Problems faced by Trainee Teachers during teaching practice

Waleed Alnouri Mohamed Isweesi
Faculty of Education Qasser Ben Ghashir – English Language Department / University of Tripoli
suisiw@gmail.com

Abstract

Teacher training instruction program needs to identify the concerns aspects of the practicum so as to take necessary precaution to minimize their occurrence, intensity and influence, and consequently, make practice experiences as effective and beneficial as possible for pre-service teachers. This study examined the concerns and experiences of English language trainee teachers of Faculty of Education Qasser Ben Ghashir during their teaching practice at schools. Twenty five Trainee Teachers were volunteered in this study. The results indicate that communication centered were their main issue. Whereas, evaluation concerns were their least concern.

الخلاصة

يحتاج برنامج تعليم المعلمين المتدربين إلى تحديد المشاكل التي تواجه تنفيذ التدريب العملي وذلك من أجل اتخاذ الإجراءات الاحترازية اللازمة لتقليل حدوثها والحد من تأثيرها وبالتالي ، جعل خبرات الممارسة فعالة ومفيدة قدر الإمكان لمعلمي ما قبل الخدمة. تناولت هذه الدراسة مخاوف وخبرات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية المتدربين في كلية التربية قصر بن غشير أثناء تأديتهم للبرنامج التدريبي في المدارس. تطوع خمسة وعشرون مدرسًا متدربًا في هذه الدراسة. وتشير النتائج إلى أن الاتصال كان احد أهم المشاكل التي تواجههم. في حين أن مخاوف التقييم كانت أقل ما يشغلهم.

Introduction

The issue of Teaching practice considered to be one of the most beneficial work field to cover, in the recent years studies more focus were given to the problems and difficulties encountered by trainee teachers while conducting their teaching practice. All teachers of faculty of education Qasser Ben Ghashir, are under pressure to prepare their future Teachers for teaching, and the practicum provides an avenue by which this expectation may be addressed.

During practice, Trainee Teachers are given the opportunity to experience and "experiment" their knowledge and skills in an authentic teaching and learning environment (kennedy, 1996).

Farrell (2008) clarifies that teaching practice as one of the most essential aspects for teacher of education, according to him, the period spent by a

Trainee Teachers in an actual classroom situation in order to practice skills under the supervision of an experienced teachers is very crucial.

(Perry, 1997:3) donates that reaching practice refers to the period of time in which Trainee Teachers gain firsthand experience of working with a particular group of students.

Al- Magableh (2010) identified some of the problems that learners are likely to encounter. These problems include the lack of visual aids, a large number of students in class lack of working space for Trainee Teachers and lack of references.

Al- Mikhlaphi (2005) identified the poor supervision short period of teaching practice and having a theoretical rather than a particular program as some shortcomings of teaching practice. He recommended that more practice should be the center of training rather than making classroom teach-in theoretic.

Aims of the study

This study aims to investigate and examine the problems that faced by trainee teachers at faculty of education Qasser Ben Ghashir during teaching practice regarding to different aspects of teaching, such as trainees' personality, readiness, performance, communication, and evaluation .

Research question

The present study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1-What are the problems that could be faced by trainee teachers while performing real teaching practice at schools?

2-How to overcome the problems that trainee teachers face

while practicing teaching?

Statement of problems

Teaching practice seems to be very hard task for Most of Trainee Teachers. Thus, the focus of the present study, investigating the various problems faced by Trainee Teachers during performing teaching practice subject at schools.

Hypotheses of the study

The present study hypothesizes that Teaching practice is a great opportunity for trainee teachers to assess and evaluate their knowledge and skills in a real teaching and learning environment.

Literature Review

Addressing professional concerns among student teachers is considered necessary to mold their professionalism. As suggested by Fuller (1969), concerns over one's own adequacy can only be achieved through a real teaching experience. Normally, at the end of the teaching course, student teachers go through a

practicum session, whereby they are sent to schools to gain teaching experiences. This will be the time where student teachers' knowledge and acquired theories are tested on their students to gauge their teaching skills. The practical teaching experience plays an important role in either making or breaking a student teacher's interest in teaching. It is during this time the student teachers' propositional knowledge is put to test in the authentic classroom where teaching and learning about teaching are usually articulated. However, these student teachers are also subjected to various concerns which need to be addressed.

