

ความท้าทายของการฝึกปฏิบัติการสอนที่วิทยาลัยครูพนมเปญ ประเทศกัมพูชา

Challenges of teaching practicum at Phnom Penh Teacher Education College, Cambodia

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจความท้าทายของการฝึกปฏิบัติการสอนในประเทศกัมพูชาโดยใช้กรณีของวิทยาลัยครูราชธานีพนมเปญ ใช้ระเบียบวิธีการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ กลุ่มตัวอย่างมีทั้งหมด 29 คน ประกอบด้วยรองผู้อำนวยการ (P-TEC) เจ้าหน้าที่กรมการฝึกหัดครู นักศึกษาครู ครูที่ปรึกษา ครูนิเทศก์ของวิทยาลัย ผู้ประสานงานตามโรงเรียน ผู้ประสานงานที่วิทยาลัยเครื่องมือในการวิจัย คือ แบบสัมภาษณ์ โดยใช้กรอบแนวคิด Creswell ในการวิเคราะห์และตีความข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพ

ผลของการศึกษาพบว่าในระหว่างการสอนนักศึกษาครูที่ฝึกปฏิบัติการสอนต้องเผชิญกับความท้าทายหลายประการ ได้แก่ การสังเกตและการสะท้อนกลับจากผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียไม่เพียงพอ การปฏิบัติในชั้นเรียนจริงมีจำกัด การจัดทำแผนการสอนและกระบวนการประเมินผลการฝึกปฏิบัติการสอน ในขณะเดียวกันนั้น ผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสีย

บางรายก็ได้เผชิญกับความท้าทายบางประการเช่นกัน การฝึกอบรมไม่เพียงพอสำหรับผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียในการปฏิบัติหน้าที่สำคัญของตน ขาดความร่วมมือระหว่างผู้ที่ทำหน้าที่หลัก โดยเฉพาะระหว่าง TEC กับโรงเรียนฝึกปฏิบัติและภาระงาน

คำสำคัญ : การปฏิบัติการสอน, นักศึกษาครู, ความท้าทาย, วิทยาลัยครูราชธานีพนมเปญ

Abstract

The purpose of the research was to explore the challenges of teaching practicum in Cambodia using the case of Phnom Penh Teacher Education College. Participants for this qualitative research were 29, there are deputy director (P-TEC), TTD's staff, student teachers, mentor teachers, college supervisors, school-based coordinators and college-based coordinators. Using interview questions and Creswell framework for qualitative data analysis and interpretation.

The finding was as follows: During teaching practicum student teachers faced several challenges: insufficient observation and feedback from stakeholders, learners view on student teachers, limited number of practices in the real class, preparation of lesson plans, and the teaching practicum assessment process. Meanwhile, some stakeholders also faced some challenges: insufficient training for the stakeholders to undertake their essential roles, lack of cooperation among the key players, especially between TEC and practicum schools, and workload.

Keywords: Teaching Practicum, Student Teacher, Challenge, Phnom Penh Teacher Education College

Introduction

Since the second decade of the 2000s the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (Moyes) has modernized policies and programs with the goal to improve the quality of the education system. The current education set of policies and national plans establishes a pre-service training 12+4 or bachelor+1 for pre-primary school, primary school, and lower secondary school, on the other hand, it establishes pre-service training from bachelor+1 to master's degree+1 for higher education teachers will change. In the country only two training centers implement the 12+4 curricula, Battambang and Phnom Penh Teacher Training Centers (B/P-TEC). The ESP also extends training to in-service teachers with the overall goal to have all teachers already deployed in schools with a 12+2 equivalent by 2018. Within this framework. The teaching practicum has been considered a key component of pre-service teacher education and an essential part of the curriculum of future teacher to develop professional competencies (MoEYS, 2016). The direct working experience with students in schools is expected to provide student teachers with an understanding on how to put in practise what they learn theoretically. It is also part of the student teachers' personal assessment of their skills and a way to address challenges they may face when deployed.

