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Beginning Teaching: Pre-Service Teachers' Experiences with Supported Teaching in Schools

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Abstract: The quality of teachers depends on the standard of teacher education. Every teacher training program should include teaching practice. The experiences that pre-service teachers face during supported teaching are what determine the caliber of training they get. The study aimed to identify pre-service teachers' experiences during supported teaching in schools. The study was carried out with pre-service teachers on a Bachelor of Education program at a Ghanaian College of Education. The study used a phenomenology design and a qualitative approach. Convenience sampling was used to select twenty (20) level 100 pre-service teachers comprising 12 males and 8 females. Data was gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Many of the experiences during supported teaching were related to classroom instruction. Participants also learned about inclusive pedagogy and became acquainted with the larger school community. Student-teachers also formed communities of practice and learned how to work together and share their experiences through peer collaboration. They also gained experience in teachers' professional characteristics and classroom management. Importantly, through supported teaching, they developed a positive perception of teaching as a profession. The study recommends that Colleges of Education should have a systematic mentoring program for mentors and students to use in supported teaching in schools. Mentors should get adequate training before student-teachers begin visiting partner schools.

Keywords: Supported Teaching in Schools, Teacher Education, Teaching Practice, Pre-Service Teachers

1. Introduction

Reactions to calls for reforming teacher education vary across the globe [1]. Governments all across the world strive to improve teacher effectiveness, especially in light of rising global competition and the need for economic and educational reforms [2]. The most crucial component of a country's educational system and its most valuable and significant human resource is teacher education [2]. The quality of an educational system cannot surpass that of its teachers [3].

The first professional training that people do to enter the teaching profession is pre-service teacher education [4]. These programs often combine a theoretical understanding of teaching with practical experience in the classroom. The effectiveness of teachers' practice is influenced by the caliber of the training they receive through pre-service teacher education (PSTE) programs. As a result, the effectiveness of pre-service teacher education programs influences and is reflected in the quality of teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom [4].

The quality of teaching and learning for all students can be greatly improved by creating high-quality programs for pre-service teachers [4]. This is because student achievement is greatly influenced by the caliber of teachers, who in turn are influenced by the caliber of PSTE programs. Teachers must receive the necessary training to obtain the necessary functional prerequisites to teach [5]. Beginning teachers require help transitioning from the initial stage to the professional stage and then to establishing a learning community [6].

Field experiences, in which experienced teachers guide student-teachers in their classrooms, are an essential component of teacher education programs [7]. Pre-service teachers are given opportunities to practice teaching in a regular school context as part of the teacher education training process [5]. According to research, one prerequisite for student teachers learning in the workplace is the availability of effective mentoring by a mentor teacher. Globally, the idea of student teaching is established in preparing aspiring teachers to practice with various student characteristics and school environments. Additionally, it is a drive to increase their knowledge, professionalism, sense of efficacy, and adaptability in their relationships and performance [8]. Student teaching is the concluding experience for pre-service teacher learning in teacher education programs around the world [9].

2. Problem Statement

One of the most important components of teacher education is field experience and teacher educators understand how crucial it is for preparing student teachers for the classroom [10]. The teaching practice course is regarded as one of the core courses in teacher education programs [11]. Pre-service teachers have the chance to learn about their skills, needs, and capabilities while engaging in teaching practice [11]. Since teaching practice is a crucial component of teacher preparation and offers opportunities for student teachers to connect theory and practice, it has an impact on teacher outcomes [12, 13].

The effectiveness of pre-service teaching practice is the aspect of teacher education that has received the least attention [14]. The hallmark of teacher education is the placement of pre-service teachers in classrooms where they interact with kids while being supervised by an experienced teacher [15].

According to Transforming Teacher Education and Learning [T-TEL], the Diploma in Basic Education curriculum does not effectively prepare trainees to teach in Ghanaian schools [16, 7]. Although the demands of globalization and technological innovation necessitate that instructors be prepared for responsibilities in and beyond the classroom, there appears to be little relationship between the curriculum and the needs of the classroom for teachers [16]. Without a considerable shift in focus toward preparing teachers to meet the evolving requirements of the school system, efforts to improve education may not be successful [17].