Fuller (1969) was one of the earlier researchers who looked into the student teachers' concerns and stressed on the need to address these concerns. The author commented that student teachers' concerns are primarily focused on self and later move towards concerns over their students. Self concerns enable student teachers to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses before they can move on to solving various problems which they will face later on as beginner teachers. This self reflection allows student teachers to be their own analyst in finding the appropriate solutions to their problems.

There are numerous studies conducted on student teachers' concerns. The study by Smith (2000) indicated that student teachers in general have concerns with self (discipline in the classroom management, personal and institutional adjustments, and personal characteristics) and managing teacher tasks (teaching methods and strategies, working with special needs students). A similar study was conducted by Cakmak (2008) on student teachers' concerns toward the teaching process. Based on the questionnaire administered to 156 student teachers in Turkey from various study fields, classroom management was seen as the major concern by the respondents. Besides this, a study by Newlove (1969) identified student achievement and student adequacy as some of the concerns among the 23 junior level education students. The respondents in this study also addressed concerns over their ability to teach their students and their role as teachers. Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010) also identified several issues pertaining to pre-service teachers' readiness in teaching. Focusing on 62 pre-service teachers in the USA, their study identified several issues. Among them were; lack of preparedness to educate the ELL students, little interactions between teachers and the ELL students and lack of support for ELL students in the classroom.

Research design

The research design is based on the use of descriptive study which examined the problems faced by trainee teachers at Qasser Ben Ghashir faculty of education and how they were coping with the various circumstances on the practicum program at different schools in Qasser Ben Ghashir. This type of study permitted the researchers to obtain data to determine specific concerns that encountered them in teaching.

To enable respondents supply the needed data for answering the research question, the researcher used multiple tools which were reflection report and semi-structured interview.

Reflection report

Reflection report is an essential process for transforming experience - gained from the experiential activities and the course material – into genuine learning. It enhances students critical understanding of the course topic and their ability to assess their own values, goals, and progress. Reflection is a form of personal response to experience, situation, events or new information. Indeed as schon (1989) argued that the reflection represent a way of dealing with practice problems and by thinking about possibilities that emerge in the real context, teachers are able to understand their teaching process, enhancing their competence to identify problems and implement solution. Reflective right writing is an activity that

includes description of (What, when, who) and analysis (How, why, what, if).

Types of reflection report

There are several types of reflection report that are useful to engage the Trainee Teachers in order to optimize learning after experiential learning activity.

Those types include:

-Cognitive reflection examines the new knowledge and skills that students acquired from their experiential activity, this includes the kind of learning that is addressed in curriculum.

-Affective reflection look at what students feel as a result of their experience . How has this experience changed their attitudes , option or sensitives?

-process reflection covers what students learn from the process itself. This includes how to work with others and understanding the consequences at actions.

All these type played an important role in the assessment of our teaching experience. As the writers of the reflection report use the reflection process that allowed us to think about all the events that occurred during the practicum and overcome some possible doubts and fears.

Therefore, the researcher considered reflection report as a powerful tool in the construction of the teaching practice for the reason that it allowed trainee teachers to think about their actions, student's feedback, the methodologies that they are using, the mistakes that they might make, their responsibilities, and their difficulties and the most important to reflect about solution of their own problems and about new way of teaching

Advantages of reflection report :

-To make connections: Reflective writing develops and clarifies the connections between what you have already known and what you are learning, between theory and practice and between what you are doing and how and why you do it.

-To clarify learning: Reflective writing helps to clarify what you have studied and integrate new knowledge with previous knowledge.

-To examine learning processes: Reflective writing encourages to consider and comment on your learning experiences.

Sample of the study

The sample of the study consists of English language department pre-service teachers at the faculty of education Qasser Ben Ghashir. The participants of this study were students of teaching practice course. They were 25 participants divided into two groups according to the research design, for reflection report instrument there were fifteen participants, whereas, ten participants for focus group discussion instrument. So, the total sample number for this study was twenty five respondents.