Starting with the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2014-2018 (MoEYS, 2014), the ministry has acknowledged the key role of the education of all education services, which, along with other six priorities, was included in the priorities of the plan (MoEYS, 2014: 14). Specifically, the ESP lists as the priority the improvement of the "quality and efficiency of all education

services” (MoEYS, 2014: 14). Moreover, from 2020, all new teachers will be required to have at least a bachelor’s degree (MoEYS, 2014, MoEYS, 2015). The importance of the education services was reiterated in the subsequent policy Teacher Policy Action Plan (TPAP) 2015-2020, which, laying the foundation for a significant change in the curricula the teachers, was promulgated to establish training for teachers through Teacher Training Centers.

In 2016, the practicum guidelines were revised to reinforces the link between the Teacher Training Centers and the public schools where the student teachers are deployed. The teaching practicum has been considered a key component of pre-service teacher education and an essential part of the curriculum of future teacher to develop professional competencies (MoEYS, 2016). The direct working experience with students in schools is expected to provide student teachers with an understanding on how to put in practice what they learn theoretically. It is also part of the student teachers’ personal assessment of their skills and a way to address challenges they may face when deployed. Currently there are six teacher training institution for lower secondary teachers, including the Phnom Penh Teacher Education College (P-TEC).

A few studies have looked at the implementation of the practicum and found that the student teachers face a variety of challenges, ranging from not being able to draft lesson plans and teaching material and manage students in the classroom to not being assisted or followed up by mentor teachers and college supervisors (Research Phnom Penh Teacher Education College, 2017; Pich, 2016; Practice and Challenges of Teaching Practicum at

Phnom Penh Teacher Education College, Cambodia, 2019). As a result of these gaps of the practicum, new teachers are likely to be deployed with little to no skills which will eventually factor into students' poor education achievements. The studies though do not explore the relationships between the P-TEC supervisors and the student teachers as well as the cooperation among all key actors of the practicum, namely supervisors, mentors, student teachers and other school staff members and the challenges arise from that or lack thereof.

Objectives

The objectives of the research were to explore the implementation and challenges of teaching practicum in Cambodia.

Research Methodology

The P-TEC has been selected as research site because, despite a recent report showed the challenges of teaching practicum, there is no research on teaching practicum for lower secondary school teachers at P-TEC. P-TEC is one of the two training centers that was upgraded from 12+2 to 12+4 formula in 2018, therefore the understanding the current practice and implementation of teaching practicum may provide insights for other upgraded colleges.

The researcher generated data using semi-structured interviews, which have played a key role in delineating weaknesses and strengths of the school-based experience. Supplementary data were drawn from desk

research including documents such as government guidelines, and published research on teaching practicum.

The sample consisted of ten student teachers who fit the following criteria (1) student teachers must have finished teaching practice in June 2018, (2) must have conducted practicum in different schools. Each subject was represented by two students. The other participants of the study were six college supervisors, seven mentor teachers, two school-based coordinators, and one college-based coordinator. In order to get additional information related to teaching practicum, the study also included one deputy director of the Phnom Penh Teacher Education College and two members of staff from the Teacher Training Department. Random sampling selection of participants was utilized along with open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews. The same set of questions was asked to each interviewee to enable comparison and triangulation of the findings (Yin, 2018). The student teachers were selected from the student list of the Centre according to the criteria set for the study. The other participants of the studies, namely college supervisors, mentors and coordinators were selected as they were part of the practicum committee, which is created by the academic officer before the onset of the practicum.

Before the field work, pilot research was conducted to assess the feasibility and process of conducting classroom observation and interviews. Ten student teachers, two teacher educators -including one deputy director- and one mentor participated in the pilot study. A list of questions for use in the design of the interviews in the main study were asked to understand various issues related to the teaching practicum. The field pilot allowed for

checking respondents' understanding of questions as well as their reactions to the interview. Based on the results of piloting, some interview questions were reworded, especially in the Khmer translation, because they were vague or proved difficult. After the pilot process, the researcher categorized the interviews according to the target participants: (1) interviews for student teachers, (2) interviews for college supervisors and mentor teachers, (3) interviews for school-based coordinators and college-based coordinators. The researcher translated each interview from Khmer to English and organized the material by categories and types of information. This enabled to identify general data and distinctive information. I then utilized a coding system to group words, sentences or sections of the interviews. This process slowly helped to define areas of investigation. The analysis started with the examination of the translation to identify themes, which were then given a code.