To transform initial teacher education in Ghana, the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF) was created [18]. This was done on the theory that preparing effective, inspiring, and engaging teachers is a crucial first step toward ensuring high-quality education for all students. Effective teachers, equipped to teach utilizing learner-centered pedagogy and inclusive approach are needed to improve the quality of education [18].

The introduction of the four-year B. Ed program into Colleges of Education has altered the environment in which pre-service teachers in Ghana are prepared for admission into the teaching profession. In the B. Ed program, student teachers now spend a portion of their preparation time participating in supported teaching in schools [19]. The goal of the B. Ed. Curriculum is to revolutionize initial teacher education and ensure the preparation of highly competent teachers who can push their students to achieve results [19]. The National Teachers' Standards for teaching, which are the goal of the B. Ed. program, state that it aspires to produce new teachers who are competent, and completely prepared to teach the basic school curriculum.

Student teachers can develop and apply their professional values and attitudes, knowledge, and practice through supported teaching in school placements, which were created to help them become qualified teachers after their training. The availability of well-equipped schools, mentors who are prepared, and strong connections between colleges or universities and the schools all play a role in the achievement of this goal [18]. Supported Teaching in Schools aims to develop teachers through involvement in student-supported practicum experiences that promote ongoing reflection, teaching practice, and school observational visits [18]. Pre-service teachers go through beginning teaching in their first year, where emphasis is placed on school-based, organized, and directed learning experiences in schools [19].

Student-teachers have the opportunity to express their educational ideas during teaching practice, which also enables them to experiment and put their teaching and learning knowledge to the test. However, throughout this professional practice, student-teachers go through varied experiences and difficulties [20]. During supported teaching, are pre-service teachers given the guidance and experiences they need to develop into effective professionals?

3. Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation of the study is situated learning theory, which was first proposed by Brown, Collins, and Duguid [21] and developed by Lave and Wenger [22]. Situated learning emphasized that information should be presented in a real-world setting. Students are more likely to learn when they are actively engaged in their learning environment as opposed to sitting passively in class. The notion of communities of practice contends that learning should be seen as an entrenched and active process rather than solely as the transmission of knowledge [22]. Beginners pick up knowledge by observing other community members before gradually transitioning from observers to active participants. Situated learning states that for learning to be effective, it must be integrated into the social and physical environment [22].

Learning is experienced and mediated through interactions with others in a community of practice [23]. Members of a community of practice share and create practices together, receive knowledge through their contacts with other group members, and have the opportunity to advance intellectually, professionally, or personally [22]. Situated learning places a

strong emphasis on giving students the chance to demonstrate their skills and capabilities [23].

The premise that most of what is learned is specific to the setting in which it is taught is emphasized by situated learning [24]. The foundation of situated learning is the notion that learning is contained in the "context" in which the learning is taking place, rather than in the individual [25]. The process by which outsiders integrate into a community of practice by eventually having open access to areas of established practice is known as legitimate peripheral participation [22]. Through appropriate peripheral participation, the learner can gradually put together the group's culture and what it means to be a member. The participant transitions from the position of observer to that of a fully functional agent as their knowledge and involvement in the culture grow.

In situated learning, learners integrate the course material practically in real-world settings [26]. The approach also places a strong emphasis on 21st-century competencies including teamwork, leadership, reflection, critical thinking, and the genuine application of ideas [27]. Giving students the chance to participate in community service in the field, enables them to independently develop instructional strategies and integrate and apply knowledge in a practical setting [27]. Learning is a component of generative social activity in the lived-in world, and not an independent process located somewhere [22].

Learning requires an authentic, contextualized environment where participants can interact and reflect [21]. Pre-service teachers can apply the pedagogical and content knowledge they learned in the classroom because they are in an authentic teaching environment [15]. Through legitimate peripheral engagement in the practice of a professional community, knowledge acquisition is first demonstrated on the social level and subsequently internalized [22].

4. Conceptual Framework

4.1. Teacher Education

Teacher preparation, which takes place prior to becoming a regular teacher, is referred to as teacher education. Despite the different perspectives in each nation, there is a global trend toward rethinking and reorganizing teacher education [28] to meet the demand for high-quality teachers. To ensure that all students receive high-quality education, teacher preparation is recognized as essential [29].

Each strategy for restructuring teacher education emphasizes a distinct perspective on the knowledge required to teach, as well as how issues in education are presented in each setting. At the moment, academic knowledge and practical knowledge are the two main types of knowledge regarding teaching and learning that predominate [33].

