

The Realities of Teaching Practice for Nigerian Education Undergraduates: Emerging Challenges and New Directions

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Publication Date: 2026/05/16

Abstract: Teaching practice is a vital part of training future teachers in Nigeria, giving student-teachers real classroom experience to connect theory with practice. However, many student-teachers face significant challenges during this practicum. Problems like a lack of proper supervision, poor communication between universities and schools, financial pressures, overcrowded classrooms, and short teaching practice periods often make it hard for students to fully benefit from this important training. This paper looks closely at these challenges and explores how they affect the development of teaching skills. It also suggests practical ways to improve the experience. The paper further reviewed the prospects and new directions for teaching practice in Nigeria, therefore recommends among others that there should be better planning and placement of student-teachers, increased financial support, more training and monitoring of supervisors, stronger partnerships between universities and schools, and encouraging student reflection and peer support. The use of digital tools for supervision and feedback was also discussed as a helpful innovation. Finally, the paper emphasizes the need to give students more time for their teaching practice to allow deeper engagement. By addressing these issues thoughtfully, Nigerian universities can make teaching practice more effective, helping to prepare skilled and confident teachers who will improve education across the country.

Keywords: *Teaching Practice, Nigerian Universities, Education Students, Challenges, Prospects.*

How to Cite: Nweze, Isaiah Ifeanyi; Fred-Ibe, God's Favour; Ugwute, Charles Ogbonna; Nwovu, Chukwuka Abraham; Chukwu, Florence Amarachukwu (2026) The Realities of Teaching Practice for Nigerian Education Undergraduates: Emerging Challenges and New Directions. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 11(5), 328-336. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26may430>

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a generally accepted indispensable tool for personal and societal development. It is a process through which individual's knowledge, skills, behaviour, and values are improved to become useful and contribute meaningfully to themselves and the nation at large. Education encourages economic growth, reduces poverty, fosters peace, promotes gender equality, and encourages sense of belonging (UNESCO, 2018). It provides people with the opportunity to

learn new things to enable them to make better choices and be part of decision makers in their community and country. In Nigeria, it is a general conception that education plays a remarkable role in making the country better, hence the need to get school functioning properly to help individual secure a responsible future (Federal Ministry of Education, 2020).

One of the relevant ways through which student-teachers are prepared to contribute to knowledge is engaging in teaching practice. It is a supervised period where student-

teachers are placed in real classroom scenarios to practice the theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom setting. Teaching practice is an important component of teacher education programmes across the globe. It is also known as the practicum or internship which serves as a connection between the theoretical knowledge gained by student-teachers while studying in the university and the actual-skills they require to contribute meaningfully to classroom settings (Elayah, 2018). Teaching practice is a compulsory teacher-training exercise that is carried out by education undergraduate students in Nigeria universities. This exercise normally take place within the penultimate or at the final year of a student's academic programme. During teaching practice program, student-teachers are posted to either primary or secondary schools, where they spend approximately three months or more according to the program requirement in their institutions. This exercise exposes student-teachers to environment where they can put into practice what they have learned in their education courses, thereby enabling them to become familiar with the schools' daily routines, culture, and other expectations of schools. As potential professional teachers, teaching practice exercise provides the opportunity to gain the proper skills to shaping their professional identity as future educators (Abieyuwa, 2021). It is a time for undergoing hands-on learning, reflection, and personal improvement.

However, even though the importance of teaching practice cannot be overemphasised, the actual implementation in Nigeria faces series of challenges among which are: inadequate funding, poor or irregular supervision by the assigned supervisors, lack of teaching materials, and improper feedback systems (Yusuf et al., 2022). Student-teachers fund their transport, teaching materials, and accommodation, which affects their performance in the school they are posted. These challenges if not properly addressed can greatly reduce the effectiveness of the teaching practice experience and may pose a negative impact on the entire quality of teacher education in Nigeria. There is need to seek solution to these challenges since this practice is targeted at preparing competent and confident teachers who will take over the education system of the country.

