

## Student's Assessment of Internship Programme. A Case of College of Agriculture Education, Mampong-Ashanti of University of Education, Winneba

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### Abstract

Teaching is the key to all successes in our educational system, especially as it encapsulates all that that to do with the training of human resource in various fields to meet the work force base of every country. That is why the teacher needs to be properly educated and trained for professional efficiency, and inculcated with not only a positive attitude that will enable an individual go through the training properly but also come out well equipped to assume his/her responsibilities in educational facilities. In this regard Internship Programmes have to be thoroughly studied due to their import in the facilitation of learning to teach. The paper is a descriptive survey which sought to assess the internship programme by students. This study was conducted in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies of the Faculty of Agriculture Education, a campus of the University of Education, Winneba. The sample comprised of 208 students who were on teaching practice (internship) programme for 2011/2012 academic year. These students were drawn through simple random sampling. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The instrument for data collection was a 45- item questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument was validated and an internal consistency of 0.89(89%) was calculated using Cronbach Alpha techniques. Data was analyzed using means and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed that the adoption of all the effective strategies for improving students' internship programme, such as, practical preparation of mentees for teaching; innovative strategies to solve the challenges faced by the programme, will positively affect teachers' practical preparation for internship programme. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made: that partnership schools should be more accessible to the mentee and the supervisor; that the government should subsidize the cost involved in undertaking the programme. The study established the need for the University to provide regular mentorship training for mentors and to create the awareness to provide adequate motivation for mentors. Lastly, the collaboration of the University and partnership schools to provide good accommodation and adequate teaching and learning materials will make interns capable professionals to impact on their future delivery of teaching that will be effective and comprehensible to all students in educational institutions.

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**Keywords:** internship programme, theoretical and practical preparation, mentees, mentors, teaching practice, on campus and off campus

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### INTRODUCTION

The global claim that education is a major, sure and potent instrument for the attainment of sustainable development in all human society today cannot be overemphasized. Ghana is no exception to the value of Teacher Education as one of the most significant aspects of any country's education. Thus Education develops the country's human resources upon which the nation draws its doctors, lawyer's engineers, religious leaders and a countless number of work force. It can be gleaned from this fact the utmost importance of teacher education. Owolabi (1987)

opines that "Education is the process of learning to live as a useful and acceptable member of a society who needs to learn and share the customs, beliefs and values of that society". Owolabi shares the belief of the proponents of the human capital theory which states "that education raises the productivity and income of workers by providing workers with specific knowledge and skills and develops their general reasoning work and society are also induced by classroom education".

Teaching is seen by many as an attempt to help someone acquire or develop some skill, attitude, knowledge, idea or appreciation of knowledge gained. In other words, the teacher's task is to create or influence desirable changes in behaviour, or in tendencies toward behavior, in his students. Owusu Mensah (2002) also contends that "teaching occupies a central position in our education system and as a result teachers are expected to affect positive changes in the students they teach." All these attest to the fact that teaching is the key to all successes in our educational system, especially in training personnel in various areas of the work force.

However, the teacher needs to be properly educated and trained for professional efficiency, and inculcated with not only a positive attitude that will enable him/her go through the training properly but also come out well equipped for the responsibility ahead. Many nations have solved many of their problems through effective classroom instructional activities. Teacher educators place high premium on teaching practice, which takes the form of structured on-campus (campus based experiences) and off campus (field experiences) teaching strategies designed to give student-teachers opportunities to practice various aspects of teaching under the guidance and supervision of experienced teachers.

Wallance (1991) limits the usage of the term 'education' to only the field-experience components of the training process, and defines it as "the opportunity to give the trainee the specialized skills to develop and improve his professional practice in the context of a real classroom, usually under some form of guidance or supervision". For Olaitan and Agusiobo (1992), practice teaching is an experience of guided teaching in which the student teacher assumes increasing responsibility for directing the learning of a group of pupils over a specific period of time.

It is against this background that Teacher Training Colleges and Universities' managing teacher Education programmes were purposely established throughout Ghana, with the aim of providing high quality professional teacher education at the tertiary level. For the trainee teachers to carry out their duties effectively, emphasis is placed on both professional and academic preparations. The professional preparations include the study of Education, Methods of teaching specified subjects and project work. The academic preparation on the other hand involves the study of teaching subjects such as English language, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Religious and Morale education, Social Studies, Music and Dance and Physical education. As Dzobo (1972) puts it, there are two major aspects to the preparation of teachers, and these are the academic and professional preparations. To qualify as

a teacher one must be well versed in the subject content areas as well as undergo a professional preparation which will give him/her special competence in the art of teaching. Trainee teachers are also exposed to "On-Campus" teaching practice (Pre-internship Seminar) organized on campus during which a teacher trainee role play as a teacher to his classmates in simulated classroom situation under the supervision of subject lecturers. This process runs through the third year second semester programme. The teacher trainees then proceed to "Off-Campus" practice teaching known as "Student Internship Programme" which lasts for a whole semester. If a student performs creditably in other subjects and does not pass the internship programme he/she does not qualify for the award of degree. Practice teaching is important as it also helps prospective teachers acquire teaching skills. Just as it occurs in other professions, a trainee teacher needs practice teaching in addition to theory in order to perform efficiently and effectively.

