



**TEACHER TRAINEES PERCEPTION  
TOWARDS ON-CAMPUS TEACHING PRACTICE  
AT THE HOLY CHILD COLLEGE OF EDUCATION,  
TAKORADI, GHANA**

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**Abstract:**

Teaching practice is an important component in any teacher education programme. It is regarded as the most crucial way in helping teacher trainees to become effective classroom teachers. This study sought to investigate the perception of teacher-trainees towards on-campus teaching practice. It involved both Early Childhood and General Basic Education Diploma teacher trainees of Holy Child College of Education perception. Their concerns, challenges encountered and experiences gained during the teaching practice in the year 2017/2018 academic year were taken into consideration. The research employed qualitative research procedure. In-depth interviews were used to gather data for the study. The results revealed that, teacher-trainees have benefited from the on-campus teaching practice in the development of the following teaching skills: communication with students, classroom management and lesson notes preparation. The study recommends that effort should be made to train teacher trainees in the preparation of lesson notes with particular attention given to the English language and the preparation of teaching and learning materials.

**Keywords:** professional competence, on-campus, teaching practice, teacher trainees

**1. Introduction**

According to Cobb, Darling-Hammond and Murangi (1995), Education has never been more challenging and important than in today's global world. The development of Education system of every nation is of paramount importance towards the development of the citizenry. Education is a powerful instrument that brings change. A good education system equips the citizenry with the skills needed to churn, nurture and turn

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young pupils into well-meaning and responsible adults who will contribute their quota towards the development of their nation. Successful education systems cannot be complete without quality teacher education. Quality Teacher Education forms an integral part of any good education system because it involves the training of Teachers who are very critical to human capital development. This suggests that the training and development of the teachers must not be compromise in its quality if maximum benefits are to be derived.

Teaching practice as prescribed by the Colleges of Education in Ghana forms an important component of the initial teacher professional training program during which trainees are exposed to the real school and classroom situation in order to help them develop the skill and art of teaching. Teaching practice is designed to give the student-teachers an opportunity to put into practice, the theories relating to principles and practice of Education, which they have learnt at College. Teaching practice as a basic professional requirement is aimed at exposing student-teachers to the real school and class situation where they acquire some practical experiences in the art of teaching, as well as get adapted or acquainted with the social settings of education institutions far before the completion of the course of study.

To produce dynamic and competent teachers, initial teacher professional training must engage teacher trainees in activity which will help develop the favorable attitudes and skills required for effective teaching. It is seen as one of the most important factors in the development of a nation. In order to build a prosperous nation and citizens, the education system must be ideal for the needs of the future. Over the past decade, considerable attention has been focused on discovering meaningful ways to prepare teacher trainees for the teaching profession. With increased demands being placed on teachers to meet the needs of diverse students and to design classrooms and use methods of teaching that are learner-centered, the world of teaching has become more complex (Leke-ateh, Assan & Debeila, 2014). Therefore, the education and preparation of teachers is a critical issue in national development.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

The quality of education in every country is mostly determined by the quality of its teachers. Equally, the quality of teachers is determined by the level of their subject matter mastery and how they pass on that subject matter to their learners. Teachers' ability to do these, hinges on how the Initial Teacher Education prepares them for teaching. The Initial Teacher Education should provide teachers with intellectual and professional background through the study of academic content, professional and pedagogical studies, and create the opportunity for trainees to practice teaching. However, the initial teacher education in Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa particularly, has been criticized for failing to prepare teachers adequately for the conditions they face in the field (Lewin & Stuart, 2003). There is also the opinion that the initial teacher training curricula in many African countries, including Ghana, are too theoretical, with little emphasis on practical knowledge and practice (Akyeampong, Lussier, Pryor &

Westbrook, 2013). To address these issues, the initial teacher training programme must be reformed to make it practice-based, giving trainees a number of opportunities to observe and practice a variety of different forms of professional knowledge and skill through direct practical experience in colleges.

Many types of research have been conducted to investigate ways to make teacher trainees teaching practice more enjoyable and worthwhile experience. However, not much is known about the teaching practice that is undergone by trainees who are at the diploma level. This is simply because the duration of their studies is shorter, thus preventing them from obtaining as much knowledge and experience as they should. It is in view of this that this study attempts to find out the perception of teacher trainees on on-campus teaching practices. Thus, this study attempts to investigate the problem, challenges and experiences gained during on-campus teaching practice from teacher trainees' perspectives.

## **2.1 The Concept of Teaching Practice**

Teaching practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is considered to be one of the most influential aspects of pre-service teacher education (Haigh, 2001). Teaching practice has been accepted as a teaching requirement (Marais & Meier, 2007). Again, teaching practice is often considered a stressful experience for the majority of teacher trainees, as it is their first formal attempt at teaching (Kyriacou & Stephen, 1999). The purpose of teaching practice is to integrate educational theory into practice (Yusof, Yusof, Ali, Yusoff, Farza, & Nawai, 2014). Teaching practice induct teacher trainees more fully into the professional work of the teacher (Perry, 2007). It gives the teacher trainees the opportunity to experience at first hand, the excitement of being a part of the real classroom setting, getting to know learners; planning and organizing the classroom task (Ampofo & Orodho, 2014). This opportunity is a real chance for the student to experience the real environments of the teaching process, its complexity, and challenges that may affect the process of implementing the school curriculum. Through teaching practice, the teacher trainee gets a feel of how teachers work together and how the school bureaucracy operates (DelGesso & Smith as cited in Ampofo & Orodho, 2014). Kinggundu and Nayimah (2009) assert that teaching practice helps teacher trainees to get involved in many experiences. This position is supported by Buchner and Hay as cited in Ampofo and Orodho (2014), that teaching involves many experiences that simply could not be replicated in a non-social environment. As this is a central and very important component of teacher education, a lot of time and attention needs to be spent and given to ensure that teacher trainees undergoing the programme are well prepared physically and mentally. This is because the experience gained from the teaching practice is important and valuable in the learning process and developing the understanding with respect to the profession.