Moreover, various initiatives have been established to enhance teaching practice. In 2024, the European Union and UNESCO launched a €45.4 million "Expand, Integrate and Strengthen Systems" (EISS) programme to improve teacher training in Nigeria (UNESCO, 2018). Digital learning platforms supported by UNESCO are also helping both new and current teachers strengthen their ICT skills and gain access to up-to-date teaching materials. Therefore, this paper reveals the challenges and opportunities associated with teaching practice for Nigeria university students, while suggesting practical improvement measures.

II. HISTORY OF TEACHING PRACTICE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Teacher training program in Nigeria was introduced during the colonial era by Christian missionaries. The first education system was in form of apprenticeship model

which involves pupil-teachers and catechists, trained within mission schools with two-year courses which leads to certified qualifications, focusing on theology, local language, and fundamental methods of teaching (Ogunyinka et al., 2015). Yaba Higher College was established in 1932 which was formally opened in 1934 to train secondary science teachers. This was the first formal post-secondary teaching programme which was later incorporated by the University of Ibadan in 1948 (Yaba Higher College, 2025).

In 1960s, there was a significant change as the University of Nigeria, Nsukka introduced B.Ed. programmes integrating subject content with pedagogical theory, which brought a shift from the initial model of obtaining a degree and a different diploma. This trend was followed suit by the University of Ibadan, Lagos, Ahmadu Bello, and Obafemi Awolowo respectively in 1963 – 1967 (Fafunwa, 2018). Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa, the first Nigerian Professor of Education, through the Ife Primary Education Project (1970-1978), advocated for the inclusion of Nigerian native languages and cultural content in the school curriculum, which led to the official integration of indigenous language teaching in 1977 (Fafunwa, 1989). The National Universities Commission (NUC), which was established in 1962 and granted statutory authority in 1974, became responsible for maintaining university standards, including teaching-practice frameworks (National Universities Commission, n.d.).

Teaching practice was established as an important and well-planned component of teacher education programmes, designed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical classroom experience. It became a supervised exercise that involves major activities such as micro-teaching, guest teaching, and extended in-school placements. These components are conducted under the guidance of cooperating teachers within the host schools and university supervisors who provide professional oversight and feedback on the performance of the student-teachers (Ogunbameru & Uwameiya, 2012). The purpose of this well-structured approach is to ensure that the pedagogical theories the student-teachers learned in their coursework are employed in real-life teaching environment. The frequent observation, and mentoring enables the student-teachers to gain competencies in planning lessons, managing classrooms, and delivering instructions. Teaching practice is institutionalised to ensure that student-teachers who graduates from teacher education programmes acquire not just academic knowledge but also the practical skills needed for effective teaching in a classroom setting.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF TEACHING PRACTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION

In teacher education, teaching practice plays an important role in the development of competent and effective teachers. During this period, they are placed in real school environments where they can acquire practical experience and develop teaching skills. The following highlight the importance of teaching practice in the professional development of student-teachers:

➤ *Application of Theoretical Knowledge:*

Teaching practice gives student-teachers the opportunity to translate concepts acquired in different courses during their university coursework such as education psychology, curriculum studies, and pedagogy into real teaching experiences. Rather than only understanding theories in a classroom, they can see how those ideas are applied in real-life teaching. For example, they can use learning theories to understand pupil behaviour, apply curriculum design principles to prepare their lessons, and implement different teaching techniques to keep learners engaged. This experience helps them connect theory with practice, making their education more meaningful and practical (Ünver, 2018).

➤ *Development of Professional Skills:*

Teaching practice provides student-teachers the opportunity to build the key skills such as lesson plan preparation, organising classroom activities, using teaching aids, managing learners' behaviour, and evaluating learners' progress which are needed to be effective educators. Having direct interaction with learners and experienced staff allows them develop communication, problem-solving, and time-management skills. These practical experiences improve their ability to organise lessons, teach clearly, handle classroom challenges, and assess student understanding effectively. While teaching more lessons, they improve better at delivering instruction and managing classroom dynamics (Segal, 2019).

