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RESEARCH ARTICLE

TEACHING PRACTICE: CHALLENGES FACED AND PERCEPTIONS HELD BY STUDENT-TEACHERS

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to identify the challenges faced and perceptions held by student teachers in teacher training colleges in Kenya. A specific case of Tambach was studied. In arriving at the sample for the study, both purposive and random sampling techniques were applied in which twenty seven (27%) percent of male and female in every school participated. The data for the study was collected through a self completed questionnaire which comprised of Likert type questions, rating items and open-ended questions. The data was analyzed using the SPSS programme in which frequencies, percentages and cross tabulation were calculated. The analyzed data was presented using Bar charts and Tables. The study revealed that student teachers experienced some challenges which included confusing formats of the schemes of work for same subject, departure and arrival time which was seen to be too early and late respectively among others. Student teachers were found to be holding positive perceptions about teaching practice which included giving them an opportunity to interact with regular teachers and share everyday teaching experiences. A number of recommendations were made; which if implemented would improve the face of teaching practice in teacher training colleges.

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Introduction:-

Teaching Practice is considered a core exercise in teacher training. A teacher trainee has to undergo this exercise to enable certification; otherwise the training requirements will not have been made. In Primary Teacher training, it is popularly known as P1 Training. It is undertaken in three sessions lasting between two to three weeks per session. Towards the end of the third teaching practice session external assessment is done.

Background to the Study:-

Teaching Practice is the core of teacher education that one must undergo successfully in order to be certified. According to Kisirkoi, Wachira and Malusu (2008), teaching practice is defined as a process in teacher education training programme through which the teacher is provided with an opportunity to apply the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values acquired to the actual classrooms experience for a fixed period of time under the tutelage of their lecturers and the school (P 166).

Performance contracting requires that some research be undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge which should in turn be used to devise new applications for service delivery.

As part of meeting the course requirements a P1 teacher trainee has to undertake a practical teaching exercise in which he/she is assessed and given comments on strong and weak points in relation to his/her performance. The teaching practice exercise starts with the survey of schools to be used for the practice followed by assigning (posting) student teachers to the identified schools and respective teaching classes. It is then followed by briefing (taking student teachers through the general requirements of teaching practice), observation{where students visit the

assigned schools to collect all the necessary information on topics to handle, availability of teaching resources and facilities, population of pupils in their teaching classes and their sitting arrangement, names of the relevant teachers(head, senior and class),the sponsor of the school, and the general environment of the school}, actual preparation and then two or three weeks of practical teaching.

During the process of preparation, student teachers line up in front of various offices awaiting lecturers to go through their schemes of work, first lesson plans, suggested class projects, suggested nature corners, and suggested teaching aids among other requirements based on teaching subjects. But along the corridors of lecturers' offices, student teachers have scribbled a lot of information which, portray their perception of teaching practice preparation and to some extent, teaching practice in general. Some of the statements sampled include;

- "Maze, hii maisha ya TTC ni noma sana. Mimi nitasare hii course."(The teacher training life is not a joke;I will leave this course)
- "Mvumilivu hali mbivu; kwani nimevumilia sana na sijala mbivu"; (Patience does not pay. I have been very patient but not realized its fruits).
- "When you come to approve English, you approve your mind first before the fast hand and tutor's pen disapproves your work as eyes hide in their sockets, tears rolling down the cheeks".
- "Pray before you enter"
- "If this is the case, I will not bring my kid to the teachers' training college. Afadhali awe musician(Its better for my child to become a musician)
- "Welcome to the frustration corner"
- "Ni heri kuendesha mkokoteni kuliko kufunza English especially in Tambach TTC" (It's even better to operate a hand cart business than to teach English language especially in Tambach TTC).

The statements sampled above among others, portray the student teachers' psychological picture of teaching practice preparation and practical teaching in general. In the Book of Daniel 5:25-27, the Lord of heaven send a hand that wrote the inscription "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN" on the wall of Belshazzar's palace during his reign. On seeing the writings going on minus a visible human body, the king got terrified and curious. From the onset, he felt that there was something wrong that needed urgent attention. Just as the writings on the palace wall got the king's attention, the writings on the college walls triggered some curiosity on the part of the researcher which led to the desire to unearth the cause of the seemingly negative perception of teaching practice hence the study *"Challenges faced and perceptions held by student teachers on teaching Practice, A case of Tambach Teachers College"*

Research Design to Methodology:-

A research design provides the glue that holds the research together. The design for the study was basically descriptive.

The Population and the Sample:-

The population for the study was the 2012/2013 second year group which comprised of 405 students. Of these students, there were 212 female and 192 male.

The sample for the study comprised of 84 students which was 27% of population. This was thought to be an appropriate sample. The participants were randomly, selected after categorizing them based on: teaching class level viz: lower or upper, means of reaching the school (on vehicle or on foot),trip(first or second). Out of the 405 P1 student teachers, 57 female and 54 male students were picked to participate in the study. The subjects were selected after first identifying the number of students in every teaching practice school. As such the study considered 27% of male and female in every school.

Data Collection Instruments:-

Data for the study was collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised of Likert scale type questions where the respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement in relation the statements making up the teaching practice i.e. TP posting, briefing& observation, TP preparation(preparation of schemes of work, first lesson plans and some teaching aids),Transport to and fro TP schools and finally, Actual teaching. Analysis of the responses presented a picture on the challenges faced by the student teachers together with possible solutions to them.

There were other items which required students to rate or give the level of contentment in relation to teaching practice services offered in various academic areas within the college and where possible, with reasons for their

choices and lastly, open ended response items in which respondents were asked to indicate issues they liked/disliked about teaching practice; again, analysis of the qualitative data gave a picture on more challenges student teachers faced while undergoing teaching practice

Data Analysis:-

The data collected was first coded then analyzed using the SPSS Programme. In this programme, the descriptive statistical techniques which included the frequencies, percentages and Cross tabulation were carried out.

The data analyzed was presented using

- i) Bar charts
- ii) Tables

The Problem:-

The writings on the walls of lecturer's offices speak a lot about the perception of teaching practice preparation and actual teaching in general. The writings done by students though not directly intended for the staff 'pricked' the heart of the researcher leading to the following questions;

- i) If students were well briefed on what to do during preparation, why then would they float issues which painted a picture of frustration, uncertainty and lack of unpreparedness in preparing teaching documents like schemes of work, first lesson plans and to some extent, teaching aids?
- ii) If students had been adequately exposed to the teaching methodology, why would they worry about actual teaching practice?
- iii) If they had been exposed to the techniques of schemes of work preparation, why would they seem not ready to face lecturers for schemes of work, first lesson plan and teaching aids approval?
- iv) If they willingly chose to join a teacher training, college why then the seemingly negative picture about teaching practice?

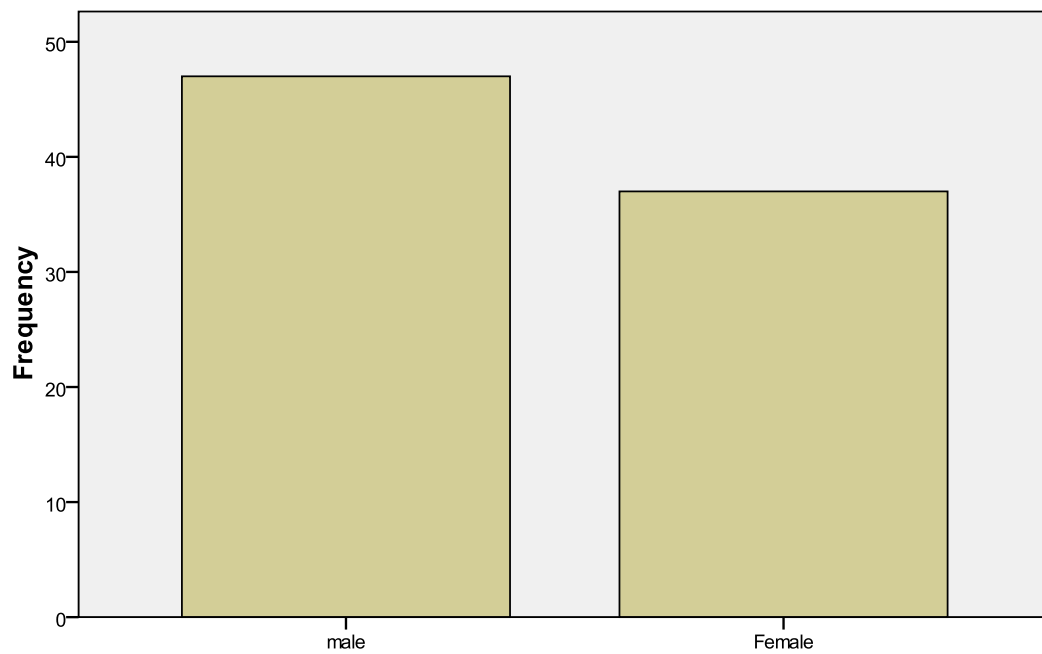
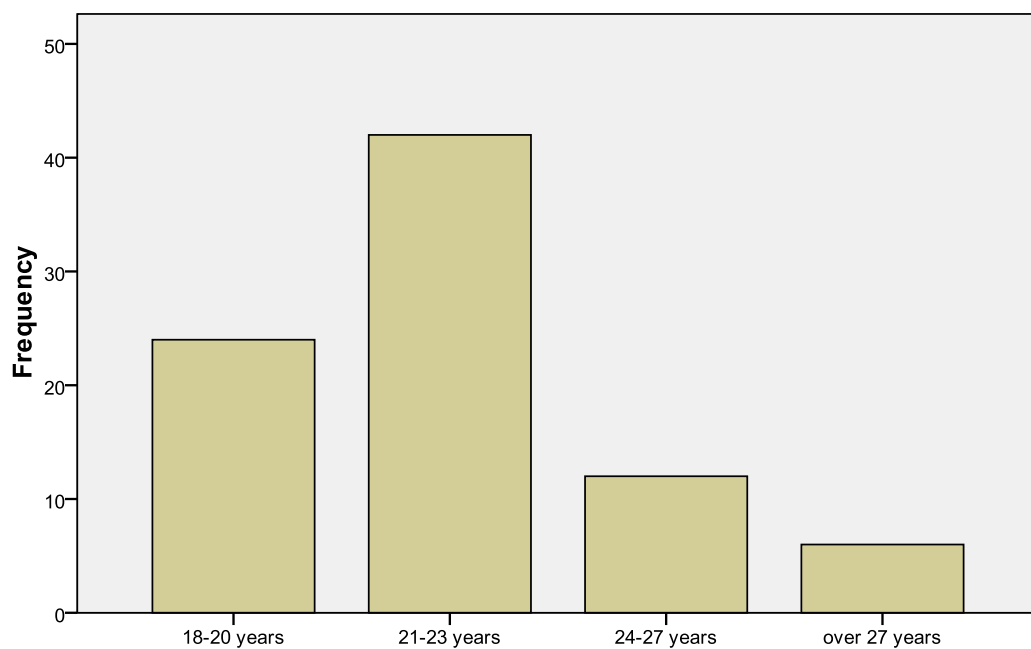
These questions formed the basis of the problem that there seemed to be issues which threatened student teachers when it came to teaching practice preparation and actual teaching. Were the issues related to perceived challenges during teaching practice or a negative perception of the whole process of teaching practice?. These were some of the pertinent questions that the study sought to find answers to.

