

## **An Evaluation of Teaching Practice Program Undertaken by Student-Teachers of English Major**

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### **1. Abstract**

This paper examines the teaching practice program carried out by English majors at Education faculty, Misrata University . It investigates the challenges faced by them during performing teaching practice exercise. It deals with pre-service teachers from the perspective of student-teachers' experiences and personal views. Ten students-teachers were chosen randomly to elicit their views concerning teaching practice program. The discussion is based on the results of these interviews and qualitative method was adopted to analyze the data obtained. Student- teachers of English language are not well- prepared to encounter and perform teaching practice process in the classrooms because they tackle the teaching practice program in secondary schools before they finish the study of teaching methodology subjects. The findings revealed that (1) The time allotted to teaching methodology I & II is inadequate.(2) lack the knowledge of the techniques of teaching language skills and sub-skills before tackling this program. (3) Pre-service teachers are not given chances to participate in school activities, attend meetings or evaluate class work and homework. (4) Student-teachers tackle the teaching practice program before they accomplish teaching methodology II.

### **2. Introduction**

This paper deals with an evaluation to the to the teaching practice program used by English Department, Faculty of Education. Since the graduates of this college will be teachers of English, the faculty organized a specific plan to be adopted during carrying out teaching practice program.

The English Department has its plan to help the students carry out what required easily in order to be reliable to teach English in all levels of general education ( primary, preparatory and secondary stage ). English

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department students study about 128 credits to get the degree of bachelor in education (English language specialization). They study 70% English language courses, 20% education subjects and 10% general courses.

As a prerequisite factor, students are not allowed to join teaching practice program unless they accomplish at least 78 credits out of 128, and to pass some courses concern this program such as English language teaching methodology **I** and English language teaching methodology **II**. These courses help students get special knowledge about the suitable techniques of teaching the target language. For example, teaching methodology **I** gives students information about types of teaching methods used in different centuries, such as the grammar translation method, the direct method, the audio-lingual method and the communicative approach. In teaching methodology **II**, students are given courses about the techniques used to teach the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and language components such as phonetics, vocabulary and grammar. During these courses, students get chance to practice teaching different language elements in the faculty to prepare themselves for teaching practice program. The staff member who is responsible for this course, divides the students into individuals and each one tries to prepare a specific lesson about aspect of the language skills and carry it out in front of their colleagues and to accept their critique.

The paper is divided into seven sections. Section one contains abstract. Section two is the introduction of the study, whereas section three deals with literature review which relates to student-teacher practice. Section four contains data analysis of students interview tables used by the researchers. Section five shows the results and findings of this study. Section six is the conclusion and the last section is some recommendations for the students and teaching experts.

### **3. Literature review**

Teaching practice is an important component towards becoming a teacher. Akinsola (2014) defines teaching practice as a time when all learned theoretical concepts and ideas in educational psychology, management of classroom, subject content, curriculum development, various philosophies

dealing with education are called into use. It provides experiences to student-teachers in the actual teaching and learning before getting into a real world of teaching profession. It is an important part of teacher training. The process of preparing, training and supplying the student-teachers with the basic skills of teaching is considered to be one of the tasks of colleges of education. Weinstein (1990) pointed out that teaching practice is the period in which real levels of pre-service teachers' basic skills are determined. These skills will enable them to be successful teachers in their future. Bolarfinwa (2010) defines teaching practice as a double functional experience within the field to acquire some practical experiences in order to shapen the student-teacher up for profession and evaluate such student-teacher in terms of amount and quality of professional learning. Practice is meant to help pre-service teachers cultivate teaching habits. Marais (2011) says that teaching practice is a concept that refers to other terms such as student teacher, field studies, in-field experience and school-based experience. Marais (2011) also provides three connotations concerning the learning experience of student-teachers in schools which are: (1) The practicing of teaching skills and acquisition of the mentor teacher's role. (2) The whole range of student teachers' experience during teaching practice periods in schools and (3) The practical aspects of the course as distinct from theoretical studies. Okobia, etal, (2013) conducted a study which investigated the challenges faced by student-teachers at faculty of Education in Benin city of Benin during their teaching practice performance. The findings of their study revealed that the majority of the student-teachers encountered some problems. These include: the student-teachers were excluded from the staff meeting in schools, teaching practice is a period of stress for them, lack of cooperation from subject teachers or school supervisors, lack of instructional materials and resources and difficulty in planning lesson notes.

