

Effectiveness of Practicum Component of B.Ed. Program at University of Education Lahore, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of B.Ed. practicum in different campuses of University of Education (UE), Lahore. Seven components of practicum were identified by reviewing related literature. The population of study consisted of all students enrolled in B.Ed. (elementary) program session 2012-13. A sample of 200 students were selected randomly from four campuses of UE. A validated questionnaire (Cronbach alpha) consisting of 35 questions were used to collect data. Data was analyzed through SPSS and results were presented in tabular form. Frequencies were run to see the practices of training/orientation, lesson planning; role of supervisor, school related issues, school and classroom management, teaching methods, role of corporative /mentor teachers in practicum. Major findings showed that training and orientation of teaching practice was weak in all campuses of UE. Lessoning planning and role of supervisor were found strong and effective areas of practicum. Students were using different teaching methods successfully. The university has no lab schools for practicum. Schools were found to be less cooperative. No significant difference was found in the effectiveness level of practicum in different campuses of UE. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made.

Keywords: Practicum, effectiveness, Prospective teachers, University of Education

INTRODUCTION

A number of terms such as the teaching practice, practicum, student teaching, field studies, infield experience, school based experience or internship are used to refer to the activity of practice teaching (Haigh & Tuck, 1999). Practicum or teaching practice is a course or program in which the students or trainees are ported to schools normally lower than their institution of learning, to teach the student subject areas of their specialization for a specific period. During the period student teachers as they are called, assume the position of normal subject teachers and at the same time engage in all lawful assignments given by the cooperative school authorities (Mohan & Ghosh, 2011).

Practice teaching is defined as teaching by a student under the supervision of an experienced teacher. The aim is to provide hands on experiences with children of diverse ages, contexts and students to enable a back and forth movements between theory and practice (Schechter & Parkhurst, 1993). This phase of training contributes not only to the development of occupational norms but also to reducing anxiety about teaching and to learning classroom techniques. It also seems to contribute most of discover workable conduct, where “workable” becomes characteristically defined as classroom management, following fixed schedules of instructions, simplifying lesson plans, getting through the material and cutting back on the breadth and richness of the material presented (Dreeben, 1970).

The practicing teachers work in a variety of ways in response to the needs of learners and schools. They work with individual students, small groups with special needs or with whole class (Ezenne, 2010). Engaging in a wide range of professional activities like using available instructional media, arranging bulletin board, classroom and management, keeping attendance register, making daily plans and unit plans etc (Johnson & Deprin, 1971).

Practice training provides: an opportunity to gain confidence; chance to put theories into practice; an opportunity to learn the skills and attitudes of a competent and affective teacher; the chance to learn about children in real life; an opportunity to improve the knowledge of subject matter; the chance to gain from the benefits of constructive criticism; an opportunity for self-evaluation and to discover strengths and weaknesses; an opportunity for the teaching institutions to evaluate it (Brown and Brown, 1990).

Teaching practice provides the trainee an opportunity to acquire practical skills through direct experience (Mohan & Ghosh, 2011). Meetings are held to give the students the necessary information about their teaching practice. Teaching practice organized together with the supervisors gives out the necessary information of such matters as procedure for observation days, on assessment, on appropriate dress, on learning aids etc. Students can ask questions about any aspect of teaching practice that concerns them (George, Worrell, Rampersad, Rampaul, 2000). The students should be told about their transport and about the times they are supposed to board the buses to and from the school. All the students going on teaching practice should attend teaching practice programs (Macharia & Wario, 1994).

The success of the use of standards for developing and accessing prospective teachers' achievements relies on the sensitive support given to the prospective teachers in the school by the mentor and in the institution of higher education by the appropriate tutor (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2004). Supervisors visit the internees in their own classrooms. The task of supervisor as an observer is to help intern make sense of his or her experience with in the frame work of the total curriculum. The supervisor is also expected to help each intern find the pattern in his or her success or failures so that the movement in five areas is maintained. At times when an intern is struck or having problems certain amount of pushing and pulling by supervisor is required. During adjustment the supervisor focuses on questions and comments which help the intern begin to make the basic skills involved in planning, managing, and grading (Andrew & Telmberg, 2010).

