

ASSESSMENT OF CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENT-TEACHERS IN GHANAIAN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION DURING TEACHING PRACTICE PERIOD

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Abstract: The study sought to assess the challenges faced by Ghanaian colleges of education (GCoE) student-teachers during teaching practice period in the practicing Basic schools. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The sample size was 160 third (final) year student-teachers made up of 85 male and 75 female student-teachers. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. A 27 item questionnaire was the main instrument used for study. Data from the questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics mainly frequency and simple percentages. It was revealed that student-teachers experience quite a number of classroom management challenges; practicing school environmental challenges; instructional challenges as well as supervisory and mentorship challenges during teaching practice. It was found out that all the 160 student-teachers represented 100% indicated that managing and controlling large size classes and poor pupils' sitting arrangement in overcrowded classroom were the most serious classroom management challenges. It was observed that lack of accommodation for the student-teachers; lack of science laboratory and poorly equipped ICT laboratory and libraries were the major practicing school environmental challenges. It was revealed that non-availability of subject matter textbooks for pupils and inability of student-teachers to master the subject matter different from their area of speciality were the instructional challenges. Also, lack of cordial relationship between the supervisor and the student-teachers during supervision and frequent assessment of students-teacher's progress and attitudes by the mentors were the supervisory and mentorship challenges faced by student-teachers. Finally, more than one-third (1/3) of respondents indicated that female student-teachers encounter sexual harassment challenge by some school-based mentors and supervisors during teaching practice so as to give them good results. It was recommended that the government of Ghana should provide well-equipped science and ICT laboratories as well as libraries and current subject matter textbooks to all Ghanaian Basic schools so as to facilitate the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Assessment, challenges, faced, colleges, Ghanaian, student-teachers, teaching, practice.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher education is an important aspect of the Ghanaian educational system. The teacher education system in Ghana aims in the preparation of teachers who are responsible for transforming the educational theories, principles and policies into practice in Ghanaian Basic (primary and JHS) and senior high schools.

According to Okobia, Augustine and Osagie (2013), the main thrust of the teacher education programme globally is to produce teachers who can perform adequately in the world of work and meet the present day challenges in the classroom settings or situations.

In order to achieve this laudable aim, the teacher education programme must adequately exposed student-teachers (would-be teachers) to both the academic (theoretical) and practical aspects of the teaching and learning situations.

In an explanatory study, Ojoawo (1996) stated categorical that the theoretical dimension of teacher education programme takes care of the acquisition of theoretical knowledge in the classroom whiles the practical dimension constitutes all forms of pre-service contact with the act of teaching in classrooms.

Teaching, according to Okonkwo and Chikwelu (2012), is an invaluable asset to today's contemporary society; and that teaching is a process through which a teacher applies his/her knowledge of the learners, subject matter and methodology to help an individual learn better. On their parts, Agusiobo and Udegbe (2002) indicated that teaching is the use of educational knowledge, methods and space to educate whoever desires to be educated and it involves direct contact between the professional teacher and the learner.

Teaching as a profession like any other established profession with statutory guidelines has prescribed services it renders to any human society. Thus, it is absolutely imperative for many individuals who want to become a future teacher to acquire skills, demands and challenges in the teaching profession. The acquisition of these characteristics (skills, demands and challenges) in the teacher education programme is achieved purposively by exposing student-teachers to intensive teaching practice whiles in the college.

To attest to this fact, Onyebukwa-Nwanoro (2017) stated that a sound professional preparation is necessary for successful teaching profession and teaching practice constitutes an important and indispensable component of the process involved in the adequate preparation of professional teachers.

Teaching practice is a vital aspect of the teacher preparatory programme in the Colleges of Education and in Faculties of Education in Ghanaian Universities. Teaching practice, according to Adesina, Daramola and Talabi (1989) is a teacher education

programme or activity which involves the student-teacher putting into practice his/her acquired theory of teaching under the genuine experience of the normal classroom situation.

