

# A STUDY OF STUDENTS,' CLASS TEACHERS' AND SUPERVISORS' PERCEPTIONS AS PREDICTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDENT-TEACHERS' TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS IN MAKURDI TOWNSHIP IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** Less research has investigated students' and class teachers' perception of teaching effectiveness even as the practice is very old and arguments favour it. The present research therefore utilized descriptive survey design and purposively selected 162 secondary school students, 6 English language teachers and 6 teaching practice supervisors to complete three sets of teaching practice evaluation questionnaires that provided data for analysis. The questionnaires were validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation from Benue State University, Makurdi, and their reliability coefficient using Cronbach's alpha yielded 0.83 (students' Questionnaire), 0.85 (teachers' questionnaire) and 0.81 (supervisors' questionnaire). Results of the study using multiple regression analysis showed a high positive correlation among students, teachers and supervisors' indicating multiple prediction of teacher effectiveness. It was concluded that the practice of seeking diverse views of stakeholders on how student-teachers do their work is far more advantageous than relying on the opinion of only supervisors as it is at present. The study recommended that teaching practice exercise should not be combined with course work.

**Keywords:** *teaching practice, effectiveness, student-teachers, lesson plan*

Teaching practice is a crucial component of the teacher training programme, which when used in an effective way enables the production of "high quality professionally qualified teachers" (Wambugu, Barmao & Ng'eno, 2013). Students on teaching practice are on the path to professionalize and therefore, expected to be highly motivated, focused and committed towards achieving the goal of the teaching practice exercise.

The importance of teaching practice makes it a compulsory exercise in all education-related programmes. As a policy, students in the Faculty of Education must pass teaching practice to be allowed to graduate. During teaching practice, student-teachers acquire practical on-the-job knowledge and must satisfy their supervisors in critical areas such as lesson planning and delivery, classroom management, effective use of instructional aids, and evaluation of learning outcomes to determine whether set objectives have been achieved or not. Thus, teaching practice is viewed as a crucial phase during which student-teachers have to display their resourcefulness in connecting theory with practice. According to Gujjar (2016), teaching practice involves the practical use of teaching methods, teaching strategies, teaching principles, teaching techniques and practical training and practice/exercise of different activities of daily school life.

The objectives of teaching practice have been highlighted by Akbar (2002) and cited in Gujjar (2016) to include making student-teachers acquire opportunities of establishing an appropriate teacher pupil relationship; evaluating the student potential as a teacher and suitability for the teaching profession; developing personal relationship with stakeholders such as administrators, teachers, parents and students; and providing them with practical experience in school to overcome the problems of discipline and enable them to develop method of control. Other advantages include developing a

deeper understanding of educational principles and their implication for learning; enabling the student-teachers to effectively plan and prepare lessons; developing skill in the use of fundamental procedures, techniques and methods of teaching; developing desirable professional interests, attitudes and ideas relative to teaching profession.

To further show the importance of teaching practice exercise, the student teachers are often supervised by experienced and professionally competent teachers to ensure that work is done according to well recognized professional criteria. Ahmodu, Shuaibu, and Mashelia (2015) assert that the aim of teaching practice supervision is for teaching practice to be effective to such an extent that the student-teachers acquire and develop practical skills, attitudes and insights, which will characterize them as teachers. Thus, it is appropriate to say that “teaching practice supervision should therefore be seen and treated as a continuation of the training of the student teachers in the field, largely by their own teachers who are now referred to as supervisors” (Ahmodu, Shuaibu, & Mashelia, p.227). Student-teachers are still learners, and like the pupils they teach, they need knowledgeable others to help them on this journey (McDonald, 2009).

The concept ‘teaching effectiveness’ depicts the achievement of the goal of teaching. Aspiring teachers or student-teachers are expected to possess a number of qualities, skills, competencies and abilities, which experts see as evidence of teaching effectiveness. These vary from place to place but in Nigeria, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) enumerate these to include effective lesson planning, lesson presentation, Classroom control, Communication skill, lesson evaluation, and an approved teacher’s personality. According to Dizdarevik (2014), an effective teacher has to demonstrate mastery in planning the lesson, establishing a positive climate in the classroom, and evaluating the progress of the lesson. In this paper, three of the characteristics namely lesson planning, communication skill, and classroom management received more focus.

