LEARNING TO TEACH IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF THE INITIAL PRIMARY TEACHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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<tr>
<td>ECCE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care and Education</td>
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<td>NCCE</td>
<td>National Commission for Colleges of Education</td>
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<td>NCE</td>
<td>National Certificate in Education</td>
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<td>PED</td>
<td>Primary Education</td>
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<td>PES</td>
<td>Primary Education Studies</td>
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<td>TP</td>
<td>Teaching Practice</td>
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<td>UBE</td>
<td>Universal Basic Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>UBEC</td>
<td>Universal Basic Education Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Education Scientific and Culture Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPE</td>
<td>Universal Primary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAMB</td>
<td>Joint Admission Matriculation Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMTE</td>
<td>Unified Matriculation Tertiary Examination</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSCE</td>
<td>Senior Secondary Certificate Examination</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPE</td>
<td>National Policy on Education</td>
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Tertiary Education
Tertiary Education is the ‘education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses’ (NPE, 2004, p.36).

Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE)
Senior Secondary Certificate Examination is the final standardized examination written by students at the end of their secondary education in Nigeria. It is a mandatory requirement for admission into any tertiary institution in Nigeria and into most labour markets. Two assessment boards in Nigeria - namely, the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO) - regulate and coordinate the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination and students have the right to either sit for one of them or sit for both. The certificate awarded to students after sitting the SSCE is called the Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC). This is equivalent to GCSE in the UK.

Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME)
The Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination is an entry examination to tertiary institutions. Students are qualified to sit for the UTME after they have passed the SSCE examinations and the UTME result is the starting point for securing admission into tertiary institutions. The result enables the institutions to decide students’ eligibility to sit their (the tertiary institutions’) own department specific admission examination, popularly known as the Post-UTME in Nigeria. The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) centrally regulate the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination, mostly referred to as JAMB in this thesis. The exam is not free. Forms are purchased from designated centres or agents of the JAMB at a cost set by the Board.

Grade II Teacher Certificate
The minimum teacher qualification in Nigeria has been the Grade II Teacher Certificate. Teachers with this qualification do not usually have a tertiary education, but rather go straight into teacher training after their primary education. In Chapter Two, I will discuss the government efforts to upgrade the teacher qualifications from the Grade II Teacher Certificate to the current minimum teacher qualification.

Staff Schools
Staff schools are primary or secondary schools affiliated to higher institutions. They are intended for the education of the children of the staff that work in the higher institution. Staff schools are funded by the government but are managed by the institutions.

Cooperating School
Cooperating schools are schools (secondary or primary) where student teachers do their teaching practicum. Classroom teachers who have student teachers assigned to them are called *cooperating teachers*.

**Carryover**

Carryover is a term used in Nigerian higher institutions to describe courses that students have failed. It is argued that a carryover can affect the total wellbeing of the student ([https://nigerianscholars.com/why-you-have-to-avoid-carryovers-as-an-undergraduate](https://nigerianscholars.com/why-you-have-to-avoid-carryovers-as-an-undergraduate)).

**National Certificate in Education (NCE)**

This is the minimum qualification for teaching in Nigeria and is obtain mostly from colleges of education.

**National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE)**

This is a regulatory body that oversees the activities of NCE programmes in Nigeria.
ABSTRACT

The poor quality of the teacher workforce is a widely debated issue in Nigeria. However, empirical research in this area has typically been limited; and what there is, has tended to be quantitative in nature, lacking in rigour, and not adequately representing the perspectives of stakeholders. Student teacher voice, in particular, has been absent. Additionally, most research has tended to focus on specific aspects of training thereby largely ignoring weaknesses in the practices and processes of the teacher education system as a whole. This study is qualitative in nature, draws centrally on student teachers’ perspectives and employs a mainly phenomenological approach to data collection. It was located in two colleges of education in South-West Nigeria (one in a local and one in a rural area) and included field visits to associated cooperating teaching practice schools. The study focused on the Primary Education Studies department of the National Certificate in Education (NCE) programme. The participants were purposefully selected to include full data sets from 14 Primary Education Studies students. Data for contextual purposes were also collected from three lecturers, two head teachers and one cooperating teacher. Data were mainly gathered through semi-structured interviews and were analysed at three levels: individual, group and system level. The first level of analysis answered the first research question: *How do the student teachers articulate their experiences of learning to teach?* It explored the individual experiences of the student teachers and presented them in first person narrative accounts in a way that preserved the form of the data. The narrative accounts were further analysed to identify common experiences and answered the second research question: *What themes emerged in student teachers’ narratives about learning to teach?* In the third level of analysis, the focus was on the system and an Activity Theory framework was employed as an interpretive lens in answering the overarching research question: *How do the process, policies and practices of the initial teacher education system in Nigeria mediate primary student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach?*

The findings suggested that the system was unable to attract high quality, well-motivated student teacher candidates to programme, and the selection processes lacked rigour and robustness. As a result only six of the 14 students expressed an intention to become a teacher and of those only four planned to teach in the primary sector. There were many ways in which the impact of the system on developing the student teachers into effective practitioners was significantly limited. First, teaching and learning practices in the colleges were reported to be largely transmission oriented and concerns were raised about the professionalism and competencies of the lecturers. Second, there were no obvious monitoring, accountability or quality assurance processes in the system; and a particular lack of transparency was reported in relation to assessment procedures. Third, there were many examples of ways in which the relationships between colleges and cooperating schools were reported to be dysfunctional, leading to a poor flow of information, lack of collaboration and clarity about roles and responsibilities. Additionally, learning resources were limited in both settings and language barriers were encountered. Four, there was a marked power imbalance between student teacher and lecturer; and student voice was inhibited by the practices, policies and processes of the primary education studies programme, and the cultural norms embedded in the education system as a whole and the wider society.
DECLARATION

I declare that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated first to My God who saw me through this PhD journey.

You [God] made a way
When my back was against the wall
And it looked as if it was over
You [God] made a way
And I am standing here
Only because You [God] made a way
You [God] made a way

'https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDnrYaDPeig'

I also dedicate this thesis to my mother- in- law, late Mama Adaure Juliana Amadi whose efforts brought me this far. You gave my husband a chance to live and I am forever grateful to God for making me your daughter-in-law.
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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of this thesis, the aim of which is to draw on student teachers’ experiences to explore how initial teacher training mediates student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach. There has been a wide consensus in the literature that quality teachers are fundamental to the development of the school system and to the development of the entire nation. In Nigeria, Jubril (2007) noted that ‘teacher education is the foundation of quality in the educational system and this is the key to unlock all facets of development’ (p.131). Therefore, it is the role of teacher education to produce a teacher workforces with the knowledge and dispositions required for effective classroom teaching. Barber and Moursheed (2007) reported that the world’s best performing school systems get the right people into the teaching profession and then ensure that these individuals are effectively trained for the teaching role. However, Jubril (2007) identified this as a challenge in not just the Nigerian context but in many similar teacher education systems. Mallam Nuhu Ahmed, the Executive Secretary of the Kogi State arm of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria, claimed in a media interview that ‘the dream of a change in Nigeria will be a mirage if there are no quality teachers in the schools’ (Obahopo, 2015).

Although, it is hoped that the pre-service education of teachers should prepare student teachers to become effective and quality teachers (Brown et al. 1999), Feiman-Nemser (2003) argues that the ineffectiveness of teachers may not necessarily be related to a deficiency in their pre-service education. In Nigeria, Akinbote (2007) noted that ‘the problem of teacher education for primary schools in Nigeria is not that of curriculum design and implementation but that of recruitment into the programme’ (p.70). Adeosun et al (2009) argued that Nigeria has been failed by its curriculum influence. They argued that although the curriculum seems adequate it is not robust enough to aid in developing student teachers’ teaching strategies and knowledge of the subject matter. Professor Patrick Okedinachi Utomi, Professor of Political Economy and founder of Centre for Values in Leadership and the African Democratic Congress (Paradigm Initiative, 2017), claimed in a media interview in 2012 that ‘many…teachers are not trained at
all…[and] are as ignorant as the students they are teaching’. He exemplified his claims by narrating an incident that happened in Edo state where a primary teacher with about 20 years teaching experience could not read her teaching certificate (see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6-F2ENfQx4). Arong and Ogbadu (2010) claim that the lack of adequate supervision and monitoring of the activities of the teacher training colleges has had a negative impact on the effectiveness of teacher education in Nigeria. Professor Okebukola, the Provost of Michael Otedola College of Primary Education, also argues that

Today, almost half of the teachers in Nigeria have severe quality deficiencies. Government at all levels must take steps to improve the quality of teachers through better pre-service and in-service training (Adesulu, Uwandu, and Iruoma, 2016).

Kuiper et al. (2008) noted that ‘complaints about newly appointed teachers, who have low levels of numeracy and literacy skills as well as inadequate knowledge in their chosen areas of subject specialization, are commonplace in Nigeria’ (p. 5). This is because ‘student teachers are not often properly groomed to put into practice current pedagogy and interactive skills that have been theoretically learnt’ (Adeosun, 2011, p. 105).

The above arguments point to the lack of robust and effective initial teacher education system in Nigeria. Adeosun (2011) maintained that despite the structures and reforms in place which are intended to ensure quality teacher education in Nigeria, its impact on teacher education system can still not be felt. It therefore seems that the problem of teacher quality is well known in the Nigeria context. However, there is a lack of robust research and other literature that focuses on understanding the cause of this problem is largely opinion-based. Those literatures that are research-based are mostly quantitative studies and do not offer any opportunity for the stakeholders’ authentic voices – especially those of students – to be heard. This situation in the Nigerian context reflects what Ornstein (1995) experienced in the USA when he argued that most often, ‘practitioners [voice] are shut out of [teaching] discussion, since they lacked the specialized research skills and esoteric knowledge needed to participate in the discussion’ (p.2). He claimed that this often happens because

The researchers and theoreticians have dominated the field of inquiry and decided on what should be published… [Hence] teachers' voices are still filtered through the researchers' writings and publications. Thus, even today, most teachers' voices are coopted and cannibalized by others, and thus their voices are silenced or diffused (p.18).
More so, Cortazzi (1993) suggested that ‘to improve educational systems, curriculum reforms and classroom practice…we need to know how teachers themselves see their situation, what their experience is like, what they believe and how they think’ (p.5). This is not limited to in-service teachers but also applies to preservice teachers. Korthagen et al. (2006) noted that ‘all over the world, candidates’ voices are rarely used to ascertain whether their teacher education program achieves its goals’ (p.1035). They argued that ‘if sustained inquiry and reflection are to be valued and embedded in a teacher education program, then candidates’ perspectives must be credited’ (p.1035).

Therefore, there is a degree of accord in the literature that there is a need to draw on student teachers’ voices to identify how effective they believe the training process to be. A better understanding of how teachers learn to teach in Nigeria is crucial as ‘how teachers are prepared for teaching is a critical indicator of education quality’ (UNESCO, 2015, p.108).

This chapter continues by explaining the research aim and outlining the research questions that informed the study. It then introduces the researcher and gives an overview of the education context in Nigeria. The chapter subsequently summarises the research design and research methodology as well as research methods, and introduces briefly the research participants. This is followed by an explanation of the scope of the study and an outline of the areas of knowledge to which this thesis hopes to contribute. Lastly, the overall structure of this thesis is presented in order that the reader might find it easier to navigate.