Statements of findings and discussion of results:-

Sex of the respondent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	47	56.0	56.0	56.0
	Female	37	44.0	44.0	100.0
	Total	84	100.0	100.0	

1.0

Sex of the respondent**Sex of the respondent****Age bracket of the respondent****Age bracket of the respondent**

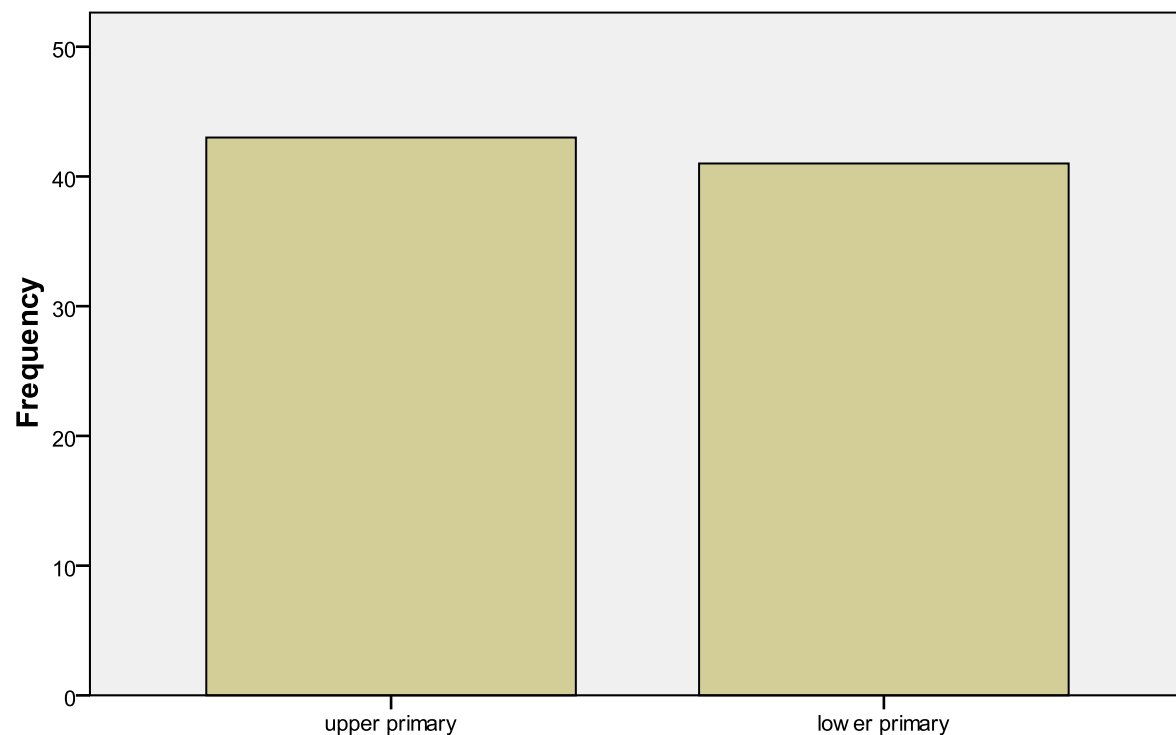
Age bracket of the respondent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-20 years	24	28.6	28.6	28.6
	21-23 years	42	50.0	50.0	78.6
	24-27 years	12	14.3	14.3	92.9
	over 27 years	6	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	84	100.0	100.0	

TP class level of the respondent(lower/upper)

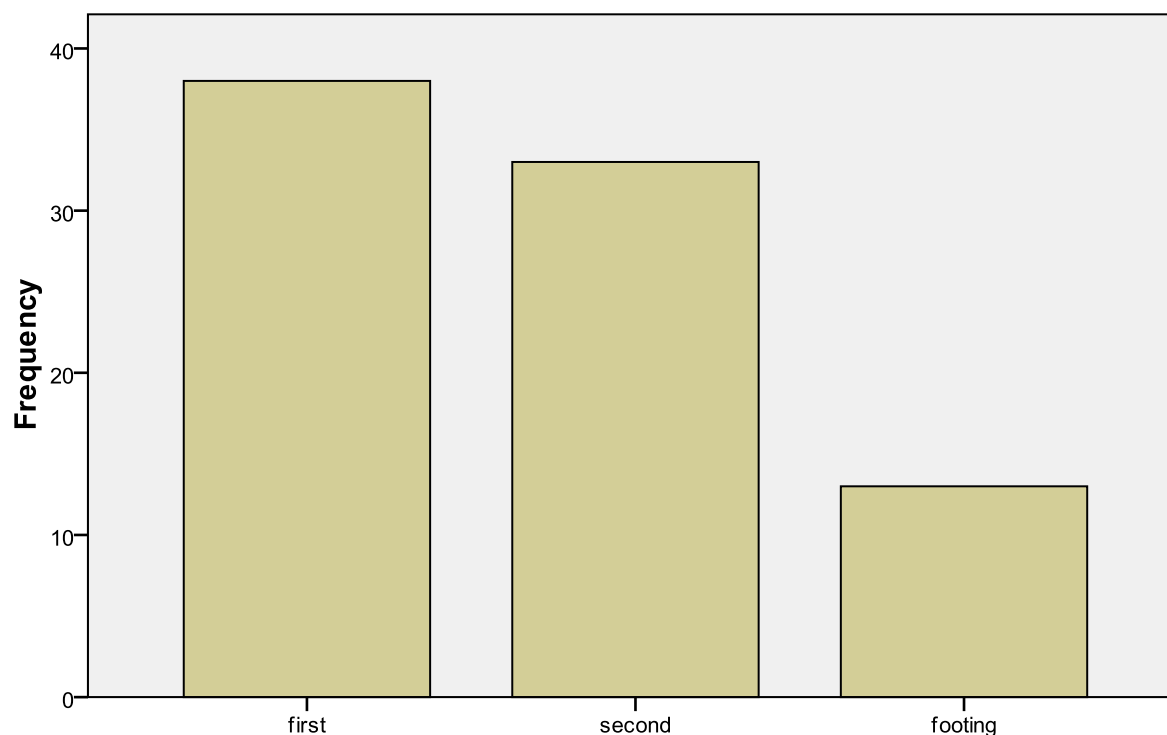
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	upper primary	43	51.2	51.2	51.2
	lower primary	41	48.8	48.8	100.0
	Total	84	100.0	100.0	

2.0

TP class level of the respondent(lower/upper)**TP class level of the respondent(lower/upper)**

Morning Trip(First/Second/Footing)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
first	38	45.2	45.2	45.2
second	33	39.3	39.3	84.5
footing	13	15.5	15.5	100.0
Total	84	100.0	100.0	

Morning Trip(First/Second/Footing)**Morning Trip(First/Second/Footing)****Teaching Practice Posting, briefing and Observation:-****Teaching practice posting:-**

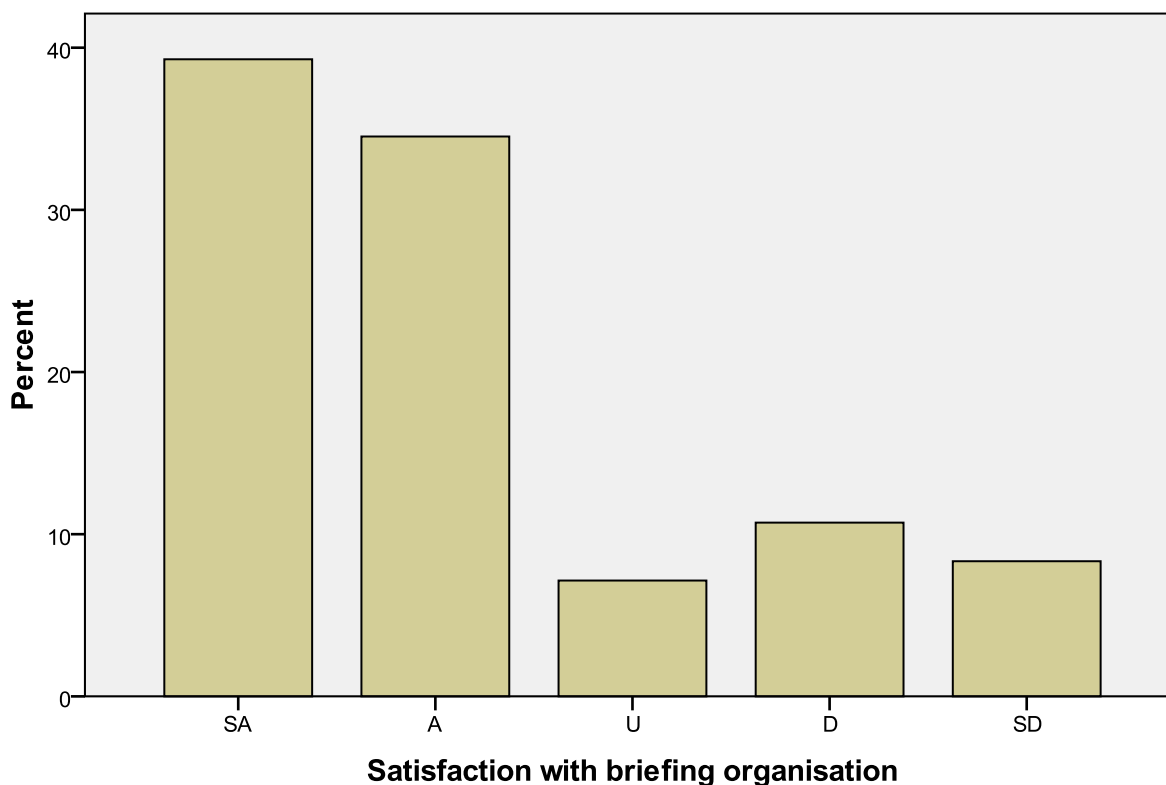
Respondents were asked to give their views on posting, briefing and observation. The study found out that student teachers were contented with the way posting was done. The random way of pairing student teachers gave them an opportunity to interact with people from varying ethnic backgrounds make friends and possibly understand them. In posting, a teacher-trainee is assigned a teaching partner, teaching subjects, a teaching class (lower or upper) and a teaching practice school. On this issue, **sixty five (85%)** of the respondents were found to be **satisfied with the way posting was done**. The remaining 15% were either undecided or opined that they were not contented with how posting (placement of students to teaching practice schools) was done as a process. In addition, the students were of the opinion that if they were given the leeway to pick their teaching partners, some would choose friends based on their ethnic and friendship preferences. This would in turn work against the achievement of national unity and respect for and development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures. Fostering of national unity, nationalism and

patriotism together with respect for one's culture are some of the National Goals of Education in Kenya. From the analysis of the data, posting wasn't found to be a big challenge at all.