➤ *Building Self-Confidence and Teacher Identity:*

Teaching practice helps student-teachers develop and build self-confidence. Initially, many student-teachers feel nervous or unsure about their ability to teach in a real classroom environment. However, as they acquire experience and receive positive responses from their learners and supervisors, they begin to trust their own abilities. This confidence enables them take initiative, respond better to classroom situations, and make proper decisions independently. The exercise also helps shape their professional identity and prepares them for the responsibilities of full-time teaching (Ifarajimi et al., 2025).

➤ *Receiving Constructive Feedback:*

This is also an important aspect of teaching practice as it keeps the student-teacher informed about their strengths and weaknesses and presents them the opportunity for improvement. For example, a supervisor during this exercise might suggest to them, better ways to manage time during lessons or recommend methods of explaining difficult concepts for a better lesson delivery. Constructive feedback is very important as it helps student-teachers reflect on their performance and make changes that lead to professional development and growth (Aderibigbe et al., 2016).

➤ *Encouragement of Reflective Practice:*

Teaching practice promotes reflective thinking. Many teacher training programs encourage student-teachers to keep journals where they write about their daily teaching experiences, challenges they face, and lessons learned. In addition, group discussion with peers provides a space for

sharing experiences and new ideas from each other. These reflective activities help student-teachers become more aware of their teaching style, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and make proper plan on how to improve in future lessons. Student-teachers develop a habit of self-evaluation, which is necessary for developing long-term profession (Ogunbameru & Uwameiye, 2012).

IV. IMPORTANT TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICE EXERCISE

Effective Teaching Practice depends not only on the readiness of student-teachers but also on the availability and proper use of major tools that support learning, teaching, and reflection. These tools help student-teachers to organise their work, engage learners, and assess their own progress. Below are some important tools that contribute to a successful teaching practice experience:

➤ *Lesson Plan Templates:*

Lesson plan templates serve as important tools in preparing student-teacher for effective classroom delivery. These structured approaches typically include major components such as learning objectives, instructional activities, teaching materials, and assessment methods. By using these templates, student-teachers are better able to align their instructional goals with appropriate content and teaching strategies. According to Ekundayo et al. (2014), such tools also help in effective time management and ensure that lessons are well-organised and logically sequenced. Lesson plan templates promote clarity, coherence, and confidence, enabling student-teachers to deliver lessons more effectively and with greater impact.

➤ *Teaching Aids and Learning Materials:*

These are important tools that help make lessons clearer and engaging for students. These can include items such as charts, infographics, real-life objects (realia), and digital visuals. Such resources are used to support teaching by making difficult or abstract topics easier to understand. For example, Akinyemi et al. (2022) found that Nigerian pre-service teachers were able to understand complex topics more effectively when infographics were used. These kinds of tools make lessons more engaging and interactive, helping student-teachers explain ideas more clearly. Overall, teaching aids are not just accessories, they are essential for making learning more meaningful and effective.

➤ *Reflective Journals:*

Reflective journaling is a valuable tool for supporting the professional growth of student-teachers during teaching practice. It involves the regular documentation of classroom experiences, including both achievements and challenges, and encourages thoughtful analysis of one's teaching methods. Through this process, student-teachers are prompted to evaluate their instructional decisions, classroom interactions, and areas for improvement. Ogunbameru and Uwameiye (2012) stressed on the importance of reflection in developing greater self-awareness and adaptability in future educators. By consistently engaging in reflective writing, student-teachers can transform isolated classroom events

into meaningful learning experiences. This habit not only improves their ability to identify patterns in teaching and learning but also enables them to set realistic goals for continuous improvement. Reflective journals serve as a bridge between theory and practice, allowing pre-service teachers to refine their pedagogical skills and grow into more effective, responsive educators.