4.2. Teacher Competencies

A knowledge component and an action component are both present in the constructions of teacher competencies [30]. Teacher competence is a set of skills and behaviors that enable a teacher to behave in challenging, fluctuating professional situations. It is a cognitive structure that supports specific behaviors [30]. Accordingly, competence is linked to the capacity to manage a variety of difficult scenarios and create efficient solutions to the problems encountered in real-world working circumstances [31]. It also includes the capacity to articulate how information and skills are used practically [30]. Once more, it is believed that competencies include teachers' moral principles and beliefs [32, 33], as well as their motivational, affective, and volitional work styles [34] and "social willingness to successfully and responsibly apply these solutions in various situations" [31].

Knowledge of various types, including both theoretical and contextual knowledge, for the practical work of teaching in the classroom and beyond, should be significantly learned during teacher education. Teacher knowledge has traditionally been viewed as a key component of teacher competence. Theoretically, teachers should have a general knowledge of education, teaching, and student learning [30].

The general understanding of the school, curriculum, pedagogy, learning principles, ethical aspects of education, and the philosophical, historical, and sociological context of education and schooling are all included in this type of general knowledge. The ability to use this information in real-world educational contexts is a component of teacher knowledge [35]. The 21st century teacher competencies put a greater emphasis on knowledge of student learning, prioritize teacher collaboration, impose requirements for the use of digital technologies, and propose different modes of teaching and learning [36, 37].

Throughout teacher education, several theoretical and contextual knowledge should be learned for the actual job of teaching in the classroom [30]. Teacher knowledge is viewed as a unique construct and the cornerstone of the profession of teaching. Teacher knowledge is continuously acquired during and after teacher education through deliberate and ongoing contact with other teachers. It combines theoretical concepts, past experiences, beliefs, and practical professional experiences [30].

There are four components that make up a teacher's competency [38]: (1) specific declarative and procedural knowledge that further differentiates between content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK); (2) professional beliefs, values, subjective theories, normative preferences, and objectives; (3) motivational orientations; and (4) meta-cognitive skills and professional self-regulation.

4.3. Community of Practice

A small team of people that collaborate regularly are known as a community of practice, where personal and social meanings are generated, and the members experience, form, and adopt new identities [39].

People who participate in a community of practice can carry out the same task, work together on a project, or create the same thing. Lave and Wenger [22] coined the term "legitimate peripheral participation" to explain how outsiders

progressively join an already-established community of practice. Existing members of the community are full participants, and newcomers are legitimate peripheral participants. Through their tangential involvement, newcomers transform their identities into full engagement [39].

4.4. Mentoring in the Preparation of Teachers

Mentoring is a top priority in training sessions for teachers in higher education [40]. Mentoring is one of the best approaches to improve student-teacher quality during teacher training [41]. Developing teaching professionals through mentoring is a successful strategy. In a supportive connection between a less experienced person and a more experienced person, mentoring is a process that aids student instructors in developing their teaching behaviors and tactics. The mentor serves as both a role model and an advisor for the mentee.

During their practicum, student mentoring is a crucial component of their professional development [42]. Mentoring improves students' academic achievement, commitment, and classroom teaching strategies [43]. For new instructors beginning the field, effective mentorship connections are crucial. Successful mentoring relationships, in the opinion of researchers, are viewed as being crucial for beginning teachers to survive their first teaching experiences, build their teaching competencies, and define their teaching life [44]. According to sociocultural and situative theories, the mentor teacher is a significant factor in determining how pre-service teachers connect with one another in the field [15].

By making expert knowledge apparent, modelling good teaching techniques, offering scaffold assistance throughout instruction, and providing specific feedback for progress, mentor instructors enhance the growth of pre-service teachers [45]. The "transfer of what is purportedly learnt in teacher education programs to actual classroom practice" depends critically on this apprenticeship [46]. The thoughts and deeds of seasoned teachers reflect their understanding of good teaching. Pre-service teachers observe other teachers' lessons and remark on and on their own methods, which results in meaningful teacher learning.

