Role of the Teaching Practice Supervisor

Your role as a supervisor is to develop the required skills and competencies in the student teacher to enable him/her to function effectively in the basic education classroom.

As a Teaching Practice Supervisor, you are required among other things to be:

- a model in all ramifications
- able to utilise methods and strategies that put the student teachers and their pupils at the centre of learning
- knowledgeable in your subject matter and versatile in the facilitation of learning
- a prudent manager of time and resources
- able to plan and design programmes that will facilitate effective teaching practice
- able to use appropriate resources to stimulate and facilitate the development and assessment of teacher trainees during teaching practice
- able to observe and assess student teachers objectively.

Qualities of an effective Teaching Practice Supervisor

Throughout the Toolkit you will read the thoughts and conversations of four Teaching Practice Supervisors who have contributed many ideas to the Toolkit. We are going to meet them now. They will be joined now and again by guest Teaching Practice Supervisors. Let’s meet our four supervisors.

My name is Mrs Achebe and I am in my 40s. I am a practising primary schoolteacher, teaching social studies to Primary 1-6, and I have been teaching for 16 years. I graduated with a B.Ed., and am currently studying for an M.Ed. I hold a number of roles in addition to my school duties: organising workshops for teachers on new teaching methods (such as group work), undertaking exam supervision, and I am also a Teaching Practice Supervisor. As a Teaching Practice Supervisor, I feel highly valued by the schools I work with and by the NTI, although less so by the student teachers themselves.

My role as a Teaching Practice Supervisor involves ensuring that the student teachers have proper classroom organisation, showing them how to plan lessons, observing their lessons, and assessing their progress and final competence. I am currently working with six trainees; three men and three women, and I feel that the
I am Mall. Rabiu, and I am over 50 years old. I have a B.Ed. and have been a secondary schoolteacher for more than 20 years. I have been a Teaching Practice Supervisor for over six years, and am currently supervising 27 student teachers (including 17 women) on teaching practice as well as some permanent teachers in the immediate locality (1-5 km). I volunteered to become a supervisor, as I met the key criteria of being in a teaching post and I was motivated by my interest in TESSA. As a supervisor, I feel valued by those I work with – teachers, head teachers and the student teachers.

I believe the key functions of my supervisory role are to improve classroom teaching and learning, to ensure a child-centred approach, to make teaching more interesting and meaningful, to ensure TESSA is being used appropriately and to upgrade pupil standards through hard work. The supervisor works in partnership with the school - there are many shared responsibilities.

I feel that my effectiveness as a supervisor is enhanced through use of TESSA materials combined with my interest in working with teachers. However, lack of cooperation from the supervising teacher can limit my impact with student teachers. In my opinion, I am particularly good at the discussion of lessons with student teachers, and I enjoy this part of the role, although I feel my observation of student teachers could be improved.

I believe good supervisors have experience of teaching and an interest in undertaking the task. I did not receive any initial training for the role but since being in post I have participated in training, both face-to-face and distance learning. I would like to have more training, particularly around reviewing the teaching practice part of the programme, establishing criteria for assessment in the teaching practice programme and new teaching techniques.

I was introduced to TESSA in a training workshop in 2009 and have remained enthusiastic about TESSA. I use it to keep up to date and I demonstrate TESSA strategies to my trainees; I am keen to move teachers away from a teacher-centred approach and see TESSA as supporting this development.

I use a mobile phone and occasionally email and social networking through Facebook.
My name is Mr Omotoso and I am over 50 years old. I have been a study centre manager and Teaching Practice Supervisor during my career. I am no longer teaching in schools but have over 20 years' experience teaching in secondary schools and upper primary classes.

In my opinion, the role of the Teaching Practice Supervisor is focused on monitoring and evaluating the practices and behaviours of the student teachers including dealing with errant student teachers. The school shares responsibility with the supervisor for supporting the student teacher in lesson planning, observation and feedback as well as demonstrating teaching skills and counselling them.

I received training when I started working as a Teaching Practice Supervisor and have subsequently participated in both face-to-face and distance learning courses to keep up to date. I would like more training, particularly on designing the teaching practice part of the programme and defining areas of responsibility within it, helping student teachers to develop their reflective skills and counselling student teachers on teaching-related difficulties. I feel valued as a Teaching Practice Supervisor, by head teachers and teachers in coordinating schools and by student teachers and feel I am acting as a role model, although I would like further recognition in terms of financial reward, resources and training for the role.