Table 1 shows distribution of respondents for the sample:

Teacher training	**Research design**	**Number of participants**	**Gender**	**Total number**
college Qasser Ben Ghashir **Collage**	Reflection report	**15**	Male 4 Female 21	**25**
	Focus group discussion	**10**		

The context of the study

The context of the study is the eighth semester of English language department trainee teachers at faculty of education Qasser Ben Ghashir. The practicum program consists of two semesters (spring 2022- fall 2022) three weeks during the period of each semester. It aims to engage the Trainee Teachers in real teaching context at secondary school level where they practice teaching with teachers in the school and engage with their class teachers and supervisors in professional dialogues through post-lesson discussion. During the first days of the practicum, the trainee teachers work as observers at the school, liaising with their school classroom teachers to engage in collaborative teaching with them if possible. The class teacher acts as a mentor and helps familiarize the Trainee Teachers with the school routines and some other pedagogical matters such as the level of their class, lesson planning and preparation, but he or she is not responsible for evaluating the trainee teachers takes over the assigned class and conducts independent teaching. In the practicum period the performance of trainee teachers is assessed by their university academic and educational supervisors through some essential criteria such as : classroom teaching performance, classroom language and reflection report.

Data collection procedure

To collect the research data, the researcher utilized two instruments, focus group discussion that expressed vary practicum problems. When conducting the focus group discussion the researcher maintained a structured approach and divided the participants into eight groups, each group consisted of three participants then interviewed each group alone. The approximate time allowed for each group discussion was twenty- five minutes followed by reordering tool. Information gathered from the discussion was recorded by the researcher. The other instrument that was used by the researcher for the data collection, is reflection report which required the researcher capacity of the reflective thinking.

The participants wrote a reflective report through their practicum to document their teaching dairies, experience and concerns. There were no fixed number of entries, but the students teachers were advised to write as often as they felt necessary. Below guiding question to assist the participants in the reflective process includes :

-Give a description of the circumstances, situation or issues related what has been selected what were the concerns, issues, or worries? When practice teaching?

Data analysis procedure

While conducting this study, by the use of two instruments, focus group discussion and reflection report a large amount of data was obtained. This has been analyzed in order to provide appropriate answer to the question addressed in the study. Data were submitted for categorization in which code were used to identify relevant concerns emerging from the teaching program that described in the instruments. The identified categories were used to describe practicum difficulties and problems according to the research questions and objectives of the study.

In this study, Data obtained from the semi-structured interview and reflection report were analyzed through content analysis which take the form of top (literature review) down (participants answers) approach according to six items as : practicum, lesson, preparation, personal, communication, teaching concerns and evaluation.

All the trainee teachers of the focus group discussion and reflective report were analyzed in a parallel fashion in relation to similar categories of items. This means that comparative analysis was undertaken across data from different participants to identify paralled or connected items . Initial analysis of the data involved interring the data into the computer, reading then re -reading and annotating the transcripts and report with comments and specific descriptive phrase under each item.

findings

The findings of this study are based on data gathered from two focus groups discussion and reflection report of students teachers who provided information about their concerns in the practicum experience. The findings obtained according to the researcher question of this study. This study indicated that the participants faced lots of challenges during their teaching practice program.

Also indicated that there are six categories of practicum – related concerns

1- Teaching practice related concerns.

2- Practicum concerns.

3-Lesson preparation concerns.

4-Communication centered concerns.

5-Teaching related concerns.

6-Evaluation based concerns.

Each one of the mentioned of categories related concerns donates very specific issue or problem.

-Teaching practice related concerns includes:

A-The insufficient preparation of the trainee teacher for teaching practice period.

B-the allocated time for teaching practice always make trainee teachers

feel fearful and confused as being first time in practicum.

-The concern of Lesson preparation includes :

A-The right choice of the sub table teaching aids for each lesson.

B-Using simple approaches and methods to apply lesson.

C-The right pronunciation of the new words.

D-Guessing the appropriate meaning of the new words correctly.

E-The insufficient information that provided in the lesson.

F-The good management of time duration of the class.

G-The attractive methods to create an activity.

H-The creation and achievement of objectives and goals of lesson.

I-The absence of consistence between written lesson plan and explanation fear a facing the same previous lesson difficulties.

- Personal concerns include:

1-Being fearful and anxious .

2- mispronunciation concerns.

3-Time management.

4-lack of self confidence.

-Communication centered concerns include:

1-The insufficient meetings with the supervisor after each teaching practice.

2-Supervisor's positive feedback absence.

3-The lack of readiness of the trainee teachers to be integrated with the society.

5-The effectiveness of using Arabic language in classroom.

6-The affection of misbehavior and noise in class.

-Teaching related concerns:

1-The unexpected question from pupils.

2- Failing to clarify the lesson through the short class period.

3-Forgetting the sequence of lesson elements prepared before class during explaining.