Brown and Brown (1990) indicated that the teaching practice provides the following features: 1. Gaining confidence. 2. Getting benefits from criticism. 3. A chance to learn about students in real life before joining teaching career. 4. A chance to learn skills and attitudes. 5. A competent effective teacher. 6. A chance to improve knowledge of subject matter. Azeem (2011) concluded

in his study which dealt with problems of prospective teachers during teaching practice that The majority of schools do not prepare the timetables for student- teachers, Student-teachers are not imparted practice training of different methods of teaching before they are sent for teaching practice exercise, Majority of student–teachers are not informed about the rules and regulations of the practicing schools.

Furthermore, Empirical findings support the notion that high level of anxiety among student –teachers may be tied to negative consequences such as class control problems and class disruptions. Preece (1979) found correlation between student- teacher anxiety and class control problems. Tarusha and Bilali (2015) showed that the teaching anxiety to student teachers was influenced by a number of factors that are associated with specific characteristics of learning situations such as teaching planning, ability to analyze problems of learning , class management, assessment of students, public speaking and teaching observationp from mentor teacher. Ranjan (2013) comments in his study on the practice teaching program that the student-teachers were able to apply the education theory learnt at the institution into practice but there were some complaints appeared during performing the program, for example the student-teachers felt unhappy for not respecting and welcoming by staff members of the school. They were often excluded from many school activities. Education faculties have to talk and arrange in advance with school teachers about teaching practice to remove worries and clarify the benefits the students can get from this program. Sharma (2015) points out that colleges of education impart not only theoretical information but also practical knowledge and skills in teaching different subjects to student teachers at the end of the session. According to Sharma, teaching practice is carried out for practical application of knowledge and skills in authentic teaching and learning environment. It is a valuable opportunity where pre-service students are in a position to increase their knowledge, do experiments on the basis of the acquired information and to solve the problems related to teaching.

Akbar (2002) provides a number of objectives of teaching practice:

1. Providing the prospective teachers with an opportunity of establishing appropriate teacher- student relationship.
2. Developing personal relationship with others: administration, teachers, parents and students.
3. Providing opportunity for evaluating the student potential as a teacher and suitability for teaching profession.
4. Overcoming the problems of discipline and enabling student teachers to develop method of teaching.
5. Putting theories into practice and developing a deeper understanding of educational principles and their application for learning.
6. Developing skill in use of fundamental procedures, techniques and methods of teaching.
7. Enabling the student-teachers effectively to plan and prepare lessons.
8. Developing desirable profession interests, attitudes, techniques and methods of teaching.
9. Enabling student teachers to acquire desirable characteristics/ traits of teachers and displaying appropriate behavior.
10. Developing skills such as fluent speaking, meaningful reading and using teaching aids.
11. Discovering own strengthen and weakness.
12. Exchanging ideas and methods between practicing school and teacher training institution.

#### 4. Data analysis

##### 4.1. Table 1. Educational Aspect

Items	students									
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
Did you accomplish English teaching methodology I?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Did you accomplish English teaching methodology II?	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗

If yes, did you study the way of teaching all the language skills and sub-skills?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
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From this table, it is clear that all the ten students 100% studied English language teaching I. This means that all of them have general idea about the teaching methods used for teaching foreign languages. As mentioned before, the concentration during studying this course is upon the communicative approach because the syllabus of the material used in Libyan schools is based on this method. This table also shows that only three students out of ten 30% studied English language teaching II. This means few students accomplished this course whereas the rest 70% did not accomplish this course before joining the teaching program. They do not have a complete idea about the way of teaching language skills and sub-skills. This means that they ignore the suitable techniques for the teaching process. It is also clear that most of the students who accomplished English language teaching II, did not study the way of teaching all the language components. Only some of them did and this is due to many factors such as the time allocated to this course by English department and the large number of the students who study this course together.

