Challenges Faced by Prospective Teachers during Teaching Practice: Connecting Theory to Practice

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Abstract

The study investigated the challenges faced by the prospective teachers during teaching practice. The sample of the study comprised 34 prospective teachers enrolled in the final semester of B.Ed. (Hons.) program at University of the Punjab and University of Gujrat. The prospective teachers were trained in using student-centered pedagogies in teaching practice. Data analysis revealed that there was a noticeable transformation towards the use of teaching methods other than lecture method in their classroom. The major challenges included dealing with poor physical infrastructure, scarce and underused academic resources, inflexibility in classroom arrangement, non-professional attitude of school administration, and trying out innovation without challenging the prevailing school norms. Teaching practice has helped prospective teachers to strike a balance between their expectations and reality of schools and classrooms. A closer interaction among university, school, prospective teachers and students beyond teaching practice is essential to increase mutual familiarity addressing the surprise element of challenges faced by the prospective teachers.

Keywords: Student centered pedagogies, classroom environment, teaching practice

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Introduction

Teaching practice is challenging for prospective teachers (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009), however, greater attention on this aspect of teacher education is evident in recent literature (Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Reid, 2011). The expectations of prospective teachers and classroom realities are different (Melnick & Meister, 2008; Yıldız, Geçikli, & Yeşilyurt, 2016). The profession is far more complex than prospective teachers' expectations. The level of freedom expected by the prospective teachers in the school environment does not match with the demonstrated level of school administration (Eptien, 1993; Normore, 2003). The students do not behave the way prospective teachers expects them to behave (Saarnivaara & Sarja, 2007). The material required for interactive methodologies is hardly available, tightly planned scheme of studies does not allow the flexibility expected by the prospective teachers to try out idealized teaching pedagogies (Kilgore, Ross, & Zbikowski, 1990).

Ball and Forzani (2009) highlighted teacher education should   prioritize the clinical aspect of teaching, 'To make practice the core of the curriculum of teacher education requires a shift from a focus on what teachers know and believe to a greater focus on what teachers do (p. 503)'. In this scenario, Grossman et al (2009) pointed out, empirical evidence is needed to fully understand how access to various aspects and types of practices both support and hamper the development of prospective teacher about their teaching skills. Teaching being a skill cannot be taught merely through training during teacher education courses. It only equips prospective teachers to build knowledge and sketch school classroom teaching environment theoretically (Gossert et al., 2001; Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza - Bailey, 2000).

The comment of Trent (2012) regarding classroom practices is contrary because the schools are mostly traditional. They have concern mainly about teaching for students to do well in exams so there is a lot of time spent on past (exam) papers, teaching to pass the test. Therefore, interactive methods of teaching are hardly used. In this case, there might be problems, some students and other teachers might complain if he/she fall behind the teaching schedule or don't focus so much on exam preparation (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Leithwood, 1994). We are powerless to change what schools think and want and there is great challenge for prospective teachers to think beyond the set design of teaching and learning level of students.

Literature highlighted (Jensen, Lahn, & Nerland, 2012; Klette & Carlsten, 2012; Nerland, 2012; Smeby, 2012) that prospective teachers had problems in conceptualizing the challenges they face in professional language terms, leading to difficulties in connecting problems of practice with wider knowledge reservoirs. There is a lack of

shared vision among faculty responsible for teaching subject content and those teaching pedagogy, as well as few opportunities for prospective teachers to learn in the context of practice. Consequently, prospective teachers face challenges to design, plan, and organize the learning tasks for students which are key dimensions of teaching practices (Ball et al., 2008; Cohen et al., 2003; Gore, 2001; Scott, 2015). They felt incompetence due to lack of experience in executing these learning tasks (Rink, 2006; Shulman, 2004). Generally, they are unable to deliver sequentially progressive, developmentally appropriate, and maximally engaging learning tasks (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Ball et al., 2008; Cohen et al., 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2006).

One of the major challenges of prospective teachers is their incompetence of subject content knowledge and pedagogies. They often confused to students' ongoing learning responses and their emerging questions in the classroom due to lack of practical exposure of teaching (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Ball et al., 2008; Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Lampert & Graziani, 2009; Rink, 2006; Barraket, 2005).

The discrepancy found between learning experiences in university and field-based teacher education environments is critical for researchers (Hammerness, 2006; Zeichner, 2010). Unfortunately, lack of communication between university and field-based teacher educators, mentor teachers and university faculty often lack a shared vision of powerful teaching and learning (Grossman, Hammerness, McDonald, & Ronfeldt, 2008; Hammerness, 2006).

Kyriacou and Kunc's (2007) study highlighted four key reasons that explain teacher attrition rates, namely, workload, salary, disruptive students, and the low status of the profession in society. Triangulating these factors against the intrinsic and altruistic motivations for joining teaching found in the study. The School administrators need to be cognizant of not burdening the beginning teachers as they struggle to develop their sense of professional identity in the teaching practice. Professional development courses should also focus on how to deal with highly disruptive classroom behavior.