In this research, the researcher created a different type of tables for each participant involved in the teaching practicum. Specifically, there was one table for CBC, one table for SBCs, one table for CSs, one table for MTs, and another table for STs. The researcher judged a point to be YES, NO or PARTLY based on the respondents' reaction to the question that sought to understand whether they followed teaching practicum guidelines or not. The researcher eventually summarized the findings in a table. As the researcher is also a teacher in the P-TEC the dynamics of the power relationships were also considered. As a result, the study accepted only volunteers to participate to the research. Additionally, to avoid conflict of interest with my previous role, the researcher imposed on her practice a

rigorous research protocol for objective use of data. Additionally, to minimize the bias, the researcher utilized random sampling selection, open-ended questions, and semi-structured interviews with all participants.

Finally, the research focuses on one training center only and limits the number of participants to specific criteria and sampling due to tight deadlines and limited resources. Therefore, it does not intend to represent the overall complexity of practicum and the challenges that its implementation implies depending on training centers as well as the schools of the practicum.

Research Findings

The results of the study found that There are two challenges of teaching practicum at Phnom Penh Teacher Education College: the challenge of teacher students and the challenge of college supervisors and mentor teachers. As will be mentioned as follows.

1. Challenges faced by student teachers

The findings of the study indicate that teaching practicum at P-TEC faced numerous problems. The study participants identified that the major challenges encountered during the implementation of practicum program included 1) supervision of the college and mentor teachers, 2) limited number of classroom teaching, 3) students' view of student teachers, 4) preparation of lesson plans, 5) lack of cooperation among practicum stakeholders, 6) a large number of student teachers assigned to one mentor teacher. As the following details.

1.1 Insufficient observation and feedback by college supervisors

The supervision from college supervisors is important for student teachers when they face some challenges during their practice in the classroom. Before going to a practicum school, student teachers need to complete lesson plan. Thus, students need support from their college supervisors in terms of guidance, feedback, and comment to improve their lesson plan before sending it to mentor teachers for checking. “...I went to observe each of my student teachers teaching one time for the whole period of teaching practice because I was busy with another work, I didn't have time to observe every lesson” (CS2). And “... I attend the workshop at the province, so I observed the student teacher only one time” (CS3). In contrast, the answers provided by other student teachers, “My supervisors never came to observe me during my teaching time, event first subject, because they joined the workshop in the province” (ST1). However, some college supervisors make appointments with student teachers outside the practicum school to offer advice after the student teachers explain their activities. “...When student teachers have a problem at practicum school such a lesson plan or difficulty in managing the classroom, they call me to meet at school” (CS5).

It is thus evident than when the college supervisors are busy, they try to find an alternative way to meet the student teachers. Some of the college supervisors observe their student teachers in the classroom, but they do not visit according to the schedule that they received from student teachers. This is consistent with Pich's (2016) study findings on quality of

the practicum at Provincial Teacher Training Center (P-TTC) that observes student teachers received insufficient feedback from their supervisors.

1.2 Insufficient observation and feedback by mentor teachers

Interviews with nine student teachers of five subjects and five different practicum schools showed that mentor teachers should teach them teaching strategies, classroom management, ways to motivate students, and tactics for dealing with unexpected situations. They should also assist in developing teaching methodology and writing the lesson plan as shown in the following interview extracts.

“My mentor teachers came to see me all the time of my teaching of second subject (minor subject), but during my first subject [he] never came (main subject)” (ST3). However, there are mentor teachers who can be busy with another task in their school, thus they conduct class only once per each student teacher, “...I observed student teacher one time each only because I was busy in the office” (MT1).