Teaching practice briefing:-

On briefing, students showed satisfaction on how it is organized. They were happy that all departments were represented and that each department was allowed to complete its presentation before another was ushered in. This was supported by 80% of all the respondents. At the same time, 74% of the students were of the opinion that briefing was deeply handled and that they went out of briefing rooms satisfied. Of all the respondents, over 85% were satisfied that as they went out to their practicing schools for observation, they were well aware of what they were required to do. The satisfaction expressed by the student teachers meant that the exercise was fulfilling and organized. Adequate time is given to departments after the major non academic offices (Dean of Students, Principal's, and Deputy Principal's) have had a chance to address the student teachers. Time to ask questions, make comments and give suggestions is always accorded the student teachers. The final section of briefing is taken up by the teaching practice office where general issues relating to teaching practice are also highlighted to student teachers. They include discipline, transport arrangements and meals arrangements, general conduct during teaching practice session, handling of school property and how to handle pupil's issues. Generally, the study found that student teachers were contented with the way the briefing was being handled. This aspect of teaching practice was not a challenge to the student-teachers.

Satisfaction with briefing organisation



Actual tp preparation (Preparation of schemes of work, first lesson plans and teaching aids):-

Actual preparation of the teaching documents requires students at times to line up outside various offices. The number of students enrolling for training as primary school teachers has been rising over the years. The number of tutors has remained stagnant or increased at a ratio disproportionate to those of students. In some cases, tutors find themselves having to content with very long queues of students waiting for their service. Depending on the quality of work the teacher would wish to see in the student teacher, guiding and giving corrections may take a long time. As one student is being served many others could be waiting in the queue. At times, they may feel bored and tired.

This is the time they get a chance to put the writings on the wall. One week prior to actual teaching practice is normally set aside for preparation of all the necessary teaching practice documents.

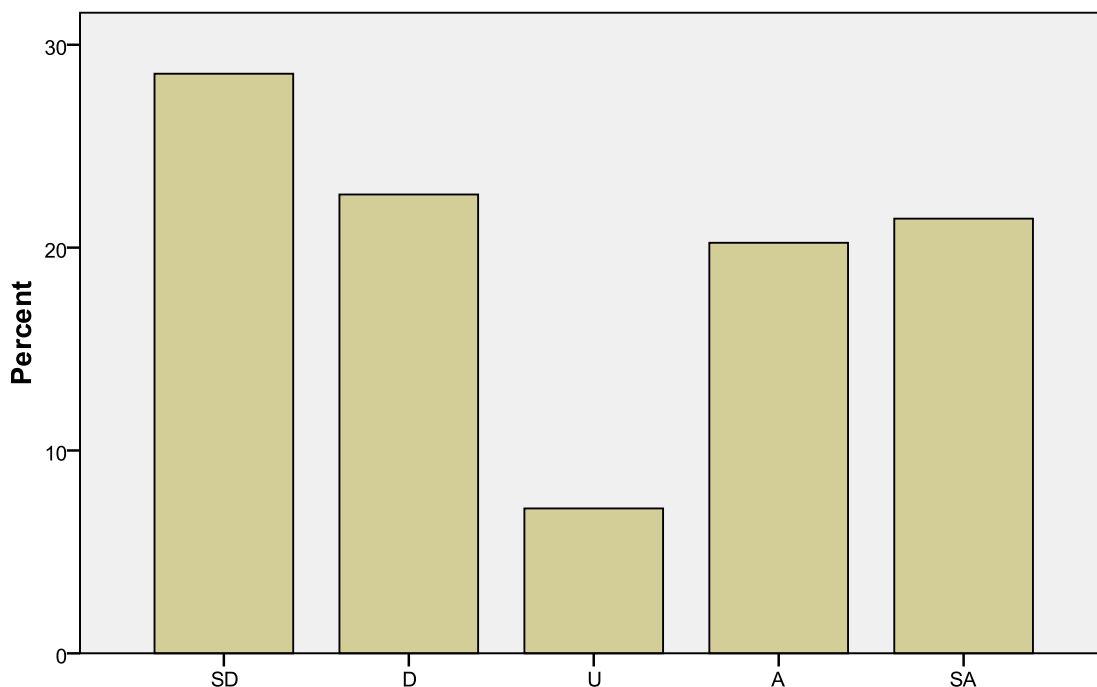
Respondents were asked if preparation time was enough, if lecturers gave adequate guidance during preparation, if teaching practice office was supportive to them during the teaching practice time, if translation of the syllabus presented them with any challenge, if preparation of teaching practice materials was a problem together with the availability of reference materials in the library.

On whether one week was enough for them to prepare, 50% of the respondents were of the feeling that the time was enough though one was to work extra hard. Those who felt that time wasn't enough formed 46% of the respondents. The dissatisfied group cited the following as some of the reasons to support their claims:

- Too much pressure was put on the student teachers to complete the work within the prescribed one-week period.
- At times, tutors were not available to serve them as they could be out on official duty or teaching. Teaching occurs concurrently with teaching practice preparation because at one given time, there is always a cohort of students not going out for teaching practice when the other one is out.
- Long queues occasioned either by the 'seasonal' availability of tutors or the large number of students to be served and the nature of subjects assigned to the student teacher to teach. It is traditionally hyped that languages (Kiswahili and English) require more time to complete.

Considering the percentage which felt that preparation time was not enough, it can be concluded that inadequate preparation time presented a challenge worth considering. But for those who felt that it was enough they said that it made students get time to relax later if they got organized right from the word Language

Preparation time for teaching documents not enough



Preparation time for teaching documents not enough

Language use by tutors:-

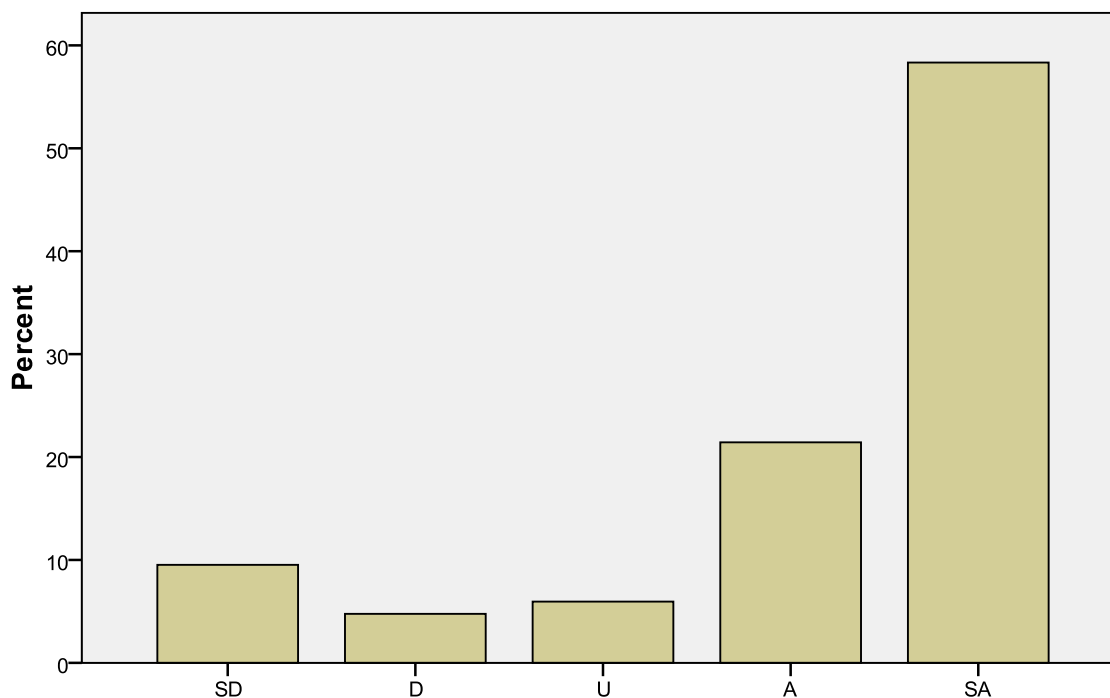
Language used to address an individual is very important in communication. A friendly language encourages one to freely and openly engage communication while a harsh one discourages. Language used by lecturers on students during the teaching practice preparation period seemed a big challenge to students. Out of the 84 students who formed the sample for the study, **76.2%** felt that some teachers used an **unfriendly language** to address them while approving their work. Some respondents mentioned that harsh language is common with the lecturers during this time. Some were cited saying the following:

- "We are not here to teach but to mark schemes of work"

- “Go back for correction” (Specific areas to be corrected were at times not pointed out)
- “Where were you when others were learning these?”
- “These are not the questions to be asked at this time”

The remaining 18.8% were comfortable with the language used by the tutors while 5% of the respondents were undecided.

Unfriendly language use by lecturers



Unfriendly language use by lecturers

Basing on the statistics above, the study found that unfriendly language used by the tutors was one of the major challenges faced by the student teachers while preparing for teaching practice in Tambach Teachers Training College.

Time spent per student teacher by tutor:-

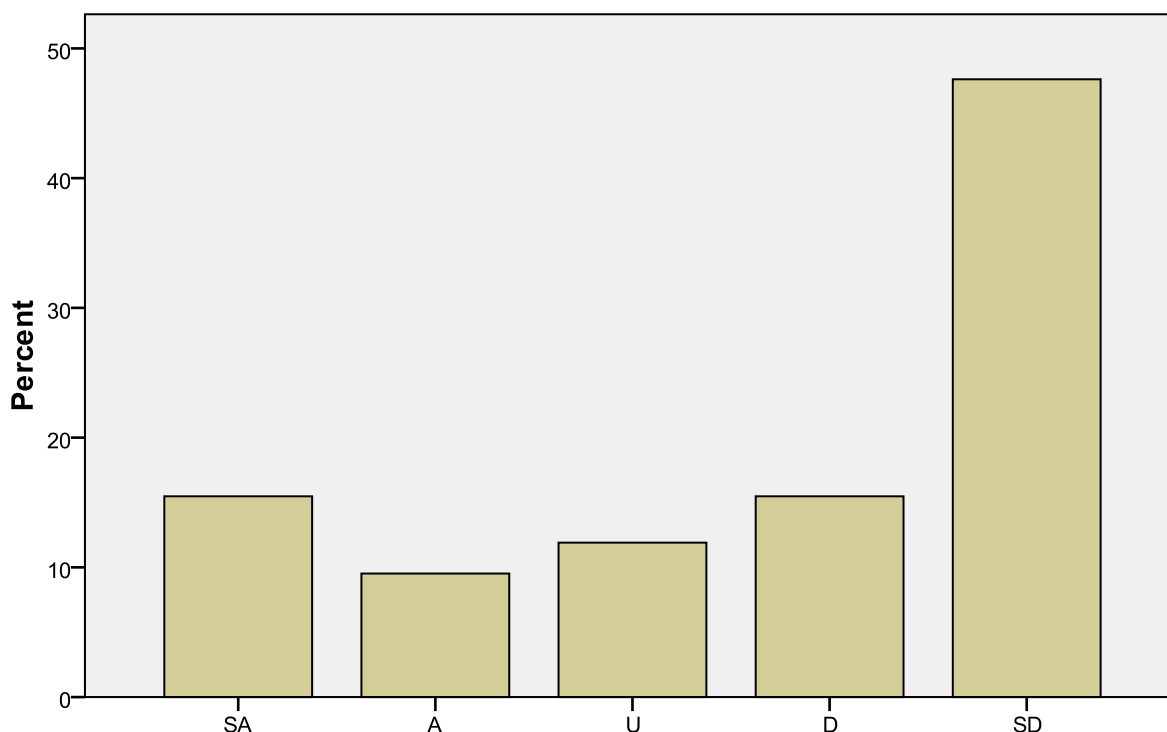
Time taken on one student by a lecturer during approval time seemed to feature out prominently.

