

Student Teacher's Reflections on the Internship Teaching Practice of a Teacher Education Program

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Received: 24- June -2023

Revised: 27- July -2023

Accepted: 21- August -2023

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ABSTRACT

The internship plays an important role in completion of any professional courses. The successful completion of professional courses depends greatly on the internship. As a result, it is also covered in teacher training courses. It gives students first hand exposure to the numerous responsibilities of a teacher, such as instructing and improving topic knowledge. Additionally, it offers a chance to apply theoretical understanding of techniques, methods, and teaching aids in a practical setting. Student Teachers begin to use their understanding of teaching and learning during their internship, integrating theory and practice. The internship will give student teachers the chance to critically analyse as they strive to make sense of their experiences and find their own voices and identities as Teachers. This is perhaps the most significant benefit. Being a master teacher is a lifelong process of improvement. The internship teaching practices gives student teachers the groundwork they need for future professional development. The findings and discussion demonstrate that with the correct supervision and support of school subject teachers and supervisors, trainee teachers have gained integrated teaching skills. Through the entire internship programme, they were incredibly satisfied.

1. INTRODUCTION

An internship is a process of training that helps interns improves their potential for future employment. It's crucial to become proficient at your profession. Training received by interns throughout their internship helps them learn new skills and knowledge, which improves their performance. Internships are a surefire way for graduate or postgraduate students to develop their personalities. It gives interns a chance to learn firsthand. It aims to make improvements to an intern's performance on the job that are reasonably permanent. Interns will undoubtedly gain more information and skills through their internships than they would otherwise. The fundamental goal of an internship programme is to bring about a desired change in a trainee's behavior. The teaching internship is regarded as the apex of teacher education preparation since it gives student interns several opportunities to contextualize their theoretical learning and practical abilities. Therefore, the main objective of a teaching internship is to provide teacher interns with real-world classroom experience so they may evaluate their teaching skills. Through this procedure, teacher interns can solidify their pedagogical principles and learning and teaching philosophies.

Internships aid in changing students' knowledge and abilities, or what they know and how they will work. The act of conveying, developing, or upgrading a student's information and abilities that they gain in the form of theory is therefore accomplished through internship programming. Internship programmes are advantageous for both new candidates and government agencies. It gives new candidates a chance to experience the demands and working circumstances of the modern, professional business environment. Hence, the internship gives the student a better idea of what is required of them in terms of education and training for their job. The school Internship promotes professional networking, encourages the development of teaching-learning theories, offers a safe environment for experimentation, welcomes fresh viewpoints, and heightens the desire to keep learning and reflecting.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

A descriptive Survey method is adopted for the study to bring out the experiences of the student teachers and their reflections about the internship program. This method is adopted to understand the perceptions of student teachers about the internship training offered in the colleges of education, its strength and weakness. The sample

involved here is the II-year student teachers in the academic year 2022-23 of Madurai district in Tamilnadu. A systematic random sampling technique is adapted for the study where around student teachers in and around Madurai were used for the study. Likert scaling technique was used for the analysis. The data collected through the questionnaire was statistically analyzed to find out the means and standard deviations and then presented thematically.

The researchers interpreted the mean results of assessment of student teachers and internship program using the following scale: 4.50-5.0 (excellent), 3.5-4.49 (very satisfactory/effective), 2.5-3.49 (satisfactory/effective), 1.5-2.49 (less satisfactory/effective), and 1.0-1.49 (not satisfactory/effective). They also used the following scale to interpret the problems encountered: 4.50-5.0 (very frequently), 3.5-4.49 (frequently), 2.5-3.49 (occasionally), 1.5-2.49 (seldom), and 1.0-1.49 (never).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Reflection of student teachers on guide teacher and school environment

