Preparation for Teaching Practice Supervision: A Proposal for Paradigm Shift

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Abstract

The quality of Teaching Practice (TP) supervision in Nigerian schools significantly impacts the development of pre-service teachers. Effective supervision requires well-prepared supervisors who understand their roles, challenges, and strategies for supporting student teachers. This paper identifies the Teaching Triad in TP programme, discusses briefly the traditional role of each member of the triad, highlighting the ideal roles and explores key aspects that supervisors need to be aware of to enhance the teaching practice experience. Drawing on existing literature from online database, the paper discusses the importance of clear communication, constructive feedback, and mentorship in teaching practice supervision and provides a framework for paradigm shift advocating the integration of technology in support of TP Supervision.

Introduction

Teaching practice is a critical component of teacher education programs, providing student teachers with hands-on experience in real classroom settings. This essential exercise is considered a rite of passage for all aspiring educators, serving a function akin to the "housemanship" for medical doctors, the Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) for engineers, or court attachment for lawyers. Its core objective is to provide a bridge between the theoretical knowledge and principles learned in the university classroom and their practical application in a real-world teaching environment. In Nigerian schools, the quality of teaching practice supervision plays a vital role in shaping the professional development of pre-service teachers (Adeyemi, 2017). Teaching Practice is a Teaching Triad or the Student Teaching Triad (Aglazor, 2019; NYIT, 2019), involving the Supervisor, the Student-Teacher and the host Supervisor or Teacher. The triad is intended to be a cohesive team, working toward the shared goal of guiding the aspiring teacher to a successful completion of their field experience.

The traditional role of the supervisor is to assess the student-teacher in a classroom situation and assign marks to prescribed expected performance of the student-teacher, a feedback quasi observations is handed to the student-teacher at the end of the supervision period. However, supervisors, often lecturers or experienced educators, are tasked with guiding student teachers, offering feedback, and assessing their performance. The effectiveness of supervision depends on supervisors' awareness of their roles, challenges, and strategies for supporting student teachers. The host teacher, in particular, is an integral field mentor who is expected to provide day-to-day guidance and support to the student teacher. The triad is intended to be a cohesive team, working toward the shared goal of guiding the aspiring teacher to a successful completion of their field experience (Aglazor, 2019). The success of the teaching practice program is conceptually anchored in a collaborative dynamics of the teaching triad,.

Roles of Supervisors

Supervisor's role is not the traditional visiting to observe the student teacher while teaching and then awarding marks and written observations. The supervisor should play multiple roles during teaching practice, including mentorship, assessment, and being resourceful to the student teacher (Borko & Mayfield, 1995). They are expected to provide constructive and objective feedback, offer guidance on lesson planning and delivery, assess student teachers' performance, and make meaningful suggestions to improve teaching practices (University of Maine, 2023; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Omonijo, 2015). Effective supervisors balance these roles, creating a supportive environment that fosters student teachers' growth and development.

The university supervisor is the link between the university and the school, ensuring that the student teacher's field experience aligns with the academic program's expectations and performance standards (NYIT, 2019; Aglazor, 2019; NCCE, 2025). The supervisor should conduct structured visits to observe the student teacher, provide feedback, and hold a post-observation session (Ajaar, 2020; Akpan, 2019). The supervisor's role is to support and assist the student teacher's professional growth, moving from a role as a simple assessor to that of a mentor (Darling-Hammond, 2017; University of Maine, 2023; NCCE, 2025). The supervisor cements the relationship between the student teacher, the host school, and the training institution.

The university supervisors should ideally be skilled in pedagogical techniques and approaches. Their role involves guiding student-teachers in planning and delivering effective classroom instruction with a high level of success. A professional supervisor should possess the necessary qualities and expertise to support and mentor student-teachers in various aspects of education.