The above description clearly indicates that during teaching practicum the student teachers do not get proper support from college supervisors and mentor teachers. The study by Yunus et al., (2010) revealed student teachers’ lack support from their mentor teachers and college supervisors during teaching practicum. The study also mentions that student teachers rarely had the opportunity to speak with their mentor teachers, because they were busy with their main tasks at school. On the other hand, the researcher found that some mentor teachers did not meet the student teachers before and after classes. Yunus, et al., (2010) and Rasheed (2017)

reported similar findings as student teachers lacked support from their mentor teachers and college supervisors during the teaching practicum.

In conclusion, not all the mentor teachers and college supervisors assist the student teachers despite their expected roles and responsibilities. Findings from the interviews also showed that mentor teachers were more active than college supervisors in terms of frequency of observation and feedback. The respondents indicate that mentor teachers were supportive and always willing to help.

1.3 Students' view on student teachers

The majority of participants acknowledged that classroom management is a major area of concern, especially at the beginning of the teaching practicum. The student teachers were mostly concerned about dealing with students' noise in the classroom. This study reveals that student teachers experience difficulties related to classroom management. It also reveals that learners think that student teachers are not their real teachers. The extracts below reveal some of these difficulties. "It is difficult to teach when the learners make a noise. They will not be listening. They think I am not their teacher. I just come here to practice. I am a student like them ...not real teachers to listen to and to respect" (ST1). "... Some students do not pay attention to. Students do not cooperate, and some lessons have many activities, and the teaching does not follow the time set up. On the other hand, some respondents from one school (one class) said that learners were well behaved and that they actively participated in the class activities: "Students respect us as teachers, though there are some who think that we are student teachers. Some students also asked me, "Teacher (Lok Krau) if

you want to get the high score, we will help you. I knew you came here for practice then get the score from my teachers here after you finish” (ST5).

One mentor teacher also noted that student teachers faced challenges during the teaching practicum because their knowledge and experience were limited. “Student teachers have little experience, because they are first-year students at the training center, thus some student teachers have limited understanding in their lesson when they taught” (MT2).

Class size is also a reason that might affect the practicum experience as student teachers may have a class with 35 to more than 60 students. Mustafa, et al., (2014) showed that large numbers of students in one classroom are an impediment to classroom management in general, and classroom discipline specifically. Larger classes are louder and crowded to the extent that the classroom discipline is negatively affected. One teacher cannot handle such situations in the classroom alone. Teachers lose lesson time in such conditions because they spend most of the lesson time trying to control the learners.

“I teach from grade 7 and 8 and there are about 62 students in each class. The classes are just too big, and this poses problems in class management. With 25 to 35 students, it can be easy to manage, and this can ensure effective teaching because I can control the class” (ST1) and another student teacher said, “there were 40 to 50 students in my class” (ST3).

This is also ascertained by Ebrahim, et al., (2007) and Al-Momani (2016) who showed that a large number of learners in the class affects the

outcomes of the practicum, as student teachers cannot use theoretical knowledge learned in the college. Marais and Meier (2004) found that respondents experienced a decline of moral values in schools and neglect of discipline. Most of the student teachers desperately wanted to improve their classroom management skills and realized quite early that they needed to be more assertive with the learners.

Classroom management is a cause of stress for different stakeholders. Many research studies confirm that maintaining appropriate classroom management is a difficult component of practicum causing stress (Murray-Harvey et al., 2000 and Merc, 2011). They also show that student teachers are highly concerned with their abilities in managing the time and managing the class. This study suggests that classroom management as a factor causing stress is confirmed by some mentor teachers and college supervisors. They pointed out that student teachers have difficulty in controlling the classroom because student teachers are not considered real teachers.

1.4 Limited number of classroom teaching during teaching practicum

The duration of the teaching practice was explored to determine whether it was perceived as a challenge. Ten student teachers indicated that the duration of teaching practice was six weeks, including two weeks for classroom observation for both main and minor subjects. The first week of teaching practice was usually for settling, including lesson plans, lesson notes, and teaching timetables. The vast majority of the student teachers indicated that the duration spent for the teaching practice was good for

them, but their very little classroom teaching was not sufficient. Here are examples of interview excerpts given by respondents: “If I thought that about six weeks would be long, but in reality, I taught only one time during the whole period of the teaching practicum. Information Communication Technology subject the timetable of the practicum school has one day a week so we need to shift in the group to have one time each” (ST4), “I think six weeks is not enough for student-teacher practice” (ST1), Other student teachers also mention, “I think it is not enough for me because I taught three hours for both subjects, so I think the amount of teaching did not help me to improve yet” (ST6). Likewise, college-based coordinator explained that “In fact, according to the information I received from student teachers they taught one or two times during the teaching practicum, especially for the second subject, because during that time student took semester examination and a lot of holidays as well. I understand this difficulty, but I am also struggling because the schedule I received from school only allow our student teachers in grades 7 and 8” (CBC).