During teaching practice the supervisors observe a number of lessons taught by individual student teacher (Stimpson, 2000). Practicum seminar provides a vehicle for discussing goals and objectives (Newsome & Lederman, 1999). Seminar might concentrate on a discussion of various kinds of data which the intern has been asked to collect about their classroom, students and school. These assignments help the intern to organize and find patterns in the details of their daily experiences (Andrew and Telmberg, 2010). A mentor is named teacher in the school who has responsibility for: advising students teachers how to teach their particular subjects; developing students teachers understanding; advising prospective teacher on class management and planning of curriculum and assessment (Stratemeyer & Lindsey, 1969).

The student teachers observe lessons in the mentor teacher's class including lab lessons (Lassonde, 2008). Prospective teachers set high expectations for pupil behavior and establish a clear framework for classroom discipline to anticipate and manage pupils' behavior constructively (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2004). The micro teaching practicum has resulted in improvement in teaching and supervisory skills. The video tape, feedback, self-analysis, consideration of alternative behavior and practice are an effective combination for learning (Lipsitz, 1973). University of Education Lahore (UE) is one of the major teacher

training institutions of the Punjab province (Pakistan). The UE has its nine campuses across the province where a 30 days teaching practice is arranged for students of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of teacher education is to produce effective practicing teachers (George et al, 2000). To achieve the goal of effective teacher training different approaches to teacher education have arisen in teacher education programs all over the world. One of such approaches is the introduction of practicum in teacher education which is decidedly a valued component of teacher preparation (High & Tuck, 1999). The present study was conducted to see the effectiveness of practicum of B.Ed program being offered at all campuses of University of Education (UE) Lahore.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The study was conducted to achieve the following objectives:

1. To investigate the students' views about the effectiveness of practicum (Teaching practice) of B.Ed. at all campuses of University of Education Lahore.
2. To identify weak areas of B.Ed. practicum in UE.
3. To compare different components of practicum (lesson planning, role of supervisor, classroom management etc.) among different campuses of UE.
4. Highlight the role of different stake holders in the development of B.Ed. practicum.

Significance

Findings of the study would be helpful for the improvement of B.Ed. practicum in UE. Role of different stake holders of practicum would be highlighted in this study. Different campuses of UE would get the idea of their effective standing in practicum as compared to other campuses. UE administration would be able to enhance the similarities of practicum among its different campuses.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to B.Ed. elementary program of UE Lahore. The prospective teachers only were taken as participants of the study.

METHOD

Population

The population of study included all students of B.Ed.(elementary) session 2012-13 enrolled in the University of Education Lahore who had done their teaching practice.

Sample

The sample of study consisted of two hundred randomly selected students from four conveniently selected campuses of UE. The detail of selection of sample from each UE campus is as under:

Table 1. Selection of Sample

<i>Sr. No.</i>	<i>Name of Campus</i>	<i>Sample Size</i>	<i>Group Value in SPSS</i>
1	UE Bank Road Campus Lahore	50 students	1
2	UE Township Campus Lahore	50 students	2
3	UE Vehari Campus	50 students	3
4	UE Attock Campus	50 students	4

Instrument

A questionnaire comprising 35 close ended questions was prepared to check the effectiveness of practicum. Seven components of practicum were identified to construct questionnaire through reviewing related literature. Researchers personally collected data from the students of Lahore and Attock campuses, whereas data from Vehari campus were collected through postal service. Collected data were entered in SPSS software for analysis.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This section shows the results of data analysis. Data was analyzed by running frequencies. In the frequency tables, different numbers were given to different campuses i.e. Bank Road campus Lahore: 1, Township campus Lahore: 2 Vehari campus: 3, Attock campus: 4.

Table 2. Frequency Table for Orientation/Training practices in different campuses of UE

<i>Practices</i>	<i>Campuses</i>				<i>Total %</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	
	<i>Frequencies</i>				
1 Orientation session before the start of teaching practice.	29	25	28	47	65
2 Observation of teaching before practice.	13	25	7	6	26
3 Teaching practice conducted in the laboratory school of university.	2	17	0	5	12
4 Provision of transport for pupil teachers for going to schools.	3	4	0	0	4
5 Micro teaching sessions for training of teaching.	12	1	19	19	26
6 Trainers taught by the team teaching.	30	12	20	34	48
7 Organization of workshop/training related to the preparation of audio visual aids or models.	14	18	25	34	46

Table 2 revealed the results of orientation/training practices of teaching practice. 65% prospective teachers enrolled in B Ed program received orientation session. 26 % had opportunity to visit the schools for observation of teaching before the beginning of practice teaching. Table also showed that a very few prospective teachers had done teaching practice in laboratory schools of the institution. Only few of them had the facility of transport from their institute to school. Some pupil teachers had micro teaching sessions for training of teaching. Approximately half of the pupil teachers (48%) were taught through team teaching and 46% had attended workshops/training related to the preparation of audio visual aids or models.