#### 4.2. Table 2.Social Aspect

Items	students									
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
Have you been given any lectures about the school year program and routine?	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X
Have you been involved in any activities done by the school where you applied teaching	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Have you attended any meetings with the teachers and the headmaster in the school to introduce you things you sometimes need?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
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This table shows that all the students 100% did not get any chance to have lectures or meetings to be aware of the program and the routine used in the school during applying teaching practice. So all of them are not aware of the rules and routine used by the teachers and students in the school.

The table also shows that students of teaching practice did not involve themselves in the activities done by the teachers and students in the school.

The same table also clarifies that only two students 20% attended two lectures about school program and two students attended only one lecture, whereas all the students 100% did not get chance to attend any lectures with the teachers or the head-master in these schools.

#### 4.3. Table 3. Language Aspect

Which of the following components did you get chance to give presentations during studying English teaching methods?

Item	students									
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
Listening	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Speaking	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X	X
Reading	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X
Writing	X	✓	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X
Grammar	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vocabulary	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X
Pronunciation	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓

From the above table, it is obvious that most of the students did not get chance to give presentations about the all language skills and sub-skills, but some of them 20% gave presentations about two components, others about 80% gave only one presentation. This indicates that during studying English

language teaching methodology II, the students could not get chance to practice teaching different skills or sub-skills. This can be owed to the limited time allotted to teaching this course and the large number of students in each group.

### **5.The findings of the study**

The ways of gathering data in this study are personal interview of students who accomplished the teaching practice program last year.

They confirmed that there were many problems encountering the student teachers during carrying out teaching practice. Accordingly, the researchers found out the following:

1.All the interviewed students 100% accomplished teaching methodology I.However30% of them accomplished teaching methodology II. Whereas 70% did not. This means that most of pre-service-teachers lack the knowledge of the techniques of teaching language skills and sub-skills before tackling this program which had bad results on their performance.

2. Non of the pre-service teachers had opportunity to attend any lectures or meetings where they applied this program. As a consequence, they did not have any information or ideas about school activities. It seems that there is a need for good relationship between student-teachers and teachers in schools so as to enable them achieve the desired outcomes from the teaching practice exercise. The schools have a great role to play in helping the student-teachers professionally. They have to be expected to report on the work of pre-service teachers to the college. These reports have a great value to the university and have to be given an important attention.

3. Data indicated (see table 3) that most of pre-service teachers did not get a chance to give presentations about language skills and sub-skills which made them encounter many hindrances during carrying out their teaching practice program in the schools. Educators in the Education Faculty have to give a chance to student-teachers to rehearse and give lessons in front of their colleagues in all aspects of the language before tackling teaching practice exercise in schools to make it more effective and fruitful.



## 6. Recommendations

1. The time allotted to English language teaching methodology is inadequate. It should be at least six hours a week. At the present, the students study only four hours a week.
2. Since this study revealed that the majority of student-teachers complained that they were not given adequate teaching practice exercises in all skills and sub-skills, the teaching practice lecturers in the faculty should organize effective and adequate practice and orientation for student-teachers before tackling teaching practice exercise.
3. The students who study English language teaching methodology II are large number. They should be divided into small groups not more than 20 students in each class.
4. Students have to participate in all activities of school such as preparing the timetable, evaluation of class work and home work, arrangement of tutorial groups, sports, games, morning assembly, sharing in news board, information board, decoration of classroom and so on. Therefore, the student-teachers have to spend the whole day in schools as real teachers.

## 7. Conclusion

It has been asserted that teaching is a unique profession that requires adequate skills on the part of student- teachers which constitute an important part of teaching practice program. This study indicates that all students 100% who study in English department, achieved English teaching method I. We can generally say that those students have an idea about the teaching methods which deal with different ways of teaching any target language for non-native speakers. About 70% of the students did not accomplish English language teaching II before joining teaching practice program. This subject introduces different techniques for teaching different skills and sub-skills during teaching any foreign language because the students are sometimes asked to teach any skill or component during carrying out teaching practice. This means that not all students get chance to practice teaching language skills and sub-skills during studying this course. So it is unwise to ask them teach different skills or components correctly. Since there were no meetings or

lectures to introduce the rules and routine used in the schools where the students apply teaching practice. It is clear that the majority of the students who carry out the teaching practice program did not have any idea about the rules and routine used in these schools. This makes the students of teaching practice in a passive role. What they do is just giving their classes and sometimes attending the morning assembly.

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