Out of the 84 students who formed the sample, 53 of them which is equivalent to 63% were of the opinion that **a good number of lecturers took too long to serve one student**

Taking long with one student could mean that the student may not have understood the concepts related to scheming and that the teacher could at times forced to “teach” again. The reasons could be the approach the tutor(s) used to teach the concepts or student’s absence from class during lessons among other reasons. Although this is subject to confirmation, some tutors in Tambach Teachers college have harbored a feeling that they be allowed to approve

work by students that they normally teach/handle.

Lecturers take shortest time on one student



Lecturers take shortest time on one student

It is possible that the unbearable length of time spent on a student during approval could, to some extent, account for the writings on the walls. This could be linked to the saying an “idle mind is a devil’s workshop”. From the analysis of the data collected, the study found that one other challenge that the students were to bear with was the unbelievably long period of time that a lecturer could take giving support to a single student in their offices.

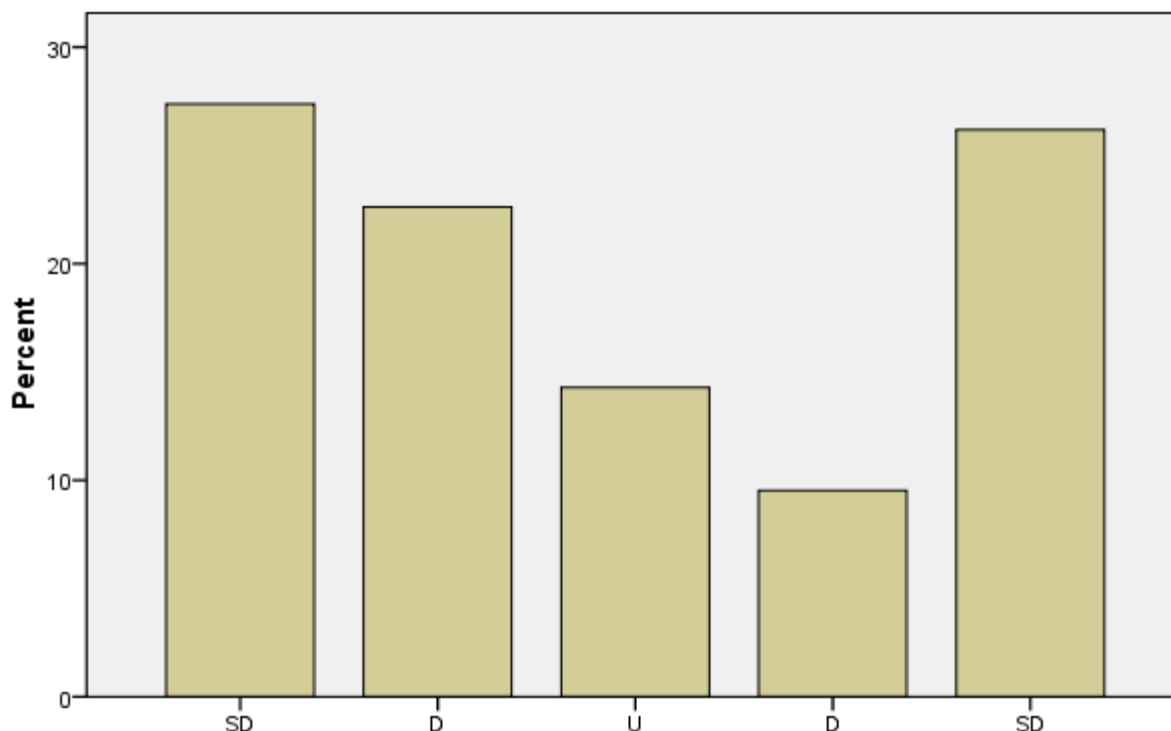
Support of the Teaching Practice office to student teachers:-

Teaching Practice office is a very important office in issues related to teaching practice.

The amount of support given to student teachers by the office during the teaching practice time is very important in guaranteeing success in the exercise. The study sought to find out the views held by the on students concerning the support given by the office. It was the feeling of close to 50% of the students that they were receiving adequate support from the office during preparation time. Reasons given to support their answer were that:-

- The office bearers were always available in the office.
- The office bearers listened to their complaints keenly.
- They try their best to offer solutions to the problems presented.

TP office not supportive at TP prep. time



TP office not supportive at TP prep. time

The office has always operated an open door policy where no one is restricted from accessing the office so long as there is an officer in it.

Those who felt that they were not being supported by the office said that the office should be in a position to provide free manila paper and allowances. The percentage of respondents who fell under this category was 34 per cent. They felt that the office was not doing enough to save student teachers who were financially disadvantaged. But this demand was seen to be beyond the jurisdiction of the office. On the other hand the office provides felt pen ink, powder paints, manila papers for making master time table and adequate packets of pieces of chalk. The first two items are provided during the final teaching practice session. From the data analyzed, it can be deduced that shortage of manila paper for making charts is a challenge to at least 34% of the student teachers.

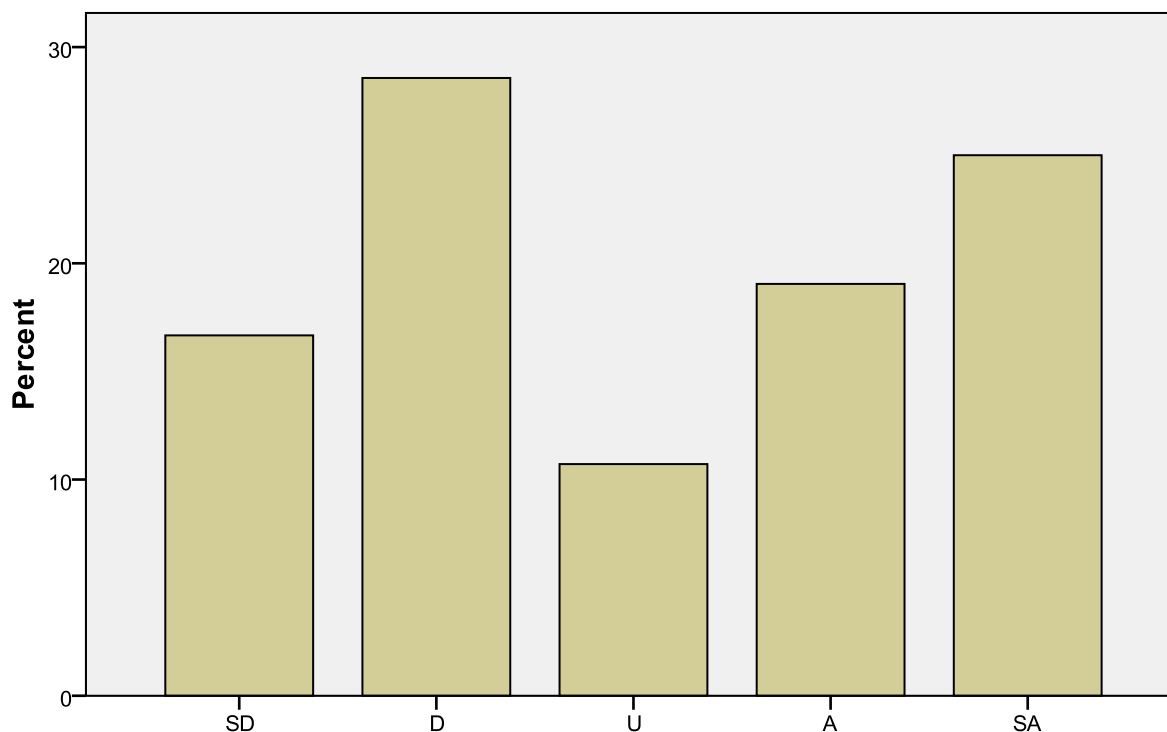
Adequate guidance during preparation is important for production of good/professional teaching documents. Fifty percent 50% of the students felt that some lecturers were not giving adequate guidance to them during the preparation time. Those who had a feeling of not being guided cited some of the following reasons.

- Use of harsh or abusive language
- Reluctance to guide beyond a certain limit
- Contradiction in the way of scheming same subject. Lecturers in the same department may be having different formats of the Schemes of Work.
- At times, failure to pinpoint the particular areas to be rectified.
- Signing the student's work at times without going through it thoroughly. Mistakes are at times discovered when assessment is on.

From the observations above, it is evident that lack of adequate guidance to the students during preparation is a challenge. This is because a cumulative 50% of the respondents harbored the reservation.

The syllabus is a very important teaching document. It gives the goals of education, the topics, subtopics, suggested reference, resources among others. Ability to translate the syllabus into a scheme of work is a great milestone in the preparation for teaching. Translating the syllabus objectives into a scheme of work was felt to be another challenge to students. This is because around 43% of the number sampled felt that they sometimes got confused while trying to make sense of the objectives in the scheme of work in some subjects while in some, they were okay. At the same time, around 46% of the respondents seemed comfortable translating the syllabus objectives into a scheme of work.