To acquire and replicate such teaching approaches in their classrooms, it is essential to interact with and learn from model instructors in these settings [47]. Learning is an essential component of generative social practice in the lived-in world rather than simply being placed in practice as though it were some independently tangible process that just so happened to be positioned somewhere [22]. Only when learning is integrated into the social and physical environment in which it will be employed will it be meaningful [21]. Situated learning settings give students access to professional performances and process modeling, enabling them to see the task before attempting it.

5. Methodology

5.1. Design

The study used a qualitative approach and phenomenological design, from an interpretive point of view. The description of an individual's present experience is known as phenomenology [48]. Phenomenology emerged from Edmond Husserl's philosophical view that one's own experience of things, such as conscious perceptions and sensations that result from daily experience, should serve as the foundation for knowing [48]. Husserl claims that phenomenology is a method of inquiry that provides a comprehensive account of the study subjects' lived experiences of meaning-making and enlightens us as to how they perceive the primary object or phenomena [49]. "Lived world experience" and "captured consciousness," are the two key terms used in phenomenology to describe the process of extracting or capturing consciousness [49].

In phenomenology, embodied experience is the primary means of understanding reality [50]. The goal of phenomenology is to describe experiences, the "things themselves" and to bring to our attention some past experiences so that we might consider the present significance of these past experiences [51, 52].

5.2. Participants and Sampling

The study participants consisted of Twenty (20) level 100 pre-service teachers (12 males and 8 females) who were enrolled in a four-year bachelor of Education program.

Convenience sampling procedure was used to select the sample. In convenience sampling, the researcher examines any population members who are conveniently accessible.

5.3. Instruments and Data Collection Procedure

Data was gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews using a protocol developed by the researcher. The interviews took place both in-person and online. The interview guide included follow-up questions that prompted student teachers to describe their experiences during supported teaching in schools (STS). Follow-up questions were posed during the in-person interviews to elicit further details about their experiences.

The online interview comprised text-only conversation and was conducted asynchronously. Participants were asked the questions over a WhatsApp group using a Google form that was created for that purpose.

For six weeks, student-teachers took part in supported teaching in schools (STS). They went to partner schools every week to observe and learn from their mentors, co-teach, plan, and discuss professional and instructional experiences they saw with their peers and college tutors. The STS coordinator walked student-teachers through an orientation program before the school visits, explaining the purpose of STS and what they would be doing in their partner schools. Additionally, they received all the required supplies, including the guide for supported teaching in schools and templates for student reflective journals. Data were collected at the end of the sixth week of school visits.

5.4. Data Analysis

Version 2.0.8 of QDA Miner Lite was used to analyse the data. The QDA Miner Lite was used to upload data cases for coding and analysis. The data was coded case by case based on noteworthy statements from the participant's experiences. Themes were generated using thematic analysis. The themes that emerged and the relationships between them served as the basis for interpretation. The key ideas that emerge concerning the research topic and statements that exhibits some amount of significance within the data qualify as a theme [53]. Themes and concepts were created by grouping similar significant remarks from participants. These themes were then combined to provide a textual and structural account of student teachers' experiences. Simple frequencies and percentages of noteworthy statements were obtained from the coded texts and displayed in charts and tables.

6. Findings

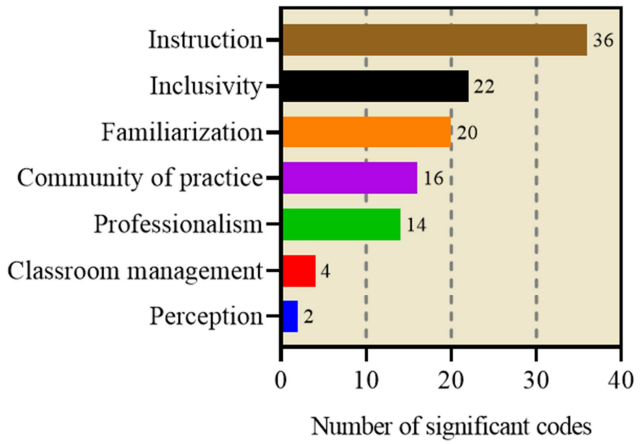

Figure 1. *Thematic areas of experiences gained with number of significant codes.*

Based on important assertions of the experiences pre-service teachers were exposed to throughout their six weeks of supported teaching in schools, data from the interviews was categorized into themes. These experiences were grouped into seven categories: instruction, professionalism, community of practice, classroom management, awareness of inclusivity, perception, and familiarization. The seven thematic areas of experiences that student-teachers gained during STS and the number of significant codes generated are depicted in Figure 1.