➤ *Observation and Assessment Checklists:*

These are essential tools for promoting fair and structured evaluation during teaching practice. They enable mentors and supervisors to assess key aspects of a student-teacher's performance, including lesson structure, classroom management, clarity of instruction, and engagement with learners. By using a standardised format, these checklists help ensure that feedback is consistent, focused, and easier to interpret. According to Nwafor et al. (2023), such tools make the evaluation process more transparent and objective, allowing student-teachers to clearly identify what they are doing well and where they need to improve. In the same vein, Killen and O'Toole (2023) emphasises that when feedback is specific and systematic, it becomes more meaningful and actionable for trainee teachers. Over time, regularly completed checklists also serve as a practical record of progress, helping student-teachers reflect on their development and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. This structured approach makes the assessment process more supportive and effective for both learners and educators.

➤ *Feedback Forms and Evaluation Reports:*

Feedback forms and evaluation reports are indispensable tools for guiding the professional development of student-teachers during teaching practice. They provide structured opportunities for mentors, supervisors, and even peers to offer clear and constructive feedback on various aspects of teaching performance such as lesson pacing, clarity of instruction, classroom control, and responsiveness to student needs. Hudson (2016) emphasizes that well-structured feedback enables pre-service teachers to recognize both their strengths and the areas in which improvement is needed, making the learning process more focused and meaningful. Brookfield (2017) maintains that ongoing feedback promotes reflective teaching by encouraging educators to consider how their methods affect student learning. When used consistently, feedback forms also make the mentoring process more transparent and supportive, helping student-teachers build confidence and adjust their strategies in real time. In this way, evaluation reports are not merely administrative tools but vital instruments for professional growth and teaching effectiveness.

➤ *Digital Tools and Technology:*

The integration of digital tools into teaching practice has significantly enhanced how student-teachers engage learners and deliver content. Tools such as presentation software, interactive whiteboards, and classroom-response systems like Kahoot have made lessons more dynamic and student-centred. Platforms like Mentimeter and Lucid allow for real-time polling, collaborative brainstorming, and visual mapping activities, which promote active participation and deeper understanding (Nwafor et al, 2023). Ikpeama et al.

(2025) also note that student-teachers who effectively utilize educational technology create richer and more inclusive learning environments. When technology is thoughtfully integrated, it not only supports differentiated instruction but also builds digital competence in both the teacher and learners. As noted by Mishra and Koehler (2006) in their Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, effective teaching with technology depends on the thoughtful intersection of content, pedagogy, and digital tools. For student-teachers, learning to strike this balance is crucial in preparing for the modern, technology-enhanced classroom.

➤ *Classroom Management Materials:*

For student-teachers, establishing a well-organized and respectful classroom begins with the use of practical management tools. Materials such as seating charts, class rules posters, behaviour tracking sheets, and daily routines schedules serve to communicate clear expectations and promote structure in the learning environment. These tools are particularly beneficial in helping novice teachers reduce disruptions, maintain order, and foster a positive classroom climate. Research by Simonsen et al. (2024) show that visual supports and behavioural cues play a vital role in proactive classroom management. Oliver et al. (2011) maintained that consistent use of such materials improves student engagement and academic performance. Moreover, Evertson and Weinstein (2013) note that when student-teachers implement structured management tools, they report greater confidence and perceived control over their teaching space. Collectively, these resources support student-teachers in creating an environment that is both supportive and conducive to learning.

➤ *Curriculum Guides and Syllabi:*

Curriculum guides and syllabi serve as essential roadmaps for student-teachers by outlining the required topics, skills, and assessment formats expected within a course or program. Access to these structured documents ensures that student-teachers can align their lesson plans and teaching activities with official educational standards and intended learning outcomes. This alignment not only guarantees that they cover the appropriate material at the right depth but also helps maintain pacing and continuity throughout the academic term. According to Alfauzan and Tarchouna (2017), adherence to curriculum frameworks supports coherence in instruction and improves student achievement by providing clear expectations. Furthermore, Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) stress that well-structured syllabi facilitate the development of both cognitive and practical skills by guiding assessment and learning strategies. Smith (2008) found that well-designed curriculum guides are instrumental in assisting novice teachers to transition from theoretical knowledge to effective classroom practice, promoting confidence and instructional fidelity.

➤ *Mentorship Support Tools:*

Mentorship support tools, including model lesson plans, tip sheets, observation protocols, and reflective guides, play a critical role in assisting cooperating teachers and supervisors to effectively support student-teachers.