## **2.2 Research Questions**

The study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the teacher trainees' concerns, challenges and experiences during on-campus teaching practice at Holy Child College of Education?
2. How has the OCTP prepared teacher trainees for the future?

### **3. Methodology**

For this study, a qualitative research procedure was employed to collect data. Participants were purposively selected for the study. The participants were chosen on the basis of being a group leader during the on-campus teaching practice at the time of the interview. At the time of the research, all teacher trainees (Group leaders) who had undergone their 3month on-campus teaching practice were on campus making it easier for the researchers to get in touch with the participants and also obtain firsthand information. As this study is based on purposive sampling, the data obtained was "thick" as would have otherwise been if convenience sampling had been used.

#### **3.1 Respondents**

The population of this study consists of Diploma in Basic Education (General and Early Childhood) teacher trainees at the Holy Child College of Education, Ghana, 2017/2018 academic year level 200-year group. In this study, fifteen teacher trainees group leaders who had just completed their on-campus teaching practice were purposefully selected. They were selected on the basis that they were group leaders at the time of the study. All the fifteen teacher trainees were interviewed for the purpose of obtaining varied views from the different groups on the on-campus teaching practice.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

**4.1 Research question 1:** What are teacher trainees concerns, challenges and experiences during on-campus teaching practice at Holy Child College of Education?

During the 3 months on-campus teaching practice, there were a number of problems faced by teacher trainees in their teaching which are grouped into themes. One of the themes is challenges or concerns faced. Majority of teacher trainees interviewed were of the opinion that they had challenges in the preparation of teaching and learning materials and the preparation of lesson notes especially with English lessons as the ones taught by their English tutor was not in agreement with what the supervisors were expecting from them.

According to Teacher trainee (TtA), she had difficulty in talking to the class for the first time and this challenge placed on her more pressure.

I felt shy in talking to the class; I made little mistakes when teaching (TtB). According to TtC she also had difficulty in writing on the chalkboard for the first time. For classroom management, teacher trainees were of the view that their classroom management skills were not bad since this was their first time of teaching. But they were quick to admit that putting pupils into groups for grouping activities and overall class management was a challenge. According to TtD some of the pupils (teacher

trainees) were naughty and troublesome. This challenged them the most since they had to bring to the fore all consequences and rewards involved in managing pupils with such behavior. This they said was not easy considering the fact that they were novice in the teaching profession.

With regards to experiences gained through the On-campus teaching practice (OCTP), participants were of the opinion that the On-campus teaching practice has been helpful to them. According to them, they can now confidently teach in front of a class. The initial team teaching of teaching lessons in parts and finally, starting the lesson from A-Z helped me to gain confidence in teaching TtF. It has improved my confidence level and improved my writing skills on the chalkboard TtG.

**4.2 Research question 2:** How has the On-campus teaching practice (OCTP) prepared you for the future?

There are a number of benefits gained during the On-campus teaching practice sessions. Excerpt of some interview illustrates this more vividly: According to TtH, the On-campus teaching practice has helped her to know how to teach pupils in class but for the teaching practice, I wouldn't have been able to do so. The On-campus teaching practice has helped me to apply the theories learned in the college, develop strategies which will direct my teaching and reflect on a lesson taught TtI. Again, according to TtJ, the OCTP has helped her to improve upon her lesson notes preparation and to demonstrate prerequisite skill in pedagogy.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

As a result of the crucial role that on-campus teaching practice plays in developing the educational competencies of teacher- trainees, this study attempted to highlight teacher-trainees perception of on-campus teaching practice. The results revealed that, teacher-trainees have benefited from the on-campus teaching practice in the development of the following teaching skills: communication with students, classroom management and lesson notes preparation. Most of the teacher- trainees interviewed expressed positive sentiment. They believed that the on-campus teaching practice has helped them to teach for the first time. They were of the opinion that the on-campus teaching practice has contributed to their ability to apply the theories learned in the college. For them, this is the first time that they had the opportunity to put into practice what they have learned regarding teaching.

Furthermore, the majority of the teacher-trainees were of the view that the on-campus teaching practice has helped them to improve upon their lesson notes preparation and to demonstrate the prerequisite pedagogy. These findings are in agreement with Yusof et al (2014) assertion that teaching practice enabled trainees to practice the right pedagogy.

On the other hand, teacher-trainees highlighted common challenges during the on-campus teaching practice. These challenges include preparation of teaching and learning material, putting pupils into groups, preparation of lesson notes in English and

difficulty in writing on the chalkboard. The study recommends that effort should be made to train teacher trainees in the preparation of lesson notes with particular attention given to the English language and the preparation of teaching and learning materials. This will go a long way to sharpen their skills, knowledge and abilities for their chosen carrier and improve their preparedness for the task of improving knowledge in their pupils. Again, there is the need for the managers of educational sectors to provide the needed resources and training kits to aid them to prepare adequately for their on-campus teaching practice.

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