Experiences that altered student-teachers' perceptions of teaching as a vocation fall under the category of "perception." The activities that familiarize student teachers with the schools and wider school community are referred to as "familiarization." These include school history, school facilities, the local environment, and information about other school stakeholders. Community of practice refers to the experiences student-teachers get when working side by side with peers, collaborating on projects, reflecting, and discussing teaching and learning in small groups.

The experiences that aid in the development of student-teachers' problem-solving and management skills in the classroom are represented by the theme "classroom management." Experiences under “inclusivity” are those that help student instructors become more knowledgeable and conscious of inclusive pedagogy. The term “Professionalism” as used here are those experiences that help student-teachers acquire positive professional traits. The term "instructional experiences" refers to those learning opportunities that student-teachers have had that directly relate to teaching methodology and strategies.

The majority of noteworthy statements came from instructional experiences (36), followed by inclusiveness experiences (22), familiarization experiences (20), and community of practice experiences (16). Low numbers of meaningful codes were found for professionalism (14), classroom management experiences (4), and perception (2). Table 1 lists the key themes, noteworthy statements and frequency of codes.

Table 1. *Key themes, noteworthy statements and frequency of codes.*

Theme	Significant statements	frequency
Classroom management	Knowledge of classroom management	4
	Mentor assistance/guidance	5
	Collaboration and teamwork	8
Community of practice	Lifelong learning	1
	Respect for others	1
	How to share ideas	1
Familiarization	Knowledge of wider school life	9
	Familiarization with school life	11
Inclusivity	Knowledge of differentiated instruction	4
	Knowledge of inclusive pedagogy	18
	Knowledge of assessment strategies	1
	Improved communication skills	3
	Creativity and innovation in teaching	1
	Developed confidence in teaching	2
Instruction	Devoting time to learners	1
	Knowledge of learner behavior	3
	Knowledge of lesson introduction	1
	Knowledge of lesson planning	3
	Knowledge of teaching methods/methodology	21

Theme	Significant statements	frequency
Perception	Changed my perception of teaching	2
Professionalism	Being friendly and approachable	2
	Being patience	3
	Positive attitude toward teaching	2
	Good professional traits	7

The majority of student teachers' experiences were related to instruction. These include knowledge of teaching methodologies and techniques (21), lesson planning (3), knowledge of learner behavior (3), communication skills (3), knowledge of lesson introduction (1), assessment strategies (1), devoting time to learners (1), and creativity and innovation in teaching (1) are specific experiences.

Knowledge of differentiated instruction (4) and knowledge of inclusive pedagogy (18) were two areas where many students' experiences were connected to their knowledge of inclusivity. These include familiarity with inclusive teaching and learning techniques that mentors employed while they were being monitored. Familiarization, that is being familiar with the school and the wider school included getting to know school life (11) and the larger school community (9) including other stakeholders of the school.

Student-teachers gained knowledge through community of practice as they asked their mentors for assistance (5), shared ideas with mentors, other teachers, and their colleagues (1), enquired for clarification and lifelong learning (1), collaborated and worked in teams (8), and exhibited respect for one another within the community of practice (1). Additionally, student-teachers acquired some qualities of a successful teacher, such as being approachable and friendly (2), having patience (3), and having a positive attitude toward teaching (2). Although it included the fewest significant statements, the student-teachers understanding of classroom management was enhanced, and they had a positive attitude toward teaching (2).

7. Discussion

7.1. Instructional Experiences

The study found that instructional and methodological concerns as well as inclusive behaviors dominated student-teachers' experiences. Providing pre-service teachers with the appropriate instructional and methodological competencies is one of the most crucial aspects of teacher education programs. These remarks reflect the perspectives of student teachers:

"By giving each student personal attention, my mentor inspired the students. He encourages the female students to compete with the male students in the class. They are not discouraged by my mentor. He accepts any response" (STS03).

"STS helps me to very well design a lesson and also help me to review learners' RPK" (STS021).

"I have discovered that teaching is a process, thus one needs to have a lot of time to suit the demands of learners" (STS042).

"I now know how to introduce a lesson by drawing on students' prior knowledge" (STS039).

"I now know how to create lesson plans and present lessons" (STS018).