Translation of the syllabus into a Scheme of Work:-
Translating the syllabus into a S.O.W.is confusing



Translating the syllabus into a S.O.W.is confusing

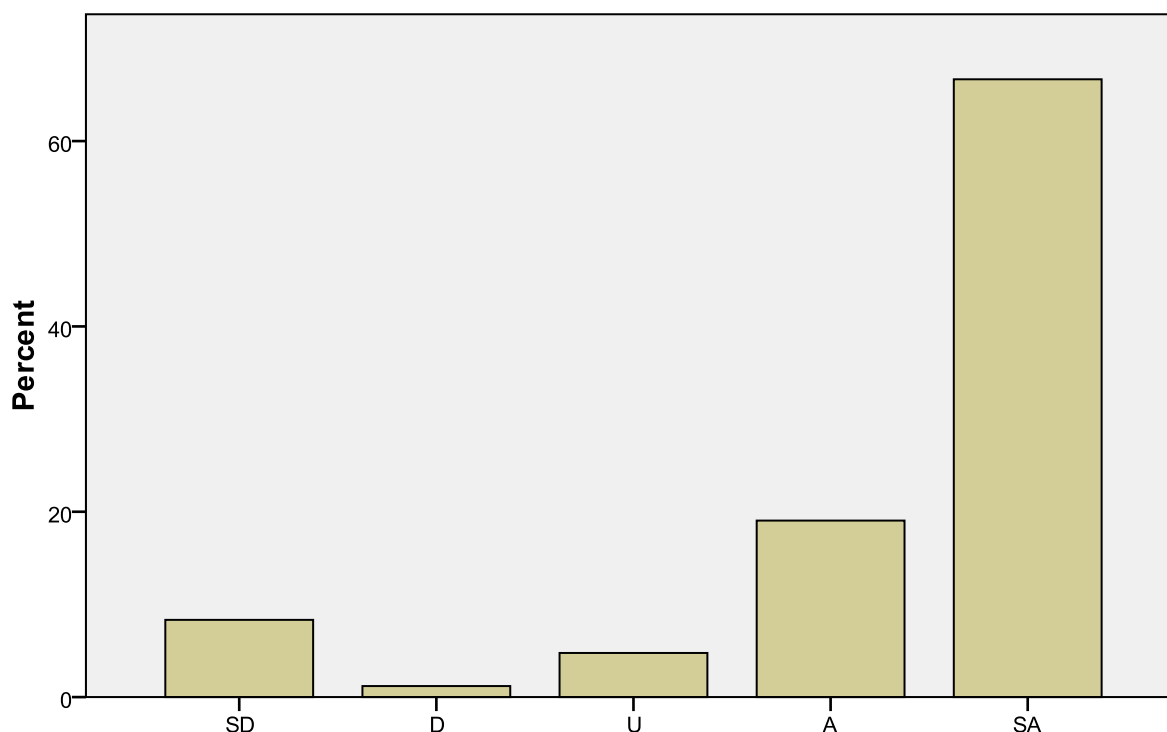
This issue could be seen from the individual differences point of view. There are students who are fast learners while others are slow. It may also depend on the approach used by the tutor while teaching how to make the schemes of work and also, the amount of practice assignments given on the same. Under normal circumstances, every tutor is expected to give their students adequate exercises on scheming and lesson planning. Frequent and relevant exercises give the student teachers a practical approach to translation of the syllabus into the scheme of work. With clear understanding of the use of the syllabus in preparation for instruction, students find it easy and enjoyable to prepare good instructions.

Availability of syllabus books/copies:-

After the student teachers have been assigned classes and schools to teach, they go out to the particular assigned primary schools for necessary information for use in preparation for teaching practice. This practice of going out is normally termed as 'observation'. After observation, they are expected to make schemes of work whose success

depend majorly on the availability of the syllabi for the respective teaching subjects.

Syllabi for different subjects not enough(TP prep)



Syllabi for different subjects not enough(TP prep)

A spot check at the college library indicated that there was only one syllabus book for every subject taught at the primary school level. It was also found out that the only syllabus book available for a particular subject contained copies of the syllabus for all class levels(from Class 1-8).Therefore, there were a total of 13 syllabus books against slightly over four hundred(400) student teachers. This is a ratio of 1:31.

To reduce the problem of the shortage of the copies of the syllabus, the library staffs normally make photocopies of the same which are then kept in the reserve section for lending to the students.

The study found that over 88% of the respondents were of the feeling that the copies of the syllabus in the library were not adequate for the student cohort at a time. Some student teachers said that they were at times forced to work in groups as they shared the few copies of the syllabus, forced to copy from others or forced to wait for others to finish using the syllabus before handing them over to them. This was therefore found to be another challenge faced by the student teachers at the college.

Though not part of the respondents for the study, the college librarian said that it was the duty of the subject teachers to place a request to the library through the Dean of Curriculum's office for more copies to be produced.Surprisingly, it turned out that some subject tutors never saw this shortage as an issue.

Lesson plan making:-

After making a scheme of work the lesson plan making follows. Over 87% of the sample reported that they had no problem with lesson plan making. About 10% felt that making the lesson plan was still a major problem or challenge to them. Those who felt that it was not a problem said that the format was always given and that the schemes of work already produced made lesson planning easy. Therefore adequate knowledge in scheming eases the task of lesson planning.

Preparation of teaching aids:-

Teaching/Learning Aids are very important in that they help the teacher pass across the content with ease. They also make learning interesting among other advantages. Almost, all subjects have a unit on teaching resources which is

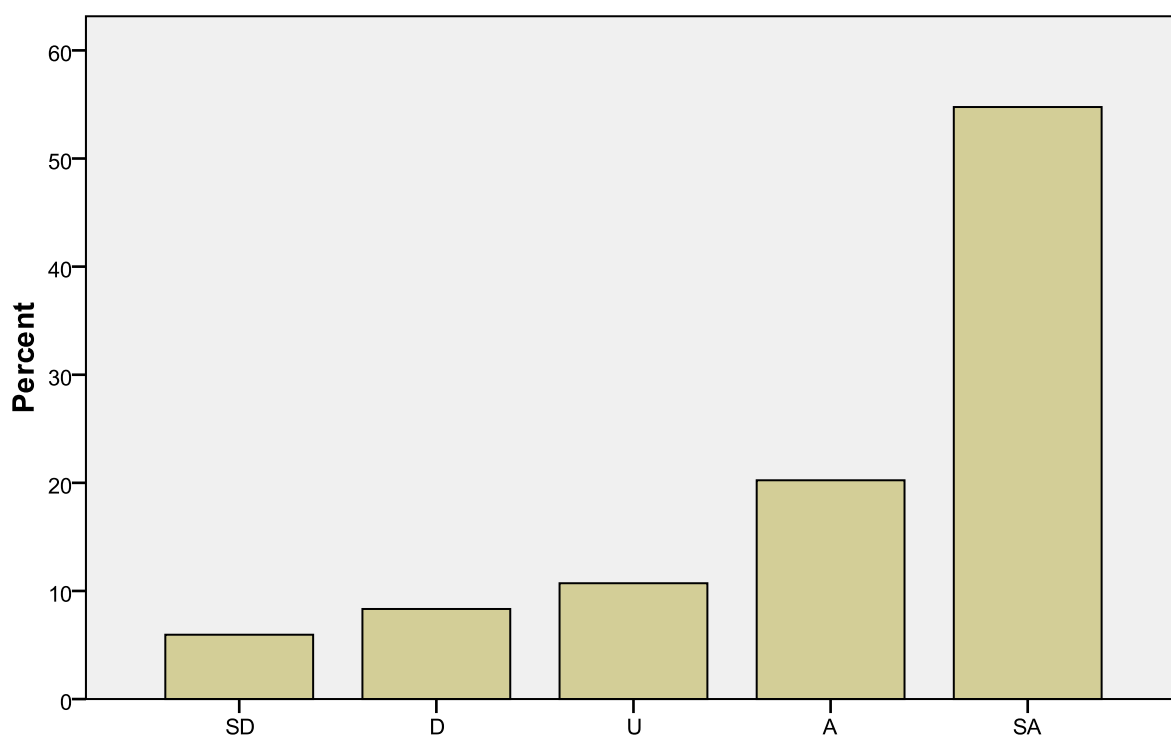
taught to all student teachers in the first year of study. For example, in Social Studies, among the resources covered in the unit include:

- Models
- Real objects and specimens
- Maps and globes
- Diagrams and sketches
- Maps
- Audio visual aids and audio resources among others.

This unit is covered before covering the area on Schemes of Work and Lesson Plans. It is organized that way so as to give the student teachers headway in scheming and lesson planning. In the scheme of work and lesson plan formats, there is a column and a row for teaching aids respectively.

The study found out that **75% of the respondents felt that preparation of teaching aids was a big challenge to them.**

Preparation of T/L Aids is a tedious process



Preparation of T/L Aids is a tedious process

The reasons which cut across the minds of many respondents was that preparation of teaching aids was a challenge **because some lecturers could not be reached to give further guidance on the making of teaching aids and eventually their approval.**

A spot check on lecturer's residence showed that around 20 out of 70 lecturers resided outside the college. Some were commuting from as 45 kilometers away from the college.

The distance and the cost involved in travelling to and fro the college could be weighing heavily on the preparation of teaching practice. Some of them use private pool transport and their arrival and departure time is sometimes dictated by the vehicle owner. Those tutors who reside within the college have a humble time to meet the students because they have all the time even up to 10 pm at night.

Besides the tutors' role in preparation of teaching aids, availability of adequate reference material cannot be overemphasized. These materials may guide the student teachers in the absence of the tutor. When respondents were asked on the availability and adequacy of reference materials in the library, 80% of the respondents felt that the reference materials in the library were not adequate for preparation.

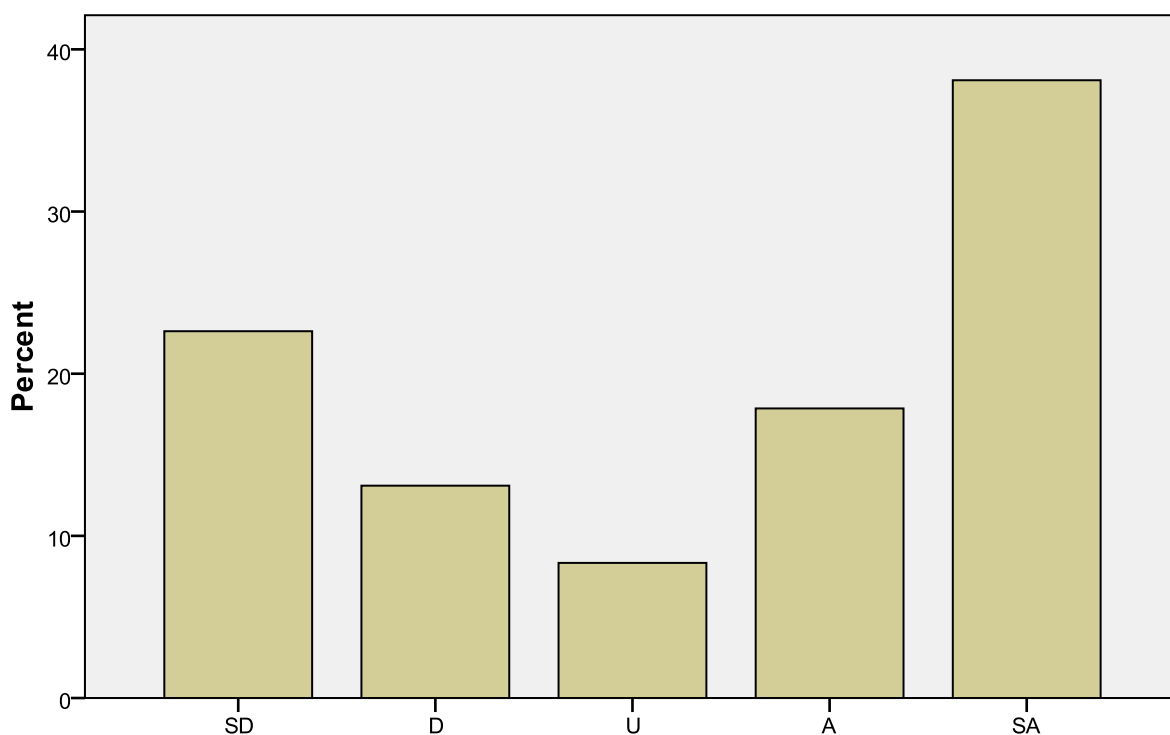
Transport to and fro teaching practice schools:-

To go and come back from TP Schools, practicing teachers either walk or board college vehicles. Those who board college vehicles may either fall under first trip or second trip depending on the availability of vehicles and transport schedule released by the teaching practice office. Those who fall under first trip normally leave the college compound at between 4.30 am and 5.00 am in the morning. The second-trip group normally leave the college when the bus carrying the first group students comes back. Therefore, there is no specified time scheduled for the second trip to leave the college. The ones who walk to school leave at their own time as long as they reach their practicing schools before the assembly starts.

