



School Internship Programme in B.Ed.: A Critical Evaluation of Its Effectiveness in Developing Teaching Competencies

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Abstract

The School Internship Programme is a key part of the B.Ed. curriculum that helps trainee teachers practice teaching in real classrooms. It connects theory learned at college with practical teaching skills. Guidelines from the National Council for Teacher Education and the National Education Policy emphasize that internship should be structured, reflective, and focused on improving teaching skills.

This study explores how the internship programme helps improve teaching skills of B.Ed. trainees. A descriptive survey method was used. The sample included 100 trainees and 20 mentor teachers chosen randomly. Data was collected using a Teaching Competency Scale, a Mentoring Support Questionnaire, and classroom observations.

Results showed a significant improvement in teaching skills after the internship ($t(99)=29.35$, $p<.05$). Mentoring support was also found to play an important role in improving skills ($t(98)=5.78$, $p<.05$). Some challenges like lack of mentoring time, limited feedback, and resource issues were also identified.

The study suggests that structured guidance, reflection, and collaboration between colleges and schools are necessary to make internships more effective.

Keywords: School Internship, Teaching Skills, B.Ed., Mentoring, Reflection

3. Introduction

Teacher education is foundational to producing competent, reflective, and professional educators capable of addressing the multifaceted needs of learners in contemporary classrooms. The quality of teacher preparation directly impacts student learning outcomes, classroom climate, and the broader educational system. Globally, teacher internship or practicum is considered a critical

component of teacher preparation programmes, providing pre-service teachers with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in authentic classroom contexts (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

In India, the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) curriculum mandates a structured School Internship Programme as a means to integrate theory and practice. The programme allows trainees to gain firsthand classroom experience, develop pedagogical skills, understand learner diversity, and foster reflective practices. Through micro-teaching, lesson planning, classroom management, assessment practices, and collaborative learning, the internship cultivates professional competence.

The National Council for Teacher Education guidelines and the National Education Policy emphasize experiential learning, reflective teaching, and competency-based evaluation. Internships are now considered essential for bridging the gap between teacher education institutions and real school environments.

Despite its significance, several challenges are reported, including limited mentor interaction, inconsistent feedback, and time constraints. Studies have also highlighted a lack of structured monitoring, which can undermine internship effectiveness. Therefore, a systematic evaluation of the School Internship Programme is essential to identify strengths, limitations, and practical recommendations for enhancing teacher preparation quality.

4. Review of Literature

Several studies both in India and internationally have examined the role and impact of school internships on teacher education:

1. **Darling-Hammond (2017)** emphasized that experiential learning, including internships, significantly enhances teaching competencies and professional readiness. Her study indicated that pre-service teachers who engaged in structured internship programs demonstrated higher confidence, better classroom management, and effective lesson delivery.
2. **Sharma & Sharma (2018)** examined 120 B.Ed. trainees and concluded that structured mentorship during internships positively correlates with the development of lesson planning, classroom management, and assessment skills. The study emphasized that mentor engagement and feedback are crucial determinants of trainee performance.
3. **Singh & Kaur (2019)** analyzed challenges faced during school internships in Indian teacher education institutions. They identified key obstacles such as insufficient mentor support, lack of constructive feedback, and time limitations, which impede the full potential of internship programmes.
4. **Aggarwal (2020)** highlighted the importance of reflective practices such as maintaining teaching journals. Reflective practices enhance self-assessment, problem-solving skills, and professional growth. Pre-service teachers who maintained reflective journals during internships showed improved teaching strategies and responsiveness to student needs.

5. Internationally, **European Commission (2018)** reported that school internships integrated with micro-teaching sessions enhance the competency levels of teacher trainees by providing iterative learning opportunities.
6. **NCTE (2014)** and **NEP (2020)** recommend structured and competency-based internship durations (4–6 weeks for each methodology), including mentorship, observation, and reflective documentation, to ensure trainees are adequately prepared for professional teaching.

Synthesis of Literature: The literature underscores that internship effectiveness depends on structured mentoring, reflective practice, feedback mechanisms, and alignment with theoretical training. However, limited studies in India have critically evaluated the cumulative impact of these factors on teaching competency development, highlighting a research gap that the present study addresses.

5. Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of the School Internship Programme in enhancing teaching competencies.
2. To analyze the influence of mentoring support on trainee performance.
3. To identify challenges faced by trainees during the internship.
4. To provide actionable recommendations for improving the quality of internship in B.Ed. programmes.

6. Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no significant difference between pre- and post-internship teaching competency scores.

H₀2: Mentoring support does not significantly influence teaching competency development.

7. Methodology

7.1 Research Design

The present study adopted a **descriptive survey research design** to evaluate the effectiveness of the School Internship Programme in developing teaching competencies among B.Ed. trainee teachers. A descriptive design was considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative information from participants without manipulating any variables. The study aimed to describe the existing conditions of the internship programme, assess changes in teaching competencies after internship, and examine the role of mentoring support in enhancing professional skills. The design also facilitated the collection of factual information regarding the challenges experienced by trainee teachers during their internship.