The guide teacher has a significant impact on the student teacher's learning experience because she serves as a role model and mentor for the student teacher. The methods used by their mentor instructors are frequently adopted by student teachers. As interns begin an intensive and persistent time of learning to teach in a setting of practice, guide teachers, who serve as role models for teaching, support and supervise them. The tasks assigned to the guide Teacher are such as preparation and communication, encouragement of the Intern's learning, and evaluation of the Intern's comprehension and development. Table 1 presents the student teacher's reflection on guide teacher. Here all the indicators obtained a rating of very satisfactory, with a composite mean of 4.21. The highest satisfaction was obtained in "Subject knowledge and teaching skills of the guide teacher" (4.27) the next highest satisfaction was obtained in "Co-operation with student teachers in their internship" (4.21). Further the satisfaction was obtained in nearly to the last one in "Maintaining class room discipline and awareness about individual student's psychology" (4.20), and "Guide teacher's involvement in co-curricular and extra-curricular activity teaching" (4.19). The last but still very satisfactory was obtained in "Technical knowledge in teaching to concentrate different levels of students' understanding" (4.18). These results clearly enumerates that the student teachers were very satisfactory with their performance of guide teacher.

Table 1: Student teacher's reflection on guide teacher

| Indicators | Mean | Verbal description |
|---|------|--------------------|
| Subject knowledge and teaching skills of the guide teacher | 4.27 | Very satisfactory |
| Technical knowledge in teaching to concentrate different levels of students' understanding. | 4.18 | Very satisfactory |
| Maintaining class room discipline and awareness about individual student's psychology | 4.20 | Very satisfactory |
| Guide teacher's involvement in co-curricular and extra-curricular activity teaching. | 4.19 | Very satisfactory |
| Co-operation with student teachers in their internship | 4.21 | Very satisfactory |

The other criteria for assessing the reflection focused on the school environment as school play in important role in laying foundation for children's life. Table 2 presents satisfactoriness in student teacher's reflection on school environment. The table shows that free materials and uniform obtained very satisfactory ratings (4.38). The indicator obtained very satisfactory was in "Transport facility to reach the school" (4.35).

Table 2: Student teacher's reflection on school environment

| Indicators | Mean | Verbal description |
|--|------|--------------------|
| Atmosphere of school overall environment | 4.25 | Very satisfactory |
| Laboratory facilities for higher secondary students | 4.19 | Very satisfactory |
| Seating and other furniture availability for students | 4.17 | Very satisfactory |
| School buildings are well ventilated, well lighted and hygiene | 4.17 | Very satisfactory |
| Safety precautions and First aid facility | 4.18 | Very satisfactory |
| Quality of mid day meal and preparation | 4.28 | Very satisfactory |
| Library facility and availability of books | 4.13 | Very satisfactory |
| Toilet facility for teachers and students | 4.20 | Very satisfactory |

| | | |
|--|------|-------------------|
| Transport facility to reach the school | 4.35 | Very satisfactory |
| Free materials and uniform | 4.38 | Very satisfactory |
| Play ground and games equipments | 4.27 | Very satisfactory |
| Availability of E-teaching tools | 4.26 | Very satisfactory |
| Drinking water arrangements | 4.30 | Very satisfactory |
| School buildings have enough trees and compound wall | 4.17 | Very satisfactory |
| Cleanliness of the campus | 4.18 | Very satisfactory |
| Waste disposal and management | 4.17 | Very satisfactory |

The results imply that the school environment could affect the children’s psychology directly or indirectly and maintaining the environment in proper could be given good learning atmosphere to the students. Above mentioned indicators are well observed and monitored for a period. It clearly shows that Government and Government aided schools are functioning with good environment which is enhancing children’s learning also teachers’ teaching. This resulted in increase of enrollment in government and government aided schools.

In the above reflection of the school environment the further highest ratings in “Drinking water arrangements” (4.30), and “Quality of mid day meal and preparation” (4.28), and “Atmosphere of school overall environment” (4.25). The further indicator obtained satisfactory in “Toilet facility for the teachers and students” (4.20). Schools are running from primary to higher secondary hence it is needed that separate toilet facility for students and proper cleanliness of the toilet. The proper disposal of napkins should be made to avoid communicable diseases during the heavy seasons. When it is a co education schools there is need for separate arrangements for boys and girls where one could be disturbed by others.