The Cooperating Teacher (Host Teacher)

The cooperating teacher is an experienced professional who serves as a crucial day-to-day field mentor (Aglazor, 2019; Al-Mekhlafi, 2025; Scranton, 2023). The host teacher is the student teacher's guide within the school, providing regular, informal, and constructive feedback on a daily basis (University of Maine, 2023; Al-Mekhlafi, 2025; Scranton, 2023). The host teacher responsibilities include offering guidance on instructional design and classroom management, introducing the student teacher to the school's social dynamics, and helping the student teacher integrate into the school community (Aglazor, 2019; Al-Mekhlafi, 2025; Scranton, 2023). Their assessment of the student teacher's performance is also a vital component that contributes to the final grade (Imam, 2023; Iiste, 2025). The traditional model often falls short because cooperating teachers often do not receive formal training or coordinated preparation for this critical mentorship role (Al-Mekhlafi, 2025; Akpan, 2014). They are often not involved in any orientation regarding the important and onerous role they play. They are left to assess student teachers offering 20% worth of marks, at will and for many personalized and subjective assessment gimmicks. Most host schools are never compensated or appreciated.

The Student Teacher (Aspiring Teacher)

This is the central figure of the triad, whose professional development is the primary objective of the teaching practice (Aglazor, 2019; Chukwu, 2025). Their role is to translate educational theories and principles learned in the university classroom into practical application in a real-world setting (Imam, 2023; Chukwu, 2025). This hands-on experience allows them to assume the full range of a teacher's duties, discover their personal strengths and weaknesses, and begin developing a professional identity (Imam, 2023; Aglazor, 2019; Chukwu, 2025). A key part of their development is becoming a "reflective practitioner" who continually evaluates their own performance through practices such as keeping a reflective journal (University of Maine, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2017; NYIT, 2019). The student teacher for the first time finds himself facing his own class, expected to demonstrate practically his professional and academic skills blended in pedagogical presentation to achieve the desired learning outcome among his subjects. Many factors come into play, and it is the duty of both the university and the host supervisors to help the student teacher overcome the tension between expectation and the struggle to fit into a new setting.

Challenges in Teaching Practice Supervision

In Nigerian schools, supervising teaching practices faces challenges such as limited resources, high student-to-teacher ratios, and insufficient supervision time. For example, there are only 37 supervisors overseeing 422 student teachers, leaving each supervisor responsible for an average of 11 student teachers. Additional obstacles include inadequate funding, security concerns, poor school conditions, and inadequate training for the teaching team, especially the host supervisor. Striking a balance between mentoring and assessment roles also strains supervisors, leading to potential conflicts with student teachers. These difficulties lead to subpar supervision quality, impacting mentorship and guidance for student teachers. Consequently, many student teachers are ill-equipped to handle classroom complexities independently, hindering their professional development and jeopardizing Nigeria's global competitiveness in education. To improve supervisory effectiveness and address these systemic issues, a comprehensive new strategy leveraging modern tools is urgently needed.

In reality, Nigeria often falls short of this ideal due to a lack of necessary support and communication mechanisms despite clearly defined roles for each stakeholder. Cooperating teachers, despite their crucial function, often receive inadequate preparation for their mentorship responsibilities, leading to a lack of formal training in supervision techniques. Simultaneously, university supervisors struggle to provide regular and meaningful evaluations due to logistical challenges, hindering their ability to offer essential day-to-day guidance to student teachers. As a result, the teaching team operates as separate entities rather than a unified

support system. Implementing innovative and collaborative approaches is key to addressing this structural failure and ensuring student teachers receive the necessary guidance for their development.

The Pervasive Logistical and Infrastructural Challenges in Implementing Educational Reforms

The effective implementation of educational reforms in Nigeria, such as enhancing teaching practice supervision, faces significant hurdles due to persistent logistical and infrastructural barriers. Issues like frequent power outages, unreliable internet connectivity, and expensive data costs impede the efficient use of technology and digital tools. Additionally, a notable digital divide exists, with rural students and schools encountering greater difficulties in accessing digital devices and dependable internet compared to their urban counterparts. The high student-to-supervisor ratio further complicates matters, making it impractical for instructors to deliver personalized attention to all student teachers.