Theoretical curriculum of teacher education programs may not improve practice and students understanding (Schulz, 2005; Khan, 2013). Melnich and Meister (2008) reported "Doing School" cannot be simulated in university classrooms, and one extensive field experience cannot equip pre-service with the essentials to succeed in their own classroom" (p. 53). Such reasons may contribute to teacher dissatisfaction, stress, and burnout (Kokkinos, 2007). According to McIntyre (2003), new teachers express strong dissatisfaction with their teaching assignments, and frustration with the politics of their profession, the lack of adequate resources, inadequate mentoring support and expectations and scope of the job, disparity between teacher preparation and expectations, isolation and lack of support, and an emerging gap between novice teachers' vision of teaching and the realities of the job.

Summing up literature major challenges faced by prospective teachers (during teaching practice) are increased paperwork, lack of resources, feelings of isolation, low salaries, lack of parental support, large classroom sizes, lack of student achievement, lack of administrative support, lack of recognition, student attitudes and increased accountability, (Anhorn, 2008; Liu, 2007; Yost, 2006). The difference in learning (academic) in course work and doing (practically teaching in class) is a challenge and opportunity in itself.

Teacher Educators and government has strived hard to bring changes in teacher education by revising courses in pre-service teacher education, preparing teacher guides, embedding student-centered pedagogies, increasing duration of teacher education programs, offering extended teaching practice and adding better career opportunities for prospective teachers. It is still to be seen how introduction of these initiatives help in encountering/reducing above mentioned challenges faced by prospective teachers in their first exposure to real classroom teaching.

The prospective teachers enrolled in B.Ed. (Hons.) under revised teacher education program, who are going to their final teaching practice in the schools, are the focus of this study. It will explore challenges faced by prospective teachers of B.Ed. (Hons) program in their teaching practice and will inform the policy makers, universities and education department officials the ways in which newly introduced teacher programs can be made compatible with market demand and professional standards. The findings will inform about possibilities, means and avenues of integration and collaboration between teacher education institutions and schools in developing efficient pre-service programs helpful in bridging the gaps between theory and practice in the teacher education.

The research aimed to explore these research questions; i. Are prospective teachers well prepared for students centered teaching in the real classroom? ii. What are the challenges faced by prospective teachers in using innovative pedagogies during teaching practice? iii. What are the expectations of head teachers, in-service teachers and students towards classroom performance of prospective teachers? iv. Is the level of support provided by the school administration and cooperating teacher enough supportive to work independently?

Methodology

The study employed mixed method approach to explore the type of pedagogies used in the classroom, challenges faced by prospective teachers, expectations of school administration and students and support provided by the schools to prospective teachers. There is an assumption of revised B. Ed (Hons.) program that revised curricula, extended duration of program and teaching practice will transform teachers from traditional teaching practices to innovative teaching - students centered teaching. Apparently, this transformation is very idealistic but practically very demanding to manage class size, group organization, and moreover, teachers and administration thinking. Prospective teachers might face challenges

during teaching practice due to mismatch between required and on ground facilities at schools. Moreover, school teachers and administration enhance challenges of prospective teachers by having huge expectations by them. The study has different stakeholders and steps and at each step different type of data was produced from participants of the study. Therefore, quantitative and qualitative approaches were used together.

Context of the Study

This paper is based on partial data collected for a USAID project. Different sources of data collection were used during four-week teaching practice of B. Ed (Hons.) students (prospective teachers) at University of the Punjab and University of the Gujarat. They have almost completed their course work which aimed at to equip them with ample theoretical understanding of innovative pedagogies, suitability of various teaching methods in context of the content to be taught, the art of effective planning and execution of lessons and techniques of becoming students centered teachers with classroom management skills. These courses of reformed teacher education program envisioned prospective teachers with knowledge of innovative pedagogies to prepare them in developing shared body of knowledge among active learners. It was assumed that prospective teachers would be more innovative, comfortable and convenient in their act of student centered teaching when they were given opportunity to teach in their final teaching practice in schools.

The selection of schools for teaching practice activity was made by the teacher training institutes. There is mutual understanding between teacher training institutes/universities and school administration for conduct of teaching practice. Three type of schools were included; Govt. Girls Elementary schools, Govt. Girls High Schools and Boys Laboratory High School. But prospective teachers were assigned to teach classes at elementary level (6-8 grades). The students studying in involved schools belong to lower middle-class, aging from (10-13 years).Two prospective teachers were male and 32 were female. All prospective teachers were fresh without prior experience of teaching. The arrangement of classroom furniture was very formal in setting, facing teacher with 3 to 4 students sitting on each bench on 2-3 rows. Rooms were large with proper air and light.

Research Design

The study aimed to explore the challenges faced by prospective teachers during teaching practice. It is an integral part of B.Ed. (Hons.) program and the students under training are periodically sent to the schools for teaching practice. In the study, the prospective teachers of final year and observing their teaching practice were involved in the study. The design of the study is given in figure 3.1. This research had following three stages;

Stage 1 (Before starting teaching practice)

Prospective teachers starting their final teaching practice in allocated schools in the Lahore and Gujarat were selected. The information about expectations of prospective teachers towards school environment, classroom practices, students' behavior and support of school administration were collected.