I currently supervise 20 student teachers, 13 of them women, at schools ranging from 25 to 65 km from my base. The student teachers' average age is early 30s. Some of the student teachers find it difficult to find sources for teaching materials due to their low-income status and many of the women complain of domestic issues.

I was introduced to TESSA in 2006 at a workshop for teachers in Lagos. I use micro-teaching and activity seminars to help my student teachers to become familiar with the approaches in TESSA as well as making suggestions on their lesson plans. I own a laptop and mobile phone and have occasionally used social networking sites such as Facebook. I would like to see the Nigerian education system give much greater importance to experience and interest over paper qualifications. I believe that teacher educators should have a much higher status, as in other professions, and would like to see teaching practice given status as a discrete programme rather than as part of a larger programme.
My name is Mrs Okonkwo and I have been a secondary schoolteacher for over 20 years. I now also hold the posts of study centre manager and Teaching Practice Supervisor. I am in my 40s with an M.Ed. and have been in my current posts for more than six years. I was keen to become a supervisor because of my interest in teachers. I supervise NCE students on teaching practice and facilitate NTI and NCE students' contact sessions.

I believe that the main role of the Teaching Practice Supervisor is to prepare student teachers for their teaching practice (through a group session before the teaching practice) and subsequently to monitor their lesson preparation and delivery, in particular the use of activity methods, pointing out strengths and weaknesses and encouraging student teachers to improve.

My view is that supervisors should be appointed on the basis of their educational qualifications and expertise. I feel my main strengths are in observing student teachers' teaching, assessing their final competency and in counselling those with personal difficulties. In my opinion, supporting student teachers with the planning of lessons and demonstrating teaching skills is the responsibility of the school. A lack of time hinders my effectiveness in the role but this is balanced by my interest, love for the job and for student teachers and by being impartial. I received training at NTI for the role of supervisor when I took on the role, and I have since participated in further training, both face-to-face and distance learning. However I would like to receive further training. I was introduced to TESSA in 2011.

Activity 1: Qualities of an effective Teaching Practice Supervisor

This activity invites you to reflect on the qualities of a Teaching Practice Supervisor.

- Read through the Teaching Practice Supervisor portraits and make a list of the qualities of an effective Teaching Practice Supervisor as noted by these supervisors.
- Are there any qualities you would like to add? Insert these in the list you have just created from your reading.
- Compare your list with the list on the next page that was written by a group of Teaching Practice Supervisors at a workshop. Is there anything they have missed that you consider important?
Teaching Practice Supervisors at a workshop wrote that a good Teaching Practice Supervisor should be:

- respectful of the student teacher and understand them
- a facilitator and mediator of learning
- knowledgeable and understanding of how adults learn
- one who uses creative and problem-solving approaches to learning that stimulate him/herself and the student
- a good communicator and role model
- able to take account of what student teachers already know and can do
- able to build on teacher trainees’ interest
- someone who appreciates the value of developing links with the school and community
- someone with good subject knowledge
- aware of the need to continue to develop an understanding and practice of teaching and learning
- someone who carries out professional roles conscientiously.

**Core tasks of the Teaching Practice Supervisor**

1. Provide regular on-site observation of student teachers’ teaching performance.
2. Help student teachers to develop lesson plans which encourage an activity-based approach.
3. Assess the student teacher’s performance based on pre-established teacher performance standards.
4. Interact with student teachers about their teaching experience and their progress.
5. Analyse the whole of the student teacher’s logbook/diary.
6. Conduct seminar classes to prepare student teachers for and evaluate the success of teaching practice.
Activity 2: Core tasks of the Teaching Practice Supervisor

In this activity, you are going to review how you carry out the Teaching Practice Supervisor’s main tasks.

Read the core tasks of a Teaching Practice Supervisor above again and as you do so, think of your own practice as a Teaching Practice Supervisor.

- Which of these tasks do you spend most time on?
- Which do you think is most important?
- Which task do you enjoy most?
- Which task do you feel most confident about undertaking?
- Which tasks do you feel less confident about undertaking?

Note down your answers (either on a paper notebook or in a computer) and keep them to refer to as you work through different aspects of the Toolkit.

You might find it interesting to compare your answers with those of other Teaching Practice Supervisors.