When respondents were presented with items on transport to respond to in relation to the transport arrangement, the responses were as follows:

- i) Slightly **over 51% of the respondents seemed not satisfied with the transport arrangements** put in place by the teaching practice office.
On the other hand, slightly over forty(40%) percent of the respondents felt that the transport arrangement was okay. The remaining 8% were not decided.
- ii) Some of the reasons cited by respondents for not being satisfied with the arrangement included:
 - a) Time of leaving the college which may be as early as 4.30 am. The respondents felt that that time was too early for them. The number of male and female students who felt that way was almost the same. They also felt that **some schools were located in very cold zones like the highlands** and this exposed them to the danger of developing respiratory diseases like pneumonia and asthma.

Arrival time at TP schools not appropriate



Arrival time at TP schools not appropriate

- b) Another reason cited was that those who fell within the first trip were the first to leave the college at 4.00 am and the last to arrive at the college at around 4.00pm. This marches the business practice of handling issues of “last in, first out” although this one can be coined to “first out, last in”.
- c) At some point, the TP office has had to content with a good number of students who felt that the first trip was a disservice to them. They have always asked for change of transport schedule so that they use the second trip buses. Some have backed their arguments with letters from their personal doctors or college nurse asking the Teaching Practice office to allow the said persons to travel to schools using the second trip buses. Some have cited cases of chest congestion, pneumonia and rheumatism.

At times the college Teaching Practice office has to arrange for some students to be taken during the first and others during the second trip because of the number of buses the college has. There are only three buses i.e. a 62-seater, and two 51-seater buses and three 14-18-seater vehicles against a population of at times 540 students. It is also good noting that the small vehicles also transport lecturers to TP schools for assessment. At times there can be vehicle breakdown which may worsen the situation. From the above observation, the college has no otherwise but to use trips in carrying practicing teachers which may not satisfy those who may fall into the first trip.

Actual Teaching:-

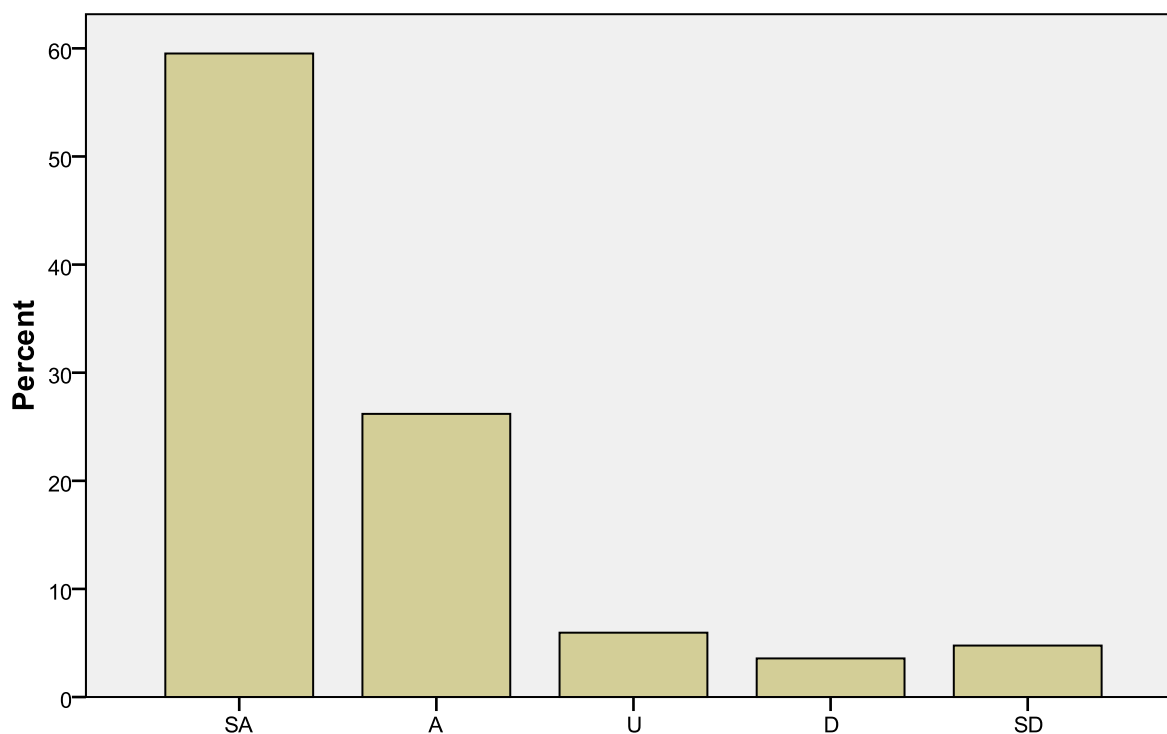
When the first year students arrive in the college, they feel that their dreams have been answered. But when some imagine standing before a class while an assessor is seated behind seeing how he is handling the lesson, they feel that they may not stand it.

On actual teaching, respondents were asked whether they experienced some difficulties when delivering the lessons, integrating the teaching/learning aids into the lesson or managing the class. Their response was as follows:-

Content Delivery:-

The study found out that content **delivery was not a problem** to most of the student teachers. This is because out of 84 students who formed a sample, 72 of them felt that they were competent with content delivery. This translates to 86% of the respondents. Success in content delivery was attributed to adequate preparation by the respondents. Adequacy in preparation included preparation of the schemes of work. With the Schemes of work well prepared the respondents said that it became easy to make lesson plans together with the lesson notes. In addition, teaching/learning aids made for use made content delivery simple and interesting.

Content delivery not a problem



Content delivery not a problem

As stated earlier, student teachers must prepare schemes of work for all the subjects assigned for teaching. First lesson plans are also made. After the subject teacher is satisfied with the output of the work then he/she appends his/her signature on the document. A student whose work does not bear the signature of the subject tutor is deemed to have not passed through all the stages in the preparation for teaching practice and they will be compelled to comply. This could be contributing to a high percentage of success in preparation.

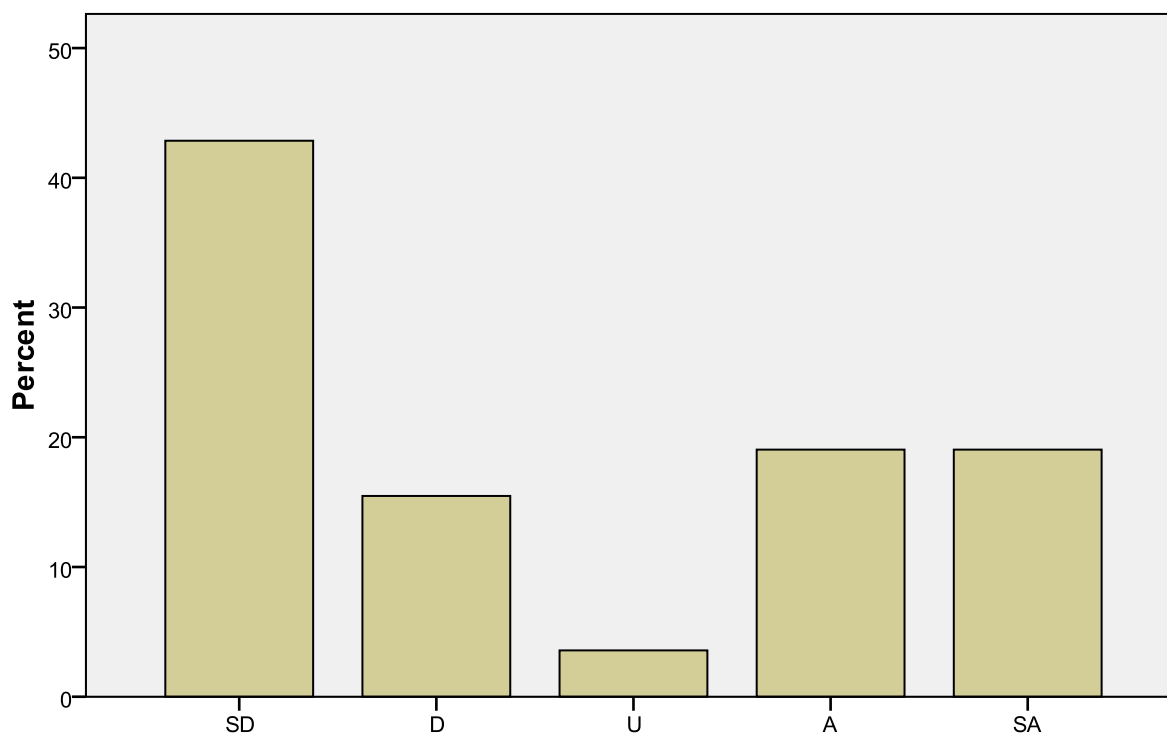
A small number of respondents which found lesson delivery a puzzle to them cited the fear assessor's presence in class. It is good to note that there is no way that a student can meet the course requirements without being assessed. The advice to the "shy" ones is that courage is needed

Use of Teaching/Learning aids in teaching:-

Introducing a teaching aid at the right time and using it effectively is a right direction in a teacher's professional development. Teaching aids make learning interesting, helps in retention of what is taught and learned, and make content delivery simple among other reasons.

Over 58% is the sample indicated that using teaching aids during teaching was not a hard task to them. They indicated that since they had indicated that they would use the teaching aids, they were compelled to look for and or make

Using T/L aids in teaching a hard task



Using T/L aids in teaching a hard task

During assessment, an assessor may try to correlate the teaching/learning aids column with what is on the ground for confirmation. Student teachers are encouraged to indicate, make/avail and use teaching aids because they are likely to help them capture the attention of the learners among other benefits.

Some student teachers felt that making these aids was a challenge. The commonly cited reason was the unavailability of manila papers and lack of endowment with the skill of drawing. However, the college Learning Resource Centre (LRC) provides an escape window for the students who perceive themselves unable to come up with good drawings on manila paper. This is done through the provision of projection services through the use of the overhead projector.