These resources provide mentors with clear frameworks and practical strategies, which help ensure consistency and clarity in their guidance. By reducing ambiguity, such tools enable mentors to give targeted, constructive feedback that enhances the teaching skills of student-teachers. Research by Hudson and Hudson (2018) discovered that structured mentorship resources improve communication between mentors and mentees, fostering stronger professional relationships. Additionally, Carpenter and Linton (2016) stressed that standardized observation protocols help mentors identify specific strengths and areas for growth, making evaluations more objective and actionable. Furthermore, Nesbitt and Barry (2024) find that access to well-developed mentorship tools boosts mentors' confidence and effectiveness, which directly contributes to improved teaching practice outcomes for student-teachers.

V. CHALLENGES FACING TEACHING PRACTICE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

➤ *Inadequate Supervision and Mentorship:*

One of the major challenges confronting teaching practice in Nigerian universities is the lack of adequate supervision and mentorship for student-teachers during their practicum. Many student-teachers experience insufficient guidance due to the limited number of university supervisors available to provide consistent oversight. Furthermore, some mentors at host schools demonstrate low motivation or lack the necessary training to effectively support and guide student-teachers. This gap in structured mentorship results in missed opportunities for developing essential teaching competencies and receiving timely, constructive feedback. According to Ifarajimi et al. (2025), such deficiencies critically hinder the professional growth of student-teachers. On the same note, Ogunode and Ibrahim (2023) maintained that ineffective mentorship compromises the quality of teaching practice, leaving student-teachers ill-prepared for real classroom challenges. Moreover, Ndubuisi and Ndubuisi (2024) emphasise that strengthening supervision systems and training mentors are vital steps to improving practicum outcomes in Nigerian teacher education programs.

➤ *Poor School Placement and Coordination:*

Another significant challenge facing teaching practice in Nigerian universities is the poor placement of student-teachers and weak coordination between faculties of education and host schools. Often, student-teachers are assigned to schools located far from their homes, which creates logistical difficulties and can affect their ability to fully engage in the practicum. Moreover, many of these schools lack essential teaching materials and resources, making it difficult for student-teachers to apply pedagogical theories effectively. The weak collaboration and communication between universities and host schools further exacerbate these issues, resulting in misunderstandings, scheduling conflicts, and inadequate support for student-teachers. Abieyuwa (2021) is of the opinion that such coordination failures disrupt the practicum process and diminish its overall effectiveness. He further emphasises that improving school placements and strengthening partnerships with host institutions are critical for enhancing teaching

practice outcomes. He maintained that better logistical planning and resource provision are necessary to create conducive learning environments for student-teachers during their practicum.

➤ *Financial Burden on Students:*

Teaching practice in Nigerian universities often imposes a significant financial burden on student-teachers, as the costs associated with the practicum are predominantly self-funded. Students are required to cover expenses such as transportation to and from assigned schools, procurement of teaching materials, daily meals, and sometimes accommodation, especially when placed far from their homes. This financial strain can be overwhelming for many students, negatively impacting their ability to fully engage with the practicum and perform effectively in teaching tasks. Tope et al. (2018) argue that these out-of-pocket expenses discourage some student-teachers and contribute to stress and reduced motivation. They believed financial challenges during teaching practice often led to absenteeism and lower quality teaching experiences. Osiesi et al. (2023) emphasise the urgent need for institutional support or funding schemes to alleviate the economic pressures on student-teachers and improve overall practicum outcomes.

➤ *Overcrowded Classrooms and Lack of Teaching Aids:*

A common challenge faced by student-teachers during their practicum in Nigerian public schools is the overcrowding of classrooms coupled with the scarcity of essential teaching aids and learning materials. Overpopulated classrooms create a chaotic environment that makes it difficult for student-teachers to engage learners effectively or implement learner-centred teaching approaches, which require interaction and individual attention. The absence of adequate teaching aids such as visual materials, charts, and instructional tools further limits the capacity to deliver lessons that cater to diverse learning styles. Abubakar, Madawaki and Naabu (2022) maintain that such conditions negatively impact the quality of teaching practice and the overall learning experience. In support, Okechukwu and Oboshi (2021) stress that overcrowding leads to poor classroom management and reduced student participation. Additionally, Ogunrinbokun et al. (2023) argue that the lack of teaching resources hampers innovation in teaching methods, thereby restricting the development of effective pedagogical skills among student-teachers.