1.2. The Research aim and questions

1.2.1. Research Aim

The aim of this study is to explore how the initial teacher training system in Nigeria mediates student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach. This aim was explored mainly from the perspective of student teachers but other key stakeholders’ understanding and experiences of the process were drawn upon to afford additional contextual understanding of the effectiveness of the practices, policies and processes that comprise the training system.
1.2.2. **Research Question**

The main research question that this research addressed was

- *How do the processes, policies and practices of the initial teacher education system in Nigeria mediate primary student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach? (Research question 3)*

To address this overarching research question, two preliminary research questions were asked:

- *How do the student teachers articulate their experiences of learning to teach? (Research question 1)*
- *What themes emerged in student teachers’ narratives about learning to teach? (Research question 2)*

These three questions together informed the data collection and analysis.

1.3. **Contribution to knowledge**

This study hopes to make empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions to the current debate on learning to teach. Empirically, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature that focuses on understanding the improvement needs of teacher education systems. Although several systemic studies have been conducted on teacher education around the world, only a few of these studies have focused on the Nigerian context, and most of those lack either rigour or depth (see Section 1.6). This lack of a robust research base has limited what is known and can be claimed about teacher education in Nigeria, as evidenced in the currently very limited literature on teacher education in Nigeria.

Methodologically, this study hopes to offer a new perspective on how teacher education can be examined in Nigeria. It also hopes to offer new perspectives on how research on student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach can be approached in Nigeria and other countries in the region. As argued in Section 3.6, most learning to teach research in Nigeria is quantitative-based; and mere counting of frequencies cannot provide a holistic, detailed and nuanced description and understanding of teacher training experiences.

Theoretically, by using activity theory from a sociocultural perspective, I hope to identify and understand how the social interactions within the teacher education system, and the cultural context in which the interactions are embedded, influence learning-to-teach activities not just in Nigeria but in the wider context. Activity
theory is not new to research in the Western world as it has been used in research in many social science disciplines including teacher education. However, in teacher education research using activity theory has most often focused on one individual or group of individuals performing a particular activity rather than on the teacher education system itself. In Nigeria activity theory is innovative in that it is not widely used in research.

1.4. The researcher: Personal and professional experience

This study was driven by my curiosity and my ambition to understand how primary education could be improved in Nigeria. I focused on primary teacher education because of my experience as a primary teacher as well as my professional belief that the improvement of the education system should start from the primary sector and specifically its workforce. This is also acknowledged in the fourth edition (2004) of the Nigeria Policy of Education: ‘since no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers, teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development’ (p.39).

I worked as a primary school teacher at a low-cost private primary school in Anambra State, Nigeria from 2001-2003. Low-cost private schools are those privately owned schools that are neither registered nor recognized by the government (Umar, 2008). They cater for children from poor homes and do not charge the excessive fees commonly charged by registered private schools (Tooley, 2005). Umar (2008) stated that the low-cost private schools are gaining popularity as parents have lost trust and interest in public schools due to the ‘neglect and collapse of public primary schools in Nigeria’ (p.92).

As a primary school teacher, I was neither trained nor qualified; I took the teaching job immediately after my secondary education, aged 16, as I was not able to secure admission to my first choice of study: medical laboratory science. This was due to my inability to obtain a credit in my SSCE in chemistry and physics. While in the job, I got admission to study for degree in Religious Education at Abia State University, Uturu. In Nigeria, there are three main routes for teaching profession, namely, through National Certificate in Education (NCE), a degree in education and a postgraduate diploma in education (PgDE) (section 2.5). Hence my degree in Religious education qualified me to teach at the secondary school level. When I graduated from the course, I was not confident enough to take up a teaching job at the secondary level; rather I returned to the primary sector but could not
continue on the job as I felt that my teaching skills had not improved as a result of my training. Reflecting on my teacher training experience, I felt something was missing; the training was not robust enough to prepare me for the real classroom teaching experience.

At the university, teaching practice was organized as a block of six weeks in the second semester of my second and third years. The courses were known as Teaching Practice I in second year and Teaching Practice II in third year and were offered simultaneously with other courses/modules. This meant that we were expected to complete other courses at the university while fulfilling our placements. During Teaching Practice I, I only visited my cooperating school twice throughout the six weeks of the teaching practicum. The first visit was when we registered our details with the cooperating school as student teachers and the second visit was when I was signed off. I remember contributing 3000 naira (Nigerian currency, currently equivalent to about £6) to my supervisor as an ‘honorarium’. The supervisor gave us two options: either to pay the 3000 naira OR report to the placement school daily. As it was not guaranteed that my attendance at the school would earn me the required score for the course, I paid the money and passed the course without doing the actual placement.

During Teaching Practice II, I was posted to a secondary school at Isuikwuato town also in Abia state. This high school was over 17 kilometres from the university; hence, the cost and logistics of travel, coupled with the requirement to attend normal lectures while on teaching practice, made the placement unfeasible. As a result we (all students in my cohort) came to a mutual agreement with our supervisor and the head teacher at the cooperating school, through our cohort leader that we should only attend when our supervisor informed us he planned to visit us at the school. Hence, I visited this school only once. But unlike my previous experience, we made an ‘optional’ financial contribution in appreciation of our supervisor. He did not request it but we thought he deserved a present for being considerate.

For the college-based experience, the method classes were always overcrowded; therefore, the lectures took place in large auditoriums where the lecturer could use the microphones. The problem with this was that only students sat close to the front and close to the speakers could hear what the lecturer was saying; those at the back could hardly hear or understand anything as there are not enough loud speakers in the hall. The course ‘Methods in Teaching Secondary
Religion’ was meant to teach us the techniques of teaching ‘religion’ in secondary school; however, the lecturer did not attend any of the lecture periods until two weeks before the examination. This was because at that time he was completing his doctorate and did not want to give up the course for someone else to teach. He was also the Head of Department of religious education at that time and probably used his ‘power’ to stop other lecturers from taken up the course. When he did attend, he pointed us towards the questions he was likely to ask during the examination and asked us to research them. In summary, I did not have the opportunity to experience what could be perceived as ‘effective teacher training’.

In addition, as I noted earlier, I had a teaching job in a primary school after my graduation, where I earned a smaller salary than the salary of the teachers that had studied abroad. Those teachers who studied abroad earned higher salaries because the school management believed that international exposure was valuable in maintaining the overall quality and value of the school. Just after I had resigned, I decided to study abroad. The two main reasons for taking this decision were as follows: first, I wanted to gain international exposure, which would enhance my knowledge and put me in a position to earn a larger salary; and secondly, I wanted to contribute towards the improvement of the school system and perhaps establish my own school. This motivated me to seek admission to study a MA in Educational Leadership and School Improvement at the University of Manchester, UK. Although I struggled at first to fit into the system, it dawned on me that teaching and learning activities at the University of Manchester (maybe throughout the UK) were different from those I had experienced in Nigeria. I came to understand why teachers who studied abroad were paid a larger salary than those of us that were locally trained.

As part of my MA research, I completed a small-scale study in Nigeria that aimed to identify school impact on student achievement. The study was mainly quantitative and was based on the comparison of public and private students’ SSCE results in English and mathematics between 2007 and 2010. I also did a structured interview to explore the senior secondary school students’ and first year undergraduate students’ perceptions of the impact of their secondary education on their academic performance. Analysis of the SSCE results suggested a remarkable disparity in academic success between private (independent) and public (state) secondary students in English and maths (see Appendix 1). The structured interviews indicated further that the findings above could be the result of
differences in the school intake, and in the availability and efficiency of the administration and resources (human, financial and physical) between the private and public school types. Although, as mentioned above, my initial intention of coming to do a Master’s degree in the UK was to be able to get more pay, the findings of my MA study and my journey through the academic road in the UK made me aware of the shortcomings of the Nigerian education system and motivated me to look for ways to improve it. Hence, I decided to do a PhD.

1.5. The research context – Nigeria

1.5.1. Potted history of the origin of Nigeria

One of the commonest misconceptions about Africa is classifying it as a country rather than a continent. Kayser (2014) noted that most western articles, politicians and journalists tend to identify countries in Africa as just ‘Africa’ rather than specifying a particular nation state. John (2013) referred to it as a ‘perception problem’. Africa is a continent made up of five main regions and 54 independent countries (Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.). These countries have ‘significant cultural differences between countries that result in a multitude of different beliefs, practices and lifestyles’ (Dawoodjee, ND). Markkanen (2015) noted that ‘Africa as a whole cannot be characterized with one single market type’ (p.7). It has ‘diverse culture, which varies not only from one country to the other but within each country as well’ (Tony and Boo peel, 2018). The countries also have very different internal organization and governance, institutions and systems and importantly languages. Even when countries share similar systems developed, for example, from those imposed upon them in a period of colonisation, it is a mistake to make the assumptions about underlying similarities. Even within countries, such as Nigeria the cultural differences are vast.
Nigeria is located in the western part of the African continent (see figure 1). Nigeria covers an area of 923,769 square kilometers and borders the Republic of Benin in the west, the republics of Cameroon and Chad in the east, Niger in the north, and Lake Chad to the north-east (NBS, 2010, p.33). Nigeria was home to numerous tribes and kingdoms and fell under the British colonial rule in the 19th century (Blanco-Mancilla, 2003). United as a federated nation state in 1914, it gained independence in 1960 (see below). Nigeria currently comprises 36 states and the federal capital of Nigeria. These are split further into 774 local government areas (Adeyemi, 2012; UNESCO-Ibe, 2010) which are grouped into six geographical zones, namely: south-west, southeast, north-west, northeast, north central and south-south. The geographical zones were created in the 1990s by the then-president,
General Ibrahim Babaginda and are argued to be an ‘explicit crosscutting of ethnic and religious lines so that the ethnoreligious conflicts that may arise [within the communities] can be handled at the local and state levels before they become national crises’ (Paden, 2004, p.25). The country’s population is estimated currently at over 150 million with about 40 percent being children below 15 years of age.

Nigeria became a country under the British colony as a result of the 1914 amalgamation of the three protectorates (kingdoms) - namely the Lagos Colony, the Southern Protectorate and the Northern Protectorate – that existed at that time (Omipidan, 2014; Afigbo, 1991; Ademolekun, 1991; Fafunwa, 1982). This was done under the administration of Sir Frederick Lugard, the then British colonial administrator. Prior to this time, these protectorates independently existed and had their own culture, language, food, governance, values etc. (Omipidan, 2014). Although, colonial rule started formally in 1914, the British had been trading in the region since 1851 (Afigbo, 1991; Ukeje and Aisiku, 1982) but showed no interest in ruling the people. However, in 1871, they started to take over the governance of the people in the region. The outcome of this is that Nigeria became a multiethnic, multicultural, multifaith and multilingual country (Akinnaso, 1994) and has over 250 ethnic groups (NBS, 2010; Ajibade, Adeyemi and Awopetu, 2012) and about 400 local languages (Aito, 2005), with the three major languages being Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa.

Omipidan (2014) noted that, during the colonial period, Nigerian governance was through ‘indirect rule’; a system where the colonial masters claimed that they ruled not directly but through the traditional rulers. Heerteen and Moses (2014) noted that the territorial and ethnic borders that marked Nigerian colonial society were still in place in 1960 when the country achieved independence and was established as a federal state. In the postcolonial period, Nigeria again was split into three major zones:

Each dominated by one or two ethnic groups: Hausa-Fulani in the north (currently the North West, North East and North Central), Yoruba in the west (currently the South West), and Igbos ethnic groups in the east (currently South East). Hundreds of other ethnic minorities of different size (and South South) made up the rest of the population. In 1963, the federation was separated into four states when the multi-ethnic Midwestern State was carved out of parts of the Western Region. Partly parallel with these political borders, what many perceived as a religious divide cut through the territory: the south was predominantly Christian, whereas the north was widely Islamic dominated (p.172).
This created a major tension in the immediate postcolonial period. The three major tribes – Yoruba, Igbo (also known as Biafra) and Hausa – competed for power and resources which severed the relationship between the Southern regions especially the Igbos and the Northern Regions (Heerten and Moses, 2014). And resulted in a series of coups between January and June 1966 and ‘an outburst of violence including the massacre of the Igbos residing in the Northern zone between June and October 1966’ (Heerten and Moses, 2014, p. 173). The massacre of the Igbos in the Northern zone angered the Biafra political leaders led by late General Ojukwu to ‘declare its independence as the Republic of Biafra’ (Heerten and Moses, 2014, p. 173). It was argued that the peace negotiations led by the Nigerian government failed at that time; hence, the violence and the Biafra’s declaration of independence culminated in a civil war that started in 6 July 1967. The war went on until January 1970 when the remaining Biafran leaders surrendered to the Nigeria authority.