These infrastructural challenges are not mere inconveniences; they are crucial factors that must inform any successful digital solution. The contrasting outcomes of various EdTech initiatives in Nigeria exemplify this reality. While big-scale high-tech ventures like Edukoya failed due to unsustainable business models in light of poor internet connectivity and the affordability constraints of most Nigerian families, smaller programs like the one in Edo State and initiatives like EduBot Naija have shown promising outcomes by utilizing low-tech, mobile-first, and offline-ready solutions. The success of these endeavors underscores the importance of tailoring supervision strategies to Nigeria's specific circumstances, rather than blindly importing Western models reliant on extensive and reliable infrastructure.

In Nigeria's teaching practice program, substantial human capacity and pedagogical gaps among student teachers and supervisors present significant challenges. Many student teachers lack essential pedagogical knowledge and orientation, rendering them unprepared for the complexities of classroom management and instructional delivery. Similarly, supervisors, often lecturers, lack training in modern supervision techniques and tend to rely on outdated evaluation models rather than offering active coaching or mentorship. This perpetuates a cycle of mediocrity as inadequately trained lecturers pass on insufficient skills to student teachers, who subsequently struggle in the teaching profession. The solution lies in retooling lecturers to become reflective coaches, guiding student teachers to develop critical thinking skills essential for success in a dynamic classroom environment, rather than simply identifying mistakes.

Strategies for Effective Supervision: A Paradigm Shift

Effective supervision requires clear communication, constructive feedback, and mentorship (Hobson, 2006). Supervisors should establish open lines of communication with student teachers, providing regular feedback and guidance (Omonijo, 2015). They should also foster a supportive environment, encouraging student teachers to reflect on their practice and develop their teaching skills (Borko & Mayfield, 1995). Importantly, supervisors should develop a reburst strategy in guiding students to plan their lessons, while the host teacher gives complementary support and guidance. The future of supervising teaching practices in Nigeria should involve a fundamental change in approach. Instead of focusing solely on high-stakes assessments for grading, the aim should be to promote a continuous process of mentoring and professional development. University supervisors should take on the role of mentors, offering consistent, constructive feedback to assist student teachers in improving their skills. This shift in perspective is not just a goal; it is essential for enhancing the effectiveness and impact of teacher education programs. In the 21st century, teaching practice supervision should change

to reflect the new normal in leveraging technology in the supervisory functions of the University supervisor.

This paper proposes a new approach to training university lecturers for effective supervision of student teaching in the 21st century by advocating a shift from traditional paper-and-pen methods to leveraging technology in teaching practice (TP) supervision. By recognizing challenges hindering teaching programs in Nigeria, such as outdated teaching structures and inadequate resources, the paper advocates for a focus on professional growth rather than mere assessment for student teachers. Central to this approach is the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and Kobo Collect to enhance supervision ethically and strategically. KoboCollect, an open-source Android application, streamlines the collection of primary data and facilitates the administration and assessment of TP activities, offering personalized feedback and supporting pedagogical analysis (KoboToolbox, 2024; ResearchGate, 2021). This framework emphasizes targeted skill development, policy creation, and fostering a collaborative environment to enhance teacher education in Nigeria effectively and sustainably, with KoboCollect optimizing the real-time supervision of TP processes.

Developers/Owners

KoboCollect is a core component of the KoboToolbox platform (KoboToolbox, 2024; ResearchGate, 2021). The organization's co-founders are Phuong Pham and Patrick Vinck, who also serve on its Board of Directors (KoboToolbox, 2025). The platform's core team includes a chief operating officer, lead developer, and various specialists in back-end development, project management, and data analytics (KoboToolbox, 2025).

KoboCollect: How It Works

KoboCollect is designed to simplify and streamline the process of collecting data, particularly in areas with limited or no internet connectivity (KoboToolbox, 2025; School of Data, 2025; ResearchGate, 2021). It is a mobile-first application, ideal for conducting numerous field-level surveys using phones or tablets (School of Data, 2025). The app is based on the open-source ODK Collect app and requires a free KoboToolbox account to operate (KoboToolbox, 2024; ResearchGate, 2021).