The teacher education programme at the University of Education Winneba seeks to prepare teachers who demonstrate excellence in the classroom, and who serve as leaders in the field of education. University recognizes that to become a teacher requires strong preparation in subject matter knowledge, the development of pedagogical skills, right dispositions, and the acquisition of the ability to make good judgement in practice. However, such knowledge and skills are incomplete without attending to the particular qualities of life in classrooms, school and communities.

There have been a lot of complaints about the internship programme since its inception in 1999 from supervisors, mentors, mentees and the people in the communities' that the students visit. Since its inception, the programme has not known any study regarding its effectiveness, efficiency or otherwise. It is against this background that the researchers are attempting to evaluate and assess the internship programme as part of teacher (mentee) preparation in the University of Education, Winneba in the case of College of Agriculture Education Mampong Ashanti.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Practice teaching is one significant experience that makes all the difference between professional and non-professional teachers. Hence the need to attach great importance to it as regards teacher preparation. It is therefore clear from the above discussion that the quality of educational programme depends on the type of teachers who implement it. As Adentwi (2002) puts it "Just as it is not proper to teach people how to drive theoretically without any opportunity to try their hands on the steer over a period of practice before they start actual driving on the roads, so also is it proper to place graduating student teachers on

teaching schedules without a period of supervised practice teaching. Moreover, Inwbong (2008) also opined that the future of any nation depends on the quality of teachers. In this regard, the maxim that “no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers and that no nation can rise above the level of its teaching staff” shows the import of the role of the teacher and teacher education programmes in national development.

It is however difficult to say that the student internship programme is organized in the way it should be and the teachers that are produced out of it carry out their duties as expected of them. It is in this respect that the researchers seek to find out if the students’ internship programme is adequate, and the challenges and strategies to be adopted in order to make it more worthwhile.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The main purpose for carrying out this study is to assess the Students Internship Programme as part of teacher preparation at the College of Agriculture Education, Ashanti Mampong Campus of University of Education, Winneba. The study aims to

1. Investigate the adequacy of theoretical and practical preparation of mentees (teacher trainees).
2. Find out whether the method of supervision is comprehensive enough to equip the mentees with the necessary skills of the teaching profession.
3. Seek information on the challenges involved in internship programme and strategies adopted in solving the problem.
4. Make recommendation for the effectiveness of this programme.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. To what extent do mentees have theoretical and practical teacher preparation to help them perform better during students’ internship programme?
2. What problems do mentees face during the internship programme?
3. What strategies can be adopted to make the internship programme effective and successful?

### **Null Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the level 300 and 400 students on the student internship programme as part of teacher preparation of mentees and its related activities.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Design of the Study**

The design of the study is a descriptive survey which attempts to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of the population (Gay 1992). The study was carried out in the College of Agriculture Education Ashanti Mampong Campus of University of Education Winneba. The target population comprised of all the students in levels 300 and 400 from the Faculty of Agriculture Education. Simple random sampling was used to choose 106 students in level 400, and 102 students in level 300. These students who were on teaching practice were selected from six departments.

#### **Instrument for Data Collection**

A 35- item questionnaire made up of four sections was developed by the researchers. Section A was on personal data which sought to ascertain among others the student teachers’ biographical data.. Section B sought to elicit information on the degree of agreement with the item statement presented in the questionnaire titled “Theoretical and practical teacher preparation for mentees in Students Internship Programme.” This was developed from the University Evaluation form used to assess students on internship programme. Section C deals with challenges facing students on internship programme. Section D delineates strategies to improve students’ internship programme. A modified **likert scale** was used and the weightings were, Strongly **Disagree** (SD) =5; Disagree (A) =4; Uncertain (UN) =3, Agree (A) =2, Strongly Agree (SA) =1. The average of these points is  $3.0 (5+4+3+2+1) = \frac{15}{5} = 3$ . This was used in data analysis.

The researchers distributed the questionnaire with the help of lecturers who supervised students on teaching practice. There was a 100% response rate since the lecturers collected them soon after administering them while on location.