Both in the colonial and postcolonial period, communication was an issue (Igboanusi, 2008) as a result the amalgamation of the Protectorates (see above). Hence, the English language became the official language in Nigeria and later on in the 1970s became the medium of instruction in schools (see section 2.4). English language has become the ‘dominant language of administration, organised commerce, the mass media, the judiciary, the legislature’ (Igboanusi, 2008, p.724). It is also regarded important in securing jobs and a prerequisite for admission into higher education (Igboanusi, 2008). Although, everyone is expected to communicate in English language, Ajibade, Adeyemi and Awopetu (2012), noted the proliferation of Pidgin English in Nigeria. They argued that Pidgin English is the ‘unifying’ language in Nigeria especially among the youths, as it is the only language understood and spoken by both the educated and non-educated. It is also ‘used when people who do not speak the same language need to talk to each other’ (Ajibade, Adeyemi and Awopetu, 2012, p. 290). Akinnaso (1994) concurred that ‘pidgin is gaining wider currency as a lingua Franca, a commercial language and the language of the commercials’ [in Nigeria] (p.143).
1.5.2. The current education system

Education in Nigeria can be formal or non-formal. The latter was also referred to as mass education in the 2013 National Policy on Education. Adewale (2009) argues that, ‘Nigeria adopts both formal and non-formal approaches to provide basic education for its citizenry’ (p.191). While formal education takes place in the regular school system, non-formal education ‘targets children, youths and adults who have either dropped out of school before achieving permanent literacy or have never been to school’ (p.191). The aim of non-formal education is to provide an equivalent of the formal education activities in an informal learning setting. The government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as private organisations, establish learning centres across the country where interested candidates receive training on skill acquisition, lifelong learning, information technology etc.

As mentioned above, formal education takes place in a conventional school system. Nigeria currently follows the 9-3-4 system of education: this represents nine years of basic education, three years of senior secondary education and four years of tertiary education. The 9-3-4 system of education was introduced in Nigeria in 2004 in response to UNESCO’s call for universal basic education for all children (Sule and Bawa, 2012; UBEC, 2014). Universal basic education advocates the provision of free and compulsory access to education for children between the ages of six and
14 years¹ (see section 2.3). This age group represents six years of primary education for children between the ages of six and 11 and three years of junior secondary education for children between 11 and 14 years old (Amaghionyeodiwe and Osinubi, 2006; Onyukwu, 2011; EP-Nuffin, 2009).

After nine years of free and compulsory education, students can enrol for three years senior secondary education. However, education at this level is neither free nor compulsory, as students are expected to have acquired ‘the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning’ (UBEC, 2014) during their nine years of basic education. Students that cannot study further to senior secondary level can use their Junior Secondary Certificate to learn craft skills or start an apprenticeship. Although the three years of senior secondary education is not compulsory, it is a pre-requisite for tertiary education. At the end of the three senior secondary years, students are expected to sit and pass the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) to obtain a Senior School Certificate (see also the glossary).

At the end of secondary education, students are expected to continue into higher education. Higher education in Nigeria takes place at either ‘the universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, or monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses’ (FRN, 2013, p.26). To gain admission to tertiary institutions, students are required to pass the ‘Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination’ (Onyukwu, 2011) in addition to their Senior School Certificate with credits in five subjects (including English and mathematics) in no more than two sittings, irrespective of the institution. Each student can choose up to six institutions: two universities, two polytechnics and two colleges of education at the point of registration for the examination (Onyukwu, 2011).

After the UTME, the institutions set their ‘cut off’ marks to enable the JAMB to allocate the qualified students to them. In other words, the initial allocation and admission of students to tertiary institutions is done by the JAMB (Onyukwu, 2011; EP-Nuffin, 2009). Students that were selected during the first ‘cut off’ are said to have ‘primary or merit admission’, and they are allowed a certain period to accept their admission. After giving primary or merit admissions,

¹ In Nigeria, a child’s age does not determine the school year he/she should be in; academic achievement does. Thus, it is common to see a 10-year-old child in junior secondary school.
institutions that still have some places left organize the internal assessment known as ‘post-UTME’ to select students (Onyukwu, 2011). At this point, students can complete an institution’s internal assessment only if the student chose the institution when he/she initially applied for the UTME. As each institution has admission autonomy at this stage, students are required to pay towards the internal assessment. Each institution is, however, required to ‘match their admission conditions with the practices directed by the policy’ (FGN, 2004, p. 23).

Both formal and non-formal schools in Nigeria can belong to the government or private organisations. Ones owned by the government are known as public schools, while ones owned by private organisations are known as private schools. In formal school setting, private schools are not tuition free, irrespective of the level – nursery, primary, secondary or tertiary – but public schools are free from primary to junior secondary school, as a result of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme. The The Universal Basic Education Scheme started in Nigeria as a strategy to achieve the UNESCO’s declaration of ‘Education for All’ as well as the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (www.ubeconline.com). Senior secondary school students pay about 2500 naira per term, which is currently equivalent to £5. Notwithstanding, some states (for example, Lagos) have made public education free at senior secondary school level. Having said that, it is important to note that the activities of ‘all’ schools – irrespective of their ownership – are centrally regulated by the Federal Ministry of Education. The ministry enacts policies, sets standards and monitors the performances of all schools in Nigeria (FGN, 2004; UNESCO-IBE, 2010). They also set up boards (at the state level) to oversee and regulate activities of all schools. States and local governments have legal responsibilities towards schools that fall within their territory and ensure the implementation of policies (FGN, 2004, pp.57-60).

1.5.3. Primary and Secondary Education in Nigeria

Primary education has been identified as the ‘key to the success or failure of the whole education system’ in Nigeria (FGN, 2004,p4) whose objectives are to ‘

inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy, and ability to communicate effectively; lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking; give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society; mould the character and develop the sound attitude and morals in the child, develop in the child the ability to adapt to the child’s changing
environment; give the child the ability to adapt to the child’s changing environment; and also give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child’s capacity’ (FGN, 2004, p.14).

Alaba (2010) argues that these objectives are in line with the UNESCO’s objective which aims to ensure quality in and access to basic education (p.156). The Nigeria’s national policy on education also emphasises on teachers’ responsibilities towards the attainment of primary education goals and maintains that primary school teachers are required and expected to be professionally and effectively trained (FGN, 2004).

Primary education in Nigeria starts at age six and lasts for six years. It is part of 9 years of free compulsory education in Nigeria and is compulsory for all children aged between 6 and 11 (FRN, 2004). Primary education is ‘preceded by pre-school or nursery education and followed by secondary education (Opoh et al., 2014, p.2). Pupils are required to sit for ‘common entrance’ exam in their sixth year in order to transit to secondary school. Pupils’ performance in the common entrance examination determines their secondary school placement. The entrance examination subjects are English language, Mathematics, Verbal reasoning and Quantitative aptitude. Although, ‘common entrance’ exam is a standardized test, the questions are not centralized. Each state has the autonomy of producing their test questions and the result of the common entrance examination is used to allocate students to either their first, second or third choice of secondary school. At the end of primary education, students are expected to obtain a Primary School Leaving Certificate. This certificate is ‘based only on continuous assessment and is issued locally by the head teacher of the school’ (FGN, 2004, P.16).

Secondary education is organized in two stages, namely junior and senior secondary education. Junior secondary education is a three years compulsory education that follows primary education. It is also part of the 9 years of basic education described above. At the end of the three years of junior secondary education, students sit for junior Secondary Certificate Examination in order to progress to senior secondary school. Students who could not study further to senior secondary level can use their junior secondary certificate to learn craft works or to do apprenticeship. Senior secondary education is however not compulsory but it is a prerequisite for tertiary education. It typically lasts three years and students are expected to sit for senior secondary education at the end of the three years. They are
also expected to sit for the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination in order to secure admission into any higher institution of their choice.

1.5.4. Higher education in Nigeria

Higher education is the education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, and monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses’ (FGN, 2004, P.36). To gain admission to higher institutions, students including prospective teachers (see section 2.4) are required to do the ‘Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination’ (UTME) (Onyukwu, 2011) in addition to their Senior School Certificate with credits in five subjects (including English and Mathematics) in no more than two sittings irrespective of the institution. Each student can choose up to six institutions: two universities, two polytechnics and two colleges of education at the point of registration for the examination (Onyukwu 2011). After UTME, institutions set their ‘cut off’ marks to enable the Joint admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) to allocate the qualified students to them. In other words, primary allocation and admission of students to tertiary institutions is done by JAMB (Onyukwu 2011; EP-Nuffin, 2009). Students who were selected during the first ‘cut off’ are said to have ‘primary or merit admission’ and they are allowed a certain period to accept their admission. After giving primary or merit admissions, institutions that still have some places left organizes internal assessment known as ‘post UTME’ to select students (Onyukwu 2011). At this point, students can do an institution’s internal assessment only if the student chose the institution when they initially applied for the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination. Each institution has admission autonomy at this stage; nonetheless, they are required to ‘match their admission conditions with the practices directed by the policy’ (FGN, 2004, p. 23).

Despite the unified in the admission criteria, Amaghionyeodiwe and Osinubi (2006) argue that more value is placed on university education that other forms of tertiary education. They identified three channels to higher (university) education in Nigeria (see figure 3) to illustrate the value hierarchy of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. University education is placed highest, followed by polytechnic and monotechnic; college of education is the lowest in the hierarchy. As a result of this, most of the students who studied in college of education and as well as in polytechnics and monotechnics tend to further their education by seeking university education (Amaghyonyediwe and Osinubi, 2006,p.34; EP-Nuffic, 2009). In view
of this argument, Nwali (2013 in press) lamented that ‘it is degrading that graduates from polytechnics go back to start university from first year…because of the preferential treatment to university graduates in Nigeria’. EP-Nuffic (2009) also affirms that ‘students who have obtained the Nigerian Certificate in Education can continue on to the second year of the Bachelor of Education or the first year of a regular bachelor’s programme’ (p.12). This basically means that ‘the three years of NCE programme is equivalent to the first year of relevant education degree course in the university’ (Osuji, 2009, p.296).

**Figure 3: Channels to higher (university) education in Nigeria**

![Diagram](image)

Adapted from Amaghonyeodiwe and Osinubi (2006)

1.6. **Research design and methodology**

The design of this study was broadly influenced by the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky. Sociocultural theory describes learning as a social process that occurs as ‘learners participate in a broad range of joint activities… from which they acquire new strategies and knowledge’ (Scott and Palincsar, 2006, p.351). From a sociocultural perspective, the focus is on understanding how the social and cultural activities of a particular system mediate the outcome within the system. Within this broad perspective, I adopted activity theory as the lens through which learning-to-teach in Nigeria was examined. An activity theory framework was considered because it informed the understanding of the norms, rules, practices and processes of the initial teacher education system (Douglas, 2012). There are generally considered to be three generations of activity theory credited to Vygotsky, Leontiev
and Engestrom respectively. This study, however, follows what Kaptelinin and Nardi (2012) referred to as ‘an aggregated framework’ (p.11) comprising of elements from both leontiev’s and Engestrom’s conception activity theory (see also section 4.1).