1.5 Preparation of lesson plan

According to this study during teaching practicum student teachers prepare many lessons before classes start. Moreover, they send to supervisors and school mentors check and provided feedback. Most of student teacher said that it is very hard for them to plan many lessons particularly to write the aim of the lesson. For example, “...My difficulty in preparing the lesson plan is to determine the aim of the lesson” (ST9), or “...I did not clear about the aim of the lesson, so I feel difficult to write the

lesson plan.” (ST8) and “...they used the format of lesson plan differed from what I have learned from school” (ST5).

There were several complaints by student teachers who felt that their mentors exploited them by asking them to write multiple or extra lesson plans. According to the college-based coordinator, “Student teachers told me some mentor teachers asked them to write quite a lot of the lesson plans, even though they need two or three lesson plans for their practice during the practicum. Mentor teachers give them the score, so they feel they need to write for their mentor teacher, because they are afraid to get low score” (CBC).

1.6 Assessment of student teachers in the practicum period

The assessment form provided by the Teacher Education College, then handed to the mentor teachers from the school, is all for the summative purpose. At the beginning of the teaching practicum, mentor teachers and college supervisors are given a set of the practicum evaluation form of student teachers. The mentor teachers and college supervisors need to fill in at least three different forms: the observation form, the evaluation form for the semi-practice stage, and the final evaluation report form of student teachers' practice:

Moreover, to make an assessment report, mentor teachers and college supervisors conduct classroom observation and follow up of student teachers based on the schedule that they received from practicum school or student teachers. According to the practicum guidelines (MoEYS, 2016), to assess the student teachers, college supervisors conduct class observation and follow up student teachers at least three times. This study

showed that a large percentage of student teachers from P-TEC did not have feedback on their work from the mentor teachers and college supervisors. Additionally, majority of the student teachers from P-TEC felt that the assessment from mentor teachers and college supervisors was short.

The interview data from student teachers revealed that some college supervisors did not come to observe their teaching sessions, thus they assessed according to mentor teachers' report. "The mentor teachers are a key assessor (nak vay damlay). Some of them did not come to observe us during the teaching, thus when mentor teachers gave the score they just accepted and follow their ideas" (ST5). Regarding the evaluation of the teaching practice, another student teacher said "College supervisors should come all the time that student teachers have teaching classes, and they should evaluate correctly without bias. Because some college supervisors give the score to student teachers without observing us" (ST7).

2. Challenges faced by college supervisors and mentor teachers

2.1 Insufficient training

This study showed that college supervisors and mentor teachers did not have the documents such as the practicum handbook or roles of stakeholders. For instance, "...Yes, I attended meetings at P-TEC, they taught us how to use evaluation form/format, when the teaching practicum starts and ends, they told us what we need to do with student teacher for that period but did not specify what we needed to do. It is fine for us because we have experience with teaching practicum for many years, but for teachers who never or have little experience with teaching practicum it is

hard for them” (MT2). “...It was not the meeting or orientation, because when P-TEC invited some mentor teachers to attend the meeting they did not come. It may be because our meeting did not provide transportation for them” (CBC).

2.2 Lack of cooperation

This study showed that there was little communication between P-TEC and practicum schools in accomplishing the major activities of the teaching practicum. In addition, the majority of the school mentors and college supervisors indicated that the partnership was weak. One Coordinator recalled that, “I feel that the placement schools do not see for practicum as their duties” (CBC).

“I agree we did not often communicate to the school principal (practicum committee at school level) according to the schedule, I contact and meet them when student teachers have a problem at practicum school” (CBC).