Table 3. Frequency Table for practices related to Lesson Planning

<i>Practices</i>	<i>Campuses</i>				<i>Total %</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	
	<i>Frequencies</i>				
8 Practice of lesson planning before teaching practice.	49	47	47	36	90
9 Supervisor checks your planning on daily basis.	33	16	27	23	50
10 Pupil teachers regularly plan lessons.	45	47	50	40	91
11 Deliver lessons according to planning.	35	32	42	44	77

Table 3 reflected that 90 % of the subjects practiced the lesson planning before teaching in their class. As a pupil teacher they regularly planned their lesson, but half of the supervisors were not checking their lesson planning on daily basis. Majority of them got chance of delivering lessons according to their planning.

Table 4. Frequency Table for Role of supervisor

<i>Practices</i>	<i>Campuses</i>				<i>Total %</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	
	<i>Frequencies</i>				
12 Supervisors deputed by the university regularly visit practicing school.	35	19	28	32	57
13 Prospective teachers discuss the problems regarding teaching practice with supervisor.	49	47	49	43	94
14 Supervisor helps to solve the problems of teaching practice.	45	45	47	45	91

Table 4 highlighted the practices related to role of supervisors in practicum. It showed strong role of supervisors for the solution of their problems related to teaching practice. Supervisors visited practice teaching schools regularly as reported by 57% prospective teachers. Township campus had low frequency of supervisor’s visits.

Table 5. Frequency Table for School related issues

<i>Practices</i>	<i>Campuses</i>				<i>Total %</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	
	<i>Frequencies</i>				
15 Teaching elementary classes at schools.	45	41	45	45	88
16 School administration gives classes according to the area of interest of prospective teachers.	32	47	44	35	79
17 School administration provides you appropriate sitting place to sit during leisure time.	20	21	12	21	37
18 During teaching practice free access to the library of school.	0	7	10	17	17

Table 5 showed issues related to practicing schools. Majority of the students had got the chance of teaching at elementary level. Few students had not got opportunity to teach in the areas of their interest. Prospective teachers had to spend whole day in school but only 37 % of them had been getting proper sitting facilities. The prospective teachers had not access to library and computer lab of the school in all campuses of University of Education.

Table 6. Frequency Table for School and Classroom Management

<i>Practices</i>	<i>Campuses</i>				<i>Total %</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	
	<i>Frequencies</i>				
20 Attending the morning prayer of the school daily.	4	29	29	39	51
21 Chance to mark the attendance of students.	9	22	26	28	42
22 Appropriate behavior of school teachers.	32	31	30	45	69
23 Non-serious behavior of students hinders your teaching.	28	17	26	21	46
24 Students listen to your lectures attentively.	44	43	39	49	88
25 You move within the rows to maintain discipline.	49	45	41	49	92

Table 6 discussed the management related practices. Half of the subjects had the opportunity to attend Morning Prayer but a few of students in all campuses never marked the attendance of students. Prospective teachers of Bank Road campus got less chance to mark attendance and attend Morning Prayer as compared to other campuses. Majority of the students reported appropriate teacher and students' behaviors, while half of the students had been facing non-serious attitude of students which hindered their teaching.

Table 7. Frequency Table for Teaching Methods

<i>Practices</i>	<i>Campuses</i>				<i>Total %</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	
	<i>Frequencies</i>				
26 Planning activity for lessons.	44	45	43	42	87
27 Preparation of portfolios during teaching practice.	47	50	40	32	85
28 Use of storytelling methods for teaching.	42	30	38	36	73
29 Peer tutoring for any lesson.	36	26	31	37	65
30 Planning of a group discussion.	29	26	28	41	62
31 Preparation of power point presentation for your lesson.	31	12	19	20	41

Table 7 presented the frequencies related to teaching methods that prospective teachers had been using during teaching practice. It showed that majority of the students planned activities for the lessons. They also prepared portfolio. Three fourth of the subjects were using story telling methods. More than half of the prospective teachers planned to use peer tutoring and group discussion methods. Tendency of using power point presentations was low. Even half of the teachers were not using power point slides for teaching.

