

ABOUT THE BOOK

Teaching Practice is a major bedrock of Teacher Education and the method adopted for its implementation stands as an index of its eventual success or otherwise. This book presents in a succinct manner, the meaning, scope and the role of the student-teacher in an effective Teaching Practice exercise.

The book, which is a product of research and long years of teaching experience by selected scholars from Faculty of Education, Lagos State University (LASU), is but a needed reference material for student teachers and education experts at the Colleges of Education and Universities in developing countries.



ZRIAG EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHERS

(A Guide for Student-Teachers)

Edited by

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Published by:
ZIKIAG EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHERS
17, Alafia Street, Ijanlakin
P. O. Box 4097, Festac Town, Lagos.

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First Published 1999

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OLU-AKIN PRINTING PRESS
Tel. 02-2311733, Ibadan.

THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT TEACHER
IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Makinde, Solomon Oluwafemi

Introduction

Teaching practice is an important and integral component of the instructional programme a teacher in training must successfully undergo before he can be certified as a professional in teaching. It affords the individual student-teacher the opportunity to put into practical demonstration (in the classroom) these principles, techniques, strategies, methods and knowledge (content and pedagogical) acquired during his course of study. The student-teacher should recognize the fact that college or university authority is making effort to give him or her a valuable opportunity to gain practical experience through practice-teaching. In the light of this, it is important for the principal beneficiary of the privilege to know himself or herself as a teacher, to understand his or her role in the school and also know how to establish decent and rational relationships with every member of the school community.

The Teacher

In academic environment like the primary and the secondary schools, the teacher is an academic staff who is expected to be a specialist in teaching one or two subjects. In the nursery and primary schools, the teacher is expected to be able to handle all the subjects pupils are exposed to in the school. N. C. E. and University Degree holders in Primary Education may be specialists in a particular subject but they must be able to teach other subjects in the nursery and primary school curriculum.

The duties of the teacher transcends the teaching of one subject or the other. It is more than giving assignment to students and evaluating teachers' academic progress. He could be appointed to serve as a class-teacher, house master/house mistress, club co-ordinator, labour co-ordinator, member of the examination committee and any other responsibility the school authority might consider him to be able to manage effectively.

While describing the teacher, Ajibade (1987: 164 - 165) has this to say:

One can sum up the teacher as a guide, a teacher, a moralizer, a model, a counsellor, a creator, an authority, an inspirer of vision, a doer of routine, a breaker of group, a story teller, an actor, a builder of community, a learner, a factor of reality, an emancipator and a person.

The above given description can be regarded as all inclusive for a dynamic and committed teacher. Despite the description, the specific characteristics of a good teacher will be examined.

Characteristics of Good Teacher

The following are some of the qualities of a good teacher.

(i) High Intellectual Ability

The status of a teacher depends a lot on his intellectual ability (Bamisyaye 1990:155). He should keep himself abreast of innovations in teaching and he should be able to handle any situation or problem that might arise in the teaching-learning process through quick identification, analysis and solving of such problems.

(ii) Effective Communication

The teachers impart knowledge to the pupils through communication which could be verbal, written or the use of signs. The teacher should therefore be able to communicate effectively through clarity of expression, legibility of writing on the chalkboard, the use of appropriate instructional media and asking straight forward logically presented questions.

Resourcefulness and Industriousness

The good teacher must be resourceful and industrious. He should have the ability to explore his environment, avenues and the resources around him for effective teaching-learning process. He should be able to design and improvise where and when necessary. His goal is to make his lesson interesting, lively and effective. He should be hardworking, innovative, painstaking and conscientious in the manner he carries out his work in school.

Knowledgeable

The good teacher has an in-depth understanding of the content and pedagogical area of specialization. Because he knows the pupils through professional competence, he employs the relevant teaching techniques and strategies for teaching. A good teacher is the pupils' joy and in fact, students respect the knowledgeable but firm teacher and are contemptuous of teachers who would rather be friends with learners than address themselves to the work to be done (Bamisyaye 1990:155).

Humility

No matter the height of academic attainment a teacher might process, he should be humble. Traits of arrogance or boastfulness should not be identified with such a teacher. Simplicity in appearance and neatness must be ensured. He should be approachable for cordial pupil-teacher relationship. A good teacher does not pass or say uncomplimentary things about his colleagues to the learners because 'a man of good character does not assassinate other people's character'. His personality should command the learners' respect.

