
11.	Supervisors are not cooperating and unfriendly	7%	8%	65%	20%	Disagree

The results in table(2) showed that there were several challenges faced by student- teachers during their teaching practice experience. The highest percentage (89%) was given to the item no(1) part 2: " there was no effect of my character on dealing with others in the field". This result agreed with Jusoh(2011) study that analyzed student- teachers' personal issues that hinder their progress in teaching practice experience. The next challenge was the lack of instructional materials that are needed for effective teaching with (88%) percentage. The related item no (30) was, "some schools do not have enough instructional materials that are needed for effective teaching". The third obstacle with a percentage of (87 %) was about students' respect for student teachers. Its related item no (6) was," school students do not respect student- teachers". Further, dealing with rude students and losing control over them was another distinguished challenge. The percentage of the item that highlighted this issue was (84%) and it stated " student- teachers meet some rude students who are difficult to deal with and they have little control over them". Other challenges can be divided into two types of issues: administrative and supervision. On administrative issues, the student- teachers stated that some

schools reject student- teachers and that they were not fully involved in all school activities and it was not easy for them to interact with permanent teachers as they were in some cases assigned a different staffroom.

The challenges on supervision were that supervision was not done regularly and uniformly. In addition, with very low percentage, few of the respondents indicated that the supervisors were somehow harsh and not friendly . This challenge was gained the lowest percentage.

### **Conclusion**

The attention toward teaching practice experience is needed because of the multiplicity and overlapping roles of the members who are involved in the teaching practice. Also much of what is happening with the student – teacher in or outside the classroom remains unknown (Crookes, 2003). This could happen, either because of the lack of visits from supervisors or advices given from cooperative teachers. In addition, very little is known about the nature of the assistance provided to the student- teacher from the cooperative teacher and the academic supervisor when he/she encounters a problem or a particular challenge.

Overall, the researcher attempted to give a glimpse of light on this field. According to the findings, the student- teachers' perspectives of teaching practice is positive in that the student- teachers found teaching practice to be very beneficial and it provided an opportunity for the trainee teachers to increase their professional competence. Also, student – teachers faced challenges during teaching practice. These challenges include: lack of instructional material needed for effective teaching, being unrespected of school students and not being involved in all school activities.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. It is highly recommended to conduct mini- trainings or meetings for university supervisors, cooperative teachers and student- teachers to

discuss and arrange the specific roles and expectations of each of them.

2. A proper orientation for student- teachers should be carried out using efficient means of communication like: seminars, workshops, conferences and discussion before they go for teaching practice.
3. The university should appeal to the government individuals and industries to assist in supplementing educational materials and learning resource that would prepare the student- teachers.
4. The cooperating teachers should be trained on their roles when working with the student- teachers.
5. A proper training should be carried out for supervisors in order to conduct teaching practice professionally.
6. Appropriate arrangement should be made with schools that will be used for the teaching practice exercise, so as to enable the committee on teaching practice know exactly how many students are to be posted to schools and also the subject area where there is dire need. This will help the committee to post students to schools appropriately, so as to avoid the problem of rejection of student
7. teachers in schools.

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