4-The interaction, most trainee teachers being unable to make the class active.

5-Controlling the class while presenting the lesson.

6- Time management.

- Evaluation based concerns :

1-The confusion caused by the supervisor existence in classroom.

2-The less positive influence as result of the supervisor existence during practicum .

3-The passive impact of supervisor evaluation on the trainee performance.

4-Being evaluated by the supervisor own criteria instead of specific teaching skills.

5- the attendance of the academic supervisor.

Discussion of results

This study concluded that majorities of the Trainee Teachers faced some concerns in their teaching practice period that identified as practicum concerns, personal, lesson, preparation, communication centered, teaching related an evaluation based concerns. The result indicates that communication centered concerns were their stressful challenges whereas, evaluation based were less stressful issue in their practicum experience.

The Participants reported also That communication centered concerns which were their most problematic issue related to how trainee teachers could bond good relation with their academic supervisors, students and how to use their language as communicating mean and assess them in this experience with the existence of some circumstance that may influence this communication line. On the other hand, Evaluation based concerns , (being evaluated by the supervisor) were the simplest concerns that faced by trainee teachers in this practicum experience.

The result has shown that communication concerns were the most worrisome issue for participants in this practicum which may probably result from the insufficient meeting with the supervisor, being not motivator for trainees and insufficient feedback given by the supervisor. Language as mean of communication was also concern that pre-service teachers faced in their teaching practice period. That means their language as English teachers incompressible by some pupils. The adequacy of Arabic noise, misbehavior are also listed among essential factors that may concern Trainee Teachers and reduce good communication in class.

Reading to other challenges and concerns, personal concerns (concern which result from the Trainee Teachers themselves) were also an effective challenge on their application (e.g. being discourage front of the class) one possible argument for this is that everybody can develop these concerns in different circumstance and times. Another stressful experience which may cause concerns to Trainee Teachers is the lesson preparation task (e.g. the inconvenient chosen of teaching aids for each lesson and the creation of lesson's objective and goals). The last most stressful concern that encountered by trainees in their practicum in the shortness of teaching practice period and also the class duration which was not helpful for trainees to apply all their abilities.

In agreement with Rundney, G.L. (1993) who found that the concerns experienced by beginning teachers

could have ranged from classroom discipline, motivation students organization of class work insufficient teaching material. She cautioned that the concerns faced by beginning teacher were real and these concerns did have the ability of limit and frustrate their already complex teaching duration, students teachers reported they faced difficulties on how to control class and also the insufficient competence to create motivational and active classroom atmosphere in similar to another study which was by Tan (2008) who highlights the language, cultural (diversity) environmental barriers experienced by four American pre-service teacher in central Asia and how they compared and successfully managed in gaining valuable experience during their teaching practice, this investigation also hand drown sufficient attention and adduced that language was stressful element that faced by trainees dang their practicum this semester that emerged in the pupils in competence to comprehend the trainee language easily, therefore, this issue had extremely influence their performance another investigation was by Ong, Ros, Azlain,Sharntian Ho (2004) who discovered the pressure felt during Trainee Teachers practicum prevented them from positively engagingly.

Recommendation

In order to build positive attitude of students towards teaching practice at English language department, Faculty of Education Qasser Ben Ghashir, the researcher recommend the following:

1- The duration of Teaching practice should be expended longer.

2- More time should be devoted in college by trainee teachers in learning and applying skills under mock condition where feedback can be provided by their own classmates and supervisors.

3- The first two days of teaching practice should be kept for integration of trainee teachers with students of class, so that acceptance and comfort level increase between trainee teachers and students of the class.

4- Professional development for trainee teachers should be promoted by the college through research and other activities like attending conferences and workshops.

5- Developing the curriculum of teaching skills courses (teaching strategies 1 & 2).

6- Preparing and facilitating the work at the practicum school.

7- Students of teaching practice should not have more than two subjects, because if they have more, it will affect their practice attendance.

8- More exposure should be given to trainee teachers to enhance their teaching skills before the last week (evaluation week).

9- Organizing workshops for trainee teachers to know more about the art of teaching, and for academic supervisors to make their supervision more effective.

10-The school administrators should ensure a conducive environment for the trainee teachers throughout the practicum session.

Conclusion

This study focuses on the problems faced by trainee teachers during practicum experiences in the local schools at Qasser Ben Ghashir region. The experiences and knowledge recorded would help raise awareness among trainee teacher of English language department .