Stage 2

At this stage, periodic visit by research team were managed to collect data regarding research questions through classroom observations of prospective teachers in three phases. Each prospective teacher was observed 9 times during teaching practice overall, and 3 times in each phase. A total of 259 (108 from University of Gujarat and 151 from University of the Punjab) observations were made in three phases of data collection. The data were also collected from head teachers, in-service teachers and students by the research team.
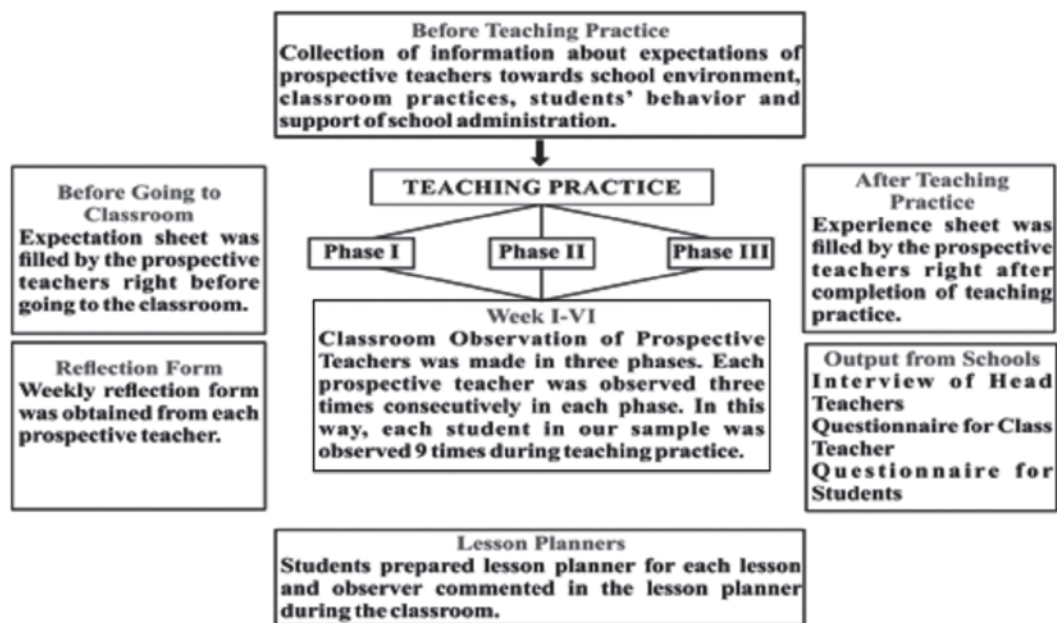

Figure 1. *Design of the Study*

Stage 3

Data collected through various tools was analyzed and triangulation was made to confirm the credibility of collected information. Analysis, findings, conclusions and discussions were aligned to address the research questions of the study.

Population and Sample

The population of this study was prospective teachers enrolled in their final semester of B.Ed. (Hons.) program in teacher education institutions of Punjab province of Pakistan.

The prospective teachers of two universities were included in the sample; University of Gujarat and University of the Punjab, Lahore based on their willingness to participate in the study. The study required prolonged commitment on the part of the university as researchers had to collect data thrice during teaching practice, questionnaire for school teachers, interview university faculty and students of prospective teachers in schools. The number of prospective teachers enrolled in B.Ed. (Hons.) final year was 35 and 28 in university of the Punjab and University of Gujarat respectively. Among them 19 and 15 prospective teachers were agreed to participate from University of the Punjab and University of Gujarat respectively. The head teachers, teachers and students of the schools (where prospective teachers were placed for practice teaching) were also selected in the sample.

Instrument of the Study

Keeping in view, scope and targets of the study multiple instruments were used. This information was collected from different individuals involved in the teaching learning process in the schools. The key respondent in the study were prospective teachers. The information captured from them includes classroom observation schedule, expectation/ experience sheet, weekly self-reflection form and lesson planners. This was enough evidence to know about their teaching practices, challenges and facilities provided by the school administration. The information was supported with other sources of data to strengthen and validate the output generated through this study. The most relevant respondents to know about classroom teaching practices of prospective teachers were their students directly involved in the teaching learning process in the class. Therefore, there reflections were collected against factors of students centered teaching. Further to this cooperative teachers' perspective regarding classroom teaching practices of prospective teachers were also collected. The headmaster/ headmistress interview was a source to know about their expectations from prospective teachers, prospective teachers' performance in schools, classroom management, socialization and university-school cooperation in organization of teaching practice. The detail of instruments used for data collection is given in the table. 1

Table 1

Brief Description of Instruments used for Study

Sr#	Sources of Data	Instrument/ Tool	Purpose /scope	Type of data	Items
1	Prospective Teacher	Classroom observation schedule	Record information Student Centered Teaching	Quantitative Tool	53
2		Expectation/ Experience Sheet	Capture Expectations and actual experience of Prospective Teachers in the classroom	Qualitative /Open ended questions	6
3		Weekly Self Reflection From	Capture behavior change towards students, teaching and lesson planning	Qualitative /Open ended questions	4
4		Lesson Planner	Observe changes in teaching practices, class activities, students' involvement	Qualitative/ lesson planner a document	4 weeks
5	Students	Questionnaire	Students reflection about prospective teachers teaching	Qualitative/ Questionnaire	17
6	Cooperative Teacher	Questionnaire	Triangulate information of cooperative teacher towards students, school and administration	Mix; Structured and open-ended questions	22
7	Head Teacher/ Mistress	Interview	Class management, socialization, provisions	Qualitative/ interview	12

Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected by a team of 10 researchers in four-week time. A two-day workshop was organized to train the research assistants in collecting data from the sample universities. A coordination meeting was arranged with concerned faculty at University of the Punjab and University of Gujarat a week prior to data collection. A meeting with head masters/head mistresses/head teachers of the cooperating schools was also arranged prior to data collection. They were provided orientation about the project objectives and requested for their support. A team of trained research assistants with team leader performed class observations, interviewed head teachers, interviewed university faculty involved in teaching practice, got questionnaires filled from students and cooperating teachers and collected expectation/experience sheets filled by the prospective teachers. Lesson plan and weekly self-reflection forms were also gathered on each visit by the research assistants.

Data obtained through quantitative instruments (like questionnaire and classroom observations) were analyzed through descriptive statistics. Information collected in the form of narrative data were synthesized to bring out positions of respondents on the themes addressed in research questions. Ethical considerations as per international ethical standards for research in social sciences were observed.

Results

The results of the study were presented in tables, graphs, and descriptions as per nature of analysis and demand of the research questions. Prospective teachers observed performance on various factors of teachers' preparedness was observed by the research team, cooperative teachers' observations and student's reflections. The results about prospective teachers' preparedness against factors of students centered pedagogies are given below.

Table 2
Prospective teachers' observed performance on various factors of teacher preparedness

Factors of teacher preparedness			Per item	
	N	Mean	mean	SD
Language and Voice Clarity *(range 6-30)*	259	17.62	2.94	5.453
Disrupting Behavior *(range 5-25)*	259	8.53	1.71[a]	3.387
Instructional Variety *(range 10-50)*	259	19.06	1.90	7.242
Students engagement in the learning Process *(range 4-20)*	259	9.08	2.27	3.933
Teacher Task Orientation *(range 3-15)*	259	8.31	2.77	2.803
Classroom Environment *(dichotomous question 1=yes and 2=no i.e. range 5-10)*	259	6.88	1.38*	1.198
Supportive Material *(dichotomous question 1=yes and 2=no)*	259	1.01	1.01*	.108

* Lower number means higher degree of conformity

[a] Higher score means more disruptive behavior

Prospective teacher's preparedness was assessed through their proper use of language, clarity of voice, occurrence of disruptive behavior in their class, selection and justified use of teaching method (instructional variety), extent of student involvement, effective use of class time (teacher task orientation), suitability of class environment for student-centered activities and provision of supportive material. Prospective teachers were observed to control their classes quite fairly. They had basic support material like writing board with spacious, clean, flexible, furnished (having desk chair for students) classroom in their respective schools. Most of the prospective teachers were acceptably good in use of language and had clear voice. The use of student-centered teaching practices was slightly evident in the class observations recorded and student engagement should be focused as there is room for largely improvement. The prospective teachers also had problem in class time distribution and timely completion of planned teaching content during class.

Cooperative teachers' observation of preparedness of prospective teachers

Cooperative teachers (N=9 out of 21, 45%) also endorsed the fact that prospective teachers tried innovative (pedagogy other than prevalent in school) teaching in their classroom. Those who tried used charts and showed videos on their laptops related to the topic of their lesson.

Majority of cooperating teachers (15/20 i.e. 75%) reported that prospective teachers were quite interested in teaching and they contacted cooperating teachers after their class. Most of the cooperative teachers (65%, N=13) were contacted by prospective teachers after the class for getting feedback on their lesson. The questions usually asked by the prospective teachers were about handling students in class (16.7%), guiding slow learners (25%) and make their teaching more relevant (41.7%). The prospective teachers were easily approachable (60%) to them for discussing their problems, although 43% of the students reported that at times this created class management problem. Prospective teachers were accommodative of students' views and were flexible in their teaching.

Students Observed Reflection on prospective teachers' preparedness

There were 949 students in the sample who were asked questions related to student-centered teaching which included language and voice clarity, disrupting behavior, instructional variety (teaching method) and teacher task orientation of their respective prospective teachers. There were less than 6% students who had complaint about the understandability of the language used by their prospective teacher. Otherwise, they were satisfied against all factors of prospective teachers' preparedness for student centered teaching.

Preparedness of Prospective Teachers for Classroom Teaching

The prospective teachers were exposed to student centered teaching methods during instruction at teacher education institutions with an expectation to use the same methods in their teaching. A total of 252 lesson observation revealed that prospective teachers used different combination of teaching methods and a total of 1500 instances of using different teaching methods were recorded. The results showed that lecture is still stands tall in teaching methods used by prospective teachers but encouragingly questioning. Activity, demonstration, test and discussion methods are increasingly replacing/ joining lecture as upcoming methods of teaching.