Effective lesson planning is based on well identified specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) lesson objectives, which provide the roadmap for the teacher. Research (The University of Aberdeen, 1997) recognizes two types of objectives namely teacher-driven objectives and students-driven objectives. The former refers to what is intended that the teacher will do while the latter refers to what is intended that the student will have learnt, or will be able to do, as a result of a learning experience (otherwise called learning outcome). An interface exists between lesson objectives and evaluation. Objectives form the benchmark for evaluation to determine if set target has been achieved or not.

Another crucial component of teaching effectiveness is classroom management. The two sub-components of classroom management are physical classroom organization and behaviour management (Oliver & Reschly, 2007). The physical classroom organization refers to the learning climate. An effective teacher is expected to establish a positive classroom climate and working discipline. Dizdarevik (2014) recommends that the teacher should be able to evaluate the progress of the students and self-evaluate his own work.

Lesson presentation cannot be discussed without reference to communication and use of language. In fact, communication is the soul of teaching and learning. Teachers’ skills and abilities in the four major components of language namely listening, speaking, reading and writing have to be strong for effective lesson delivery. Effective classroom communication involves the teacher’s ability to express his ideas and views clearly and concisely adapting to the lesson content and style of the class (Muste, 2016). Khan, Khan, Zia-UI-Islam and Khan (2017) emphasize that effective classroom communication is helpful in transmitting education, classroom management and is the core of interaction with students in class. Under this criterion, the student-teacher is expected to use suitable vocabulary, pronounce words clearly, arouse students’ interest and sustain such interest in the lesson. Lesson presentation also embraces the overall personality and resourcefulness of the teacher. The attainment of set objectives depends on teachers’ ability to connect previous knowledge with present topic, flexibility and creative use of relevant instructional aids.

The problem addressed in this study was whether or not the perception of students, teachers, and supervisors differ regarding student-teachers’ teaching effectiveness on a four-point criteria namely lesson planning, classroom management, communication, and lesson presentation. Much research tends to focus on supervisors’ perception of teaching effectiveness. This study, therefore, introduces another dimension by involving students and subject teachers in addition to supervisors in order to get

a more comprehensive perspective and then ascertain if their various perceptions show a relationship. Less research has investigated students' perception of teaching effectiveness even as the practice is very old. There are many arguments in favour of the practice of involving students in measuring teacher effectiveness. Chen and Hoshower (2003) contend that students' ratings of teachers are the most, if not the only, influential measure of teaching effectiveness. To Chen and Hoshower (2003), therefore, active participation by and meaningful input from students can be critical in the success of such teaching evaluation systems. In one study, Olatoye and Aanu (2011) found that teachers are in support of the practice of using students to evaluate teaching effectiveness. Stevens and Marquette (1979) have confirmed that differences do exist between students' and faculty perceptions of teaching effectiveness. The question that guided study was, "Does the perception of students, teachers and supervisors regarding English language student-teachers' teaching effectiveness differ?"

It is an acceptable research practice to involve students in evaluating teachers' teaching effectiveness. In some studies (Delaney, Johnson, Johnson & Treslan, 2010; Latif & Miles, 2013; Ralph, 2003), students were asked to identify and rank the characteristics of effective teaching. In a study on Senior Secondary School science teachers' perception of using students to evaluate teaching effectiveness, Olatoye and Aanu (2011) found that majority of the teachers sampled were in favour of using students to evaluate their teaching effectiveness. In another study that investigated students' perception of effective teaching, Latif and Miles (2013) used an Ordered Probit regression approach to investigate instructors' knowledge and their enthusiasm. The same study investigated how perceptions of teaching characteristics differed among students of different genders, years of study, and cultural background. The survey involved 387 Thompson Rivers University students. The major finding was that the most important characteristics of an effective teacher include his knowledge of the subject, his ability to explain the material clearly, and his adequate preparation. The results of such studies are helpful in making administrative decisions such as staff retention, promotion, salary and tenure (Stevens & Adams, 1981). Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness are commonly used to provide formative feedback to faculty for improving teaching, course content and structure (Chen & Hoshower, 2003) and to measure students' engagement and learning (Kelly, 2012).

The importance of teaching practice to education has made many researchers to develop high interest in this area and the extant literature is full of a wide-range of research outcomes. A study by Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009) examined how teaching practice experiences influence student-teachers' perception of the teaching profession and it was found that the exercise makes students to acquire positive experiences. Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009) reported that when student-teachers experience challenges during teaching practice, it tends to affect their perception of and attitude to the teaching profession. In Kenya, Wambugu, Barmao and Ng'eno (2013) investigated student-teachers' perceptions of teaching practice assessment in Egerton University, Kenya. Wambugu, Barmao and Ng'eno (2013) maintained that "teaching practice plays a significant role in formation of perception of pre-service teachers, regarding their roles and responsibilities as professional teachers" (p.170). The main finding was that student-teachers' perceptions towards teaching practice assessment is favourable.