In this study, the Primary Education Studies (PES) scheme was conceptualised as an activity system for the training of primary teachers. This training activity takes place in two settings: namely, colleges of education, and cooperating schools (i.e. primary schools). In this study, the subjects were the student teachers; the tools include the learning resources, the teaching and learning activities and assessment, and the object of the activity is to train student teachers to become teachers. The members of the community include lecturers, peers, pupils, cooperating teachers, head teachers and external supervisors. The division of labour outlines the responsibility of each member of the community. The rules of the activity relate to the norms, and the rules (formal or informal) that regulate the teacher training activity. These activities are expected, as an outcome, to produce quality primary teachers.

It has been reported that there are very few rigorous qualitative studies in Nigeria (Humphrey and Crawfurd, 2014; Umeokafor and Windapo, 2017). Hence Humphrey and Crawfurd (2014) argue that ‘in-depth qualitative data…are needed to unravel some of the more complex processes affecting children in particular social contexts hinted at in some of the survey data’ (p.ii). With this in mind and in relation to the research aim, this study employed qualitative methods. Qualitative methods were considered because of the researcher’s philosophical stance that, ‘meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world’ (Merriam, et al., 2002, p.3). Hence, it enabled the researcher to ‘capture participants’ views and perspectives’ (Yin, 2011, p.8). Since I am particularly interested in representing the student teachers’ perspective, this research adopted a mainly phenomenological approach in order to portray the ‘lived’ learning experiences of student teachers. The phenomenological approach seeks to describe lived experiences of individuals; it aims for ‘fresh, complex, rich descriptions of a phenomenon, as it is concretely lived’ (Finlay, 2009, p.6). I considered a phenomenological approach appropriate for this study because I am of the view that users of a programme have a particularly insightful perspective on suggestions for its improvement.
In Nigeria, primary school teachers are trained in colleges of education (section 2.4) and this study was located in two colleges of education referred to as colleges A and B respectively. These two colleges are located in the same state in the south-west of Nigeria for safety, convenience and easy access to the research sites. Although these two colleges are in two distinct locations (one rural and one urban) and are about 76 miles apart, both are government-owned. They use the same national curriculum and are regulated by the same body, known as the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). Both colleges met the inclusion criteria for the study (Appendix 2). Thirty-five student teachers were initially recruited purposively using snowballing techniques; of these the study sample of 20 were selected. The method of data collection was mainly semi-structured interviews. Data from 14, of the 20 student teachers interviewed, were reported in this study. The Minimum Requirement Document (ref) provided contextual information about the regulation of primary teacher education in Nigeria. This includes the curriculum and the policies. More so, interviews with three lecturers, two head teachers and one cooperating teacher as well as my field notes and informal observations informed my understanding and interpretation of the student teachers’ data.

Data analysis was done at two levels: the individual, and system level. The idea was to draw from the individual experiences to understand how the system of training teachers works in Nigeria. At the individual level, student teachers’ interviews were first presented into narrative accounts (Chapter Six and Appendices Seven) as they constituted what Reissman (2013) called ‘lengthy stories’. The narrative accounts were further analysed to identify and explore how the teacher education system might have shaped their experiences. This answered the first research question: How do student teachers articulate their experiences of learning to teach? And was presented in Chapter Six (and Appendices Seven). This analysis was followed by a thematic analysis of the data set as a whole which allowed for a collation of the experiences of all the student participants. This level of analysis was guided by the second research question: What themes emerged in student teachers’ narratives about learning to teach experience? This question is answered in Chapter Seven.

At the system level, I used activity theory to understand the processes, structures and practices that mediate the outcome of teacher education in Nigeria. The themes that emerged from the student teachers’ narrative accounts in Chapter
Seven were instrumental in exploring how the processes, structures and practices of the initial teacher education system influenced student teachers’ learning experiences. As ‘learning’ was conceptualized as a social process in this study (section 4.8), data from lecturers, head teachers and the co-operating teachers as well as the NCE programme handbook were gathered and discussed in order to contextualise the findings from the student teachers’ interviews. This analysis was driven by the third and overarching research question: *How do the processes, policies and practices of the initial teacher education system in Nigeria mediate primary student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach?* This question is answered in Chapter Eight.

### 1.7. Scope of the Research

As this was a PhD study, time and resources were crucial in deciding the scope of the research (Mason, 2005). Ideally, I would have followed a small sample of student teachers on a longitudinal study through their training and early years in teaching to develop a robust understanding of the system. But, as this was a PhD study, I was constrained by time; hence, I chose to select a small sample of student participants across the three years in the college of education. By doing this, I hoped to gain not first and foremost a representative sample of the student population, although I would argue that the sample was broadly representative (see Chapter 5 and Section 9.4), but wide-ranging, detailed and rich data that would populate the Activity Theory framework to afford powerful insight into the learning development of students as they progressed through their studies.

Furthermore, I did not plan to do any classroom observation because I was interested in undertaking a phenomenological approach to data collection. I was more interested in the student teachers’ experiences and opinions about their training than on ‘knowing’ the settings (Mason, 2005). Notwithstanding this, I did observe some lectures as an orientation exercise. I also participated in a seminar, staff briefings and one general meeting of the department in each of the participating colleges. These, however, happened more by ‘accident than by design’, as argued by Mason (2006, p.11), when I unexpectedly had access to such a potential data source. It is noteworthy that, although this ‘opportunistic data’ was not analysed as such, it gave me a shared experience that facilitated my discussions with the research participants.
In addition, I did not intend to focus on the teachers and lecturers other than through the student teachers’ perspective. My main intention was to focus on the teacher education system through the students’ perspective but with some limited data and observation from the other key stakeholders. Hence, I did not make any attempt to triangulate what the student teachers reported; my interviews with the lecturers, head teachers and cooperative teachers were intended to give me greater contextual understanding of the experiences that the students were describing.

Lastly, although it has been argued that the effectiveness of a system is measured by its outcome. Importantly, this study did not aim to measure or evaluate the quality or effectiveness of the teachers at the end of their training or at the time they were interviewed.

1.8. **Organisation of the thesis**

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of the thesis. I narrate my own experience of learning to teach in Nigeria as a way of setting the scene for the reader to understand my position in this study. I also highlight how my experience informed the focus of this study. The rationale for the study as well as the research aims and questions are also articulated in this chapter. This chapter also describes the design of the research and the scope of the research and outlines its significance.

Chapter Two provides a contextual analysis of the Nigerian education system with emphasis on the teacher education system. This analysis is presented in three main sections. The first section focuses broadly on the Nigerian education system. It explores the historical development of education alongside the development of teacher education in Nigeria, drawing out the influences of colonialism and post-colonialism on the education system in Nigeria. The second section analyses major teacher education interventions in Nigeria. The third section describes the current structure of teacher education in Nigeria, explaining the routes to teaching career in Nigeria and highlighting its stated purpose, curriculum, assessment and policies.

Chapter Three reviews the debates on how teacher education systems mediate student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach. This review is facilitated by the question: *how does the context of learning to teach influence student teachers’ experiences?*
Chapter Four presents the theoretical framework that underpins this study. This framework is used to understand how the initial teacher education system mediates teacher outcomes in Nigeria.

Chapter Five discusses the research methodology by describing the research context, research participants, research designs, and data collection methods and data collection procedure. It also discusses the philosophical assumptions and theoretical framework that guided the study and explains the data analysis methods. Finally it describes the research methods and methodology limitations, and explains the ethical issues considered throughout the research process.

Chapter Six presents a sample of the 6 student interviews as narrative accounts, the remainder of the student interviews are to be found in appendix Seven. Each student interview data was presented individually using the student teacher’s own words, (as explained in the methodology). It further draws from the narrative accounts to identify events that facilitated the student teachers’ lived experiences of learning to teach. This was explored further in chapter eight using the activity theory.

Chapter Seven identifies the themes emerging from the analysis of student teachers’ narrative account using the thematic analysis method.

Chapter Eight builds on the findings in chapter six and seven to explore how the policies, processes and practices of teacher education systems mediate student teachers’ experiences. This discussion refers to the literature in order to critically examine and situate the findings in not just the Nigerian context but in the wider context.

Chapter Nine summarizes the key research findings, discusses the contribution of this study to the wider field of knowledge, and reflects on the entire research process. It subsequently provides suggestions for policy makers and leaders on possible ways of improving the learning-to-teach experience of primary teachers and makes recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER TWO
Contextual analysis of education in Nigeria

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the contextual analyses of the Nigerian education system. It explores the events that have shaped the system, and particularly the teacher education system, to date. This chapter is organised in three main sections. The first section broadly describes the Nigerian education system highlighting the historical events that have impacted the development of education and teacher education in Nigeria. The second section broadly explores the major interventions that have taken in place in the Nigerian education system over the last decades pointing out their implication for the teacher education system. The third section describes the current structure of teacher education in Nigeria. It describes the routes into teaching in Nigeria and subsequently explains in detail the structure of the Primary Education Studies (PES) route, which is the context for this study.

2.2. The development of the Nigerian Education and Teacher Education System

Although the historical accounts of teacher education development in Nigeria vary somewhat, there seems to be a consensus that formal education and teacher education developed concurrently in Nigeria (Ogunyinka et al., 2014). Prior to the arrival of the missionaries and the beginning of colonial rule, Nigeria, especially in the South, practiced what Fafuwa (1982) referred to as African traditional Education. African traditional education 'emphasised social responsibility, job orientation, political participation, spiritual and moral values' (Fafunwa, 1982, p.10). The purpose was to pass to the youths and children, the knowledge, skills and attitude they required to successfully and completely integrate into the community (Mosweunyane, 2013, Fafunwa, 1982). During this time, teachers were mostly the parents and elders of the family and the method of teaching was mostly through story telling (Fafunwa, 1982; Mosweunyane, 2013; Esu and Junaid, 2012). The key feature of this education was the apprenticeship model in which ‘children learnt by doing’ (Fafunwa, 1982, p. 10). There was neither a systematic method of teaching nor an official curriculum; hence, knowledge was passed on to the youths based on the value and culture of the society.
In the North, Islamic schools were dominant. These schools existed in the North even before the arrival of missionaries in Nigeria (Fafunwa, 1982). Islamic schools focused on teaching the tenets of Islam to the Muslim youths and are found within and outside the mosque (Fafunwa, 1982; Ukeje and Asiku, 1982). Like the African traditional education, there was no systematic method of teaching. The youths and children learned by memorising and reciting the verses of the Quran after their teacher, a method that would be referred to as today as ‘rote learning’. Fafunwa (1982) further noted the difference in the structure of the Islamic school system. He pointed out the different levels of progression from reciting the Quran, to learning the Arabic alphabets and then to writing and reading them in the Arabic language. This suggested that ‘Islam with its Arabic influence was already firmly established in the Northern part of Nigeria’ even before formal education started in Nigeria (Ukeje and Asiku, 1982, p.206).

Notwithstanding the existence of Islamic education in the North, it is argued that formal education in Nigeria can be traced to the arrival of the Christian missionaries in 1842 (Ogunyinka et al. 2015; Ukeje and Asiku, 1982). They settled in the southern part of Nigeria, as the Northern part was already dominated by Muslims (Ukeje and Asiku, 1982). Fafunwa (1982) noted that at this time that the main purpose of education was to ‘propagate the gospel… and [to] win souls for Christ’ (p.21). Hence, they needed teachers who would help them preach to the local people. Ayodele and Akindutire (2009) argued that the need to train individuals who would preach in the missions gave rise to teacher education in Nigeria.