Figure 2 shows a comparative analysis of week-wise changes in use of teaching methodologies by prospective teachers with respect to percentage of time used for three weeks. Lecturing is the main method across the weeks with little decrease from week-1 to week-2 while in week-3 it raised up to 45.7% of the class timing. It appeared that major method in the classroom is lecturing which is supposed to be more or less natural pattern. It slightly decreased in week 2 but elevated raise in week 3 is evidence of reverting back to lecturing as main tool of teaching. Actually, this shift reflects that in the teacher training institutes class room teaching through student centered pedagogies to prospective teachers is not enough supportive to fence the school culture and environment. In the first week prospective teachers are struggling to use student centered pedagogies but later on they feel it difficult to continue due to class room culture and behavior of school administration.
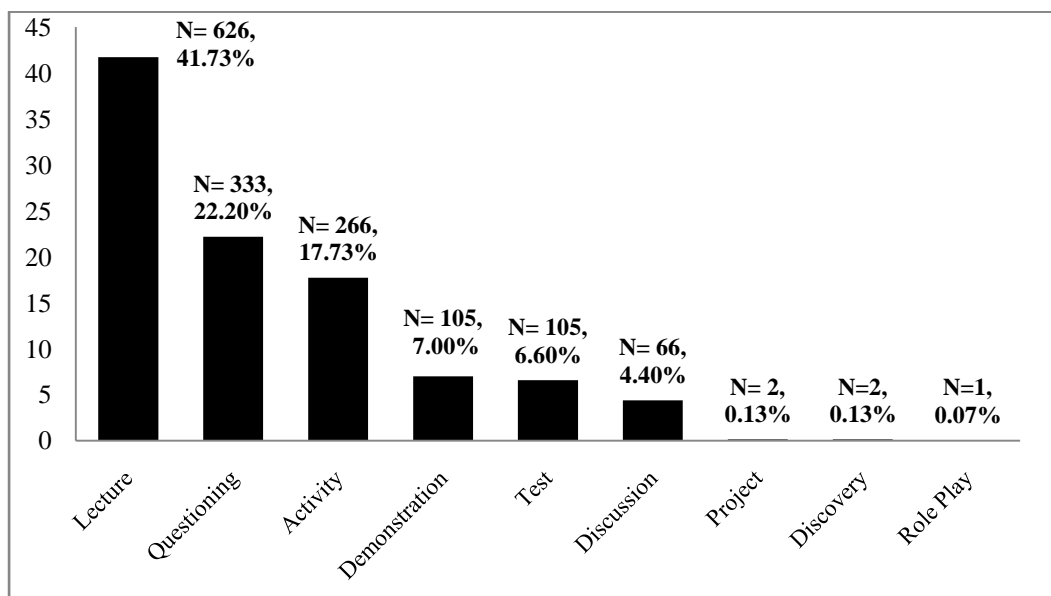

Figure 2. *Prospective teachers' preference of teaching methods during teaching practice*

The second best used method in the class room is questioning. It is encouraging to see that it slightly increased from week 1 to week 2. In fact, questioning is taking place of lecturing at this stage by gaining some percentage of time. It shows struggling mind of prospective teachers towards student engagement through questioning. But in week 3 it slightly declined which is due to prevailing restrictive elements in the class room. Overall, slight increase from week 1 to week 2 and then decrease to week 3 is not more meaningful. Week-wise little change in questioning reflects that prospective teachers are facing problems to use this method but they have tendency towards students centered pedagogies and spending reasonable percentage of time of the class to this method.

The third method mainly observed is activity based teaching. There is gradual increase in use of this method with the passage of time (from week 1 to week 3). It seemed that activity based teaching is less demanding for prospective teachers. Present curriculum is activity based and small activities are planned/designed in the content of the lessons. The prospective teachers deputed reasonable percentage of the class time to execute activities in the class room. The prevailing execution level of activities in the classroom confirms that prospective teachers have only listening repository of different pedagogical methodologies. If prospective teachers are given proper skill and classroom exposure of student centered pedagogies then it can be utilized by the prospective teachers like activity method. It seemed that prospective teachers have desire to use student centered pedagogies but they have not required skills to use them in the class.

The fourth method mainly used is test/quiz. The level of occurrence of this method is initially high but gradually falls to the end of teaching practice. The use of formative assessment during class discourse is essential to get feedback of students learning which empower classroom practices through multiple methodologies which out range progress of the class. But it is also considerable that there are many factors which contribute to decide the usage of different methodologies in the class room to make it purposeful. All the time, one method is not workable. The nature of content is also important to see and plan the best way to deliver this content to the students. In spite of all these reasons continuous fall of this method is showing that prospective teachers are losing tendency of using student centered pedagogies gradually.