Students are required to buy fifteen (15) manila papers for use during teaching practice. These manila papers are brought in during admission. The numbers seem inadequate since there are 3 teaching practice sessions to be undergone before the student teacher finally graduates and given "powers to teach". Each session lasts for utmost three weeks. Building a positive attitude towards teaching and eventually making of charts is important in fighting the challenge of inability to draw good teaching aids. When one looks at the issue of T/L aids critically, it can be concluded that students have a share of blame to carry. They are encouraged to come with a variety of teaching aids which may include models, realia and specimens and even newspaper/magazine cut-outs to ease the problem of

shortage of teaching aids. When it comes to the approval of teaching aids, most student teachers will have the column on “Teaching aids” reading

- A chart showing Or
- A picture in pupils book page or
- None

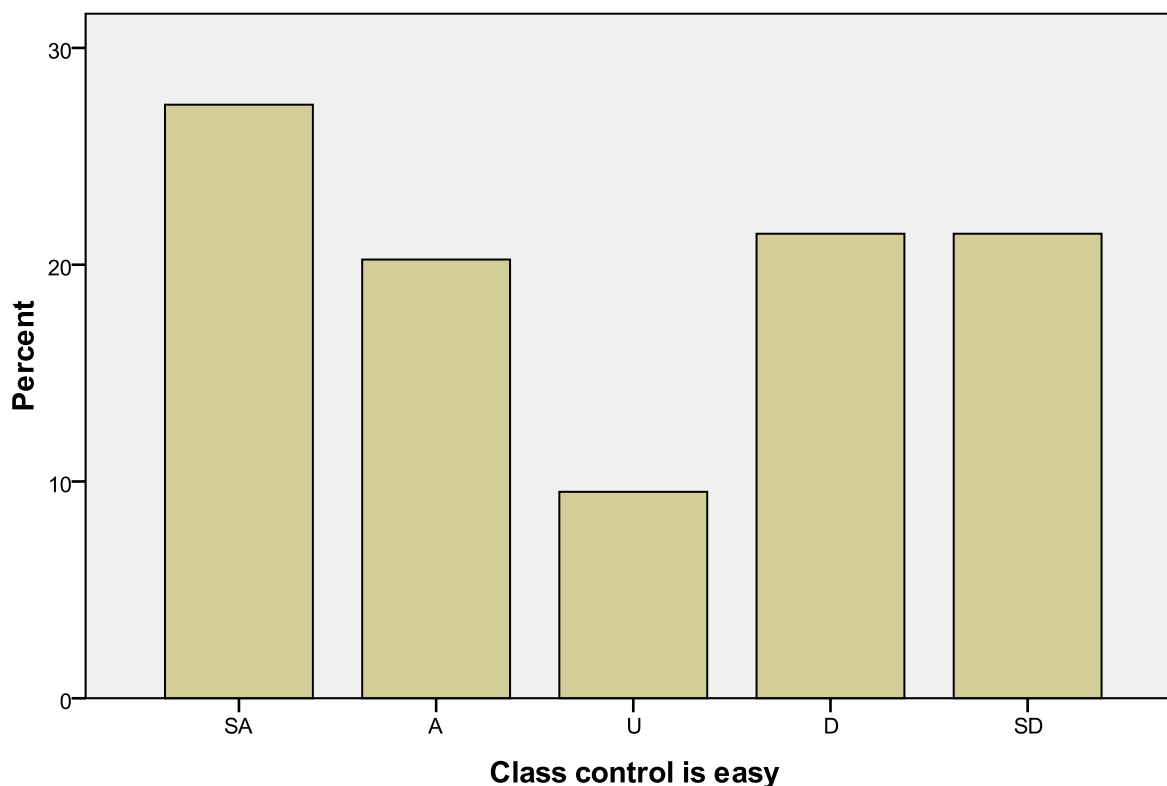
Such kind of approach to the production and use of teaching aids to some extent points to the lack of creativity on the part of the student teachers.

Tambach TTC LRC has two (2) overhead projectors which can aid fully in the drawing of charts through the use of tracing paper and overhead transparencies. One major complaint in connection to the use of the projectors is the in availability of professional staff to help and the lack of awareness of the existence of such a service.

Class control:-

Class control during teaching was found to be wanting among a good number of students. The statistics showed that almost 50% of the student teachers had a problem with controlling the class during the practical exercise. This was also seen to be another big challenge to students during teaching practice.

Class control is easy



Being able to control, have pupils listen to the teacher and follow his/her instructions is important to the achievement of set objectives. Some student teachers felt that regular teachers were not helping them fully to control their new classes. Most of them found lower classes hard to control compared to upper classes. Those who taught in classes with a big number of pupils also reported difficulty in controlling their pupils. On the other hand, student teachers could ease this pressure on class control by carrying out the following suggestions:

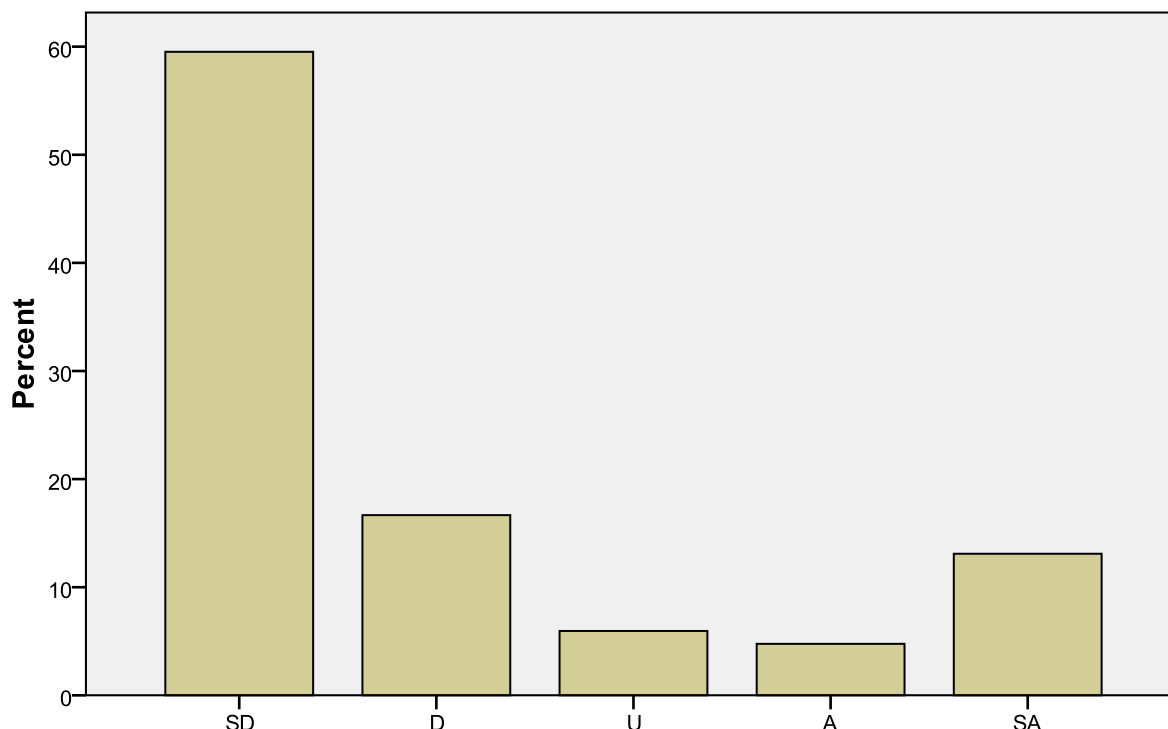
- Designing as many interesting class activities as possible so as to engage the learners in them throughout their lessons. The activities may include- discussions, debates, manipulation of teaching aids, dramatization, observation, drawing, singing, narrating stories, asking and answering questions and other pupil centered activities.
- Using a variety of teaching aids e.g. models, specimens, charts etc
- Using non verbal communication for example, tonal and pitch variation among others.

- Giving the objective(s) to the class at the beginning of the lesson especially for upper classes.

2.4.3: The Teaching Practice period

The study found out that over 76% of the sample felt that three week teaching practice period was appropriate for them. On the other hand, sixteen percent (16%) of them felt that the three-week period to practice the teaching skills was very short. Three week session is a Ministry of Education's requirement.

Three week TP session too short for impl. of comments



Three week TP session too short for impl. of comments

Some of the reasons cited by the respondents to support the adequacy of this period were that they got ample time to acquaint themselves with practical teaching environment besides getting time to implement comments from assessors. Some also added that the time enabled them make friend with the regular teachers and establish a positive working relationship with the learners. Therefore, the study found s that the practice period was not a challenge.

Ratings, Level of Contentment/Satisfaction and other Information:-

Teaching Practice is a department headed by a director assisted by other staff under him. It is charged with the duty of managing and running teaching practice. This entails fixing and releasing the dates for teaching practice(for first and second teaching practice only), posting students teachers to practicing schools and allocating them classes and teaching subjects, organizing briefing sessions for students to go for teaching practice, arranging for transport for student teachers during observation and the actual teaching period, appointing teaching practice schools supervisors, arranging transport for assessors/lecturers, compiling final results for teaching practice and releasing teaching practice results through the principal among other functions. Student teachers were given an opportunity to give their perception of how satisfied they were in relation to how the office organizes teaching practice. Those who gave the office the rating of between excellent and good was 57/84. This translated to 68% of students who felt that the office was doing its work well. However those who felt that the office was not doing well majority cited the issue of transport arrangement and the inability of the office to provide manila papers. However, as noted earlier, the transport problem was beyond the office and that the office at times goes an extra mile to ask for assistance from the nearby schools like Tambach High School, Kessup Girls and St Patrick's Iten. In addition, the office did not have a vote head for teaching resources of which manila papers could be factored in.

Respondents were also asked to rate themselves in relation to their preparedness in the production of teaching aids. Those who rated themselves to the category of excellent, very good and good was 56/84 which translates to about 75% of the whole sample. This means that the respondents perceived themselves ready and confident to produce and use teaching aids.

The level of contentment with the treatment accorded to them by regular teachers was also sought. This was sought because the office wanted to acquire this information because regular teachers were considered key stakeholders in teaching practice. It was also thought necessary to seek such kind of information because the level of satisfaction in relation to the treatment could affect performance of students on teaching practice.

Teaching Practice:-

The study revealed that sixty three percent (63%) were either very contented or contented with the treatment accorded to them by regular teachers while the remaining thirty seven (37%) were either somewhat contented or not contented at all.

Those who cited contentment felt that they were getting a lot of co-operation and encouragement from the regular teachers. They also cited emotional support from the regular teachers.

Those who felt that they were not contented cited the following reasons for their choice:

- They were not being assisted to control their classes by the class teachers
- At times, they were being given cold reception by the regular teachers

The office also wanted to know the level of contentment held by the students in relation to the assistance given to them by their own lecturers.