Table 2 further indicates the satisfactory level obtained in “Laboratory facilities for higher secondary students” (4.19), and “Cleanliness of the campus” (4.18). The further indicators obtained next level of satisfactory in “School buildings are well ventilated, well lighted and hygiene”, “Seating and other furniture availability for students”, School buildings have enough trees and compound wall” and “Waste disposal and management” (4.17). This study categorically shows that the student teacher’s reflection on school environment is significantly satisfactory and also implies that the school environment has safe and good atmosphere which helps students to enhance their potential in learning and other activities.

3.2. Reflection of student teachers on the actual classroom setting

The internship program in the teaching profession is designed to make the future teachers ready for the actual classroom by getting trained among the school students. The trainee may come across different types of students during the training period. The school students often get excited by witnessing a trainee teacher, as they tend to believe in getting relieved from the same teacher teaching the same subjects. Relationships between teachers and students are essential for both parties' success. Such relationships play a major role in determining the success of a teacher's work in terms of classroom management. Few students have a positive attitude and behavior towards the student teachers while few students react vice versa. Through the internship teaching practices, the student teachers get the chance to explore relationship building with children and how that influences classroom management because they work with students on a regular basis and for extended periods of time.

Table: 3: Student teacher’s reflection on actual classroom setting

| Indicators | Mean | Verbal description |
|---|------|--------------------|
| Time management is under control | 4.51 | Excellent |
| Implementation of the ideas as per plan | 4.48 | Very satisfactory |
| Result of using teaching aids | 4.64 | Excellent |
| Interaction and cooperation of students | 4.35 | Very satisfactory |
| Healthy relationship between students and teachers | 4.33 | Very satisfactory |
| Completion of home work and class work | 4.29 | Very satisfactory |
| Satisfactory level of students classroom expectations | 4.65 | Very satisfactory |
| Discipline and class control | 4.58 | Very satisfactory |
| Attendance and class room performance of students | 4.24 | Very satisfactory |
| Availability of additional teaching resources | 4.22 | Very satisfactory |

| | | |
|---|------|-------------------|
| Adequate seating facilities for students | 4.27 | Very satisfactory |
| Results of class test and term examinations | 4.13 | Very satisfactory |

Table: 3 present the results of student teacher’s reflection on actual classroom setting. The highest level of satisfaction was obtained in the indicator “Satisfactory level of students classroom expectations” (4.65), and “Results of using teaching aids” (4.64). The next indicator which was obtained in “Discipline and class control” (4.58), and “Time management is under control” (4.51), states that student teachers could control the class and manage their teaching time as per the plan. “Implementation of the ideas as per plan” (4.48) obtained the next level of satisfactory shows that the different ideas which is used to gain attention of the students to the actual classroom gives an accountable result. Further “interaction and cooperation of students” (4.35) and “Healthy relationship between students and teachers” (4.33) obtained satisfactory level hence it shows that students are eager to learn new concepts and ideas. Further the satisfactory level was obtained in “Completion of home work and class work” (4.29), “Adequate seating facilities for students” (4.27) and “Availability of additional teaching resources” (4.22) states that physical arrangement of class room was satisfactory.

Test and examinations helps teachers to measure the learning progress and achievement and to evaluate the effectiveness of subject understanding. Also it helps teachers to change and re-teach the lesson according to the understanding level of the students. Table:3 the lowest level hence it is satisfactory was obtained in “Results of class test and term examinations” (4.13), shows that every student has unique level of IQ and understanding. This level could be affected by many factors such as physical illness, mental stress, psychological problems and other environmental intruders. Student teachers should have the keen observation of every student and plan the lessons and teaching according to their mental age.