The remaining two methodologies are demonstration and discussion which are least used respectively. Demonstration is slightly falling from week 1 to week 3 while discussion is almost same throughout. The level of percentage of time used against
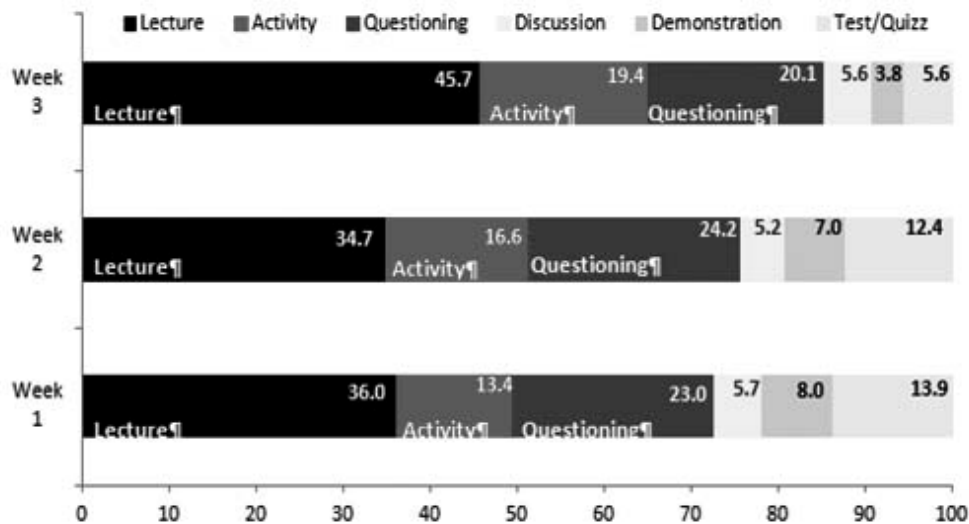
Figure3. *Changein time observed for different teaching methods from week 1-3*

these methodologies are very low all over. It is easily concluded that prospective teachers have not enough skill to use these demanding methodologies. Only reading from a book or learn through lecturing in the teacher training institute is wrong supposition that the trainee is equipped to use these methodologies. Theories are entirely different than practices especially in teaching like profession. The school culture and environment is not supportive even reluctant to use such methodologies. Because they think that the best method is to read the text in the classroom and ask students to memories it. And in this way student's memories it and in the exam, just recall it and reproduce it on the paper and they get good grades. For this reason, understanding of the students is not main concern of the school administration. Our current education policy put emphasize on the point but just theoretically. There is need to involve teachers and take them in confidence who are actual and can play role in the classroom to use such pedagogies to enhance understanding of the students.

Challenges Faced by Prospective Teachers in using Innovative methods/Pedagogies in the Classroom

Challenges emerge from shortfall in expectation and experience of prospective teachers regarding teaching learning environment in schools. Their training is usually completed in isolation/with limited exposure to actual schools till teaching practice. The content taught to them is usually taken from foreign books (at the most reproduced as such) written in different context for different audience. Prospective teachers find it challenging when could not find the portrayed environment in schools. The challenges are classified in provision of facilities, instructional needs, attitude of administration, student's behavior and mentoring of prospective teachers

The data collected through multiple sources was transcribed and thematic analysis was made. Themes were identified. This step was detailed exploration of challenges faced by prospective teachers and verification of common themes from different sources of data. Analysis carried out across the participants including expectations sheet, experience sheets, weekly reflection form, lesson planner, students' questionnaire, cooperative teacher questionnaire, head master/mistress interviews. The challenges emerged through this process are given in table 3.

Table 3
Challenges faced by prosperities teachers during teaching practice

Sr #	Challenges	Factors	Sub factors	Description
1	Provision of facilities	Physical	School building	Dilapidated school building
			Staff room	Staff room were de-motivating
			Wash room	Barely usable washrooms
		Academic	Library	Libraries were available but not functional
			Computer room	Newly established computer labs but little access to the students and teachers
			A V aids	The AV aids are scarce in schools but the existed facilities are marginally used
2	Instructional Needs	Support material	Stationary	Stationary was hardly available in the schools for use of teachers
			IT facilities & Electricity	Instructional technology is very helpful in teaching to understand concepts and students are familiar with their usage but not available moreover electricity shortfall and mostly schools have little backup facility
		Environment	Furniture	Structured furniture, little provision to arrange flexibly

3	Attitude of administration	Administrator	Head Master/Head Mistress	Bossy/authoritative attitude considered prospective teachers like servants No guidance, unduly strict behavior
		Staff	School teachers Non-teaching staff	Non-accommodative attitude, think like intruders, little guidance Irrespective attitude
4	Students Behavior		Attitude problem Interest	Discipline issue, class teacher attitude Little interest of students' in activities due to lack of such exposure Disrespect, they are for a short time
5	Mentoring	Cooperative Teacher	Identity issue Restrict innovation/fear	Prospective teachers did not accept us as teachers Do not like to use innovative methods for teaching, controversy towards students; we try to engage students but they
		University Teacher	short visits Little guidance	like students to sit passive in the classroom Faculty have few visit and for a short time with not productive feedback required to prospective teachers

Expectations of Cooperating Schools from Prospective Teachers

An interview was arranged for 5 head teachers and 20 cooperating teachers filled questionnaire. Head teachers were asked about their expectation from prospective teachers. The analysis shows synthesized set of expectations of head teachers and cooperative teachers from prospective teachers by themes.

