



An Analytical Study of the Subject of Education Practice in National Colleges of Education

*¹W. A. S. D. Welpahala, ² Prabhath Ekanayake

^{1,2}Maharagama NCoE, Maharagama

Email address of corresponding author - *welpahalawasd@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 10 September 2023

Accepted: 01 November 2023

Keywords:

National Colleges of Education; Teacher Trainee; Professional skills development; Education Practice Subject

Citation:

W. A. S. D. Welpahala, Prabhath Ekanayake. (2023). An Analytical Study of the Subject of Education Practice in National Colleges of Education. Proceedings of SLIIT International Conference on Advancements in Sciences and Humanities, 1-2 December, Colombo, pages 59 - 63.

ABSTRACT

National Colleges of Education, which contribute greatly to the quality development of Sri Lankan education, are engaged in the role of training teachers and provide necessary human resources for the school system. Currently, 19 National Colleges of Education have been established across the island and are the main institutions involved in pre-service teacher training. The learning teaching process of the teacher directly affects the development of the students in the school system. Therefore, teacher preparation programs greatly affect students' learning, and as a result the quality and performance of educational practice programs implemented in National Colleges of education should be investigated. Thus, this research has been done to study how education practice subject in the National Colleges of Education contributes to the development of teaching professional skills. The main problem of this research is the analytical study of the content of the education practice subject in the National Colleges of Education and how it works. The study also aims to examine the contribution of education practice subject to the development of the professional skills of the National Colleges of Education trainees. In relation to the main research problem, the nature of the education practice subject implemented in the National Colleges of Education and its

implementation status in the institutional training as well as the student perception of the subject have been investigated. The convergent parallel design has been used for this research under mixed research methodology. The teacher trainees of five national colleges of education were selected under the simple random sampling method, the lecturers were selected under the purposive sampling method and a sample size of three hundred and thirty-five has been used for this research. In this research, strategies for modernizing the educational practice subject have been discussed. This research which examines the subject of educational practice in the National Colleges of Education will be useful for the professional development of the student teachers studying in the colleges and for future research.

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Colleges of Education play a major role as leading institutions providing pre-service teacher training in the field of teacher education in Sri Lanka. The Institutes of Education Act, promulgated under Act No. 30 of 1986, established the Institutes of Education or National Colleges of Education. Presently, the National Colleges of Education have been developing over a period of about 38 years and are working as leading institutions that fulfill the teacher training needs of the Sri Lankan school system.

The total duration of the training course in the National Colleges of Education is three years and the first two years should be spent in residence in the college. The third year is to acquire teaching skills by working in an assigned school. That period is known as internship period. Thus, after two years of training in the college, the teacher trainee who goes to the school system for internship training engages in the learning teaching process in the school based on the experience gained during the college training. After two years of training in the college, teacher trainees are sent to

the school system for internship training. Teacher trainees engage in the learning teaching process in the school based on the experience they gain in college training. The teacher student has to study the main subject field or special subject, professional subject and general subject in the institutional teacher training. The educational practice subject related to the professional subject area develops the skills and competencies related to the learning teaching process in the role of teacher. Programs such as school profile, school and community project categories, block teaching, are implemented under the subject of educational practice, thereby developing the professional skills of teacher trainees. The theoretical and practical knowledge acquired through institutionalized educational practice can be independently developed in the actual classroom of the school system. Teacher trainees have the opportunity to further develop their teaching professional skills in internship teacher training. It is very important to find out whether the students have properly perceived the skills related to the subject of educational practice, which is very helpful for the development of the teaching profession skills in the institutional training, and what is the implementation status of the subject in the college training. Hightower (2011) mentions that teachers' teaching process affects students' learning teaching process. Therefore, he further states that the nature of teacher education programs that prepare teachers as well as the nature of educational practice programs should be studied.

Beath and Adadan (2006) note that subject-specific training in teacher education institutes, teaching experiences of teacher trainees ensure the teacher's professional development. It is clear from this idea that the educational practices and practical training implemented in teacher education institutions affect the professional development of teachers. The teacher should be able to give the student the knowledge, attitude, skills, abilities, other

skills, abilities as well as the balanced personality that he needs and for that the teacher has to gain expertise. Teacher education has the main responsibility of imparting this expertise as well as preparing and leading the role of teacher. Fall, (2012) who has studied the strategies needed to create an effective teacher, says that there are some problems with the knowledge skills and competencies of teachers, and there are challenging problems with student achievement and quality. These facts reveal different ideas and findings regarding teacher education. It is clear that it is timely to find out what the theoretical knowledge and practical skills obtained from the National College of Education training are in achieving the desired goals of pre-service teacher education.

Setunga et al (2014) who conducted a study on the professional development of teachers and teacher educators in Sri Lanka state that the last revision of the National Colleges of Education curriculum was in 2010. It has now been twelve years since the curriculum was revised. The syllabus has not been updated or revised. During the past 10 years, there have been many changes in the economic, social, cultural and educational technology sectors. The subject of educational practice, which greatly affects the professional development of the National Colleges of Education trainees entering the school system as teachers, should also be updated.