#### **Reliability of the Instrument**

The instrument was trial tested on 20 students, of which 10 were selected from level 400 and 10 from level 300 who were not used in the study. The reliability of 0.87 was calculated using Cronbach Alpha technique. This value was deemed appropriate for the study.

#### **Method of Data Analysis**

Descriptive data analysis (Mean and decision) were used to answer the research questions. A mean of 3.0 above indicates agreement with the item statement while a mean of 2.99 and below indicate disagreement. The null hypothesis was tested with Analysis of variance (ANOVA) at  $P < 0.05$ .

**RESULTS**

**Table 1: Mean Ratings on Theoretical and Practical Teacher preparation of Mentees for Students’ Internship Programme**

	<b>Theoretical and Practical teacher preparation of mentees for S.I.P</b>	Level 400 students	Level 300 Students
1	Preparation of scheme work	4.15	4.10
2	Evidence of advanced preparation	4.04	3.92
3	Exhibiting knowledge of subject matter	3.89	3.62
4	Writing of SMART objectives	4.24	4.19
5	Presenting lesson on previous knowledge	4.00	4.05
6	Comprehensiveness of lesson notes	4.17	4.07
7	Appropriateness of activities	3.92	4.00
8	Adequacy of application	4.10	4.28
9	Use of teaching materials	4.24	4.38
10	Presenting lesson systematically	4.33	4.23
11	Effective questioning	4.25	4.15
12	Engaging students in lesson delivery	3.93	3.96
13	Managing classroom effectively	4.64	4.60
14	Communicating well in lesson delivery	4.46	4.43
15	Lesson closures	4.37	4.29

Table 1 reveals that the mean ratings of the student’s shows that the respondents scored 3.0 and above, showing that all the respondents agreed that all the listed items are the adequacy nature of theoretical and practical teacher preparation of mentees for Students Internship Programme.

**Table 2: Mean Ratings on the Challenges facing students on Internship programme in College of Agriculture Education of University of Education, Winneba**

S/No	Items focusing on the challenges’ facing students internship	400 level	300 level
16	Difficulty in selecting schools for the programme	4.04 (Agree)	3.73 (Agree)
17	Difficulty in getting mentors	3.69(Agree)	3.21(Agree)
18	Poor attitude of partnership schools towards the programme	3.23(Agree)	2.88(Agree)
19	Inadequate accommodation for the mentees		
20	Inadequate supervision of mentees’ work	4.15 (Agree)	4.08 (Agree)
21	Inadequate mentors’ allowance	3.19 (Agree)	3.33 (Agree)
22	Poor attitude of mentees towards the practice	3.65 (Agree)	3.57 (Agree)
23	Inadequate teaching and learning materials	2.42 (Disagree)	2.71 (Disagree)
24	Lack of workshops for practical work	3.19 (Agree)	2.54 (Disagree)
25	High cost involved in pursuing the programme	4.19 (Agree)	3.29 (Agree)
		2.96 (Disagree)	3.29 (Disagree)

Table 2 reveals that mean ratings of the students (levels 400 & 300) shows that most respondents scored 3.0 above showing agreement to the items listed. However there were differences in opinion expressed in item listed 18, and 25. Moreover, respondents were in disagreement with the item listed in 22 (poor attitude of mentees towards the programme).

**Table 3: ANOVA for challenges involved in the Students Internship Programme**

Source of variation	ss	df	ms	f	p-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.198017	1	0.198017	0.316188	0.579593	4.300949
Within Groups	13.77778	22	0.626263			
Total	13.9758	23				

Table 5 above shows that F-calculated is less than the F-Critical. Thus we fail to reject the null hypothesis of significant difference. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the two groups.

**Table 4: Mean Ratings on Strategies for Improving Students Internship Programme**

S/No	Items on Strategies to improve students Internship programme	400 level	300 level
26	Well organized workshops for all stakeholders in the programme	3.50 (Agree)	3.05 (Agree)
	Effective training of mentors		
27	Adequate teaching periods for mentees	3.96(Agree)	2.86(Disagree)
28	Effective supervision of mentees by mentors etc	4.39(Agree)	3.77 (Agree)
29	Adoption of pre-observation conferences for mentors and mentees’ supervision	4.61 (Agree)	4.05 (Agree)
30	Post observation conference during supervision	4.36 (Agree)	3.59 (Agree)
	Informal observation conference		
31	Establishment of cordial relationships between mentee and mentor	4.04 (Agree)	3.50 (Agree)
	Formal interactions		
32		4.21 (Disagree)	4.00 (Disagree)
33		4.43 (Agree)	3.32 (Disagree)
34		4.96 (Agree)	4.64 (Agree)
35			
		2.82 (Disagree)	4.05 (Disagree)

Table 4 reveals that the mean ratings of the students shows that respondents scored 3.0 and above showing most respondents agreed that the items listed are the various strategies adopted currently to improve the

students internship programme except in items listed 27 (effective training of mentors) where there were differences in opinion expressed.