Attitude towards administration, staff, teachers and students

Prospective teachers are usually not aware about the discipline, rules, code of conduct and dress code of the schools. Their mind-set is very typical of university students. Instead of behaving like teachers they prefer to act as students but expect to be respected like teachers. Prospective teachers' age group is between 18-22 years and they lack maturity. They try to build a frank relationship with students but cannot manage the required teacher-students distance for efficient teaching-learning in class. They expect teachers to deal with them as 'teachers' but due to age difference school teachers see them as students.

Teaching is lot more than expertise in content. Prospective teachers know content but needs to understand the professional manners i.e. following school rules, timings, 'teacher-like' dressing, managing respectful relation with teachers in schools, forbearances towards students and using criticism on them constructively.

Inside classroom. Head teachers and cooperative teachers viewed prospective teachers join school for limited duration of time. The school teachers are following a pre-planned scheme of studies while prospective teachers try to manipulate according to their own interest. Head teachers and cooperative teachers understood the prospective teachers urge to implement innovative teaching methods but had reservation of letting them manipulate scheme of studies and completion of content within the constrained time. They expect university faculty and prospective teachers to follow their plan rather than imposing their expectations.

The schools have very scarce AV aids and other support material for teaching while prospective teachers expect facilities which are not even available to their permanent teachers. Prospective teachers and university should bring with them teaching resources they need to add to the school resources.

Cooperating School's Support to Prospective Teachers

This section provides analysis of related sections prospective teachers' expectation and experience sheet and cooperative teachers' questionnaire to present support provided to prospective teachers during their teaching practice.

Physical and academic facilities at school

The schools have insufficient and improper buildings constructed with minimal consideration to issues like light and space per student but otherwise schools have ample open area with variety of plantation which was used by prospective teachers in variety of manner for promoting student-centered teaching.

Instructional flexibility in classroom

In the beginning prospective teachers were offered a class for teaching and no specific guidelines were given which allowed them to plan their lesson activities independently. This freedom was hampered by the layout of the classroom in which student mobility was restrained by the type of furniture and insufficient classroom area in comparison to number of student. The limitation of class space and furniture made them think out of box and come up with some innovations to carry out the lesson activities within given circumstances.

Attitude of school administration

The disinterest of head teachers was taken as opportunity by some prospective teachers as they did not expect any professional help even with their active engagement. They use the disinterest of head teachers as uninterrupted planning of lesson and using pedagogies of their choice. Prospective teachers in the beginning felt quite upset with the make-up duties in the classes where teacher was absent but later in their reflection they termed it as an opportunity to teach unfamiliar subject and handling classes without any prior preparation. They feel confident about their teaching even if they are called for without any prior planning.

Student attitude towards prospective teachers

The students were participative and motivated to learn through non-traditional teaching methods. Despite some class management issues, it is encouraging to have student involvement and see them taking charge of their learning. Students were generally obedient and followed the instruction. Students had number of challenges in completing the project work given to them but still their interest and effort kept prospective teachers enthusiastic.

Mentoring by cooperating teacher and supervisor

Cooperative teachers' behavior towards prospective teachers was the most cherished support for prospective teachers. Meaningful liaison with cooperating teachers helped prospective teachers in understanding student needs and getting feedback about shortcomings in their teaching beyond what they have learned during their course work. The hand-on support during class when prospective teachers needed support in unforeseen class situation was a value-added learning for them which was not possible to acquire in their course work. Cooperative teachers support worked as catalyst in establishing legitimacy of prospective teachers in class as equivalent to their teachers.

Discussion

The study has generated some very interesting findings calling for rethinking teaching practice component in teacher education. There is evident aloofness between what prospective teachers'' are prepared for and what is expected of them in schools. Prospective teachers understanding of school culture, physical provisions in schools, academic support (resource material) in schools is unrealistic at times which causes adjustment challenges for prospective teachers. The experience of teaching practice offered prospective teachers to learn manipulation of resources, thinking out of box to generate resources, utilize available resources innovatively, manage individual differences in class and get themselves mentally ready to work beyond book to become professionally competent teachers.

Preparedness of Prospective Teachers for Classroom Teaching

The results showed that lecture still stands tall in teaching methods used by prospective teachers but encouragingly questioning. Activity, demonstration and discussion methods are increasingly replacing/joining lecture as upcoming methods of teaching.

Using student-centered teaching methods during teaching at teacher education institution is bringing positive change in prospective teachers' use of student-centered pedagogies in their classroom during teaching practice.

Student-centered teaching at teacher education institutions alone is not sufficient for making prospective teachers move towards use of student-centered pedagogies instead school practices, student assessment and classroom environment should also be made favorable for promoting student-centered teaching in schools.

Prospective Teachers' Performance on Various Factors of Teacher Preparedness

Prospective teachers were observed to be good in class management and delivering their lessons in clear and correct language to some extent but a lot more is still desired for making their teaching student-centered. They were still unable to involve students, utilize student previous knowledge to build up their lesson, connect their teaching to daily life, answering student questions satisfactorily and engage student in thinking while learning. The traits assumed as vital for student-centered teaching cannot be learned until whole academic environment does not encourage use of such methods which is unluckily not prevalent in our schools yet.