➤ *Irregular Supervision and Feedback:*

Irregular supervision remains a significant weakness in the implementation of teaching practice across many Nigerian universities. Due to logistical constraints, staff shortages, or administrative lapses, university supervisors are often unable to conduct consistent classroom observations of student-teachers. As a result, many students go through their entire practicum with minimal or no professional feedback, undermining the core objective of the practicum experience. Richardson-Koehler (1988) reports that the lack of structured supervision compromises the formative assessment of teaching skills and the provision of constructive feedback. Recent studies reinforce this concern. Yusuf et al. (2022) observed that without regular

observation, it becomes difficult to accurately assess students' pedagogical development and classroom management capabilities. Oredein and Oyetade (2018) emphasise that irregular feedback leads to missed opportunities for timely corrections and personalized guidance, reducing the overall impact of the practicum experience on teaching competence.

➤ *Limited Period for Carrying Out Teaching Practice:*

Another persistent challenge facing teaching practice in Nigerian universities is the limited time allocated for the exercise. In many cases, faculties of education structure teaching practice to run concurrently with other semester-based academic coursework. This divided focus limits student-teachers' ability to fully immerse themselves in real classroom experiences. Typically, only about three months within an academic semester are allocated for practicum, which restricts the depth of engagement and the development of practical teaching skills. In contrast, colleges of education often dedicate a full academic session exclusively for teaching practice, allowing for more comprehensive exposure. According to Awe et al. (2023), limiting the duration of practicum undermines the goal of bridging theory with practice. Extending the practicum period and reducing academic distractions would enable student-teachers to better reflect, adapt, and grow professionally during the exercise.

VI. PROSPECTS AND NEW DIRECTIONS

➤ *Use of Digital Tools for Monitoring and Feedback:*

The integration of digital technologies into teacher education presents a promising opportunity to address persistent challenges in teaching practice supervision. By adopting online platforms and mobile applications, faculties of education can more effectively monitor student-teachers' activities, conduct virtual observations, and deliver real-time, structured feedback. This approach not only improves consistency in supervision but also reduces the logistical barriers associated with physical visitations. Awodiji et al. (2022) emphasise the importance of using educational technology to bridge distance and time constraints in practicum monitoring. In Nigeria, institutions like the University of Ibadan have begun piloting digital reporting tools for teaching practice documentation, with promising outcomes (Odutayo & Ramsaroop, 2023). Furthermore, Obielodan et al. (n.d.) found that digital supervision tools improved student-teacher accountability and encouraged reflective practice. When well implemented, such tools can foster a more robust, responsive, and scalable practicum support system.

➤ *Funding Support and Incentives:*

Providing adequate financial support for student-teachers during their practicum is crucial for improving the quality of teacher education in Nigeria. Currently, many student-teachers are left to cover costs related to transportation, teaching materials, accommodation, and daily sustenance, which often leads to financial stress and negatively impacts their overall performance. To mitigate these challenges, government bodies, tertiary institutions,

and education stakeholders should establish structured funding schemes or stipends to support teaching practice activities. According to Tatto (1999), financial incentives play a significant role in motivating and sustaining teacher engagement, particularly during practical training. More recently, Osiesi et al. (2023) emphasise that financial aid positively influences the academic and professional commitment of education students during teaching practice. Additionally, a study by Dada (n.d.) advocates for policy-driven bursaries and logistics support as essential components in enhancing teacher preparation programs across Nigerian universities.