7.2 Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of all B.Ed. second-year trainee teachers enrolled in teacher education institutions affiliated with **Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut**, during the academic session 2024–2025. Mentor teachers supervising the internship in selected schools also formed part of the study population.

A total sample of **100 B.Ed. trainees** and **20 mentor teachers** was selected using **stratified random sampling**. Stratification was based on teaching specialization to ensure equal representation from Languages, Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies. The trainee sample included **50 male and 50 female students**, thereby ensuring gender balance and reducing sampling bias. The mentor teachers represented the same four teaching specializations, with five mentors selected from each specialization.

The use of stratified random sampling enhanced the representativeness of the sample and improved the generalizability of the findings.

Teaching Specialization	Male Trainees	Female Trainees	Total Trainees
Languages	12	13	25
Science	12	13	25
Mathematics	13	12	25
Social Studies	13	12	25
Total	50	50	100

Mentor Teacher Sample

Teaching Specialization	Mentor Teachers	Total Mentors
Languages	5	5
Science	5	5
Mathematics	5	5
Social Studies	5	5
Total	20	20

Table: Stratum-wise distribution of B.Ed. second-year trainees and mentor teachers selected through stratified random sampling.

7.3 Tools Used

The study employed multiple research tools to ensure comprehensive assessment and triangulation of findings.

1. Teaching Competency Scale (TCS):

A standardized Teaching Competency Scale was used to assess trainee teachers' competencies before and after the internship. The scale measured competencies related to lesson planning, instructional delivery, classroom management, use of teaching aids, questioning techniques, evaluation methods, and reflective teaching practices. The instrument demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency with a **Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.89**, indicating high reliability.

2. Mentoring Support Questionnaire (MSQ):

The Mentoring Support Questionnaire was administered after the internship to measure the quality and frequency of mentor guidance. The questionnaire included items related to classroom observation, feedback, emotional support, professional guidance, and collaborative planning. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was **0.86**, indicating good reliability.

3. Classroom Observation Schedule:

A structured observation schedule was prepared to record actual classroom teaching practices during the internship. The observation focused on classroom interaction, instructional methods, student participation, time management, use of teaching-learning materials, and classroom discipline. Observation data were used to validate the responses obtained through the questionnaires.

7.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was conducted in a systematic manner over the sixteen-week internship period.

Initially, trainee teachers completed the Teaching Competency Scale before the commencement of the internship to establish baseline competency levels. During the internship, trainees participated in lesson planning, classroom teaching, classroom observations, preparation of teaching-learning materials, maintenance of reflective journals, and participation in school activities.

Mentor teachers regularly observed classroom teaching sessions and provided guidance and feedback. At the end of the internship, trainees again completed the Teaching Competency Scale, while the Mentoring Support Questionnaire was administered to assess the level of mentoring received. Classroom observation records and mentor interviews were also collected to strengthen the validity of the findings through methodological triangulation.

7.5 Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent obtained from all participants.
- Anonymity and confidentiality maintained.
- Participants allowed to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

7.6 Statistical Analysis

- Descriptive Statistics: Mean, Standard Deviation
- Inferential Statistics: Paired Sample t-test (pre-post comparison), Independent Sample t-test (mentoring support analysis)
- Percentage analysis for qualitative challenges

8. Results

8.1 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Internship	100	62.45	6.82	0.68
Post-Internship	100	78.30	7.15	0.71

Interpretation: Trainees demonstrated substantial improvement in teaching competency scores following the internship.

8.2 Paired Sample t-Test

Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
15.85	5.40	29.35	99	.000

Interpretation: $t(99)=29.35$, $p<.05$. The School Internship Programme significantly improved teaching competencies, confirming H_01 is rejected.

8.3 Mentoring Support Impact

Mentoring Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
High Support	50	82.10	6.20
Low Support	50	74.50	7.30

Independent Samples t-test: $t(98)=5.78$, $p<.05$

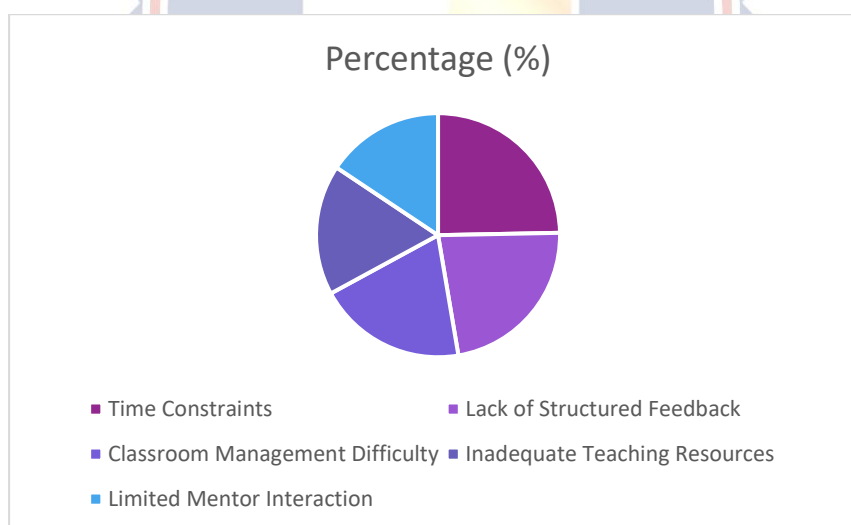
Interpretation: Mentoring support significantly influenced competency development, confirming H_02 is rejected.