The school environment is very strongly tilted towards teach-to-exam policy and forces practicing teachers to comply with their existing structure. Therefore, prospective teachers need encouragement to continue with their tendency to use student-centered pedagogies and a continuous support is required for making student-centered pedagogy as their second nature. At the same time, teacher education institutions need to advocate shift towards student-centered curriculum, corresponding assessment practices and in-service teacher training at policy level.

Challenges Faced by Prospective Teachers in Applying Innovation in Classroom

Physical and academic facilities at school. Initial teacher training is provided assuming the minimum basic facilities are available in schools. The course content teaches prospective students with this assumption but actual classroom situation in government schools is quite contrary to this. Prospective teachers have to struggle for basic provisions like staff room, classroom, soft boards, stationary etc. which they assumed as for granted before coming to schools. This discouraging situation strengthens their belief that what is taught is just bookish material and cannot be applied in practical teaching.

It is quite understandable that school situation cannot be changes overnight, but pre-service teacher education can be made more relevant by using indigenous material and keeping the course work closer to actual classrooms. There is emergent need for producing local books on subjects like teaching methods, schools in Pakistan, school administration, resource materials etc. to keep the connection between teacher training and market needs.

Instructional flexibility in classroom. The classroom lack even minimum essential teaching resources and in schools where such materials are available, school administration is reluctant to provide access to such material because of administrative complications. Teacher education should intentionally include tutoring in handling large classes, developing customized teaching resources at class level with minimum finances involved on self-help basis and maximization of use of available resources through manipulation. The borrowed resource materials are only of limited use because of their contextual irrelevance.

Attitude of school administration. The impression from analysis is that school administration (head teachers and teachers) are either reluctant to accommodate or indifferent towards prospective teachers. They consider prospective teachers as intruders in their system causing unwanted changes in school/classroom functioning. As human being school administrators are affectionate but their affections fall short of adding professionally in prospective teachers' competence.

The above discussion leads to conclude that a frequent interaction between schools and university beyond teaching practice with much broader base is required to understand teaching practice as win-win opportunity for both school and university. The school administration will only extend cooperation when they will understand that prospective teachers bring improved pedagogies, innovative approaches and modern resources to classroom which is a value addition to the on-going school efforts of providing learning environment conducive for their students. University faculty should make sure visible benefits for schools in the form of training of teachers, participation in designing courses and frequent guest lectures by school teachers and administration.

Student attitude towards prospective teachers. The students showed interest and motivation in learning through innovative teaching methods used by prospective teachers. Although at times this created discipline and class management issues for prospective teachers. The acceptance of prospective teachers by students was subject to cooperative teachers' behavior towards prospective teachers. In cases where cooperating teacher was supportive, prospective teacher took relatively less time in generating acceptability for them.

Prospective teachers also realized that their unusual expectation form students also created discomfort in their relations with students. The schools did not provide any support to students for doing their class activities and project work. This created stress for students when insisted to complete assigned work by the prospective teacher. Prospective teachers gradually learned to make their expectation realistic and doable for students.

The direct interaction between prospective teachers and students helped prospective teachers making their expectations realistic and understanding students. Innovation at a pace and form which is absorbable for the students. Prospective teachers should understand that acceptance among students is a function of cooperating teacher's support and school administration support to an extent but prospective teachers themselves are the key to develop chemistry between them and students through the competence in subject, personality traits and classroom behavior.

Mentoring by cooperating teacher and supervisor. Teaching practice can best be utilized if it encourages prospective teachers to become a teacher of their choice rather than forcing them to become replica of cooperating teacher. This can only be realized if cooperating teacher give respect and provide space to prospective teachers to teach the way which deems suitable to them. Cooperative teachers' role is to support them in realizing their goals instead setting goals for them. The results revealed that cooperating teacher failed to make this distinction and despite being very cooperative they were limitedly successful in grooming prospective teachers.

The effective utilization of cooperative teachers in teaching practice requires pre-practice orientation of cooperating teachers, clear understanding of NOT TO DO by cooperating teachers and handling insecurity from prospective teachers. Instead of assuming cooperative-prospective teacher relationship as one-way it should be understood as mutually beneficial state. The practice guides developed by HEC-TEP jointly can be improved to address these issues. A listing of roles without understanding the philosophy behind these roles leads to interpretations of choice on the part of cooperating teachers which at times may not conform to the purpose of teaching practice.

Recommendations

The study recommended some actions to address challenges faced by prospective teachers. Prospective teachers trained with innovative pedagogies are facing challenges to demonstrate their strategies in less supportive environment of schools. The provision of facilities in the classrooms, instructional needs along with administration support is recommended to facilitate prospective teachers in using flexible teaching techniques as per their skills.

The school facilities like availability of furnish library, well equipped computer labs and provision of stationary can help in transforming traditional methods with more engaging activities. Moreover, neat and clean water and sanitation facilities are recommended to strengthen school environment with better reading and hygienic facilities.

The authoritative attitude of administrators in schools and cooperative teachers in schools are also creating hurdles in the path of prospective teachers to use innovative pedagogies. It is recommended to increase acceptability of prospective teachers in schools, guidance from cooperative teachers and supportive attitude of school leaders to help them in using their teaching strategies as per their ease.

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