Teaching practice is one major way of checking teaching effectiveness. It is during teaching practice that student-teachers have the opportunity to practically translate into reality the skills and theory learnt through actual classroom teaching (Wambugu, Barmao & Ng'eno, 2013). Teaching practice exercise offers students the opportunity to practise the techniques of teaching to prepare them for the real world of the teaching profession (Mannathoko, 2013).

Students on teaching practice must be supervised. Supervision of students on teaching practice has been described by McDonald (2009) as an aspect of mentoring. During teaching practice exercise, supervisors develop in the student-teachers those skills and competencies that will transform the student-teachers into real professional teachers. They are also to counsel, correct and guide the student-teachers to use appropriate materials and methods for effective instruction. It is also their duty to provide feedback on appropriate teaching behaviour, which the student-teachers need to retain, while cautioning them on that objectionable behaviour they need to discard. At the end of their observations, supervisors prepare an objective report about the student-teacher's performance and submit to the appropriate office so that decisions could be made about the future of the said student-teacher.

It is expected that after teaching practice, the student-teachers come out better equipped to organize their teaching, to motivate their students, establish a positive classroom climate to encourage effective participation in the lesson, and to use appropriate evaluation techniques to ascertain the success or otherwise of set objectives. Of course, effective communication and classroom management are needed for the attainment of set objectives. Where student-teachers are poor in management skills due to their initial education as reported by Dizdarevik (2014), classroom outcomes are not desirable.

The common practice is to get the views of only supervisors regarding the performance of student-teachers. But some studies have sought the perception of both students and teachers to find out if a relationship exists between them with regard to teaching effectiveness. Stevens and Marquette (1979) are noted to have investigated the difference between faculty and students' ratings of traits that constitute teaching effectiveness with the results that teachers and faculty differed in their perception of important teacher traits. Stevens and Marquette's (1979) study though similar in design and purpose to Stevens and Adams (1981), it was reported in Stevens and Adams (1981) that male and female students tend to agree on which characteristics are important to teaching effectiveness. In another study, Abedin, Taib and Jamil (2014) compared students' and lecturer's perceptions on course evaluation process in four aspects. Analyzed results showed that there were no significant differences between students' and lecturers' perception on the variables measured. A comparative analysis of students' and teachers' perception of foreign language teaching in Iran by Katooli and Abdolmanafi-Ronki (2015) showed that students and teachers have varied perceptions of what should be performed in a foreign language classroom. Students clearly differed on methods of teaching grammar, the value of communicative language teaching, and the activities that are more beneficial to the students in a language classroom.

The objectives of the present study were:

1. To determine students', teachers' and supervisors' mean perception of student-teachers' lesson preparation effectiveness.
2. To determine students', teachers' and supervisors' mean perception of student-teachers' communication effectiveness and command of language.
3. To determine students', teachers' and supervisors' perception of student-teachers' classroom management.
4. To examine if a relationship exists among students, teachers, and supervisors' perception regarding lesson presentation.

1. What is students', teachers' and supervisors' mean perception of student-teachers' lesson preparation effectiveness?
2. What is students', teachers' and supervisors' mean perception of student-teachers' communication effectiveness and command of language?
3. What is students', teachers' and supervisors' mean perception of student-teachers' classroom management effectiveness?
4. Is there any significant relationship among students', teachers' and supervisors' mean perceptions regarding student-teachers' lesson presentation?

1. There is no significant difference between the mean perceptions of students, teachers, and supervisors regarding student-teachers' lesson preparation.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean perceptions of students, teachers, and supervisors regarding student-teachers' communication effectiveness and command of language.
3. There is no significant mean difference between the mean perceptions of students, teachers, and supervisors regarding student-teachers' classroom management.
4. There is no significant relationship between students', teachers', and supervisors' mean perceptions regarding student-teachers' lesson presentation.