“...There was not cooperation because most college supervisors did not go to observe student teachers at practicum school. They went to meet mentor teachers when they gave the grade or score to student teachers because they rely on the mentor teacher notes or observations” (MT1). “I met college supervisors when they attended the opening ceremony (Beuk Mondul) and gave the score to student teachers at the closing ceremony (Bit Mondul)” (MT2).

2.3 A large number of student teachers and workload

During the teaching practicum, P-TEC assigned teacher trainers to supervise the student teachers as well as mentor teachers assigned by

practicum school. During the practicum, student teachers can merge theory and practice by facing a real classroom. However, most of the mentor teachers and college supervisors feel teaching practicum loads their work, as they must supervise and write the report to the practicum committee. “Honestly, I did not have enough time to check all student teachers’ lesson plan. I think too many student teachers were leading by me, 11 student teachers. Moreover, I had to write the report on each of them at the end of the teaching practice” (MT5).

It is clear that during teaching practicum mentor teachers supervised many student teachers of the same subjects. These findings are in line with Almomani’s 2016 study on the challenges of the practicum at college of education, which found that mentors and supervisors have responsibility over many students teaching during teaching practicum. Thus, their work increases while they already have the regular work at school.

“I have no experience leading the teaching practice, it makes it hard for me to guide them on the lesson plans...” (MT4). In addition, the mentor teachers who lead student teachers during teachers are volunteers. As in Greenberg, Pomerance and Walsh’s study (2011), the selection of mentor teachers is largely determined by practicum school without any considerations given to compatibility among student teachers, subject matter, and mentor teachers. Moreover, as in Uusimaki (2013), most of the mentor teachers feel that they are inadequately prepared in their roles to supervise student teachers. “... I supervised student teachers then I needed to teach at the school, sometimes the schedule overlaps, so I needed to

quit one. Moreover, at the end of the practicum I also wrote the report/reflection then submitted to the committee” (CS4).

2.4 Limited financial support

Mentor teachers, college supervisors, and college base coordinators reported the inadequate financial support for stakeholders involved in the practicum. College supervisors must go to the practicum site, but P-TEC does not refund the cost of transportation because it does not have a budget for that. Consequently, most of the stakeholders expressed their dissatisfaction with the costs they incur during the teaching practicum. The following quotes reflect this view: “...We spent a lot of time with student teachers during teaching practicum, but we did not receive any reimbursement for our work” (MT3).

In conclusion, it is important to note that most of the challenges faced by student teachers relate to mentor teachers/college supervisors are not necessarily linked to their performance in school. In fact, mentor teachers/college supervisors do not have enough time to supervise. Student teachers limited number of the classroom teaching (sometimes only one hour), difficulties in preparation of lesson plan, and learners’ behavior in the classroom.

The partnership among stakeholders (college supervisors, mentor teachers, student teachers, college, and the practicum school as well as POE) also lacks close communication. Some stakeholders perceived as insufficient the training in the practicum while the vast majority agreed that they were busy with their work. Mentor teachers, for example, were loaded with work as they supervised many student teachers in the same major

while teaching regular classes. Insufficient budget, too, is a constraint as there is inadequate funding to cover costs of transportation to/from schools and or extra hours for tasks connected to student teachers' practicum.

Discussion

Challenges faced by student teachers

Insufficient observation and feedback by college supervisors

The supervision needed by student teachers during the practice should come not only the supervisors but also from mentors. Student teachers expected that the supervisors have enough time to provide the feedback when they send the lesson plan to check before practice in the class and after class. The result also showed that even if supervisors were busy with another training they organized another meeting with student teachers to list down all problems encountered in the class and look for the solution. "My supervisor helped me more than my mentor teacher because the practicum placement is located inside P-TEC, so I always met her and told her about the problem and asked them to help me find a solution. The supervisor did not come to observe me all the time, but I could ask them and meet at P-TEC" (ST3).