The first three teacher education institutions in Nigeria were established by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Baptist Mission and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, respectively. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) established the training institution in 1859, which is currently known as, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo (Ogunyinka, et al., 2015; Ayodele and Akindutire, 2009). In 1897, the Baptist Mission founded the Baptist training college, currently known as the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ogbomosho; and in 1905, the Presbyterian Church of England started the Hope Waddell Training Institute in order to train young primary school leavers in various trades, as well as preparing teachers and preachers (Fafunwa, 1974).
The main requirement for admission into the early teacher training institutions is a Standard IV (currently equivalent to Senior Secondary School) certificate (Ogunyinka et al., 2015; Jekayinka, 2001). However, the prospective students ‘must have served as a pupil-teacher for two years, passed the pupil-teacher’s certificate examination and would then qualify to act as an assistant teacher before starting another two-year training course in a teacher training institution’ (p.113). Teacher training was done through an apprenticeship system, in which the missionary set up a school in his residence and ‘some of his pupils lived with him as part of his family’ (Ogunyinka et al., 2015, p.113). These student teachers served as ‘teacher evangelists’ for the new converts to Christianity (Afe, 2012). At that time, the management and administration of education was solely the responsibility of the missions.

The British colonial masters arrived in Nigeria in 1851 (Ukeje and Aisiku, 1982). But as the original purpose of the British Empire in Nigeria was not ‘nation building’ but trade, education of the people was not high on their agenda (Afigbo, 1991; Ukeje and Aisiku, 1982). However, the colonial government 20 years later began to show an interest in education by funding education and granting aids to the mission schools (Fafunwa, 1982; Ukeje and Aisiku, 1982). Fafunwa noted a shift of emphasis in the objective of education between the pre-colonial and the colonial periods. He argued that while education was mainly for religious purposes in the pre-colonial era, it became –in the colonial era – ‘a diluted semi-secular education which emphasized the role of the school in the continued furtherance of colonial interest in Africa’ (p.21). The Government built the first primary school and the first secondary school in 1899 and 1909 respectively (Ukeje and Aisiku, 1982). Many more schools were built especially in the south because while formal education was fully established in the South of Nigeria, Islamic schools still dominated the north and did not allow the missions free access to the north. However, only the missions produced teachers for these schools as there were no government teacher training colleges at that time.

The first policy on education was published in 1926 in which education was categorised as two years of infant education, six years of primary education and four years of secondary (Ukeje and Aisiku, 1982). This system was, however, criticised as unsatisfactory. Fafunwa (1982) noted that the content and curriculum of this system were ‘conscious and obvious attempt to educate the African away from his culture’ (p. 21). The Phelps-Stoke Commission, an American philanthropic
organisation concerned with the religious and educational affairs of Africans, were invited to review the education system at that time (Fafunwa, 1974, p. 119). They also criticised the organisation and delivery of education in the British colonies in Africa and recommended some interventions. They argued that ‘though the educational facilities in Africa are largely credited to missions…many of the missions have yet to realise the full significance of education in the development of the African People’ (Jones, 1921, p.10). The report noted lack of collaboration and coordination among the missions and between the government and the missions, which they argued weakened the quality and effectiveness of education at that time.

The “natives” (a reference of the time relating to the African people/citizens) were neglected and the education activities were not aligned to their needs, especially in terms of career and language. Fafunwa (1982) noted that the quality of education that the British colonial administration were willing to offer the ‘natives’ were the ‘barest minimum necessary for such auxiliary positions as clerks, interpreters, preachers, pupil-teachers and so on’ (p. 22). He claimed that schools were mainly use to prepare the locals for semi-skilled jobs.

In terms of language, the natives’ languages were replaced by English language especially for educational purposes (see also section 1.5.2). English language as a medium of instruction in Nigeria has been and is still a bone of contention in the Nigerian education system (Jummai, 2012). Literatures on language education have argued that the use of language was a pragmatic response to the complex language issues in Nigeria as a result of multilingual and multiethnicity of the Nigeria population (Jummai, 2012; Fakeye and Yemi, 2009). As noted in section 1.5.1, Nigerian demographic population is diverse and people move around within the country, and as such the use of a particular language even within the community is inconsistent. Akinnaso (1988) referred to the complexities of language in Nigeria as the ‘most enduring legacy of colonisation and religious expansion’ (p. 90). He argued that English language proliferated quickly in Nigeria because ‘no personnel or material resources were available in local languages’ (Akinnaso, 1988, p. 90). As the first schools in Nigeria, were Islamic, Christian or colonial schools and there was no one national language for everyone, Akinnaso (1988) argued that it was difficult to do away with English as a language of, not just instruction in schools, but of administration and business even after independence.

Following the Phelps-Stoke Commission report and recommendations, Mr Hussey, the first director of education (Fafunwa, 1974) founded a 6-6-1 system
called three stages of education. The first stage comprised of six years of basic education; stage two was another six years of secondary education after which one could find employment; the third stage would provide a one year vocational training for careers such as teaching, engineering, medicine, and other professions (Lewis, 1965, p. 40). To actualise the last stage of education, Hussey established the Yaba Higher College where student teachers were trained in one year to become qualified teachers. This would provide the student teachers a ‘Grade 1 teaching qualification’ (see section 2.4), which was the highest level of teaching qualification at that time.

In preparation for independence in 1959, the Sir Eric Ashby Commission was invited to

Identify the future high-level manpower needs of the country for the next twenty years. The setting up of this Commission was a landmark in the history of Nigerian educational system as it examined higher educational structure in terms of the needs of the country and was the first official comprehensive review of higher education in the country. The Ashby Report also prescribed that education was indeed the tool for achieving national economic expansion and the social emancipation of the individual (Daura and Audu, 2015, p. 79).

The commission therefore recommended ‘a two–years advanced teacher training that should be associated with institutes of education in Nigeria’ (Afe, 2012, p.4). This was adopted in 1960 (Fafunwa, 1974) and led to the emergence of Advanced Teachers Colleges in Nigeria which have become Colleges of Education today (Afe, 2012; Jubril, 2007). The first Advanced Teachers College were sponsored by UNESCO and the main purpose of establishing them were to produce well-qualified non graduate teachers for secondary school to replace the older well established Grade II teachers who were not qualified for the job. The scheme provided teachers with the NCE (Nigeria Certificate in Education), that are of good quality and the right quantity to meet the educational needs as at that time. The number of these colleges gradually increased to cater for expansions in demands for education and qualified teachers (Jubril, 2007, p. 133; Afe, 2012, p.5).

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2 Highest qualification for teachers during the colonial era
2.3. Educational interventions and reforms in post-colonial Nigeria: Implications for teacher education

The Nigerian education system has witnessed a catalogue of reforms since its inception (Aluede, 2006, p.97) as improving the quality of education has been, and still is, a long-term agenda in Nigeria. Although most of the interventions have been centred on improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools (Ejima, 2012; Afe 2012), their implications for teacher education cannot be over emphasised. Education reforms started with the Phelps-Stoke commission and the Ashby commission as noted above. The reforms progressed to 1955, when the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme was first launched in the western Nigeria in preparation for the independence and to ensure that many more children got into school. At that time, the education provided by the Nigerian government was not tuition free (Popoola et al., 2009). The UPE scheme was rolled out nationwide in 1976 to provide free, universal and compulsory education to all children between six and 11 years of age (Tsafe, 2013; Aluede, 2006). Two years later it was integrated into the National Policy of Education (Oni, 2008). This policy saw an increase in enrolment during the period it was enacted. Ukeje and Aisiku (1982) noted that although the civil war (see section 1.5.1) that lasted between July 1967 and January 1970 affected the development and implementation of this scheme, the enrolment figure shot up when the war ended.

However, the overall success of UPE scheme has been extensively debated in the literature (eg. Popoola et al., 2009; Tsafe, 2013; Aluede, 2006; Utibe, 2001). Aluede (2006) argued that the UPE scheme was ‘abandoned halfway’ (p. 97) due to a surge in primary school enrolment for which there were insufficient resources, including teachers (Aluede, 1992). Utibe (2001) noted that the UPE was not properly planned hence it failed at the implementation stage. In 1999, however, the federal government launched a new scheme called Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme. This was enacted in response to the UNESCO’s Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The UBE scheme is described as ‘an offshoot of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme’ (Tsafe, 2013, p.3) but with a broader focus on equity and quality (Alaba, 2010). It focuses on providing free basic learning needs not only to primary school pupils but also ‘girls and women and a number of underprivileged groups including the street children, rural and remote populations, nomads, migrant workers, minorities, refugees’ (Tsafe, 2013, p.3).
In order to operationalise the UBE programme in Nigeria, the federal government in 2004 established a regulatory agency known as the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2014). UBEC is responsible for the ‘promotion of uniform, quality and functional basic education in Nigeria’ (ubeconline.com). There are several key features:

- Free formal basic education
- Nine years of compulsory, uninterrupted primary and junior secondary school education
- Emphasis on curriculum diversification and relevance to effectively and adequately cover individual and community needs and aspirations
- Disarticulation of junior secondary schools from senior secondary schools
- Introduction to rudiments of computer literacy
- Appropriate continuous teacher professional development
- Community ownership of schools including participation in the decision-making processes in schools (UBE, 2014)

However, there has also been an increasing debate on whether the UBE scheme has been successful. While huge progress was recorded between 2000 and 2015 in most countries of the world, the EFA Global monitoring report (2015) noted huge inequality in access to quality primary education in Nigeria. Aluede (2006) argues that although the ‘Universal Basic Education scheme seems to have increased enrolment, it is ‘leaving many issues unresolved’ (p.99). In as much as the increased enrolment is perceived as a progressive step in achieving the Education for All mandate in Nigeria, ‘the quality of education given at primary education level is still adjudged below standard’ (UNESCO, 2015, p.vii). And one of the major recurring challenges in implementing the UBE scheme is the lack of a quality teaching workforce.

Another major educational intervention in Nigeria was the commission of the Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) project in 2007. This project was funded by the Nigerian government in partnership with the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID). This project ‘supported the federal and state governments – Enugu, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara and Lagos – to develop effective planning, financing and delivery systems to improve the quality of schools, teaching and learning’ (ESSPIN, 2017). The ESSPIN project was aimed at ‘all the components responsible for improved school
quality... and for raising learning achievement’ (ESSPIN, 2017) as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: ESSPIN components for improving school quality and raising learning achievement

One of the major targets of ESSPIN was to make a significant impact on 11,308 public and non-government schools and approximately 4.7 million learners. ESSPIN believed that ‘for schools to be transformed into dynamic learning environments many things need to happen simultaneously. There need to be changes in the educational system as a whole, such as improving educational management, teaching skills, school infrastructure and learning materials’ (ESSPIN, 2017).

Although this project was targeted at the school system, part of its aim was to strengthen the teacher education system. Using Kwara state as a case study, ESSPIN report noted that ‘out of the 19,125 primary teachers in the state, only 75 reached even the minimum standards in English and mathematics’ (p.3). They attributed this to the low admission criteria for teacher training as well as ineffective structures, process and policies. The report critiqued the teacher education
curriculum as outdated and ineffective and argued that the Nigerian teacher
curriculum has failed to ‘meet the requirements of preparing effective primary
teachers’ (p.5). The report also showed that teacher education had very limited
funds to support ongoing reforms.