Initial teacher education programmes have traditionally included a critical component called the teaching practices. As teacher candidates are primarily anticipated to engage in a reciprocal engagement with the students in actual classrooms throughout the practicum phase, it also has a core mission of preparing them for the world of teaching. The purpose of the teaching practices is to give student teachers the chance to put the theories, methods, and strategies they have learned in the course of their teacher education into practice. It is required of student teachers to apply the concepts they have learned in the classroom to difficulties they meet in the classroom. The student teachers will undoubtedly get some ideas from seeing the guide teacher in a professional capacity about how to deal with issues.

Table: 4: Student teacher’s reflection in terms of problem encountered

| Indicators | Mean | Verbal description |
|---|------|--------------------|
| Discrimination among teachers and authorities | 1.38 | Never |
| Discontinuation of power supply | 1.77 | Seldom |
| Theft and students quarrel | 1.78 | Seldom |
| Student drop out | 1.71 | Seldom |
| Attendance lag of students | 1.76 | Seldom |
| Incompletion of home work and class work | 1.71 | Seldom |
| Non-cooperation of guide teacher | 1.78 | Seldom |
| Composite mean | 1.69 | Seldom |

The result of Table 4 shows that there is no serious problem would encounter by student teachers during their internship programme. The indicator obtained never in “Discrimination among teachers and authorities” (1.38), and the indicator obtained seldom which could be concentrated in “Theft and students quarrel” and “Non-cooperation of guide teacher” (1.78). The overall composite mean of reflection in terms of problem encountered was seldom (1.69) states that there is no significant problem was encountered by student teachers.

3.3. Researcher’s Proposal / Suggestions

The researcher’s proposal and suggestions towards the student teacher’s reflection on the internship teaching practice of a teacher education programme were either very satisfactory or excellent. The researcher went to field survey visits the internship schools and did interviews with some guide staff of the internship school to assess the evaluation accurately. The result area focused on guide staff and students where the suggestions will

be considered. The researcher proposed some points which would help them to widen their achievements and progress.

Table: 5 in the second result area stated that student exploration towards new concepts and ideas. Also the researcher had an interview personally with the students to find out their difficulties in studies, behavior of peer group and teachers' attitude towards students. The researcher recorded all the queries and suggestions carefully and made final proposal/suggestions. The researcher also found that there is no significant need and problem which is to be cleared and solved immediately. Subsequently, the researcher suggested few areas which were currently functioning well and the future requirements are to be needed.

Table: 5: Researcher's proposal / suggestions

| Key result area | Strategic options |
|-----------------|--|
| Guide Staff | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When student teachers encountered a problem in teaching guide staff could guide them to overcome their problem. 2. Guide staff shall allot lower section to higher section which helps student teachers to manage their teaching styles. 3. Question paper preparation, evaluation, maintaining of mark register, attendance register, student's personal record and other related follow ups could be taught by guide staff. 4. Approach strategies to reach the hyperactive students can be taught by guide staff. 5. Guide staff will allow student teachers to observe the students in play ground and other different environment. 6. Priority may be given to the student teachers to complete their record works. 7. Student teachers could be involved in cultural practices along with school students in order to develop their better understanding. |
| Students | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equal importance could be given to their teacher and student teacher. 2. Students should be provided more games equipments. 3. Adequate laboratory period should be given. 4. Parents Teachers meeting shall be conducted to develop and satisfy the needs. 5. Outdoor and field trip can be planned in order to create awareness of the environment and the world. 6. Library books could be added annually. 7. Students health should be focused during the heavy summer and rainy season. 8. Individual care should be taken by the class teachers. 9. Implementation of IT tools for teaching would help students to understand their subject well and easy. 10. Cleanliness of the class room and campus should be monitored. |

Conclusion

In a nutshell, the experience of student teachers during their internship programme was excellent and they experienced lot of new areas in teaching process. This part of internship training paved the amazing way to gain knowledge, learn teaching strategies, adjustment with diverse students, understanding of the self and moreover importance teaching. This would give confidence to the student teachers to achieve their goal as a role model and shows them the importance of teachers in every student's life.

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