Insufficient observation and feedback by mentor teachers

Mentor teachers play a critical role in providing professional guidance and support to student teachers during teaching practicum (Darling-Hammond, 2005). In theory, college supervisors and mentor teachers are expected to provide a term of reference to student teachers regarding professionalism, appearance, attendance, and conduct. They

provide appropriate information about students, give feedback, and help student teachers during teaching practicum. They are thus crucial in developing student teachers for their careers and providing feedback to improve their teaching. Mentor teachers, especially those who observe student teachers teaching sessions in the classroom, are in the key position that can influence the direction of the student teachers' careers.

There are few mentor teachers, including those who are busy, very active, and able to assist their student teachers during practicum. Most student teachers also stated that mentor teachers came to observe them according to their schedule. Seven out of ten student teachers stated that mentor teachers helped them during teaching practicum. With respect to support, interview data suggested that the most emphasized theme is the fact that mentor teachers care about student teachers' problems. Caring mentor teachers show a willingness to help students find solutions to the problems they face during teaching practicum. For example, some mentor teachers share their telephone numbers with student teachers, who can contact them anytime they have a question. The researcher found that some mentor teachers were very helpful during teaching practicum. “I observed student teachers in all the class/hours that they taught, and I also met with them before the class started - around 5 minutes- and sometimes I gave feedback to them after teaching if they made mistakes during teaching. Moreover, I always sit in the classroom with student teachers because I know they are new” (MT3).

Students' view on teachers

Lack of respect for student teachers' ability to offer students quality

instruction hampers their achievements. Learners showed no cooperation in classroom activities, were noisy and did not do their homework. This emerged from student teachers' accounts which stressed that, despite the in-depth teacher planning, they found that it was not simple to teach since the learners were not cooperative, did not do exercised/homework, and they were noisy were not effectively included in classroom activities. Language, with the use of local expressions, was a matter of disrespect "Student teachers come from the rural and remote area then they used their local word, so the students in a class laugh when student teachers speak" (MT7). According Alendag and Simsek (2017) classroom management is difficult for most student teachers because they are a new teacher. Similarly, Heeralal and Bayaga (2011: 102) found "a major concern for student teachers was learners' behavior in the classroom".

Limited number of classroom teaching during teaching practicum

Number of teachings of the practicum depends on school schedule. Student teachers discuss in group how to prepare the classes of teaching. Some student teachers taught only one time so he/her could not get enough experience. Most of the student teachers suggested that teaching practicum should have four to five of practice/teaching per student "... College supervisors should come to see us at least four to five times" (ST8). In fact, it was noticed that more hours in the practicum would be important for student teachers to gain more experience as it would help them improve teaching skills. Similarly, a study by Manzar-Abbas and Lu (2013) analyzing student training at 10 Chinese universities, showed that the duration of

teaching practicum was very short, and the timing was not a good to send the student teachers for the practicum. In contrast, some student teachers noted that “I think it is enough for me because in my subject there were many hours of teaching class than other placement” (ST1) and another one “...I taught six to seven hours the first subject (main subject) and six hours second subject (minor subject)” (ST2).

Preparation of lesson plan

Writing the lesson plane for each lesson is very difficult and time consuming for student teachers. In certain cases, the mentors’ assistance with lesson preparation was minimal while in other cases the mentor teachers and college supervisors provided ongoing assistance. As in Zanting et al., (2001) and Maphosa et al., (2007), student teachers found it difficult to develop their own initiative for lesson preparation and other teaching duties. In this study, sometimes mentor teachers did not have time to meet student teachers to check their lesson plans. “.... My mentor teachers did not check the lesson before I taught. They just sign on my lesson plan after class, which I have sent to my college supervisor to check one or two days before I teach” (ST10). This finding is consistent with Maphosa et al., (2007) who noted that student teachers felt that mentor teachers perceived them as ‘relief teachers’ to make their workload lighter. In addition, student teachers feel that mentor teachers are evading their teaching responsibility when they (student teachers) are requested to check a lesson plan before their (student teachers) teaching.