The findings of the present study indicate that trainee teachers view practice teaching an important competent in their training, because it exposes them to the accrual teaching and learning environment in which they are enabled to contextualize their theoretical knowledge gained during training, trainee teachers felt that practice teaching program hand prepared them for future profession. However, despite of its benefits, Trainee Teachers faced with challenges which significantly affected student ability to accumulate maximum benefits from faced vary concerns related to teaching programs. Also it was revealed that some Trainee Teachers faced new concerns, that didn't mention already on the literature review as: the capacity to speak fluently, the content of the curriculum or textbook was not helpful for trainees to convey is information easily to the student class, another trainees faced some concerns related to grammatical structure difficulties. In teacher training programs, all the concerns of the Trainee Teachers should be appropriately addressed to prepare them for the actual teaching atmosphere.

References:

A.M., & Rundney, G.L. (1993). Trainee Teachers; growth toward independence: An analysis of their changing concerns. Teaching Teacher Education,9(1),65-80

Al-Magableh, A.M.F 2010. An evaluation of English practicum at Yarmuk university from cooperative teachers and students-teachers perspectives. International journal of language studies ((I) LS), vol.4(4),263-300

Almikhalafi,l M. 2005. A suggested program for developing practicum in the school of education at ebb university . university researcher,8,133-154

Briggs, L,D.,& Richardson, W.D.(1992).Causes and sources of

students concerns for student teaching problems. College students journal, 268-272

Capel, S,A.(1997). Changes in students anxieties and concerns after their first second teaching practice. Education Research, 39,21-28

Cakmak, M. (2008). Concerns about teaching profession: Student teachers' perspective. *Educational Research Quarterly*, *31*(3), 57-77.

Chan, K.W., & Leung, M.T. (1998). Hong kong pre-service teacher's focus of concerns and confidence to teach-perspective of teacher development. Retrieved from AARE the association for active educational researcher, website: http://www.aare.edu.au/98pap/cha9836.htm

Chung, J. (2002). Developing teaching strategies through quality feedback. Paper presented at the European conference on education research, university of Lisbon, Lisbon, September 11-14

Davis, J. & Hall, J. (2003). Building reciprocal relationships in the student teaching practicum. The Specialist, 19(1),1-33

D'Rozario, V. & Wong, A.F.L.(1998). A study of practicum-related stresses in a sample of first year Trainee Teacherss in Singapore. Asia-pacific journal of teacher Education & Development, 1(1), 39-52

Durgunoglu, A. Y. & Hughes, T. (2010). How prepared are the U.S. preservice teachers to teach English Language Learners? *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, *22*(1), 32-41.

Fogarty, M., & Yarrow, A (1994, July). Pre-service teacher stress and the practicum: an action research project. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Australia teacher Education Association, Brisbance, Queensland, Australia.

Fuller, F.F, & Boun, O.H (1975). Becoming a teacher. In K. Rayan (Ed) Teacher education: Seventy- fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the study of Education (pp.25-52). Chicago : University of Chicago press.

Fuller, F. F. (1969). Concerns of teachers: a developmental conceptualization. *American Educational Research Journal, 6*, 207-226.

Goodings, R.M Byram, (1984). Changing priorities in teacher Education. Nichols Publishing Co. New York Guilaime,

Newlove, B. W. (1969). *The 15-Minute Hour: An early teaching experience*. Report Series No. 23. Retrieved from ERIC database (ED040154).

Ong, s.k, shabudin, R.A., Azlian, Shanti (2004). Trainee teachers' perceptions of the school practicum. Paper presented at the conference of the national seminar, Bangi, Malaysia.

Schon, D, A. (1989) A symposium on Schon's concept of reflective practice . journal of curriculum and supervision.

Smith, R. C. (2000). Starting with ourselves: Teacher-learner autonomy in language learning. In B. Sinclair, I.

McGrath and T. Lamb (Eds.), *Learner autonomy, teacher autonomy: Future directions* (pp. 89-99). London: Longman.

Tan, Y. H. (2008). English teacher trainees' voices describe their teaching practicum experience. *Jurnal Penyelidikan Pendidikan IPTAR,* 120 – 136.

Vacilotto, S., & Cummings, R. (2007). Peer coaching in TEFL/TESL programmes. *ELT Journal*, *61*, 153-160.