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USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN TEACHING PRACTICE

Min Prasad Adhikari

Lecturer of Nepali Education, Dhankuta Multiple Campus, Nepal

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*Corresponding author: Min Prasad Adhikari

Lecturer of Nepali Education, Dhankuta Multiple Campus, Nepal

Abstract

Teaching practice is considered the crown jewel of the Faculty of Education. In the final year of undergraduate and postgraduate levels, students must compulsorily participate in teaching practice. This practice allows student-teachers to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained into real classroom situations and helps them develop teaching-related competencies. During external evaluation of teaching practice, it becomes essential to assess the instructional materials used by the student-teachers. Some aspects observed during the evaluation process have formed the basis of this study.

This article was inspired by classroom observations and interviews with student-teachers. The study follows a qualitative research design. Data were collected from 25 student-teachers selected purposively from five campuses (both community and constituent) through class observation, material analysis, and direct conversation. Using both primary and secondary data, this paper explores the status of instructional material development and use among student-teachers, explaining its importance in Nepali language teaching.

The main objective of this article is to identify and analyze how student-teachers of the fourth year of the Bachelor's level (Education Faculty) construct and utilize instructional materials during their mandatory teaching practice. The findings indicate that student-teachers need more training and practice in designing and effectively using instructional materials in classroom teaching.

Keywords: Observation, Student-Teacher, Language Teaching, Teaching Practice, Instructional Materials.

Introduction

In the field of education, *teaching practice* is regarded as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical experience. It provides student-teachers with an opportunity to apply pedagogical theories in real classroom situations and to develop professional skills. The use of instructional materials during teaching practice plays a vital role in making the teaching-learning process effective, interesting, and meaningful.

Instructional materials are the tools and resources used by teachers to facilitate learning and to make abstract concepts easier to understand. They include objects, charts, flashcards, models, pictures, posters, multimedia presentations, and digital resources. These materials assist both teachers and students: teachers can present lessons more clearly, and students can understand and remember the content better.

In the context of language teaching, instructional materials are even more important. Since language involves abstract ideas, grammar rules, and cultural expressions, students may find it difficult to grasp them through verbal explanation alone. When teaching materials such as pictures, real objects, or audio-visual aids are used, students can learn the meaning, pronunciation, and usage of words and expressions more effectively.

During teaching practice, student-teachers are required to prepare and use such materials as part of their lesson planning and classroom activities. However, the extent and quality of material use vary greatly depending on their creativity, available resources, and institutional support. Some student-teachers use teaching aids effectively, while others rely only on traditional lecture-based teaching.

Therefore, this study attempts to examine how student-teachers develop and use instructional materials during their teaching practice, what kinds of materials they prefer, what challenges they face, and how these materials influence classroom learning.

Objectives and Methodology

Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify how student-teachers prepare and use instructional materials during their teaching practice.
2. To explore the types of instructional materials used by student-teachers in language teaching.
3. To examine the effectiveness of these materials in classroom teaching and learning.
4. To analyze the challenges and limitations faced by student-teachers while designing and using instructional materials.
5. To provide suggestions for improving the use of instructional materials in teaching practice programs.

These objectives are based on the understanding that instructional materials are not only supporting tools but also key factors in enhancing students' learning experiences.

Methodology

This research follows a **qualitative descriptive design**. It is primarily based on classroom observation, interaction, and reflection. The study was conducted among student-teachers of the

Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) fourth year who were engaged in teaching practice in community and constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University.

Sample and Data Collection

A total of 25 student-teachers were purposively selected from five campuses for observation and interaction. Both primary and secondary data were used:

- **Primary data** were collected through classroom observation, interviews, and field notes.
- **Secondary data** were gathered from teaching manuals, syllabi, and related academic literature.

Each student-teacher's lesson was observed to note the type, frequency, and method of using teaching materials. Short interviews were conducted immediately after observation to understand their purpose and difficulties in material use.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed descriptively. The focus was on identifying patterns, practices, and problems related to the preparation and use of instructional materials. The study's results were interpreted in relation to existing theories of teaching practice and language pedagogy.

Analysis and Discussion

The data collected from classroom observation and interviews with student-teachers reveal a mixed pattern in the preparation and use of instructional materials during teaching practice. Although most student-teachers understand the importance of teaching aids, their actual use in the classroom remains inconsistent and often insufficient.

Awareness and Attitude toward Instructional Materials

Most student-teachers were aware that instructional materials make lessons more interesting and help in better understanding. They believed that teaching becomes easier and more effective when supported by materials. However, many of them lacked the skill to design suitable materials or the confidence to use them properly. Some viewed material preparation as a formal task required by the teaching practice guidelines rather than an integral part of pedagogy.