According to Abongdia, Adu and Foncha (2015), teaching practice is known to expose student-teachers to the actual practice of teaching. Moreover, Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009) also indicated that it is during teaching practice period that student-teachers are given the opportunity to try the art of teaching before actually getting into the real world of the teaching profession.

On his part, Perry (2004) posited that teaching practice creates a mixture of anticipation, anxiety, excitement and apprehension in the student-teachers as they commence their teaching practice. Thus, teaching practice provides vast opportunities and rich experience for student-teachers to express their personal educational philosophies, theories and understandings into the classroom situation.

On their parts, Okonkwo and Chikwelu (2012) opined that teaching practice provides the laboratory where a student-teacher practicalises what he or she had learnt concerning effective teaching. This implies that teaching practice creates an opportunity for student-teachers to experiment and test their knowledge and skills in the teaching profession with understanding of their personal educational philosophies and theories.

In the Ghanaian colleges of education (GCoE), teaching practice forms an integral part of teacher education programme which occupies a phase of its own; during which student-teachers are sent out by the colleges to the nearby practicing Basic (primary and JHS) schools for the purpose of putting into practice the teaching skills he or she has learnt in college under the supervision of an experienced teacher (mentor).

A study conducted by (Abongdia, Adu & Foncha, 2015) stated categorically that it is needful to voice out clearly that teaching practice is not completely a bed of roses for the student-teachers because these students experience numerous challenges, which in a way can hamper their ability to derive maximum benefit from the teaching practice exercise in the teacher education programme.

In recent years, there have been a lot of concerns raised by the general public with regards to the challenges faced by GCoE student-teachers during teaching practice period. Since GCoE student-teachers appear to experience challenges which in a way can hamper their ability to derive maximum benefit from the teaching practice exercise, it is imperative to assess these challenges confronting these student-teachers.

It is against this background that this study was conducted to assess the numerous challenges faced by GCoE student-teachers during teaching practicing period.

Statement of the Problem

Onyebukwa-Nwanoro (2017) stated that teaching practice is a period when student-teachers are given the opportunity to try the art of teaching before actually getting into the real world of teaching profession.

In a study, Marais and Meier (2004) posited that teaching practice is a challenging but important part of colleges of education academic calendar, especially in most developing countries.

Ghana as a developing country is not an exception and that student-teachers encounter challenges during teaching practice period. In Ghana, the final (third) year student-teachers in the colleges of education are expected to undergo 12 months teaching practice in the practicing Basic schools within the catchment areas of the colleges as part of their professional development towards the award of Diploma in Basic Education Certificate. A student-teacher forfeits this certificate if he/she fails to do or pass the teaching practice.

Out of these twelve (12) months, student-teachers are expected to do ten (10) months intensive teaching practice in the practicing Basic (primary and JHS) schools. At the end of the tenth (10th) month, student-teachers are expected back to their respective colleges to prepare and write their final examination within the eleventh and twelfth (11th to 12th month).

In spite of the relevance of the teaching practice period as part of teacher preparatory programme in GCoE; student-teachers appear to face a lot of challenges during the teaching practice period in the practicing schools. This is because these student-teachers are still practicing and therefore, they may be confronted by peculiar challenges in the unfamiliar working environment at the practicing Basic schools.

On their parts, Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009) pointed out that these myriad of challenges can hamper or discourage student-teachers to take up teaching tasks in the practicing schools as part of their professional development in the colleges of education.

Studies by (SarŌçobana, 2010; Koross, 2016) posited that if these challenges are not properly assessed and addressed, they may impact negatively on student-teachers' professional development which in the long run could affect negatively their perception of the teaching profession.

Since GCoE student-teachers appear to encounter a lot of challenges that might hamper their optimum realization of their professional developments and also may have negative perception about the teaching profession; thus, it is necessary to adopt strategy to assess these challenges faced by the would-be teachers.

It is in the light of this that this study was undertaken to assess the challenges faced by the GCoE student-teachers during teaching practice period at the practicing Basic schools.