Assessment of student teachers in the practicum period

It is, therefore, not surprising that the students at the P-TEC report that they do not have many problems in terms of passing their courses during their first year since everyone always passes. Performance in Year 2 is, however, more important because it is closely linked with the posting process. In this respect, students with the highest scores get to choose the teaching post that they want and those with lower marks are left with the least desirable posts (often in remote districts with poor living conditions). At the end of Year 2, there is a final exam to assess the prospective lower secondary school teachers. Student teachers are required to pass an exam in each of the two subjects of their specialization, general culture, and pedagogy. The practicum score is also included at the end of the training course. Yet, the assessment process is sometimes marred by unethical practices in which instructors just give marks to their student teachers because they do not want the student teachers to be upset (Khlach Kaun Sis Arn Chit). In addition, student teachers also noted that the college supervisor focused on giving marks rather than teaching content.

Challenges faced by college supervisors and mentor teachers

Insufficient training

Before the teaching practicum starts, P-TEC or Municipal committee level provides orientation about the practicum regulation. Nevertheless, the orientation does not detail the stakeholders' role. They may also conduct a briefing or an orientation prior to the starting of the practicum training so that the stakeholders, especially student teachers, mentor teachers, and college supervisors who work together, can be briefed about the

organization, protocols, and other operational concerns. According to the report made by P-TEC about the orientation, the explanations focus on administration process, length of the practicum, and stakeholders in charge of the teaching practicum. Moreover, they used evaluation form and other forms during the teaching practicum process.

Lack of cooperation

Lack of cooperation between college supervisors and mentor teachers exists during teaching practicum. On the one hand, due to timetable constraints, mentor teachers are often not available to discuss the pedagogical needs of the student teachers with the college supervisors after class. The college supervisors, on the other hand, cannot meet mentor teachers because they are busy with other academic obligations. The words of one school coordinator also confirms this “...I agree we do not communicate much, because we are busy at school. We communicate when student teachers or mentor teachers have a problem during teaching practicum” (SBC1). This also generate lack of cooperation among coordinators. In fact, they contact each other when student teachers face issues at practicum schools, which means that cooperation and coordination were critical to successful outcomes of the practicum.

Many student teachers and workload

During the teaching practicum, P-TEC assigned teacher trainers to supervise the student teachers as well as mentor teachers chosen by practicum school. Most of the mentor teachers and college supervisors feel loads their work, as they must supervise and write the report to the practicum committee. “Honestly, I did not have enough time to check all

student teachers' lesson plan. I think too many student teachers were leading by me, 11 student teachers. Moreover, I had to write the report on each of them at the end of the teaching practice" (MT5).

Limited financial support

Stakeholders clearly have sense of discomfort with no-reimbursement practice during the teaching practicum period. In Walle's (2011) study too there was insufficient budget for the stakeholders in the practicum program.

"During teaching practicum, we went to the practicum school to observe student teachers using our own transportation, thus MoEYS should be allocated the budget for the practicum" CS2). Another college supervisor suggested that "MoEYS should provide the transportation for teachers when they go to observe student teachers during teaching practicum" (CS4). Adequate funding for stakeholders during teaching practicum would be appropriate.

Conclusion

The teaching practicum guidelines at P-TEC give clear direction to the key players as they detail what stakeholders must do in their role and they outline responsibilities during the stage of the practice and the evaluation. The findings of the study showed that there were several challenges in implementation the practicum. The student teachers did not get adequate support and guidance from their college supervisors and some mentor teachers. Additionally, some student teachers are not respected by learners during their teaching. Most participants, also, faced other challenges

such as limited number of practices, difficulty in the preparation of the lesson plan, and assessment practices that affect future posting. Finally, it was found out that other challenges include lack of coordination and cooperation among key players, especially between Teacher Education College and practicum schools, insufficient training for stakeholders, particularly mentor teachers and college supervisors, to undertake their essential roles, large number of student teachers to be supervised by mentor teachers and college supervisors.

Recommendation

The study has identified weak areas in the practicum that can affect the performance of future teachers. Therefore, it offers recommendations in line with the findings and within the theoretical framework of the literature. Before the teaching practicum courses, P-TEC should provide training or workshops to stakeholders regarding the whole process, especially on the roles and responsibilities of each actor involved. MoEYS should reconsidered the number of classroom teaching of student teachers during the teaching practicum.

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