The National Institute of Education, which conducted a study on the quality of the learning teaching process associated with the National Colleges of Education courses in Sri Lanka, also stated that the National Colleges of Education syllabus should be updated. The subjects of science, mathematics and English have been included for that study. No study has been conducted on the subject of educational practice and its practical contribution, which provides practical and theoretical knowledge to teacher trainees,

which is unique in creating an effective teacher. It is important to investigate the contribution to internship program by the subject of educational practice studied by student teachers in each course.

By investigating how the subject of educational practice is implemented in the National Colleges of Education, by investigating how the subject has been perceived by the teacher trainees, its existing strengths and weaknesses can be identified and the necessary information for its modernization activities can be identified. Also, it is possible to find out how the subject of educational practice is helpful for the learning teaching process of the teacher trainees in the internship teacher training. Problems faced by teacher trainees can be uncovered. Accordingly, strategies needed for successful teacher training can be identified.

Investigating the educational practices of teacher education institutions and studying the nature of their operation greatly affects their standards. Citing research findings in teacher education, Darling Hammond (2006) states that organizational practicum and professional practice evaluation affects standards associated with teacher performance. Thus, in this research, it has been investigated how the learning through the subject of educational practice during the two-year training contributes to the professional development of the teacher trainees.

1.1 Research Objectives

To identify the nature of the subject of educational practice in the National Colleges of Education

To study the contribution of educational practice subject content to teacher professional skills development

To investigate the perceptions of teacher educators and teacher trainees on the subject of education practice

To identify strategies for modernizing education practice subject

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Research design

The Convergent Parallel Design has been used in this research. The fact that the quantitative and qualitative data obtained can be cross-checked in the convergent parallel design led to the selection of this design for the research. The convergent parallel design presented as the most suitable design for the entire process from data collection process related to this research to data analysis, data interpretation and reporting has been used here.

2.2 Population and sample of the study

The population of this research is the trainees who are undergoing teacher training through Sinhala medium at the National Colleges of Education belonging to the academic year 2017 /2019. About 250 intern teacher trainees from five national colleges of education were selected for this research under the simple random sampling method. Convenience sampling method has been used in the selection of presidents, vice-presidents, lecturers, mentors and principals.

2.3 Data collection and analysis method

Research instruments such as questionnaires, interviews, observations and written reports have been used to collect the data required for this research. The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed by thematic coding, observational data by tabular charts, and written reports by qualitative analysis. Quantitative and qualitative data were compared and analyzed.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, it has been studied how the subject of education practice and its nature contribute to the development of teachers' professional skills in the National Colleges of Education. The perceptions of teacher educators and teacher trainees on the subject of education practice have been examined and strategies that can be adopted to modernize the subject of education practice have been identified. It was revealed that since 1985, the subject of education practice has been implemented in the National Colleges of Education and it was revealed that it belongs to the professional disciplines. It was also revealed that the subject provides many experiences for the professional development of teacher trainees. The current syllabus is effective from the year 2010. It was clear from the findings that the subject of education practice should be revised. It was clear from the opinions expressed by teacher educators and teacher trainees that there are parts of the education practice content that should be changed and newly added.

4. CONCLUSION

The following conclusions related to this research can be summarized and presented. Provision of adequate time as the time included in the education practice syllabus is not sufficient to cover the subject content. Inclusion of practical activities in the syllabus for communication skills is required to engage in effective teaching Adequate inclusion of learning teaching methods is suitable for the current student in the syllabus Inclusion of classroom management in the syllabus is important to impart classroom management skills that a teacher must learn Incorporation of learning aids, technology aids into the syllabus is important that suit the current student Incorporation of educational practices into the syllabus of appropriate learning aids for the current student Facilitating the study of administrative institutions is associated with the school while identifying

the school and the community action research and projects should be incorporated into the educational practice syllabus that contribute to the professional development of teacher trainees
Inclusion of teaching professional ethics in the syllabus

REFERENCES

- Beeth, M. E. and Adadan, E. (2006) The Influence of University based course work on Field Experience. *Journal on Field Experience. Journal of Science Teacher Education* 17 (2) 103-120
- Creswell, J. W. (2012) Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research, 4th Edition, www.pearsonhighered.com
- Creswell, J. W. and Clark, V. L. P. (2018) Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research, Inc: USA, Sage Publications.
- Darling, L. Hammond. (2006) Constructing 21st Century Teacher Education, *Journal of Teacher Education* vol. 57, page (s) 300 - 314, Sage Publication
- Faull, A (2012) Highly Effective Teachers: *Journals of Education and Human Development* vol. 2, December 2013
- Sethunga et al (2014) Study on The Professional Development of Teachers and Teacher Educators in Sri Lanka, NEC Research Series, National Education Commission, www.nec.gov.lk
- Hightower, M. A. (2011) Improving student learning by supporting quality teaching, *Quality Teaching Editorial Projects in Education*, www.researchgate.net