## **METHODS**

During the 2017/2018 teaching practice exercise of Faculty of Education, Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria, the researchers requested the participation of 162 secondary school students, 6 teachers in the institutions of teaching practice and six supervisors (tenure staff of Benue State University, Makurdi) in a study that involved completing three sets of "Teaching Practice

Evaluation Questionnaire.” All participants agreed after the purpose of the research was explained to them. Purposive sampling procedure was used to arrive at the sample. Makurdi Township was used because all student-teachers were posted to schools within Makurdi Township, where the University is sited. Student-teachers combined teaching practice with their lectures. The researchers selected four of the institutions of teaching practice. Three sets of “Teaching Practice Evaluation Questionnaire” were validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation from Benue State University, Makurdi, and their reliability coefficient using Cronbach’s alpha yielded 0.83 (students’ Questionnaire), 0.85 for teachers’ and 0.81 for supervisors. Cronbach Alpha was used to establish reliability because all the items were polytomously scored. This means, no answer was considered right or wrong. Participants were instructed to respond to each of the items using a five-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1) choosing the number that is closest to their rating for the item in each cohort. Four cohorts were used. The first cohort contained items on lesson preparation, the second was on communication and language command, the third was on classroom management, while the fourth was on lesson presentation and teacher’s personality as measures of overall teaching effectiveness. For method of data analysis, multiple regression analysis was used to answer the research questions and test the corresponding hypotheses.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Question One

**Table 1: Regression Analysis of Students, Teachers and Supervisors Perception of Students-Teacher’s Lesson Preparation**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.504a	.254	-.244	.65663

Table 1 shows the regression analysis of students’, teachers’ and supervisors’ perception of students-teachers’ lesson preparation. The analysis implies that the correlation between students, teachers and supervisors’ perception of English language student-teachers’ work effectiveness in terms of lesson preparation is 0.504 with a coefficient of determination of 0.254. This revealed that 25.4% variation in English language student-teachers’ work effectiveness can be accounted for by lesson preparation.

### Research Question Two

**Table 2: Regression Analysis of Students, Teachers and Supervisors Perception of Students-Teacher’s Communication Effectiveness and Command of Language**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.646 <sup>a</sup>	.417	.029	.26930

Table 2 shows the regression analysis of students’, teachers’ and supervisors’ perception of student-teachers’ communication effectiveness and command of language. The analysis implies that the correlation between students’, teachers’ and supervisors’ perception of English language student-teachers’ work effectiveness in terms of communication effectiveness and command of language is 0.646 with a coefficient of determination of 0.417. This revealed that 41.7% variation in English language student-teachers’ work effectiveness can be attributed to communication effectiveness and command of language.

### Research Question Three

**Table 3: Regression Analysis of Students, Teachers and Supervisors Perception of Students-Teacher’s Classroom Management**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.521 <sup>b</sup>	.271	-.215	.85559

Table 3 shows the regression analysis of students’, teachers’ and supervisors’ perception of student-teachers’ classroom management. The analysis implies that the correlation between students’, teachers’ and supervisors’ perception of English language student-teachers’ teaching effectiveness in terms of classroom management is 0.521 with a coefficient of determination of 0.271. This revealed that 27.1% variation in English language student-teachers’ teaching effectiveness can be attributed to classroom management.

**Research Question Four****Table 4: Regression Analysis of Students, Teachers and Supervisors Perception of Student-Teacher's Lesson Presentation and teacher's personality**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.800 <sup>a</sup>	.640	.400	.55802

Table 4 shows the regression analysis of students', teachers' and supervisors' perception of student-teachers' lesson presentation and teacher's personality. The analysis implies that the correlation between students', teachers' and supervisors' perception of English language student-teachers' work effectiveness in terms of lesson presentation is 0.800 with a coefficient of determination of 0.640. This revealed that 64.0% variation in English language student-teachers' work effectiveness can be accounted for by lesson presentation.

**Hypothesis One****Table 5: Analysis of Variance of Students', Teachers' and Supervisors' Perception of Students-Teacher's Lesson Preparation**

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.367	1	.367	1.075	.358 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1.366	4	.342		
	Total	1.733	5			

Table 5 revealed that  $F = 1.075$  at  $df = 1,5$ ;  $p = 0.358 > 0.05$ . The null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of students, teachers and supervisors regarding English language student-teachers' work effectiveness in terms of lesson preparation. Thus it can be concluded that students, teachers and supervisors have similar perceptions about the way English language student-teachers prepare their lessons.

**Hypothesis Two****Table 6: Analysis of Variance of Students', Teachers' and Supervisors' Perception of Student-Teachers' Communication Effectiveness and Command of Language**

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.156	2	.078	1.074	.445 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	.218	3	.073		
	Total	.373	5			

Table 6 revealed that  $F = 1.074$  at  $df = 1,5$ ;  $p = 0.445 > 0.05$ . The null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of students, teachers and supervisors regarding English language student-teachers' work effectiveness regarding communication effectiveness and command of language. Thus it can be concluded that students, teachers and supervisors have similar perceptions about English language student-teachers' communication effectiveness and command of language aspect of teaching effectiveness.