However, like the UPE and UBE schemes, the ESSPIN programme also
seems not to be very successful. It was broadly conceived to incorporate all aspect
of education; hence, it lacked in-depth analysis of the issues affecting the Nigerian
education system and most importantly the teacher education. The ESSPIN
programme was meant to be a nationwide programme but as noted above it was
located in just six states. Out of these six states, the research especially on teacher
education was located in just one college of education in one of the six states. The
findings were then intended to be applied to other states but this was not the case as
some of the states either did not see any need for such reforms or were not offered
the opportunity to participate. For instance, according to the ESSPIN end of
programme for Lagos state, ‘those at a governmental level that have the formal
mandate to oversee the colleges of education [in Lagos] do not see the need for
College reform’ (Kuiper and Thomas, 2009, p.1). Hence, all ESSPIN
recommendations pertaining to Lagos state teacher education (colleges of
education) were reported to be ‘general suggestion’ rather than being driven by
data.

Also in Kaduna state, which is one of the states that participated in the
ESSPIN programme, it was reported in October 2017 that that the government
sacked twenty thousand primary school teachers. The government in a media
interview stated that, ‘we tested our 33,000 primary school teachers; we gave them
primary four examinations and required they must get at least 75 percent but I am
sad to announce that 66 percent of them failed to get the requirements’
(https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/10/no-threat-can-stop-us-sacking-22000-
teachers-el-rufai/). This development came 10 months after ESSPIN reported
massive success with its interventions in Kaduna (see Final Report, ESSPIN, 2017).
This indicates that the problems with education and most importantly teacher
education in Nigeria are systemic.

In a further effort to improve the quality of teacher education, especially in
the Colleges of Education, the National Commission for Colleges of Education
(NCCE), partnered with the Teacher Education in Sub – Sahara Africa (TESSA)
team to produce a ‘Toolkit that contains several resources use in developing
teaching and supervisory skills which are beneficial to the teaching experience of student teachers’ (see section 2.4). Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa is a network of teachers and teacher educators working alongside the Open University, UK, to improve the quality of classroom practice and access to teacher education resources across Sub-Saharan Africa. It does this through offering a range of open educational resources (OER) in four languages to support school-based teacher education: English, French, Swahili (Tanzania), and Arabic (Sudan) (TESSA, 2016). The TESSA material currently forms the basis for all the National Certificate for Education (NCE) resources and Curriculum. On its website, TESSA suggests that its tools are innovative and flexible hence, can be adapted to any context. It is to be noted that ESSPIN, however, reported the NCE curriculum to be outdated and traditional. This view is supported by Adeosun et al (2009) and Akiwunmi (2013) (see section 3.3.4) who consider the curriculum to be also not well aligned with the primary curriculum in Nigeria.

2.4. The current teacher education system in Nigeria

As noted in section 1.5.4, higher institutions are also responsible for training teachers. While the colleges of education train primary teachers and lower secondary schoolteachers, Universities and polytechnics train mostly secondary schoolteachers. Another significant body that trains teachers in Nigeria is the National Teachers’ Institute (NTI). NTI was set up was to upgrade the in-service teachers’ qualification and professional knowledge through distance learning. They offer courses such as National Certificate in Education; Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PgDE); Continuing Professional Development and so on. It is important to note that NTI is specifically for serving teachers. For example, serving teachers who had a qualification lower than the National minimum qualification for teaching (i.e.) the National Certificate in Education (NCE) will be able to study for a National Certificate in Examination qualification offered through National Teachers Institute. This is done at several study centres around the country. ‘While tests, assignments, project works and the semesters final examinations are conducted at the centres, the marking of the exams scripts and the release of the results are handled centrally from the Headquarters (figure 2.1). More so, serving teachers who have no teaching qualification can acquire one through a one year Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PgDE) programme offered by the Institute (NTI, 2015). To
be eligible to study for a PgDE, prospective students are expected to have had at least a university degree.

The minimum qualification for becoming a teacher in Nigeria is currently the Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) (TRCN, p.18) which is offered through the colleges of education. The purpose was to ‘produce quality teachers for the basic education schools’ (NCCE, 2013a, p.6). The basic education level included early childhood and care education, primary education, junior secondary education, adult, non-formal education and special needs education (see section 2.1). The NCE is a ‘three-year certificate programme with the mandate to produce quality teachers for the 3Basic Education level’ (NCCE, 2012). The NCE is offered to prospective teachers through the colleges of education, and there are three different access routes to NCE study in Nigeria.

The first route is for fresh secondary school leavers. They are required to have ‘a senior secondary school certificate…with four credits at a maximum of two sittings including English language and mathematics (NCCE, 2011, p.10). The second route is for Grade II teacher certificate holders who want to upgrade to an NCE qualification. They are required to have four merits in their subjects including English and mathematics (NCCE, 2011). The third route is for students with the Senior Secondary Certificate who are already doing a NCE diploma known as the Pre-NCE. Such students can also advance to the full NCE programme if they succeed in their Pre-NCE, a diploma course for students not meeting the Senior Secondary School Certificate requirement. However, they must sit and pass the UTME (NCCE, 2011); this is required nationally for higher education entry.

The NCE is also offered to in-service teachers (who are unqualified) on a part-time basis through the National Teachers Institute (NTI). The NTI was set up to serve as a distance learning institution for training teachers. The federal government also launched some crash training programmes such as the Pivotal Teacher Training Programme (PTTP) and the Special Teacher Upgrading Programme in 2003 (Samuel and Okodoko, 2011) in a bid to meet the demand for primary teachers as primary school enrolment increased. The aim of these programmes was to ‘equip the unqualified teachers, who are already teaching in primary school, with the basic teaching skills necessary to assist in the achievement of the objectives of the Universal Basic Education’ (NTI, 2015). This training was

3 Basic education sub-sectors includes pre-primary education, primary education and junior secondary education.
necessary, as many primary teachers, at the time, did not have the minimum qualification for primary teaching (Samuel and Okodoko, 2011). Nonetheless, these training exercises were criticised by both educationalists and researchers (e.g. Oni, 2008; Obiunu, 2011) as ineffective and unfit for purpose.

The federal government through the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) centrally regulates the activities of all colleges of education in Nigeria, of which there are currently a total of about 85– 16 privates, 47 state schools and 22 federal colleges of education (NCCE, 2011). Within a college of education, there are six schools: namely, science; arts and social sciences; languages; vocational and technical education; early childhood education (ECCE) and primary education studies; and adult, non-formal and special education. As already mentioned above, the NCE programme runs over three years in the college of education; each year has two semesters of about 15 weeks of teaching (Kuiper et al., 2008; NCCE, 2012). Students in each of the schools within the college of education are required to do courses in general education, general studies and in their respective departmental courses.

The NCE curriculum is detailed in the Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards document which hereafter will be referred to as the NCE programme handbook. It is a handbook centrally produced by the NCCE. Students’ workloads are represented as units of credits. Credit units ‘represent work in the following manner: the one-credit course equals one lecture hour per week for 15 weeks; and the two-credit course equals one lecture hour and two practical hours per week for 15 weeks (Kuiper et al., 2008, p.7). To obtain a NCE, students are required to earn a minimum total of 130 credits - 36 credits in general education; 14 credits in general studies in education; six credits in teaching practice; and 74 in departmental modules (NCCE, 2012a).

To ensure effective teacher education and greater recognition of the teaching profession in Nigeria, the government set up the Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) in 1993 to control and regulate the teaching profession. The TRCN states that its vision is to ‘promote excellence in education through effective registration and licensing of teachers and to promote professionalism through accreditation, monitoring and supervision of teacher training programmes, mandatory continuing professional development and maintenance of discipline among teachers at all levels of the education system’ (p. i).
2.5. Primary Education Studies (PES)

Prior to 2011, primary education was not a standalone course. It was offered as a two-subject course that allowed students to combine primary education with another course of their choice. But in an effort to improve the quality of basic education in Nigeria, each aspect of the basic education level (see section 2.2) was established as a standalone course. Ruqayyatu (2013) argues that this was needed to be able to ‘prepare specialised teachers for different aspects of [basic education]’ (p.5). As noted in section 2.4, PES is an NCE programme that specialises in training primary school teachers. Student teachers are required to do courses in general education, general studies and in primary education courses (appendices 3.2 – 3.4).

The initial training of primary school teachers is both college-based and practice-based. In the college-based courses, all the students (not only the PES students) in the same cohort attend both the general and the general studies courses at the same time and at the same venue. Therefore, the number of students that attend those lectures commonly reaches into thousands. However, departmental lectures take place in each related department. In the teaching practice course, student teachers are introduced to classroom teaching. This offers them the opportunity to receive hands-on teaching experience. The teaching practice course is preceded by school observation and micro teaching courses. The assessment activities in the colleges of education include tests, seminars, workshops, examinations, assignments, and presentations (NCCE, 2012c). Apart from teaching practice courses, whose assessment is 100 percent based on students’ performance during teaching practice, each course is assessed with 40 percent continuous assessment and 60 percent end of semester examination. To ensure the quality of assessment procedures in the colleges of education, it is expected that external moderators will be invited at the end of each semester to review lecturers’ assessment instruments and student teachers’ results (NCCE, 2012c).

The school observation course is a two-unit first-year course that allows primary student teachers to observe school teaching. It aims for ‘students to gain a first-hand experience of what goes on in the primary school and to make links between what they are learning in theory and the reality of the Classroom’ (NCCE, 2012a, p.78). School observation is done for two hours a week over a period of fifteen weeks. However, the weeks are alternated so that ‘the weeks that they
[students] are not observing they will attend lectures so that they are able to combine the theory and practical aspects of school observations’ (NCCE, 2012a, p.79). As this is an academic course, it is expected that at the end, students should be able to, ‘i) state the responses of learners to the various methods of teaching used by the teachers; ii) explain effective methods used by the teacher in managing his/her class; and iii) write down a summary of what they have observed’ (NCE, 2012a, p.79). The assessment for the course is to keep a journal of observations made. Students who fail the school observation course cannot continue on to take the micro teaching courses.

The micro teaching course aims to ‘give students the opportunity to observe another classroom, take an active role in supporting the teacher and to prepare specific lessons previously agreed with the class teacher so that they practice their skills in methodology’ (NCCE, 2012a, p.81). It is divided into two different courses across the two semesters of the second year: namely, microteaching theory and microteaching practical. It is expected this helps the student make links between theory and practice. The micro teaching theory course is offered in the first semester of the second year, instructing student teachers about various methods and strategies for teaching. In other words, it prepares student teachers for the practical side of their role. The micro teaching practical course is offered in the second semester of the second year with its organization and structure the responsibility of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction (NCCE, 2012c). Students who fail the micro teaching course will not be allowed to proceed to the teaching practice course.

The teaching practice course is aimed at ‘providing student teachers an opportunity to put into practice their theoretical knowledge in a real school-life situation’ (NCCE, 2012c, p.42). It is a compulsory six-unit course for all students registered for the NCE programme in Nigeria and usually lasts for twenty weeks. Student teachers are required to start their teaching practice at the beginning of the first semester of the third year. This is the only time student teachers experience practical teaching in the NCE programme. During teaching practice, student teachers are expected to teach for a minimum of 10 periods and maximum of 18 periods per week (NCCE, 2012c). With the support of cooperative teachers, student teachers are expected to integrate into their practice school; they are expected to obey the codes of conduct of their teaching practice school. Teaching practice supervisors are expected to base their assessment on the valid and reliable
evaluation instrument known as the teaching practice toolkit (section 2.5): ‘The whole lesson and not just part of it should be assessed. The scoring is expected to be done at the time of observation of the student in order to reduce subjectivity’ (NCCE, 2012c, p.45). It is important to note that the college is responsible for 80 percent of teaching practice supervision and assessment while the cooperating school does the remaining 20 percent (NCCE, 2012c, p.45).

Moreover, in order to help provide a successful teaching practice, the college is expected to provide instructional planning and studies in teaching methods and required to provide instructional technology and micro teaching mentoring (model teaching, assessment, feedback reports etc.). It is the responsibility of the college to provide a minimum of ten supervisors per student before final computation of students’ teaching practice score. Colleges of education are also responsible for ‘posting students to schools where they can practice their major courses of study’ (NCCE, 2012c, p.27).

