

PROBLEMS FACING TEACHER EDUCATION IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF TEACHING PRACTICE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.

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ABSTRACT Education is widely considered as the key to development. For increased rate of development, teachers, who are facilitators of learning, should be recipients of high quality professional training. However though, the education of teachers has been riddled with innumerable problems; irrelevant and utopian curricula, reluctance in incorporating new knowledge and technology, and poor handling of teaching practice. This study endeavoured to find out the challenges student teachers faced during teaching practice. To this end, it aimed at investigating secondary school's syllabus-related problems; identifying the classroom related problems experienced by student teachers in the teaching-learning situation, finding out any assessment-related problems that student teachers encountered, determining the adequacy of the REd. (Arts) program in equipping potential teachers with relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes and finally suggesting ways in which problems in teaching practice could be overcome. The research questions were formulated in line with the above objectives. The literature reviewed delved into the importance of training teachers, the content and quality of teacher education curriculum; the problems in teacher education and finally how these problems were manifested in teaching practice. The incisive review has helped ground the study and has been utilised to ascertain the findings of the study. The research design employed was ex-post facto. The sample of student teachers from CEES was arrived at through multi-stage stratified sampling while teaching practice assessors were purposively sampled. Two questionnaires were used to collect data- and their validity was established as adequate. The average questionnaires return rate was 76.9%. Data from the questionnaires was analysed and interpreted using frequencies, percentages and descriptive statistics. In answering the research questions, it was established that the subject matter knowledge gained in college was way above the requirements of secondary schools. Therefore, some student teachers had difficulties in utilising this knowledge to bring about learning. Further, the college curriculum did not introduce student teachers to the secondary school syllabus before hand and this presented problems when planning for what to teach. The professional courses were deemed as very important but more of these were needed, like more vigorous microteaching, reinstatement of the educational evaluation and measurement unit in the curriculum and more instruction in how and when to use teaching aids. The course units learnt prior to teaching practice were to equip student teachers with knowledge and skills that would enable them perform various teaching-learning tasks. Most students performed these tasks with aplomb. Two tasks however: ensuring satisfactory discipline among learners and maintaining learners' interest and motivation, presented some difficulties to quite a number of student teachers. The student teachers experienced some difficulties in handling the secondary school curriculum. Some were not aware of its contents and therefore they were unsure on how to scheme or plan for it. Only few had difficulties in understanding the syllabus content thus teaching or supervising in a manner was as one factor by many as per the DYS; opinion. Much criticism was leveled against the way supervision was conducted. Student teachers complained of distracted and hyperactive learners during assessment. Some assessors harassed and intimidated the student teachers while others gave conflicting suggestions and recommendations. Supervision generally began when the school term was far gone and this necessitated organising lessons at the behest of the supervisor- an inconvenience that impacted negatively on the teaching-learning process. Other problems that students encountered include lack of co-operation from regular teachers and school administrations, overworking the student teacher by allocating him many lessons and lack of teaching-learning resources. Solutions to the problems identified were incorporating secondary school curriculum into the college one, beginning supervision early in the term, lecturers to hold demonstration lessons

for students and college to forge a close relationship with schools. Finally a summary of data analysis is provided. In the last chapter is the summary of the study and among the conclusions made; the training of teachers is said to be imperative while lack of partnership between schools and .~ training colleges need urgent rethinking and action. The study recommends that regular I teachers be involved in assessment and subject areas be assessed by subject specialists. Areas for further research have been suggested in order to generate more information on how to raise the quality of teaching practice and that of teacher education.