**Hypothesis Three****Table 7: Analysis of Variance of Students', Teachers' and Supervisors' Perception of Students-Teacher's Classroom Management**

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.045	1	.045	.061	.817 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	2.968	4	.742		
	Total	3.013	5			

Table 7 revealed that  $F = 0.061$  at  $df = 1,5$ ;  $p = 0.817 > 0.05$ . The null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of students, teachers and supervisors regarding English language student-teachers' teaching effectiveness regarding classroom management. Thus it can be concluded that students, teachers and supervisors have similar perceptions about English language student-teachers' classroom management aspect of teaching effectiveness.

## Hypothesis Four

**Table 8: Analysis of Variance of Students', Teachers' and Supervisors' Perception of Students-Teachers' Lesson Presentation and teacher's personality**

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.659	2	.830	2.664	.216 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	.934	3	.311		
	Total	2.593	5			

Table 8 revealed that  $F = 2.664$  at  $df = 1,5$ ;  $p = 0.216 > 0.05$ . The null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of students, teachers and supervisors regarding English language student-teachers' teaching effectiveness regarding lesson presentation and teacher's personality. Thus it can be concluded that students, teachers and supervisors have similar perceptions about the way English language student-teachers present their lessons.

## Discussion

The first finding showed that all the three category of respondents namely students, English language teachers, and supervisors have a similar perception about the way and manner the English language student-teachers plan their lessons. The analysed results showed that all three groups of respondents agreed that the student-teachers' choice of lesson topics were clear. Student-teachers' selection of class activities, depth, relevance and grading of content were considered suitable to lesson objectives. It was also their collective view that the student-teachers linked students' prior experience with the present lesson and used instructional aids satisfactorily to support the lesson. Relating this finding to the literature, we state here that the parameters of teaching effectiveness in the current study are not the same as those reported in Stevens and Marquette (1979). Stevens and Marquette (1979) were more interested in the differences in the perception of students and faculty on teachers' course-related traits. Even so, they concluded that differences exist between students and faculty perceptions of important teacher traits. The current study found that the perception of all three categories of respondents were similar regarding English student-teachers' lesson preparation. This finding came as a surprise because all three categories of respondents were not aware that they were evaluating the same set of teaching practice students. In other words, the views about the student-teachers were collated at different times but they turned out to be similar. It can be concluded that if the student-teachers satisfied all three categories of respondents on the aspect of lesson preparation, this gives some hope that the prospective teachers are of good quality.

The second finding showed that students, English language teachers, and supervisors all perceive student-teachers' use of language and communication skills to be effective. The analyzed results showed that student-teachers used English language clearly. Whether they are teaching English language as a subject of instruction or using English as a medium to teach other subjects, the general expectation is that student-teachers should be skilful in the rudiments of English grammar and sounds. English is the language of instruction for most subjects in Nigeria and students who are studying it as a second language should do so with a view to taking up the onerous task of teaching pupils the basic levels. The finding of the current study is at variance with Katooli and Abdolmanafi-Ronki's (2015) in which the perception of teachers and students regarding foreign language teaching in Iran differed. In their study, the parameters for comparison were more in terms of method of teaching, the usefulness of teaching methods, and what language activities should be performed in the language classroom.

The fourth finding showed that students, teachers and supervisors all agreed that student-teachers classroom management techniques were effective. This result contradicts the findings reported in Dizdarevik's (2014) study in which teachers demonstrated poor classroom management skills as a result of lapses in initial education.

## CONCLUSION

Gathering the opinion of three different sets of people (what this study has done) provides a more comprehensive picture of students' teaching effectiveness than relying only on the opinion of one person as has been the practice. Analysed results clearly showed high correlation in the views of students, supervisors and teachers as predictors of student-teachers' teaching effectiveness.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations have been advanced

1. Rather than relying on the views of only supervisors, University authorities should hereafter involve students and classroom teachers in the assessment of students on teaching practice. This process will provide a more comprehensive feedback on the student-teachers' work outcomes.
2. Mock supervision should be organized for the student-teachers by the classroom teachers before the visit of supervisors. This will remove anxiety that usually characterizes the visits of supervisors.
3. University authorities should discourage the practice of combining teaching practice with course work as this could reduce student-teachers' teaching effectiveness.

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