2.5.1. Teaching practice supervisor’s Toolkit

The teaching practice supervisor’s toolkit was introduced to the NCE programme in an effort to upgrade the quality of NCE teaching practice supervision. The toolkit was developed during a workshop in Kaduna and Abuja in 2011 by ‘a group of educators from the National Teachers Institute, National Commission for Colleges of Education and the Open University UK’ (NCCE, 2012c, p.2). The goal for developing the toolkit is to ‘introduce the student teacher, teaching practice supervisors and cooperating school to the active pedagogy exemplified in the TESSA material and to support effective teaching practice preparation, supervision and execution using this active pedagogy’ (NCCE, 2012c, p.2); hence, the objectives of the toolkits include the following:

- To serve as a guide for the teaching practice supervisor for effective supervision and mentoring of the student teacher
- To make the teaching practice an interesting, collaborative and successful experience for the student teacher, teaching practice supervisor and cooperating school
- To move the teaching practice supervisory role from mere assessment to mentoring, supporting and assisting the student teacher (i.e., a more learner-centred approach)
• To support standardized high-quality supervision
• To provide a set of instruments (published under an open license) to support the above, which can be adapted and used in different environments and contexts (NCCE, 2012, p.2)

The toolkit is meant to be a blueprint for supervisors to follow while carrying out their supervisory role, including instructions and suggestions that are considered ideal for successful teaching practice supervision. Appendix 2.5 is an excerpt from the toolkit showing the expected responsibilities of the college before the commencement of teaching practice.

2.5.2. Quality Assurance

It is noted in the NCE programme handbook that the ‘NCCE Quality Assurance (QA) system shall continue to monitor an institution’s curriculum inputs, processes and products to determine whether the intended target is achieved’ (NCCE, 2012c, p.31). Their responsibility includes monitoring the activities of both the lecturers and the college administrators. The QA system also ensures that learning resources are available and the student teachers receive the necessary learning supports. The QA system is also expected to assess the relevance and appropriateness of assessment procedures used in the college. According to the NCE program handbook, QA is expected to be conducted at two levels: internal and external. At the internal level, each college of education is expected to monitor, assess and ensure that the ‘guidelines provided in the [NCE programme handbook] are followed’ (NCCE, 2012c, p.31). At the external level, it is the responsibility of the NCCE to monitor each college’s compliance to the NCE guidelines, ‘accreditation of academic programme, resource visits…and evaluation of academic standards in NCE-awarding institutions’ (NCCE, 2012c, p.32).

2.6. Summary of the chapter

This chapter provided an overview of the development of education and teacher education in Nigeria. It argued that western education in Nigeria came through the missionaries and was expanded during the colonial period. However, the education provided at this time was critiqued in the literature as ineffective. Postcolonial Nigeria has witnessed a catalogue of reforms that range from the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme to the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme. The UPE scheme was thought not successful, but the UBE scheme is ongoing as it
emerged as a result of the ongoing Millennium Development Goal and sustainable development Goal. However, this chapter argued that the UBE scheme is currently facing similar issues that have limited the success of the UPE scheme. One of the major challenges is the supply of quality primary teachers in Nigeria. Following the increase in primary education enrolment in Nigeria, the government created some crash teacher training programmes, which some educationalists and researchers considered unfit for purpose as they took place over too short a period. In another effort to improve primary teaching, the Nigerian government has increased the minimum teaching qualification to the NCE in order to regulate the qualifications for primary teaching.

In addition, other interventions such as the ESSPIN and the intervention of TESSA in teacher education are all geared towards the improvement of the postcolonial education system in Nigeria. But despite all these reforms and interventions, the qualities of teachers are still questionable. Hence it is time to step back and understand what is actually happening in the teacher education system. It is also crucial to understand the policies, processes and practices that inhibit the success of teacher education programmes in Nigeria as this not clear from the literature. This is what this thesis set to explore. In the next chapter, I will review both the Nigerian, and relevant African literature, and the international literature (where necessary) to examine what are considered the key practices of effective teacher education systems. This is important for this study because, as noted above, the ongoing debate on teacher education in Nigeria suggests that the current system of training primary teachers in Nigeria is dysfunctional and of poor quality.
CHAPTER THREE
STUDENT TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCES OF LEARNING TO TEACH

3.1. Introduction

In Chapter One an overview was presented of previous research and other literature from Nigeria (e.g. Adeosun, 2014) that was very critical of the system for training teachers in Nigeria and the quality of teachers that it produced. UNESCO (2002) noted that ‘in much of the south and especially in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia, problems of teacher supply, threaten the attainment of the education targets’ (p.7). In Chapter Two, I provided a contextual analysis of education and teacher education in Nigeria. This analysis considered the historical and political context, and other events that have shaped the Nigerian education and the teacher education system. It also described and explored the key events that have shaped the system, especially the interventions that have taken place over the years. This chapter aims at reviewing what is currently known about how student teachers learn to become teachers and about how these experiences are mediated by the context in which student teachers’ learning are situated.

It is a widely held view, in Nigeria and elsewhere that the quality of the entire school system depends on the quality of its teachers. Adeosun (2014) observed that in Nigeria, ‘teacher training institutions have been critiqued for their inability to produce teachers who are properly grounded in pedagogy and content… (p. 105). In the USA too, ‘complaints from graduates of teacher education programs, school administrators, parents and politicians about the irrelevance of teacher preparation for the reality of everyday practice in schools have generated pressures to rethink both the structure and the practices of teacher education’ (Korthagen et al., 2006, p.1021). Darling-Hammond (2014) argues that, ‘how to strengthen teacher education is increasingly at the forefront of US education policy making’ (p.547), especially as teacher education is now being positioned around the world ‘as a lever for achieving educational change in the school sector’ (Murray, 2014, p.7). This has led to a continuing debate about what constitutes an effective teacher education system

This chapter is organised in three sections. The first section outlines the scope of the literature review and the search strategy that was employed (section 3.2). It also explains all the criteria used to create the boundaries of the literature review and how the literature drawn from across the world offers insights into what
might be considered a good teacher education system for Nigeria. The second section explores broadly the debates on the complexities of learning to teach. It reviews conceptions of learning to teach and debates how student teachers perceive their learning to teach experiences (section 3.3). The third section explores the influences of the systems and context within which student teachers’ experiences are situated (section 3.4). It then reviews the processes and practices that mediate those experiences. The chapter ends with a brief summary of the key points and an analysis of how the literature reviews shaped the research questions (section 3.5).

‘Whilst acknowledging the variations in approaches, McNamara et al. (2017) claims that, there is a ‘clear consensus that [effective teacher education systems enable] student teachers to acquire up to date and relevant knowledge of school policies, curricula, pedagogies and assessment methods’.

3.2. Framing of the review

The review was approached broadly with an understanding that any piece of research or article that contributes to an understanding of learning to teach (especially the local literature) was worth considering as long as it met the review criteria (see below). Widen et al. (1998) argue that most research perspectives have something to offer, and finding out what they offer involves respecting the integrity of the various paradigms’ (p. 131). This stance positioned me as what Denzien and Lincoln (1994) referred to as a ‘Bricoleur’. As a Bricoleur, I reviewed diverse literature with the intent to produce a review that builds on a number of both local and international literatures on teacher education system to identify the range of practices and processes that are thought to underpin good initial teacher training and how they can facilitate and/or constrain the production of quality teachers. With the definition of local literature extended to include the literature from other ‘similar’ African contexts, this review considered literature from other African countries that share a similar culture heritage and teacher education system (e.g. Hardman et al., 2012). In particular, of the 53 countries in Africa with diverse culture and political settings (see section 1.5.1), I judged this to include British colonies from west Africa and English speaking West African countries who are also involved in TESSA such as Ghana. I included only the literature from this region because the countries have common features with Nigeria as they were colonized at a similar
time and their education systems developed in a similar way to the Nigerian education system.

The international literature was chosen with a specific focus on literature from the UK (predominately from England), the United States, Singapore, Finland, Canada and Australia. These literatures were considered for three main reasons. First, educational research in the target international countries is relatively well advanced and generally considered more robust, and the Nigerian education system commonly imports and implements curriculum interventions from these countries. Second, as the aim of this study is to identify ways to improve student teacher learning, exploring how student learning is facilitated in other education systems provides the conceptual basis for identifying the gap in the Nigerian teacher education system. This does not mean that these teacher training systems are considered to be flawless, but they serve as an effective backdrop against which the initial teacher education system in Nigeria could be examined, especially, as in the Nigerian literature (e.g. Kola and Gbenga, 2015; NCCE, 2015), these teacher education systems have been judged to be models of good practice. However, because of the contextual and cultural differences with Nigeria, care was taken when drawing upon international literatures in order to interpret the findings of the study (Lewin and Stuart, 2013; Akyeampong, 2002). Third, these literatures are readily available and accessible and are written in the English language, which is very important because the researcher can only read and write in English. It should be noted as an additional point that the existing literatures on initial teacher education in Nigeria and comparable African countries are not readily accessible online. Additionally, most of the available literature is not research-based or peer reviewed; hence, its validity is open to question.

It should also be noted that most of the available local literature especially the Nigerian based literature neither is research-based (Humphrey and Crawfurd, 2014) nor peer reviewed. Those that are research based either report small scale surveys on very specific [or are] associated with development programmes and are driven by project agendas… [They] therefore are primarily evaluative and quantitative so as to enable outputs and outcomes to be measured against programme targets and to facilitate impact assessments. Even where qualitative data were gathered they were often then quantified (Humphrey and Crawfurd, 2014) p.ii).

Nevertheless, the Nigerian literature is a good starting point for exploring what is already in the public domain about learning to teach experience in the Nigerian
context. It provides a contextual base to review the wider and international context of learning to teach experiences. The purpose of the literature in this thesis review is various; it serves to identify potential gaps in the literature, inform the research questions, guide the research design, shape the research instruments and inform the interpretation of the findings. The entire review process is hoped to reveal a clear focus for the current research and provide a structure to critically interrogate the empirical data to be generated. It is hoped that reviewing both the local and international literatures would show how the current research might fit into the existing body of knowledge and add to the understanding of the central features and practices that bring about quality teacher education system.

Finally, some chronological and methodological limitations were imposed on the currency of the literature on teacher education system. Literatures published in the last 25 years were prioritised; nonetheless, highly influential literatures published more than 25 years ago were also considered, where appropriate. However, it should be remembered that some of the international countries targeted for review tend to change rapidly in terms of educational policy and practice; hence, awareness had to be maintained as to the accuracy or currency of the information. As the focus of this study is on primary teacher education, specific primary teacher education literatures were targeted. However, when reviewing the literature, very often there was no ‘phase’ specific data included: for some literature, the methodology was not sufficiently detailed to allow judgments to be made about the empirical data set; and in some other literature, the nature of the literature itself was cross-phase in nature. Hence, a general approach is taken in reviewing some literature.

In terms of technical detail, the literature search began with the search for relevant literature in various databases (for example, Web of Science, OECD iLibrary), online journals (such as Journal of Teacher Education, Teaching and Teacher Education), web searches (such as Google and Google Scholar), official reports, and expert recommendations from my supervisors. The resultant references were organised and stored in Mendeley and Endnote. Depending on the settings of the databases, ‘Abstract’, ‘Topic’, or ‘Article Title-Abstract-Keywords’ were selected as the area(s) where the key words would appear. Other inclusion/exclusion criteria, such as document type and publication date, were set to narrow down the
search results. Advanced search settings using ‘or’ and ‘and’ were also used to extract relevant literatures.