The Data Collection Process:

1. *Form Creation*: Users must first create a blank form for data entry using a computer on the KoboToolbox website (KoboToolbox, 2024; ResearchGate, 2021). These forms can be designed to include various question types and even advanced features like photos, video, audio recordings, and GPS coordinates (ResearchGate, 2021).

2. *Account Configuration*: After installing KoboCollect from the Google Play Store, the user must configure the app on their device with their KoboToolbox account's server URL, username, and password (KoboToolbox, 2024, 2025; School of Data, 2025). For multiple devices, a QR code can be generated from a manually set up device to configure others (KoboToolbox, 2025).

3. *Data Collection*: A device must be connected to the internet to download the 2. 3. 4. blank forms from the KoboToolbox server (KoboToolbox, 2025; School of Data, 2025). Once the blank form is on the device, data can be collected offline without a continuous internet connection (KoboToolbox, 2024; School of Data, 2025). This is particularly useful for students conducting research projects (ResearchGate, 2021).

4. *Submission*: After data has been collected and finalized, the device must be reconnected to the internet to send the finalized forms to the KoboToolbox server (KoboToolbox, 2025;

School of Data, 2025). The collected data can then be visualized, analyzed, shared, and downloaded from the user's KoboToolbox account online (KoboToolbox, 2024).

Benefits and Advantages of Integrating Technology in TP Supervision

The integration of KoboCollect into teaching practice supervision offers several benefits and advantages, particularly for educational systems facing infrastructural and logistical challenges. Its core value lies in its ability to provide a free, mobile-first, and flexible solution for data collection that enhances the supervisory process for both lecturers and student teachers (KoboToolbox, 2024; ResearchGate, 2021).

1. *Overcoming Infrastructural and Logistical Challenges*

A primary advantage of KoboCollect is its ability to operate effectively in challenging field environments, such as remote or rural areas with limited or no internet connectivity (KoboToolbox, 2024; School of Data, 2025).

  a. *Offline Functionality*: Supervisors can download assessment forms onto their Android devices when they have an internet connection and then conduct observations and collect data offline (KoboToolbox, 2025). Once the device reconnects to the internet, the data can be submitted to the KoboToolbox server for analysis (KoboToolbox, 2025). This feature directly addresses the issue of unreliable internet access and high data costs that can hinder traditional supervision methods.

  b. *Mobility:* The application is designed for mobile devices, aligning with a context where mobile phone ownership is widespread. This makes it a more accessible and practical tool than desktop-based platforms (School of Data,2025).

2. *Enhanced Data Collection and Assessment*

KoboCollect enables a more comprehensive and objective approach to assessing student teachers by moving beyond simple checklists and text-based notes.

  a. *Advanced Data Types*: The app allows supervisors to collect a rich variety of evidence, including GPS coordinates, photos, and audio or video recordings during classroom observations (ResearchGate, 2021). This provides a more detailed and verifiable record of a student teacher's performance.

  b. *Structured and Consistent Forms*: Supervisors can create detailed, digital questionnaires with advanced features like skip logic and repetitive questions (ResearchGate, 2021). This ensures a standardized and systematic assessment process across all student teachers, promoting fairness and consistency.

  c. *Centralized Data Management:* Once the data is submitted, it is stored on the KoboToolbox server. From there, it can be easily visualized, analyzed, and shared (KoboToolbox, 2024). This streamlines the administrative burden of managing and compiling numerous paper-based forms.