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to assess challenges faced by student-teachers from two (2) GCoE in the Central and Ashanti Regions of Ghana during teaching practice period at the practicing schools. Specifically, the study seeks:

- 1) To identify the classroom management challenges faced by student-teachers during teaching practice period.
- 2) To assess the practicing school environmental challenges faced by student-teachers during teaching practice period.
- 3) To find out instructional challenges faced by student-teachers during teaching practice period.
- 4) To evaluate supervisory and mentorship challenges faced by student-teachers during teaching practice period.

Research Questions

The following four (4) investigative questions directed research activity in the study:

- 1) What are the classroom management challenges faced by student-teachers during teacher practice period?
- 2) What are the practicing school environmental challenges faced by student-teachers during teaching practice period?
- 3) What are the instruction challenges faced by student-teachers during teaching practice period?
- 4) What are the supervisory and mentorship challenges faced by student-teachers during teaching practice period?

Significance of the Study

By emphasising on the assessment of challenges faced by student-teachers during teaching practice, it is hoped that this study would identify these challenges and make them bare to the stakeholders in the teacher education programme in the colleges of education in Ghana. It is hoped that the outcome of this study would enable stakeholders in teacher education programme in Ghana to profess unique solutions to these challenges which may lead to improvement in the teaching practice programme in the GCoE. This study would also serve as a source of reference for researchers who wish to carry out research into similar issues.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Several studies (Okonkwo & Chikwelu, 2012; Okobia, Augustine & Osagie, 2013; Abongdia, Adu & Foncha, 2015) have been conducted elsewhere on the challenges faced by student-teachers during teaching practice in the practicing schools.

In a study, Abongdia, Adu and Foncha (2015) identified eight (8) challenges that the student-teachers face and some of these include un-cooperative attitudes of regular teachers; work overloads on student-teachers; excessive exercise marking due to large classes and difficulty in controlling in large classes.

In a similar study, Okonkwo and Chikwelu (2012) identified four (4) major challenges namely classroom management challenges; environmental challenges; curriculum development and instruction challenges as well as supervisory challenges faced by student-teachers.

On the classroom management challenges, the study identified poor arrangement of the sitting position of pupils/students; controlling noise making and set inducing students. Also, the environmental challenges identified by their study include lack of accommodation for the student-teacher; overcrowded classrooms; lack of tables for the student-teachers; poorly equipped laboratories and libraries.

The curriculum development and instruction challenges faced by student-teachers include non-availability of relevant textbooks; giving written exercises; nervousness and inability of student-teachers to improvise instructional materials; whereas the supervisory challenges include lack of cordial relationship between the supervisor and the student- teachers and lack of feedback from supervisors on student-teachers' performance to enable them make corrections.

A study by (Okobia, Augustine & Osagie, 2013) identified the following as some of the challenges faced by student-teachers which include limited time for the teaching practice; lack of accommodation during the teaching practice; no allowances for student-teachers during teaching practice; lack of respect for student-teachers by school pupils and also indication that teaching practice period was stressful by student-teachers.

In another study, Koross (2016) also mentioned that student-teachers faced geographical; administrative; professional; instructional; supervision; social and financial challenges. On geographical challenges, majority of the student-teachers indicated that they walk for a long distance to the school and the roads are impassable and also they face accommodation problems in the schools they were posted to. The challenges on supervision were that supervision was not done regularly and also it was noted that the student-teachers stated that the supervisors were harsh and not friendly.

Studies done in Zambia and South Africa by (Kasanda 1995, Kiggundu & Nayimuli 2009; Foncha, Abongdia & Adu, 2017) identified inadequate preparation of the student-teachers; geographical distance; low and uneven levels of teacher expertise; lack of discipline among learners and lack of accommodation facilities as some of the challenges encountered by the student-teachers during teaching practice.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was the design used for the study. The rationale for using this design was to gather information from a large sample of respondents on the challenges faced by student-teachers during the teaching practice period at the practicing schools.