Table 5: ANOVA for Strategies to Improve Students Internship Programme

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	2.146188	1	2.146188	1.780006	0.194671	4.259677
Within Groups	28.93723	24	1.20572			
Total	31.08347	25				

Table 5 above shows that F-Calculated is less than the F-Critical. Thus we fail to reject the null hypothesis of significant difference. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the two groups.

## DISCUSSIONS

In Table 1, the mean ratings of the respondents level 400 and 300 students indicated that there is generally adequate theoretical and practical teacher preparation of mentees for students internship programme at the College of Agriculture Education of University of Education, Winneba. This assessment by students who took part in teaching practice both On-Campus and Off-Campus Teaching Practice is in agreement with what Tamakloe (1999) and Pecku (1998) pointed out that teacher education must now move away from under emphasis on theory to pedagogy which transmits adequate teaching skills to enable the trainee deal effectively with the practical classroom experiences. Ahiatrogah (2001) wrote that Teaching Practice (Students Internship Programme) is an essential component of any teacher training course. While Owusu-Mensah (2002) and Adentwi (2002) contended that teacher competency is an indispensable factor in the successful teaching and learning process that should go in schools.

For the objectives of teacher education to be achieved, more emphasis should be placed on the practical preparation of teachers. In Ghana, the guidelines for implementation of Basic Teachers Education Policy states that a competent teacher should possess among others, certain professional knowledge and skills which are directly related to the day to-day work of teaching; ability in planning, organizing and providing instruction, as well as making scientific analysis of situations as they arise (GES 2003). Adentwi (2002) posits that teacher trainees should be sent out for the teaching practice (internship programme) only after they have demonstrably mastered the skills and techniques of the effective teaching after sufficient exposure to micro-teaching and peer-group teaching experience. In table 2, the mean ratings of the respondents of level 300 and 400 students agreed that there are a lot of challenges facing Teaching Practice (Students Internship Programme) except on the issue of poor attitude of students towards the programme where all

the respondents disagreed with its existence but had a different opinion as to the high cost involved in undertaken this programme. Most of these challenges attest to Owusu Mensah (2002), Adentwi (2002) and Ahiatrogah (2001) assertion that student teachers are not usually exposed to the wide spectrum of administrative work and extra curriculum activities that they will be required to perform when they pass out as qualified teachers. The ANOVA mean ratings of level 400 and 300 students revealed that there is no statistical significant difference.

In response to table 4 all the respondents agreed that all the stipulated strategies were being pursued to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the internship programme (CETDAR 2009). This shows the total agreement with their mean ratings.

One could therefore conclude that if all the stated strategies are vigorously pursued there is no doubt that Students Internship Programme would be effective and successful as a major component of teacher preparation in ensuring quality teacher education.

## CONCLUSION

The achievement of quality teacher education would be meaningless, visionless and unachievable without adequate teacher preparation of the teacher trainee who would impart the knowledge to prospective learners. The study has established effectiveness and efficiency of the programme, meaning that requisite skills have been offered the interns who enrolled in the Students Internship Programme at the Mampom Campus. This claim is safely made since students affirmed that the Internship programme has provided adequate theoretical and practical training for the mentees on all the items about how adequate are these to support their learning.

Regardless of the positive dimension, there were negative ones concerned with inadequate logistics for the programme. This indicates that even though the academic factors were achieved, the non academic factors relating to support services were inadequate. This calls for serious pragmatic consideration of stipulated strategies to be adopted to solve the challenges faced in undertaking the programme.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to build an effective and efficient Students Internship Programme at the Teacher Education Universities in Ghana especially at the University of Education, Winneba, the following recommendations are made.

1. Faculties of Education should intensify their collaboration with a lot of partnership schools periodically to help students get schools or placement for school with ease to undertake the programme.
2. Mentors should be well motivated for them to avail themselves of the mentorship programme of mentees.
3. Faculties of Education should support partnership schools with teaching and learning materials in order to help mentees make use of them during teaching practice.
4. Periodic workshop should be organized for all potentials mentors in order to get adequate mentors for effective supervision of mentees' work.
5. The cost involved in undertaken this programme by students should be subsidized by the government.
6. The location of school for the internship programme should be accessible to both lecturers and students.
7. The faculty should liaise with the school to make sure that their students are well accommodated.

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