3. *Cost-Effectiveness and Accessibility*

For educational institutions with limited budgets, KoboCollect presents a highly viable and sustainable solution.

  a. *Zero Cost*: The application is free and open-source, eliminating the financial barriers associated with commercial software licenses. There are no limits on the number of forms, questions, or submissions that can be used within a single account (KoboToolbox, 2024).

  b. *Improved Teamwork*: Although primarily a data collection tool, the platform can be leveraged to foster teamwork and collaborative learning among students and

supervisors. Students can exchange ideas during the preparation of the questionnaire, which promotes a collaborative learning environment and improves engagement outside the classroom (ResearchGate, 2021).

Conclusion

Effective preparation for supervising teaching practice in Nigerian schools requires supervisors to understand their roles, challenges, and strategies for supporting student teachers. By recognizing the significance of clear communication, constructive feedback, and mentorship, supervisors can improve the teaching practice experience and contribute to the development of competent pre-service teachers. The future of student teaching practice supervision in Nigeria depends on shifting from a high-stakes, intermittent evaluation model to a continuous, data-informed, mentorship-based approach. Overcoming persistent challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, high student-to-supervisor ratios, and human capacity gaps necessitates a new era in teacher education that embraces technology strategically, ethically, and contextually.

Empowering university lecturers with the necessary skills, tools, and institutional support is crucial for addressing Nigeria's educational challenges and cultivating a new generation of high-quality, globally competitive teachers. The suggested/recommended comprehensive framework illustrates that through the responsible application of digital tools, lecturers can evolve into not just evaluators but architects of professional growth, ensuring aspiring teachers are equipped with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for success in an ever-changing world.

Suggestion and Recommendation

Proposed Framework for Preparing Lecturer: Actionable Steps:

The following are suggestions and recommendations for institutional considerationand implementation, especially on issues of policy, capacity building, resource mobilisation and collaboration.

1. Targeted Capacity Building and Digital Literacy

The initial and crucial step involves providing supervising lecturers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively manage modern supervision challenges. Faculties of Education should create and enforce a continuous professional development program for all lecturers involved in supervising student teaching. *This program should not be a one-time occurrence but an ongoing process of learning and skill enhancement*.

A vital component of this program should focus on digital literacy, *utilizing frameworks from organizations such as UNESCO and Digital Promise*. The training should combine theoretical knowledge with hands-on practical activities, following a mobile-centric approach that accommodates Nigeria's diverse technological landscape. Lecturers should learn not only to utilize digital tools but also to critically assess their outcomes for bias and inaccuracies, ensuring they retain control and view technology as a supplement rather than a substitute for human judgment.

2. Institutional Policy and Resource Mobilization

The success of any new supervision model hinges on robust institutional backing and a well-defined policy structure. Emulating institutions like the University of Lagos, all universities should establish a transparent and context-specific digital policy for student teaching. This policy should delineate acceptable digital usage, offer citation guidelines, and provide a framework for addressing ethical concerns and academic integrity. In this regard, the National Digital Learning Policy (2023) would be of useful guide.

Additionally, universities must reconsider resource allocation to combat insufficient funding issues. Instead of requesting funds for costly traditional hardware, institutions should advocate for targeted TETFUND support focusing on cost-effective, scalable mobile technology solutions resilient to Nigeria's infrastructure challenges. This strategic initiative would enable widespread adoption of digital tools to streamline supervision processes and enrich student learning experiences.

3. Fostering a Collaborative Ecosystem

The collaboration among the "teaching triad" requires a formalized structure. Universities should define the role of cooperating teachers, equip them with necessary training, and establish appropriate incentives for their role as mentors. Despite many cooperating teachers already serving as field mentors, they often lack formal training or compensation for this pivotal role.

To address this gap, universities should form public-private partnerships, akin to successful Nigerian EdTech projects, to develop and deliver a mandatory training module for cooperating teachers on contemporary supervision techniques and mentorship strategies. This training should be complemented by a structured compensation model to acknowledge and motivate their significant contributions to teacher education. By empowering and formalizing the role of cooperating teachers, universities can cultivate a truly collaborative ecosystem that offers consistent, high-quality guidance to student teachers, bridging the theory-practice gap and nurturing the professional development of a new cohort of educators.

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