According to Cozby (2001), descriptive survey design employs questionnaire to ask people to provide information about themselves, facts such as peoples' attitudes, perceptions and beliefs, demographics like age, gender, etc and other facts about the past or intended future behaviours.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The accessible population for the study was the entire final (third) year student-teachers of 2017/2018 academic year session from two (2) GCoE in the Central and Ashanti Regions of Ghana. However, the sample size was 160 student-teachers made up of 85 male student-teachers and 75 female student-teachers.

A purposive sampling technique of the non-probability sampling procedure was used to select the 160 student-teachers for the study, because of their in-depth knowledge on the challenges faced during teaching practice at the practising Basic (primary and junior high) schools.

Research Instrument

A well-structured questionnaire was developed by the researchers and used as the research instrument to collect data from the respondents. The 27 question items questionnaire called Challenges Faced by Student-Teachers (CFST) has two (2) main sections (Section A & B).

Section A contains 2 items on the respondent's college's name and its regional location. The Section B has been categorised into 4 parts based on the 4 research questions that guided the study. Part I contains 8 (1-8) items on classroom management challenges; Part II contains 7 (9-15) questions on the practicing school environmental challenges; Part III contains 7 (16-22) questions on instructional challenges and Part IV, the final part contains 5 (23 - 27) items on supervisory and mentorship challenges faced by the student-teachers during teaching practice period.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was done in three (3) weeks. In all, two hundred and fifty (250) questionnaires (CFST) were given out to third (final) year student-teachers who had their teaching practice during 2017/18 academic year session. The selected student-teachers were given about two (2) weeks to fill them out. In all one hundred and sixty (160) questionnaires were retrieved at the end of the third week. This represented about a return rate of 64% of the population who were given the CFST (questionnaire).

Data Analysis Method

The study employed quantitative method of data analysis. The data collected were organized and edited to ensure consistency. The data analysis was done using descriptive statistics mainly frequency and simple percentages. Statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) version 17.0 for window was used for data analysis and Microsoft excel program was used to present the data into tables.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the Results

This aspect of the study presents the analyses and discussion of the results in relation to the 4 research questions posed by the study. The analysis was done to cover 2 thematic areas:- socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (respondent's college name & its regional location) and the challenges faced by the student-teachers.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The respondents' socio-demographic characteristics data on the name of the college and its regional location were sought and are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Number of Student-Teachers from the 2 Selected Colleges of Education

No.	Name of college	Region of location	Number of Student-Teachers
1.	College A	Central	82
2.	College B	Ashanti	78
TOTAL			160

Source (Field work, 2018)

Data in Table 1 shows that, 160 respondents were selected from the two (2) colleges of education for the study. The total number of student-teachers from College A situated in the Central Region was 82 whereas that of College B located in the Ashanti Region was 78. This means that the majority of the views and opinions expressed in this study were of the student-teachers from the Central Region.

Presentation of Results by Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the classroom management challenges faced by student-teachers during teacher practice period?

In answering research question 1, the GCoE student-teachers' responses to 8 question items (1-8) in the questionnaire (CFST) were analysed quantitatively using frequency and percentage and are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Classroom Management Challenges Faced By Student-Teachers

No	Classroom management challenges.	Yes		No		Total	%
		F	%	F	%		
1.	Overcrowded class makes controlling of pupil's movement in and out of the class difficult.	145	90.6	15	9.4	160	100
2.	Poor sitting arrangement of pupils in class makes class management very tedious.	115	71.9	45	28.1	160	100
3.	Pupils disrespect student-teachers and do not obey rules regulations in class and during teaching.	150	93.8	10	6.2	160	100
4.	Controlling noise making is very cumbersome.	70	43.8	90	56.2	160	100
5.	Class control is very difficult for the student-teachers.	156	97.5	4	2.5	160	100
6.	It is very difficult to manage large size classes.	160	100	0	0.0	160	100
7.	Student-teachers cannot exert authority towards indiscipline behaviour of pupils in class.	35	21.9	125	78.1	160	100
8.	I can punish disrespectful pupils in school without being confronted by the regular teachers and head teacher.	157	98.1	3	1.9	160	100

Source (Field work, 2018)

Responses in Table 2 show clear that, student-teachers encounter a lot of classroom management challenges during teaching practice period. For example, all the 160 student-teachers representing 100% agreed that it was very difficult to manage large size classes.