Courage

It requires courage on the part of the teacher to handle or face the problems of classroom teaching and the hazards of teaching profession appropriately. The teacher must be courageous in handling emergencies like sudden illness without panicking or trembling. It takes courage on the part of the teacher to handle the problem of examination malpractices.

truancy, stealing and noting students. He should be ready to make sacrifices for the progress of his students.

Self Discipline

Co-operation in matters of good behaviour is an integral aspect of the life of a good teacher. The good teacher is loyal to the school authority and he is law abiding. The teacher is a model in punctuality, dressing, good character, good morals, and good citizenship. He helps the students to develop "socially desirable attitudes and values" (NPE 1981). He rewards learners good behaviour and exemplary performance through adequate and affordable reinforcement and he is fair, firm and prompt in handling any act of indiscipline or distraction. (Jajya 1988:10).

Knowing and Liking the Subject

A good teacher must be a master of his subject of specialization and also like it. If he teaches Mathematics, he must know the principles, rudiments and science of Mathematics. He must also have a clear understanding of the teaching subject. For him to be up-to-date he must familiarize himself with the most important and current discoveries including innovations in his area of specialization. He must know more than the students and be ready to answer their questions.

The good teacher must show and demonstrate before the students that he has not stumbled on the subject by accident. He must show that he actually liked the subject. There is a strong connection between knowing a subject and liking the subject (Higbet 1979:11-21). The teacher must deliver his teaching joyfully and cheerfully. Even when he makes mistakes he should be sincere to admit that because students themselves know that "omniscience is unattainable" (Higbet 1979:20).

Likeness for the Pupils/Students

A good teacher must like his pupils or students. In fact a teacher who does not like the young ones should quit the teaching profession. The good teacher must enjoy being in the company of the students. The teacher should know his pupils.

their characteristics, emotions, temperament and behavioural traits. It is not out of place to know the types of home they have come from. With love and understanding he can even assist the bad and indifferent students to settle down and learn. The teacher must not discriminate against any student on account of racial differences, class distinction or sex. He must create a conducive environment that would encourage the students to learn from him.

The Role and Contribution of the Classroom Teacher in School Administration

A school as a social organization can be described operationally as the ways in which human conduct becomes socially organized and how the structure of the social relations there in and the shared beliefs and orientations that unite the members of the organization affect the members' conduct (Esanu et al 1985:42-43). It shows the relationship between the teachers and the head-teacher or principal as well as the interaction between the teacher and the pupils. The teacher-teacher interaction, teacher-parents interaction and teacher-non academic staff interaction must not be overlooked either.

At the classroom level, the teacher sees to the maintenance of discipline which would pave the way for conducive atmospheric condition for schools' work.

The teacher contribute his own quota in terms of maintaining discipline in the school generally by being punctual and being present at the morning and afternoon assemblies as well as ensuring that the school environment is conducive for academic engagements.

The teacher partakes in the meetings of the school with the parents thereby playing his part by amplifying the programme to the parents and whoever is interested.

The teacher as a record keeper is armed with adequate and up-to-date information on all his pupils. Such information could be on parental background, health, academic and the general attitude of the pupil. The head-teacher or inspector from the Ministry of Education could request for such information at any time.

With the assistance of the school prefects, the teacher organizes the pupils in carrying out manual labour on the school farm or garden, cutting the school field, hoeing the lawns, planting of flowers and other related activities. As the head-teacher and his assistant(s) cannot be present everywhere within or outside the school premises any case of misbehaviour is reported to the head teacher for necessary actions or precautions. In the same way, pupils with deep seated psycho-social problems are referred promptly to the head teacher and the guidance counsellor.

Conclusion

The teacher's major role in the school system is to be able to meet the expectations of his learners both in learning and general behaviour (Bamissaye 1990:154-155). In this regard, the teacher is expected to motivate, stimulate and promote learners' acquisition of knowledge and this is achievable when the necessary and appropriate professional expertise is put in place. The professional teacher combines other roles with that of teacher such as serving as parent-substitute, student-adviser, social welfare officer, and sometimes, school "policeman" or detective. (Bamissaye 1990:154).

The student-teacher has a lot to learn from the experienced teachers and as a result he or she must avail himself with the opportunity at his disposal by participating in all school activities during the teaching practice period. The student-teacher should also attend the Parents-Teachers Association Meeting as he could learn a lot about the relationship that exists between the school and the body of parents.

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