Types of Materials Used

The most commonly used instructional materials were flashcards, charts, pictures, models, and blackboard illustrations. A few student-teachers used real objects (*realia*) and locally available materials, such as newspapers, plants, or tools, especially while teaching vocabulary or descriptive lessons. Only a small number of student-teachers used technological tools such as slides, projectors, or multimedia content. The main reasons for this were the unavailability of such resources in schools and a lack of technical knowledge among student-teachers.

Frequency and Quality of Use

The frequency of using materials varied widely. Some student-teachers used teaching aids in every class, while others used them occasionally. The quality of use also differed: in some cases, materials were used only for display, without meaningful interaction with students. Effective use of materials was observed when student-teachers integrated them into activities such as group discussions, language games, and storytelling. It was also noted that when materials were used interactively, students became more attentive, participated actively, and understood the lesson better.

Problems and Challenges

The major challenges identified were:

1. **Limited time** to prepare materials before teaching.
2. **Lack of resources** and facilities in practice schools.
3. **Inadequate training** on material design and use.
4. **Large class sizes**, which made interactive activities difficult.
5. **Technical barriers**, such as lack of electricity or multimedia equipment.

Despite these challenges, some creative student-teachers managed to use low-cost or recyclable materials effectively. For example, they used old calendars, charts, and natural objects to prepare visual aids. This demonstrates that resourcefulness and creativity can overcome material shortages to some extent.

Effectiveness in Language Teaching

Instructional materials proved to be particularly effective in Nepali language teaching. They helped in explaining abstract grammatical rules, illustrating literary texts, and enriching vocabulary. Students were found to learn better when materials provided context and visualization. For instance, in poetry teaching, pictures related to the theme helped students interpret meaning and emotions more effectively.

Similarly, grammar rules became easier to understand when illustrated through charts or real-life examples.

Comparative Findings

It was observed that student-teachers who used self-prepared materials were more confident and better organized in their teaching. Their students were more engaged and performed better in classroom tasks. In contrast, those who relied only on textbooks and lectures had less interactive and less lively classrooms. This comparison highlights that the effective use of instructional materials not only improves student learning but also enhances the professional growth of teachers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly show that the use of instructional materials during teaching practice is essential for making the teaching-learning process effective, meaningful, and student-centered. Although most student-teachers are aware of the importance of using such materials, their preparation and application in actual classrooms remain limited and inconsistent.

Many student-teachers still regard the preparation of instructional materials as a formal requirement rather than an integral pedagogical practice. The use of materials was more frequent in grammar teaching than in literature-based lessons such as poetry, story, or essay teaching. Locally available and low-cost materials were used more often than technological tools like projectors, slides, or multimedia aids.

The use of instructional materials was found to have several positive effects:

- It enhanced students' understanding of abstract concepts.
- It made the classroom more interactive and enjoyable.
- It improved student participation and motivation.

- It increased teacher confidence and creativity.

However, challenges such as lack of resources, time constraints, large class sizes, and limited access to technology hindered the effective use of instructional materials. Furthermore, insufficient training and guidance in material preparation and application have restricted student-teachers from realizing their full potential in this area.

Therefore, it can be concluded that teaching practice programs should place greater emphasis on the practical use of instructional materials, integrating them as a central component of professional teacher development.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Pre-Practice Training:** Special workshops and orientation programs on the preparation and use of instructional materials should be organized before teaching practice begins.
2. **Institutional Support:** Practice schools and campuses should provide basic facilities such as projectors, charts, and computers to encourage the use of ICT-based materials.
3. **Use of Local Resources:** Student-teachers should be encouraged to design low-cost, locally available, and reusable teaching aids to ensure sustainability and relevance.
4. **Integration in Evaluation:** The preparation and use of instructional materials should be included as a key criterion in the assessment of teaching practice performance.
5. **Resource Sharing:** A shared **digital resource bank** should be created at the university or campus level to make exemplary teaching materials accessible to all student-teachers.
6. **Continuous Supervision:** Supervisors and mentors should regularly observe and provide constructive feedback on how student-teachers prepare and use instructional materials during classroom teaching.
7. **Encouragement of Innovation:** Student-teachers should be motivated to experiment with modern tools such as PowerPoint, audio-visual clips, and online resources, blending traditional and digital materials creatively.

Final Remark

Teaching practice is not merely a testing phase but a professional learning journey where theory meets classroom reality. The effective use of instructional materials transforms abstract learning into tangible experience, strengthens teacher-student interaction, and develops students' creativity and critical thinking. Therefore, instructional materials should be recognized as the backbone of successful teaching practice, not just as decorative or supportive tools.

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