On the issue of whether class control was very difficult for the student-teachers; as many as 156 respondents representing 97.5% agreed to the statement with only 4 of them representing 2.5% disagreed. Again, majority of the students (150 out of 160) representing 93.8% agreed that pupils disrespect student-teachers and they did not obey rules regulations in class and during teaching.

When asked if poor sitting arrangement of pupils in class makes class management very tedious; as many as 115 student-teachers representing 71.9% responded "Yes" with 45 student-teachers representing 28.1% responded "No" to the same statement.

On the issue of whether overcrowded class makes controlling of pupil's movement in and out of the class difficult; as many as 145 students representing 90.6% indicated "Yes" while only 15 students representing 9.4% indicated "No" to the same statement.

Research Question 2: What are the practicing school environmental challenges faced by student- teachers during teaching practice period?

In answering research question 2, the GCoE student-teachers' responses to 7 question items (9-15) in the CFST were analysed quantitatively using frequency and percentage and are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Practicing School Environmental Challenges Faced By Student-Teachers

No	Practicing school environmental challenges	Yes		No		Total	%
		F	%	F	%		
9.	Non co-operative and disrespectful attitudes of the regular teachers towards student-teachers.	36	22.5	124	77.5	160	100
10.	Poorly equipped ICT laboratory and libraries.	156	97.5	4	2.5	160	100
11.	Inability of student teachers to conform to rules and regulations of the practicing school.	3	1.9	157	98.1	160	100
12.	Lack of science laboratory.	160	100	0	0.0	160	100
13.	Lack of tables and chairs for the student-teachers to sit and prepare lesson notes and also for marking exercises.	114	71.3	46	28.7	160	100
14.	Lack of accommodation for the student-teachers by the practicing schools.	160	100	0	0.0	160	100
15.	Regular teachers add their teaching work load to student-teachers.	152	95.0	8	5.0	160	100

Source (Field work, 2018)

Data in Table 3 shows that, student-teachers face a lot of practicing school environmental challenges during teaching practice period at the practicing Basic schools.

For example, all the 160 respondents representing 100% agreed that lack of science laboratory and lack of accommodation for the student-teachers by the practicing schools were the major practicing school environmental challenges faced by student-teachers during teaching practice period.

Again, majority of the respondents (156 out of 160) representing 97.5% agreed that poorly equipped ICT laboratory and libraries at the practicing schools was school environmental challenge whereas only 4 representing 2.5% disagreed to the same statement.

Also, 152 of the respondents representing 95.0% agreed that regular teachers usually add their teaching work load to them while only 8 respondents 5.0% disagreed to the statement.

On the issue of whether there was lack of tables and chairs for the student-teachers to sit, prepare lesson notes and for marking exercises; as many as 114 student-teachers representing 71.3% agreed while only 46 student-teachers representing 28.7% disagreed to the statement.

Research Question 3: What are the instructional challenges faced by student teachers during teaching practice period?

In answering research question 3, GCoE student-teachers' responses to 7 question items (16-22) in the CFST were analysed quantitatively using frequency and percentage and are presented in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Instructional Challenges Faced By Student-Teachers