"I now know that role-playing, collaborative projects, and dramatization may all be used in the classroom" (STS037).

"STS helped us understand what teaching is about, what to teach, and what the kids' learning needs are when we become teachers" (STS01).

As they watch their mentors apply a variety of teaching techniques and strategies in their lessons, new teachers develop their teaching abilities. The professional expertise of teachers must include a wide range of specialized understanding of subject content, pedagogy, and classroom management [54]. Pedagogical knowledge includes information about learning and individual learning differences, specifics of the processes of socio-emotional, cognitive, moral, and physical development, as well as strategies for curriculum design, instruction, and evaluation [54].

Creating the best learning environment, incorporating learning scaffolding techniques, utilizing collaborative techniques, applying didactic transposition techniques to ensure accessibility and coherence of the educational content being taught, assessing based on learning objectives and outcomes, and explicitly formulating expectations regarding the students' learning are some factors that affect effective teaching [55]. Initial teacher training must assist new teachers in learning how to deliver teaching.

7.2. Inclusive Methods of Instruction

During STS, students-teachers also encountered inclusive teaching techniques. They gained the awareness of how to manage children with a range of skills abilities and how to provide each student with an equal chance for success. No learner is stupid, and all learners have ideas when they are in the correct atmosphere, according to the student-teachers.

"I also discovered that no learner is foolish; every student has some background knowledge on the subject or idea" (STS02).

Every student contributes priceless ideas and life experiences to the classroom. These assets are their abilities, strengths, and skills, which are based on their individual experiences, information, and convictions. Teachers that are aware of their students' resources are better able to adapt their instruction to the ideas that students bring to class [56]. The foundation of inclusive practices is the idea that educational institutions are responsible for planning curriculum and instruction around a diverse student body in a way that

respects their innate abilities [56].

Giving each student the attention they need to learn means being inclusive in the classroom. When it comes to teaching and learning, inclusive pedagogy pays attention to the individual variations among students while avoiding the marginalization that can happen when pedagogical interventions are exclusively created with the requirements of the individual students in mind [57]. The following sentences illustrate this:

"I have learned that all learners have a variety of needs, and all should be embraced and encouraged. I have also learned to be kind to learners so they can talk to you about their issues, such as emotional, physical, and psychological issues" (STS025).

We have a variety of pupils, so I've learned that if you take your time when teaching, the students will understand all you are saying (STS004).

"I have learned about diversity and how to take each student's perspective and handle it"(STS036).

"I learn how to treat students with varied socio-cultural needs and how to control them" (STS043).

The excerpts clearly show that the student teachers witnessed certain inclusive educational strategies that their mentors employed. These inclusive teaching methods are more likely to be imitated in future classrooms by student teachers. Inclusive practice is distinct in the ways that teachers respond to diversity, how they decide how to handle group projects, and how they use specialized knowledge [58]. It is possible to effectively teach a varied group of students by being adaptable, responsive, committed to each student, and using a variety of teaching methods. Additionally, teachers who get to know their students on a very personal level will have the freedom to diversify learning for each student [56].

7.3. Community of Practice

Student-teachers had the chance to communicate and work in teams with colleagues. They also reflected on their daily observations. They established communities of practice, which are teams of student-teachers working toward a common objective and exchanging knowledge to benefit from one another's experience in the community. Student teachers reported that they had gained skills in collaboration, communication, and teamwork through supported teaching in the classroom.

"I have learned about equity and equality, effective communication, teamwork, and collaboration. Teaching is a difficult job that requires persistence and bravery" (STS14).

"I have discovered so much. For instance, teamwork and peer collaboration. Additionally, I developed my communication skills, humility, and respect for other people's opinions" (STS03).

For teachers of all levels, the creation of learning communities within schools is viewed as a model of professional development. Communities of practice are groups of people who meet frequently to enhance their knowledge and competence in a subject area and who share a concern, a set of difficulties, or a love for it [59]. Wenger et al. claims that social interactions in the workplace shape who we are and that a lot of learning happens as a result of these involvements in professional communities.

7.4. Teacher Professional Traits

Some professional characteristics were evident in student-teachers' comments. The traits that emerged include friendliness, approachability, patience, and good relationships with students. These were articulated in the comments that follow:

"I've discovered that being approachable and personable is important for a teacher so that students can talk to us about their issues and what they are going through (STS009).