Table 8. Frequency Table for Role of Corporative /Mentor Teachers

<i>Practices</i>	<i>Campuses</i>				<i>Total %</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	
	<i>Frequencies</i>				
32 Class teachers gave the opportunity to teach the class.	47	50	48	49	97
33 The class teachers kept present in the classroom when you were teaching.	23	20	25	30	49
34 Class teacher guided you for better teaching.	35	28	21	41	63
35 The behavior of school teachers was appropriate with you.	32	20	25	45	61

Table 8 described the role corporative teachers did perform in teaching practice. Almost all the corporative teachers gave opportunity of teaching class to prospective teachers. More than half of the corporative teachers had not been staying in the class with prospective teachers. They had been guiding them for better teaching. The behavior of school teachers had been appropriate with 61% pupil teachers.

FINDINGS

Major findings of the study are as under that can be used to improve the program in future:

1. It is evident from the data that students in all campuses were not provided with the opportunity to observe school practices before the commencement of teaching practice. The students were not mentally prepared to perform this important activity. University did not make arrangements of transport and laboratory schools to facilitate prospective teachers for practicum.
2. Micro teaching and team teaching were not being used at any campus for the training of prospective teachers.
3. Training related to the preparation of audio visual aids was less focused. However the performance of Attock campus, in this regard, was better than other campuses.
4. The university was not showing satisfactory performance in orientation and training related to facilities for practicum. Much is required to be done to make sure that the students are better prepared for practicum.
5. Lesson planning was a strong area of teaching practice in all campuses.
6. Pupil teachers in all campuses planned their lessons and got full chance of delivering lesson according to their planning.

7. Role of university assigned supervisors was cooperative at all campuses. They helped the pupil teachers to solve their problems. But the town ship campus students were of the view that supervisor's visits were not frequent to the practicing schools.
8. Practicing school administration was not much cooperative with prospective teachers.
9. Prospective teachers were not provided with proper sitting arrangements as they had to spend whole day in school.
10. Prospective teachers were not allowed to use school library and computer lab freely.
11. Some schools were small in size which proved a hurdle in providing a variety of experiences to the pupil teachers.
12. Involvement of prospective teachers in administrative tasks at all campuses was not satisfactory.
13. Non serious attitude of students impeded classroom management during practicum.
14. Pupil teachers had the pedagogical knowledge and remained successful in practicing these methods.
15. Mentor teachers gave the opportunity to all pupil teachers to teach the class. But the mentor teachers used to leave the classes when the pupil teachers started teaching. Students of Township and Vehari campus were not satisfied with the behavior of mentor teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The problems that deterring the effectiveness of the program can be minimized if the following actions can be taken:

1. To make the practicum more effective it is highly recommended that university of education should establish its laboratory schools at all of its campuses so that the trainees may be able to get training properly.
2. The university should train instructors in practicum. Training workshops should be arranged for this purpose so that they should train the prospective teachers on modern trends by using microteaching and team teaching.
3. University needs to spend more on practicum and it should provide the transport facility to the students.
4. The university should be more selective in the selection of schools for practicum.
5. It is patent from the university resources that university has not any force that compels school administration to facilitate the students of university. University of Education is one of the major teacher training institutions of the province. It is the responsibility of provincial government to force the schools for the proper training of future teachers.
6. Moreover, the agreement of cooperation between university campuses and the respective districts should be made which would bind the school administration to accommodate pupil teachers properly.
7. To solve the problems of classroom management students should also be given the courses on personal and interpersonal development.

CONCLUSION

Teachers deal with the most dynamic resource i.e. human beings. Teacher training programs require continues innovations to respond to changing needs (Schectr & Parknusst, 1993). On the basis of findings, it can be concluded that several components of practicum are running very effectively i.e. lesson planning doing well. Role of supervisor is effective. Students are successfully applying different pedagogical approaches during teaching practice. While some components are weak i.e. prior planning for practicum has several deficiencies. The role of schools is not as positive as required. The cooperative teachers are not fully aware of their responsibility. Authorities of UE dealing with component of Practicum need to revise these aspects to ensure the effectiveness of practicum. Moreover effectiveness of practicum in different campuses of UE is almost equivalent with slight differences in few areas.

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