No	Practicing school environmental challenges	Yes		No		Total	%
		F	%	F	%		
16.	Giving and marking pupils' class exercises and assignments are very difficult due to large class.	156	97.5	4	2.5	160	100
17.	Inability of the student-teacher to adopt eclectic approach to cater for the diverse needs of the pupils in class.	62	22.5	98	61.3	160	100
18.	Inability of student-teachers to master the subject matter different from his/her area of study.	104	65.0	56	35.0	160	100
19.	Non availability of relevant subject matter textbooks for the pupils in class.	133	83.1	27	16.9	160	100
20.	Inability of the student-teachers to improvise instructional materials for teaching and learning process.	0	0.0	160	100.0	160	100
21.	Teaching pupils, writing lesson notes, preparing for final exams and writing project work at same time make teaching practice very stressful for student-teachers.	158	98.7	2	1.3	160	100
22.	Ineligible and poor hand writing by the student-teachers on the chalkboard/maker board.	95	59.4	65	40.6	160	100

Source (Field work, 2018)

Data in Table 4 shows that, student-teachers are grapple with a lot of instructional challenges during teaching practice period at the practicing schools.

When asked if teaching pupils, writing lesson notes, preparing for final exams and writing project work at same time make teaching practice very stressful for student-teachers; as many as 158 student-teachers representing 98.7% agreed while only 2 student-teachers representing 1.3% disagreed to the statement.

On the issue of whether there was non-availability of relevant subject matter textbooks for the pupils in class; as many as 133 student-teachers representing 83.1% responded "Yes" while 27 student-teachers representing 16.9% responded "No" to the same item.

Again, 156 of the respondents representing 97.5% agreed that marking pupils' class exercises and assignments are very difficult due to large class sizes; whereas only 4 of them representing 2.5% disagreed.

When asked if inability of student-teachers to master the subject matter different from his/her area of study; as many as 104 respondents representing 65.0% agreed while 56 respondents representing 35.0% disagreed to same statement.

Research Question 4: What are the supervisory and mentorship challenges faced by student- teachers during teaching practice period?

In answering research question 3, the student-teachers' responses to 5 question items (23-27) in the CFST were analysed quantitatively using frequency and percentage and are presented in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Supervisory and mentorship challenges faced by student-teachers

No	Supervisory and mentorship challenges.	Yes		No		Total	%
		F	%	F	%		
23.	Lack of cordial relationship between the supervisor and the student-teachers during supervision.	140	87.5	20	12.5	160	100
24.	Supervisors or tutors do not respect student-teachers.	138	86.3	22	13.8	160	100
25.	Lack of feedback from supervisors on student-teachers' performance to enable them make corrections.	17	10.6	143	89.4	160	100
26.	School based mentors observe students-teacher's progress, behaviour and attitude at school.	157	98.1	3	1.9	160	100
27.	School based mentors and supervisors sometimes demand sex from the female student-teachers as well as monetary or material items in order to give good report on them.	55	34.4	105	65.6	160	100

Source (Field work, 2018)

Data in Table 5 indicate that, student-teachers experience quite a number of supervisory and mentorship challenges during teaching practice period.

When asked whether there was lack of cordial relationship between the supervisor and the student-teachers during supervision; majority (140 out of 160) of the respondents representing 87.5% agreed while only 20 of them representing 12.5% disagreed to the same item.

Also, as many as 138 student-teachers representing 86.3% agreed that supervisors (tutors) did not respect student-teachers while only 22 of them representing 13.8% disagreed to the same item.

Again, when asked if school based mentors and supervisors demand sex and material items from students-teachers in order to give good reports on them to the colleges; quite a handful (55 out of 160) of the respondents representing 34.4% agreed while 105 of them representing 65.6% disagreed.

Discussion of the Results

The results of this study showed that GCoE student-teachers who took part in the study experience quite a number of classroom management challenges; practicing school environmental challenges; instructional challenges as well as supervisory and mentorship challenges. This finding is similar to the results of Okonkwo and Chikwelu (2012) that student-teachers encounter classroom management challenges; environmental challenges; curriculum development and instruction challenges as well as supervisory challenges during teaching practice.