Those who perceived lecturers not being able to assist them were 28/84 which translated to sixty nine (69%). This was a rather high percentage. Reasons majorly cited by student teachers were that:

- Some lecturers **left the college early** hence making approval of teaching aids hard for them.
- Some lecturers were harsh. Harsh language was being used by some lecturers during the teaching practice period especially when asked to approve the teaching aids.
- Lecturers were sometime reluctant to assist the student teachers. Some students said that some lecturers would tell them that they had sat long hours and that they were tired. This would leave them with no choice but to use unapproved charts and hope that they would not be discovered or discard them altogether.

However some students felt that they were getting adequate assistance from the lecturers though they did not give reasons to back their choice of response. The number was (26/84) which translated to 31% of the respondents.

Teaching Practice is part of professional development for teacher trainees. The study sought to find out how student teachers rated the level of professional assistance given by regular teachers during TP.

The statistics showed that those who perceived regular teachers as offering high level of professional assistance were 47/84 which translated to 56% of the total sample. One of the reasons given did not touch directly on the professional development.

The remaining 44% perceived that the regular teachers were not giving them professional assistance. Reasons cited included:

- During teaching practice, the regular teachers were rarely present in the compound so it became hard at times to get their assistance.
- Some of them referred them back to the lecturers in college
- Some used a harsh language on teacher trainees

When student teachers are out for teaching practice, they are expected to get professional assistance from the regular teachers. This is because they are the people on the ground. When student teachers fail to get full professional assistance from the schools they practice in, then where else?

Areas/issues that positively perceived by students on Teaching Practice. :-

The respondents were further asked to state what made them like or dislike teaching practice. . They were also expected to give out suggestions for the improvement of the exercise.

Seeking their opinion on what interests them and what they disliked about teaching practice was found to be important because it was thought that it would help in strengthening the good areas and also addressing the weak areas which caused dislike amongst the student teachers. This would go a long way in improving teaching practice and students' perception of it.

A good number of the respondents perceived that there was enough time set aside for TP preparation. In Tambach TTC, preparation time theoretically takes a period of one week i.e. from a Monday proceeding observation to a Friday just a weekend to actual teaching. On the ground, it takes more than one week since students start preparing immediately they report back to college after observation. Observation is always scheduled for a Thursday and the

following day (Friday). Generally, most students complete preparation on a Thursday and start preparing in the afternoon of the same day through to the weekend. Then comes a Monday when officially, they are supposed to start the preparation.

Other students also reported a positive issue about preparation that some lecturers always gave proper guidance during this time. This helped them prepare quality professional teaching documents like schemes of work and lesson plans besides teaching aids.

Another positive perception about TP preparation was that they were able to acquire adequate confidence which enabled them stand in front of a class and deliver the content boldly.

On actual teaching the student teachers positively perceived this opportunity as an outlet for them to socialize with the teachers on the ground. They felt that with regular teachers and themselves being free with each other, they shared lots of experiences which in turn helped them in content delivery among other positive reasons.

Another positive perception about actual teaching was that the student teachers saw it as an opportunity to apply what they had been taught in college class to a real classroom situation. The methods of teaching, class control techniques, among others could be practised in a classroom while carrying out practical teaching.

Issues/areas that student teachers disliked about teaching practice and actual teaching. :-

One of the most common issues mentioned by very many students was in relation to **gender favoritism**. Most of them felt that male lecturers favored female student teachers during the actual teaching even during the actual teaching practice time. They felt that male student teachers received unfair treatment when it came to reprimanding them on the wrongs committed in relation to preparation of teaching documents. It was also a feeling of many that male lecturers were more likely to give more negative comments to male student teachers than to female student teachers.

In addition to the above, some student teachers felt that preparation time gave male teachers an opportunity to build relationships with female students.

The TSC code of regulations for teachers and the Public Officers Ethics Act (2003) categorically disown any kind of intimate relationship between a student and his/her teacher.

Other issues which featured prominently and seen to demotivate student teachers during the preparation period included:-

- Unguided corrections
- Long queues in approval offices

One suggestion to ease congestion and guard against unfair treatment of male student teachers by male lecturers was to carry out approvals in an open area/place. This would promote a lot of transparency and openness.

Summary of findings and recommendations:-

a) Challenges

Some of the challenges that the study found out were:

Shortage or inadequacy of some resources in the library especially copies of the syllabuses for different subjects together with reference materials on teaching aids production.

Arrival and departure time from TP schools. It was felt that 5.20 am was too early for students to be in their practicing schools.

Production/making of teaching aids .The study discovered that not all students were endowed with the artistic skills of drawing. Lack of manila papers for making charts and models.

Inability to control students in class especially to students who taught lower primary classes.

Inability to get teaching/learning aids approved by lecturers in good time.

Positive Perceptions:-

Teaching Practice office organized teaching practice to the satisfaction of the majority of the student teachers.

Teaching practice gave student teachers an opportunity to interact socialize and apply what they had been taught in theory into practice.

Teaching practice was perceived as an opportunity to share experiences with the teaching partners, regular teachers and parents.

Adequate guidance given by some lecturers on during preparation and teaching.

Negative Perceptions:-

Degrading comments given during the teaching practice session demotivate them.

Recommendations:-

There is need to harmonize the making of scheme of work to avoid contradictions from lecturers. Statement of Teaching /Learning activities should be harmonized.

Lecturers should try to use a friendly language as much as possible during approval. This gives student teachers hope and the feeling of being valued.

There is need to avail more copies of the syllabuses for different subjects to hasten preparation of schemes of work in the library. The college could photocopy them. More reference materials for the affected areas should be procured.

There is need for the lecturers to give adequate guidance on the making of schemes of work. Their availability during the approval of teaching aids adds a lot of value to teaching practice exercise.

Having in mind the point that some students were found to be poor in drawing, the Learning Resources Centre technician should publicize and promote the use of the overhead projector to aid in drawing of charts.

Big classes in teaching practice schools should be split for the purpose of easy class control.

Regular teachers should try to avail themselves in their schools throughout the teaching practice session so as to offer adequate professional assistance to practicing students.

Where possible, the college should allow the students to come with less expensive materials for making charts other than manila papers for example flip charts.

Teachers should observe professional ethics throughout the preparation and assessment period.

Where possible and with adequate consultation, departure time to schools should be revised.

Appendix a:**Students' questionnaire:-****Introduction:-**

As part of meeting the course requirements, a P1 trainee has to undertake a practical teaching exercise in which a trainee is assessed for at least three times in a single teaching practice session of three weeks. This exercise starts with the **posting** of student teachers to selected teaching practice schools within the college vicinity. The posting exercise is followed by **briefing** in which student teachers are given direction on what is required of them during the whole practical session. **Actual preparation** (preparation of schemes of work, first lesson plans and some teaching aids) week follows. After this actual preparation, follows **three weeks of practical teaching** when student teachers are assessed and advised on areas that require attention. Along the corridors of tutors' offices, student teachers have scribbled a lot of information which portray their attitude towards teaching practice preparation and to some extent, teaching practice in general. Close examination of these writings show a rather negative connotation towards practical teaching. This study is geared towards finding out the challenges facing student teachers and perceptions they hold on teaching practice.

Section a

Personal Details: Please tick (☒) as it applies to you

1. Sex: Male (☐) Female (☐)
2. TP class level: Upper (☐) Lower (☐)
3. Trip(morning): First (☐) Second (☐) Footing (☐)
4. Your age bracket: 18-20 years (☐) 21-23 years (☐) 24-27 years (☐) Over 27 years (☐)

Section B

(i)The following are statements about the components making up Teaching Practice in Tambach TTC. You are kindly requested to indicate with a tick (☐) the extent to which you agree with them. The tick (☐) will indicate your perception on Teaching Practice. Please note the following abbreviations: **SA**-Strongly Agree, **A**-Agree **U**-undecided-Disagree, **SD**-Strongly Disagree

Statements on components making up TP in TTTC	SA	A	U	D	SD	Give reason(s) for your choice
1)TP posting, briefing& observation						
Am contented with how posting to schools is done by the TP office						
Pairing of students for TP purposes should not be left to the TP office						
Am satisfied with the organization and how briefing is conducted						
Briefing time is not adequate						
I go out for observation when fully aware of what is required of me.						
2)Actual TP preparation(preparation of schemes of work, first lesson plans and some teaching aids)						
Time for preparation of S.O.W, lesson plans and T/L aids is inadequate						
Lecturers do not use friendly language during this time						
Lecturers take the shortest time possible on one student						
Lecturers give adequate guidance in relation to the preparation of S.O.W, lesson plans and teaching aids.						
TP office is not supportive of students' TP issues during the preparation week.						
Translating the syllabus objectives into a scheme of work is confusing.						
Developing a lesson plan is a simple and interesting activity.						
Preparation of T/L aids is a tedious process						
TP reference materials in the library are enough for the student population						
Syllabi for different subjects are not enough for use during the preparation week						
3) Transport to and fro TP schools						
Am satisfied with the transport arrangement by the TP office						
Arrival time at TP schools is not appropriate						
4) Actual teaching						
Content delivery is not a problem to me						
I find the use of teaching aids appropriately during lesson delivery a hard task to me						
Class control is an easy task to manage						
Three week TP session is too short for a student teacher to implement lecturers' comments/suggestions.						

Section c: ratings, level of contentment/satisfaction and other information

(a) What rating would you give to the TP office in the way it organizes and manages teaching practice? **Excellent**
☐ **Very good** ☐ **Good** ☐ **Fair** ☐ **Poor** ☐ Please give reason(s) for your choice above-----

(b) How would you rate yourself in connection to your preparedness in production of teaching aids? **Excellent** ☐
Very good ☐ **Good** ☐ **Fair** ☐ **Poor** ☐ Please give reason(s) for your choice above-----

(c) How contented are you with the kind of treatment being accorded to you by regular teachers in TP schools? **Very contented** ☐ **Contented** ☐ **Somewhat contented** ☐ **Not contented at all** ☐
 Please give reason(s) for your choice above-----

(d) How contented are you with the level of assistance given to you by lecturers during the TP session (especially to do with approval of T/L aids)? **Very contented** ☐ **Contented** ☐ **somewhat contented** ☐ **Not contented at all** ☐
 Please give reason(s) for your choice above-----

(e) How satisfied are you with the services given to you by the library staff during the preparation and actual TP time? **Very satisfied** ☐ **Satisfied** ☐ **Somewhat satisfied** ☐ **Not satisfied at all** ☐ Please give reason(s) for your choice above-----

How do you rate the level of professional assistance you receive from the TP school regular teachers? **Very high** ☐
High ☐ **Low** ☐ **Very low** ☐ **Not there at all** ☐ Please give reason(s) for your choice above-----

SECTION C

The table below contains two parts i.e. L and R which stand for factors which you like about TP and those you do not. Please indicate your views on them.

L	R
<u>WHAT I LIKE ABOUT TP PREPARATION</u>	<u>WHAT I DO NOT LIKE ABOUT TP PREPARATION</u>
<u>SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>MEASURES TO ADDRESS THEM</u>
<u>WHAT I LIKE ABOUT ACTUAL TP AND ASSESSMENT</u>	<u>WHAT I DO NOT LIKE ABOUT ACTUAL TP AND ASSESSMENT</u>