"To be a good teacher, you must be patient and have good interpersonal skills. (STS003).

"I possess several professional teaching skills that may one day help me succeed as a professional teacher" (STS028).

"STS has accustomed us to school life and given us the chance to observe certain helpful characteristics of teachers, which has aided me" (STS06).

"STS has accustomed us to school life and given us the chance to see certain helpful characteristics in teachers, which has aided me" (STS06).

"I learned a lot, but the most crucial thing is the characteristics of a skilled teacher" (STS047).

The qualities of a teacher include: being ready, having a good attitude, having high expectations, being creative, being fair, having a personal touch, accepting mistakes, having a sense of humor, having respect for pupils, having a forgiving attitude, and having compassion [60, 61]. Research found that friendliness, forgiveness, respect, compassion, fairness, attitude, and comprehension was rated as good teacher characteristics [61].

7.5. Familiarity with the School Setting and Wider Aspects of School Life

It was discovered that the majority of student-teachers were given a tour of the environment and surroundings of partner schools. This was done as part of the orientation program for student-teachers organized by head teachers and lead mentors. Most often, student-teachers learned about the history of the schools, the number of staff and students, the available infrastructure, and larger school ties like Circuit Supervisors, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders. From the remarks, it was evident that the partner schools provided student-teachers with a suitable orientation or induction. Effective teaching only happens when teachers have relationships with other teachers, students, schools, and the larger community [62].

These were made evident through their comments in the following excerpts:

"The head teacher welcomed us and walked us through the school's history on the first day. The teachers were polite, and we consulted them for clarification on everything we didn't understand" (STS09).
The lead mentor explained to us the background of the school and the amenities they had there"(STS14).
They welcomed us and informed us of the school's history, its stakeholders, its facilities, and the number of staff " (STS02).
"They welcomed us and gave us a tour of the campus. They provided us with information about the school's past and how different parties had worked together with it" (STS03).
They welcomed us with open arms. They had a terrific relationship with us. They provided us with all the aid we require" (STS12).

7.6. Classroom Management

Studies show that inexperienced teachers still have trouble with classroom control [63, 64]. In the present study, student-teachers gained some experience in classroom management. Many of the student teachers' statements revealed their experiences with classroom management:

"As a classroom instructor, I also learned how to control the entire class" (STS022).
"I now have more knowledge about good classroom management" (STS006).
"The course is excellent and fascinating. We improved our knowledge of classroom management techniques" (STS04).

Effective classroom management is essential to good instruction. For new teachers and teacher candidates alike, understanding and using effective classroom management techniques is a typical difficulty [65, 64].

To create learning settings where teachers comprehend and put into effect both preventive management measures and reactive problem-solving techniques as necessary, classroom management needs teachers to use a sophisticated and inclusive set of practices [66, 67, 64].

7.7. Changed Perceptions of Teaching

Student teachers' perspectives on instruction improved. As students observed their mentors, they began to form a positive opinion of teaching as a vocation. For instance, a student-teacher stated the following:

"STS is good. We went through a lot. We had the wrong ideas about how to teach. I discovered some mentors were passionate about their work" (STS15).

Teachers who are highly driven and have positive views about their work can build a strong rapport with students, foster a happy environment, help pupils learn, and offer guidance when needed, all of which improve the quality of teaching. Pre-service and in-service teachers need to be prepared and excited to take on such significant duties [68]. Practicums allowed pre-service teachers to reflect on what teaching entails and form attitudes toward that profession [69].

8. Conclusion

Pre-service teachers have been exposed to a variety of teaching situations through supported teaching in schools. These included learning opportunities, knowledge of instructional strategies, awareness of inclusive pedagogy, familiarization with the larger school community, and community of practice through peer cooperation. Other experiences include familiarity with the teachers' professional characteristics, classroom management, and a positive opinion of teaching.

It was found that supported teaching in schools is not guided by a complete mentorship program in Ghanaian Colleges of Education. For use by mentors and students, there should be a thorough mentorship program for supported teaching in schools for all Colleges of Education. Mentors should get proper training before student-teachers begin visiting partner schools. Again, mentors should be motivated enough to support mentees in performing their duties effectively. All mentors at the partner schools should have access to the STS mentor guide book.

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