➤ *Strengthening School–University Partnerships:*

Establishing strong, formalized partnerships between universities and host schools is essential for improving the effectiveness of teaching practice. When institutions of higher learning collaborate closely with schools, it fosters a shared understanding of roles, responsibilities, and expectations in the mentoring of student-teachers. Zeichner (2010) argues that school-university partnerships that are built on mutual respect and shared goals result in more coherent and supportive practicum experiences. These partnerships also encourage the co-development of training materials, smoother placement coordination, and ongoing communication between university supervisors and school mentors. Recent studies in Nigeria, such as that by Adeoye et al. (2023), confirm that teaching practice outcomes improve significantly when schools are actively engaged in teacher preparation. Similarly, Apelehin et al. (2025) emphasise that collaborative agreements can reduce placement conflicts and ensure that host schools are adequately prepared to mentor and evaluate student-teachers.

➤ *Curriculum Review and Policy Reform:*

Revising teacher education curricula is crucial for ensuring that teaching practice is both relevant and responsive to contemporary classroom demands. Current educational challenges such as the integration of technology, inclusive education, and competency-based learning require that student-teachers be trained with updated content and practical tools. According to UNESCO (2018), aligning teacher training with national education goals and classroom realities enhances the relevance and effectiveness of practicum experiences. Furthermore, Bunmi and Taiwo (2017) maintain that regular curriculum review enables faculties of education to incorporate global best practices and address local pedagogical challenges. Policy reforms that institutionalise periodic curriculum updates and involve key stakeholders such as teacher educators, school administrators, and education policymakers can significantly improve teacher preparedness. In Nigeria, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE, 2021) has advocated for harmonised, outcomes-based curricula that reflect current trends and equip teachers to meet evolving learner needs.

➤ *Training for Cooperating Teachers:*

Effective teaching practice requires that cooperating teachers in host schools are adequately prepared to mentor and guide student-teachers. Often, these teachers serve as the

primary professional role models during the practicum, and their influence significantly shapes the student-teachers' instructional habits and classroom management strategies. However, many cooperating teachers lack formal training in mentorship, which can limit the quality of guidance provided. Hudson (2016) stresses the importance of structured mentor training to ensure that cooperating teachers understand their roles and responsibilities. Similarly, Ojo et al. (2023) advocate for regular orientation programs to equip mentors with the skills needed to support novice teachers, including giving constructive feedback and modelling best practices. Institutions can also provide observation tools and mentorship guidelines to promote consistent and reflective supervision. Training cooperating teachers not only improves the practicum experience but also contributes to overall teacher quality and school improvement.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Faculties of Education should plan teaching practice well in advance, ensuring timely communication with host schools and proper placement of student-teachers based on subject relevance and proximity.
- Higher education institutions should collaborate with government agencies, NGOs, and private stakeholders to secure adequate funding for teaching practice. Providing stipends or material support will reduce the financial burden on student-teachers.
- University supervisors should receive regular training and be monitored to ensure they provide consistent, constructive feedback and meaningful assessment throughout the practicum.
- Schools that host student-teachers should be adequately equipped with teaching aids, classroom space, and learning materials to support quality practice and innovative instruction.
- Faculties should incorporate reflective journaling, peer observation, and review sessions into the practicum to foster self-evaluation, collaboration, and continuous improvement among student-teachers.
- Faculties of Education should allocate a longer, uninterrupted period for teaching practice ideally a full semester rather than combining it with other academic coursework. This approach, as used in Colleges of Education, allows student-teachers to focus entirely on classroom engagement and professional development.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Teaching practice continues to be a fundamental part of training future teachers in Nigeria. It provides student-teachers with important opportunities to apply what they have learned in real classroom settings and develop essential teaching skills. However, the full potential of teaching practice is often limited by several challenges such as

inadequate supervision, poor school placement, financial difficulties, and short practicum periods. To improve this vital aspect of teacher education, it is important for universities and related institutions to address these issues in a systematic way. By adopting new technologies for monitoring and feedback, ensuring proper funding and resources, strengthening collaboration between universities and host schools, and extending the duration of the practicum, the teaching practice experience can be made more effective. These improvements will help build a stronger, more professional teaching workforce, which is essential for raising the quality of education in Nigeria.

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