On the classroom management challenges, all the 160 student-teachers representing 100% agreed that it was very difficult to manage large size classes. Again, 156 respondents representing 97.5% agreed that class control was very difficult for the student-teachers with only 4 of them representing 2.5% disagreed. Moreover, majority of the respondents agreed that regular teachers usually add their teaching work load to them; school pupils disrespect student-teachers and also pupils did not obey rules regulations in class. It was also observed that poor sitting arrangement of pupils in class made class management very tedious. They also indicated that overcrowded class made controlling of pupil's movement in and out of the class very cumbersome. This finding is in agreement with the result of (e.g. Okobia, Augustine & Osagie, 2013; Abongdia, Adu & Foncha, 2015) that poor arrangement of pupils' sitting positions; pupils disrespect of student-teachers and controlling noise making were some of the challenges faced by student-teachers.

With regards to the practicing school environmental challenges, it was revealed that all the 160 student-teachers representing 100% agreed that lack of science laboratory and also lack of accommodation for the student-teachers were the most serious practicing school environmental challenges. Other practicing school environmental challenges identified in the study include poorly equipped ICT laboratory and libraries and lack of tables and chairs for the student-teachers. This finding is in support of (e.g. Kasanda 1995; Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009; Koross, 2016) that lack of accommodation for student-teachers and non-availability of tables and chairs for the student-teachers during teaching practice were the major challenges.

The study also revealed that almost all the student-teachers indicated that teaching school pupils, writing lesson notes, preparing for final exams and doing project work at same time made teaching practice very stressful and that was the major instructional challenge. Other instructional challenges identified include non-availability of relevant subject matter textbooks for pupils; difficulty in giving and marking pupils' exercises/assignments due to large class size and inability of student-teachers to master the subject matter different from their area of speciality. This finding is in consonance with that of (e.g. Okobia, Augustine & Osagie, 2013; Abongdia, Adu & Foncha, 2015) that teaching practice period was very stressful by student-teachers and disrespect for student-teachers as the major instructional challenge.

On the supervisory and mentorship challenges, it was observed that majority of the respondents agreed there was lack of cordial relationship between the supervisors and student-teachers during supervision. Other supervisory and mentorship challenges include supervisors disrespect for student-teachers and school-based mentors frequent assessment of students-teacher's progress, behaviour and attitudes. This finding is in agreement with the results of (e.g. Okonkwo & Chikwelu, 2012; Okobia, Augustine & Osagie, 2013) that lack of cordial relationship between supervisors and student-teachers was the major supervisory challenge.

Lastly, one significant finding of the study was that more than one-third (55 out of 160) of student-teachers representing 34.4% agreed that school based mentors and supervisors sometimes demand sex from female student-teachers and also demand monetary and other material items from the students-teachers in order to give good reports on them to the colleges and also give them good scores.

Finally, another significant finding of the study was that most regular (permanent) teachers usually neglect their teaching responsibilities by adding their teaching work load graciously to the student-teachers during teaching practice period at the practicing schools.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that student-teachers from the two (2) GCoE who participated in the study face a lot of challenges with regards to classroom management; practicing school environmental; instructional as well as supervisory and mentorship challenges during teaching practice. These myriad of challenges may have negative tendencies on the student-teachers' professional development towards the acquisition of competent teaching skills in the classroom settings. These negative tendencies can hamper student-teachers' performance towards the award of Diploma in Basic Education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) The government of Ghana should provide well-equipped ICT and science laboratories as well libraries and relevant textbooks to all Basic schools so as to facilitate teaching and learning process.
- 2) Stakeholders in GCoE should organise adequate seminars and workshops for supervisors, mentors and student-teachers on their expected roles during teaching practice and also to foster cordial relationship among these stakeholders in teaching practice.
- 3) Head teachers, mentors and the regular teachers should guide, counsel and encourage Basic school pupils at the practicing schools to be disciplined and also show respect for the student-teachers.
- 4) Communities where practicing schools are located should provide decent accommodation facilities for the student-teachers to lay their heads; but if this is not possible it should be monetized for them to rent some of the accommodation so as to reduce financial burden on them.
- 5) Student-teachers especially the females should be encouraged to report any sexual misconduct and any monetary or material demands by the mentors and supervisors to their colleges' authorities.

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