8.4 Challenges Faced (Percentage Analysis)

Challenge	Percentage (%)
Time Constraints	60
Lack of Structured Feedback	55
Classroom Management Difficulty	48
Inadequate Teaching Resources	42
Limited Mentor Interaction	38

8.5 Graph Placeholders

- **Graph 1:** Pre vs Post Internship Competency (Bar Graph)
- **Graph 2:** High vs Low Mentoring Support (Bar Graph)
- **Graph 3:** Challenges Faced During Internship (Pie Chart)



9. Discussion

The findings of the present study indicate that the **School Internship Programme plays a significant role in enhancing the teaching competencies of B.Ed. trainee teachers**. The comparison between pre-internship and post-internship teaching competency scores revealed a statistically significant improvement after the completion of the internship. This finding suggests that practical teaching experiences enable trainee teachers to apply theoretical knowledge in real classroom situations, thereby strengthening their professional competencies. The internship programme provides opportunities to develop essential teaching skills such as lesson planning,

classroom management, communication, questioning techniques, instructional strategies, assessment practices, and effective use of teaching-learning materials.

The findings support the philosophy of **experiential learning**, which emphasizes that professional competence develops through direct experience, observation, reflection, and continuous practice. During the internship, trainee teachers actively engage with students, classroom environments, school administration, and experienced teachers. These experiences help them understand learner diversity, adapt teaching methods according to classroom needs, and improve their confidence in handling real teaching situations.

The study further revealed that **mentoring support significantly influences the development of teaching competencies**. Trainees who received regular guidance, constructive feedback, and encouragement from mentor teachers performed better than those receiving limited support. Effective mentoring helped trainees improve lesson organization, classroom interaction, instructional delivery, and reflective thinking. Continuous observation and timely feedback enabled trainees to identify their strengths and weaknesses and adopt suitable strategies for professional improvement. This finding reinforces the importance of assigning trained and committed mentor teachers during the internship period.

The results are consistent with the findings of **Darling-Hammond (2017)**, who emphasized that structured clinical practice and mentoring improve teaching effectiveness and professional readiness. Similarly, **Sharma and Sharma (2018)** reported that continuous mentor support positively affects classroom management, lesson planning, and instructional competence among B.Ed. trainees. The present findings also align with the recommendations of the **National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE, 2014)** and the **National Education Policy (NEP, 2020)**, both of which advocate competency-based, practice-oriented teacher education with strong school-college collaboration.

Although the overall impact of the internship programme was positive, the study also identified several challenges that limited its effectiveness. The most frequently reported problems included **time constraints, inadequate structured feedback, classroom management difficulties, insufficient teaching resources, and limited interaction with mentor teachers**. These challenges may reduce the opportunities available for reflective learning and skill development. Lack of adequate mentoring time and heavy workload of mentor teachers often restrict the quality of guidance provided to trainees. Similarly, limited instructional resources and varying school environments may influence the overall internship experience.

These findings indicate that merely placing trainee teachers in schools is not sufficient for effective professional development. The quality of internship largely depends on systematic planning, active supervision, regular monitoring, meaningful feedback, and collaboration between teacher education institutions and partner schools. Well-organized mentoring systems, orientation programmes for mentor teachers, and structured reflective activities can significantly improve internship outcomes.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the School Internship Programme is an essential component of teacher education and contributes substantially to the professional preparation of future teachers. However, continuous efforts are needed to strengthen mentoring practices, improve institutional coordination, provide adequate teaching resources, and establish effective monitoring mechanisms. Such improvements will help ensure that internship programmes produce competent, reflective, and professionally prepared teachers capable of meeting the diverse learning needs of twenty-first-century classrooms.

10. Educational Implications

1. Strengthen mentor training and orientation programmes.
2. Implement structured reflective journaling and assessment of journals.
3. Enhance collaboration between teacher education institutions and schools.
4. Provide continuous feedback and monitoring during internship.
5. Extend duration and diversify teaching exposure.
6. Integrate technology and digital teaching aids into internship.

11. Conclusion

The School Internship Programme is a cornerstone of B.Ed. education, providing pre-service teachers with critical classroom experience. Structured mentoring, reflective practice, and proper supervision significantly enhance teaching competency development. Addressing the identified challenges will ensure the preparation of professional, reflective, and competent teachers capable of responding to diverse educational contexts.

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