3.3. The influence of practice, process and context

Learning to teach is an extremely complex activity. Britzman (2003) argues that ‘there is no…single road to becoming a teacher or to critiquing its currency [neither] is there a single story of learning to teach’ (p. 6). In the literature, the concept of learning to teach has been associated with phrases like ‘becoming a teacher (Hobson et al., 2005) and initial teacher preparation (Hobson et al., 2008). Hence, these two phrases are alluded to throughout this section and the entire review. This reflects Carter’s (1990) claim that ‘how one frames the learning-to-teach question depends a great deal on how one conceives of what is to be learned and how that learning might take place’ (p. 307). Widen et al. (1998) noted that ‘all researchers conduct research using a particular lens and that this focus has a bearing on what is seen, recognised as significant and ultimately reported’ [in learning to teach research] (p. 131). However, despite the varied lenses through which the research on learning to teach is conducted, the importance of having candidates with the potential to become good teachers is greatly emphasised.

The ‘initial training must prepare teachers to become effective operators within what is a highly politicised educational context (Brown and McNamara, 2011, p.32). Education has become increasingly politicized over the last 25 years. In the developing countries, this has largely been as a result of initiatives such as UNESCO’s Millennium Goals (for 2015) and the Sustainable Development Goals (for 2030). In the developed world, the pressure has largely been as a result of the prevalence and increasing global importance of the audit culture, including the advent of international league tables of pupil outcomes (PISA, TIMSS, OECD) which has focused the attention of policy-makers, educational administrators and researchers on teaching and learning, and through that to the quality and training of teachers. Barber and Mourshed (2007) also noted that the best school systems focused on three main things: ‘i) getting the right people to become teachers; ii) developing them into effective instructors and iii) ensuring that the system is able to deliver the best possible instruction for very child’ (p.5).
3.3.1. Motivation to teach

Widen et al. (1998) argued that the story of student teachers’ learning to teach experience ‘begins with who they are and what beliefs they bring to preservice teacher education’ (p. 141). They noted that some of such research mostly examined the ‘prior beliefs of beginning teachers to inform their analysis of the effects of subsequent experiences in preservice programs [others]…focused directly upon the characteristics and prior beliefs themselves’ (p. 141). Studies in Nigeria, however, focused mostly on student teachers’ motivation to become a teacher and research on student teachers’ beliefs seems to be non-existent. The researches on motivation have shown that, perversely, most candidates attracted to teaching in Nigeria are not motivated towards studying for the course or becoming a teacher. Akinbote (2007) investigated ‘the entry qualifications, the mode of entry into and the reasons why students enrol in Colleges of Education’ (p. 64). He situated the study in 13 colleges of education across the South West of Nigeria and noted that a total of 1200 students participated in the study which lasted for two weeks. The questionnaires were analysed using frequency counts and percentage only. Akinbote’s (2007) finding indicated that many student teachers enroll in primary education studies as last resort and do not have any intention to become teachers. Hence he concluded that such students are not likely not to possess the right teacher qualities as they are not interested in learning the tenets of the profession.

Using questionnaire, Ejieh (2006) examined 106 third year student teachers’ motivation for studying Primary Education Studies (PES) in Nigeria. Like Akinbote (2007), Ejieh’s findings also indicated that most of the student teachers did not have genuine interest in the teaching profession. His findings indicated that out of the 106 student teachers who participated in his study, only 21 genuinely wanted to have a teaching career. Five out of this 21 did not want to specialise in primary education because of the poor status and image of primary school teachers in Nigeria. Ejieh (2006) concluded that

This situation, added to the generally widely held belief in the country [Nigeria] that teaching is mainly for the academically weak people, calls for policies aimed at improving the image of teaching as a profession. Otherwise some bright school leavers with a genuine interest in teaching may be loath to enter teacher education institution (no page number)
Although the above research concerns the Nigerian context, the issues raised especially pertaining the fact that not enough people are interested in a teaching profession has become a concern in many countries (Kyriacou et al., 1999). Kyriacou et al. (1999) classified student teachers’ motivation into three categories, namely; altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic reasons (see table 1).

Table 1: Kyriacou et al. (1999) categories of student teachers' motivation (p. 374)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altruistic reasons</td>
<td>These reasons deal with seeing teaching as a socially worthwhile and important job, a desire to help children succeed, and a desire to help society improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic reasons</td>
<td>These reasons cover aspects of the job activity itself, such as the activity of teaching children, and an interest in using their subject matter knowledge and expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic reasons</td>
<td>These reasons cover aspects of the job which are not inherent in the work itself, such as long holidays, level of pay, and status</td>
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Kyriacou et al. (1999) noted that the categories above might vary from one context to the other as a result of the differences in the ‘social, economic and cultural context, and in the general image held of teaching as a career’ [in each context] (p. 374). Barber and Mourshe (2007) linked the ability to attract the right candidate to the status of the teaching profession within a system. In most countries where the teaching profession is relatively well paid and of high status, ‘more talented people became teachers’ (Barber and Mourshe, 2007, p.23). Typical examples of such a context include Singapore and Finland. In Singapore, entry to the teaching profession is very competitive and it commands great respect from the public (Yip, Eng and Yap, 1997): teachers enjoy good salaries and have guaranteed job placements, access to social benefits (such as retirement and healthcare), annual bonuses, high social status and fully funded initial teacher education (Goodwin, 2012; Darling-Hammond and Rothman, 2012). Similarly, in Finland, the status of teaching profession is relatively high: ‘Teaching is considered an independent and respected profession rather than a mere technical implementation of externally mandated standards and tests’ (Stewart, 2010, p.17). Young people decide to be trained as teachers not just because of the salary but also for its high social status and recognition, job security, ‘professional autonomy in schools, and the ethos of teaching as a service to society and the public’ (Sahlberg, 2012, p.7).
In poor economic context such as Nigeria, the social, economic or financial situations do not adequately motivate and attract potential candidates. Students pay their own tuition fees, as there are no funding, grants or loans and the social status of the teaching profession is low compared with other careers. On top of that, primary school teachers receive a much lower salary than do secondary teachers, which explains why many people are not motivated to become primary teachers. Moreover, the economic situation in Nigeria has affected the job market. The ‘tertiary qualification is [now] thought to be useful in only a formal sense (not because of what is to be learnt, but because of the certificate obtained) as it is believed to open up opportunities for well-paid employment’ (Kuiper et al., 2008, p.10). Hence, many young people opt for any available means to enter the job market. One of the easiest ways to enter the job market is to study to become a teacher, and after qualifying many move on to other more lucrative careers.

Another major area of student teachers’ experience is their perception of the relevance and effectiveness of their course. Adeosun et al. (2009) studied the effectiveness of the Primary Education Studies (PES) curriculum in Nigeria. The findings claimed that ‘PES curriculum is adequate; however, the teaching strategies need a lot of improvement’ (p.107). They noted that the lecturers disagreed with ESSPIN (2008) that reported the PES curriculum content was outdated, overloaded and difficult. The lecturers rather thought the curriculum was, however, not a good reflection of the primary school subjects. On the other hand, student teachers felt that despite the fact that the curriculum did not adequately fit into the primary school curriculum; there is not enough time to teach the available courses. Notwithstanding, the research reported that student teachers were having a positive experience as they felt some of the things they did in the college were helpful teaching practice. The limiting factor here is that this study did not provide a clear description of how the research was conducted and gave conflicting information on the purpose of the research and methods of data collection. The methodology was stated as case study, but it was not clear what the ‘case’ was; it was claimed that the main focus was to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum yet it also explored the PES’ admission, supervision, monitoring, learning facilities and management policies. This makes it difficult to judge the robustness and validity of the study.

Oluwatayo and Adebule (2012) investigated the teaching performance of 222 student teachers in Nigeria during their teaching practice experience. They
claimed that all (participated) student teachers’ teaching performance was satisfactory and that this satisfaction was neither based on previous teaching experience nor on gender. However, how they came about this conclusion is not clear from the paper. The methodology was not systematic as the study was mainly based on frequency counts and percentage calculation of the data collected.

Giannakaki et al. (2011) argue that most times what student teachers think about their training is driven by their emotions. Previous research on learning to teach suggests that student teachers develop strong affections for learning to teach. Hayes argues that ‘the development and honing of trainee teachers’ emotional literacy is an essential element of their preparation for teaching and too important to be left to chance’ (p.169). Hobson et al. (2008) study of student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach in England indicated that for many student teachers, the experience of learning to teach had influenced their emotions. Hayes (2003) classified as ‘edifying and other debilitating’ (p.166). From his study of the impact of emotions on student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach in England, Hayes (2003) developed four typologies of the emotion student teachers develop prior to, and after, their teaching practicum to include; affirming emotions, fatalistic emotions, anticipatory emotions and anxious emotions. However, this typology is broad, overlaps in some areas and does not reflect the ‘exact’ emotion indicated by the student data. Hayes recognised this when he stated that ‘it would be a mistake to attempt to place trainees into one or other of the four categories without recognising that emotions, by their very nature, are unpredictable, fast-changing and subject to a variety of other pressures (such as health, friendship patterns, family life, etc.)’ (168). However, Hobson et al.’s (2008) study of student teachers’ experiences used a more precise category of positive and negative emotions to identify the different ‘affective dimensions’ of student teachers’ experiences.

[The] positive emotions, including feelings of satisfaction and enjoyment, were expressed, in particular, in relation to relationships with pupils, to their (trainees’) perceptions of pupil learning, to perceived support and reassurance from their mentors or tutors, and (for some) to their perceptions of their development as teachers. The negative emotions were also expressed...in relation to their experience of ITP [Initial Teacher Preparation], including, for example, a perceived lack of support from mentors and other teachers in their placement schools, the assessment of their teaching, the ways in which some tutors and mentors provided them with ‘feedback’, the volume of ‘paperwork’ they had been provided with
and had to deal with, their workload and work–life balance, and their own sense of their development and efficacy as teachers Hobson et al., 2008, p. 412].

The importance of addressing student teachers’ emotions is outlined in Hayes (2003). He notes that student teachers are likely to be counterproductive if their negative emotions especially the fear of coping with the experience is stronger than their motivation and enthusiasm about the course. Giannakaki et al. (2011) likewise add that there is a possibility that the ‘anxiety can intensify into a deep state of fear, deterring student teachers from seeking help or talking to their tutors for guidance’ (p.458).

3.3.2. The recruitment and selection process

Getting the right people into the teaching profession, as noted above, has been identified by Barber and Mourshed (2007) as one of the key strategies for ensuring a quality teacher education system. Nonetheless, teacher recruitment and selection has been recognised as a major problem in many teacher education systems (Caskey, Peterson and Temple, 2001; Kansanen, 1991). Kansanen (1991) argues that, ‘through the selection for teacher education, we control the quantity and quality of the group of people who are allowed to become teachers and to work as teachers in our schools’ (p.252). Through the selection process, education systems are able to avoid the recruitment of unqualified candidates. However, there is no consensus in the literature across educational systems on what should constitute an effective recruitment and selection process (Casey and Child, 2007). Kansanen (1991) maintained that ‘in spite of the huge amount of research, we do not know particularly well what kind of selection criteria would be best nor what consequences this selection process has’ (p.252).

While the admission process for some teacher education systems focuses more on good academic grades, as academic ability is generally judged to be important (Casey and Child, 2007; Pozarnik, 2011). Others, in addition to grades, assesses prospective teachers’ dispositions using written profiles, and letters of reference as well as oral interviews (Harrison et al., 2006; Casey and Childs, 2011). Although the available pool of candidates is subject to the fluctuations in the wider economy as well the graduate job market (section 3.3.1), having clear and effective admission criteria ensures that teacher education systems are able to select the best candidates (Musset, 2005). Darling-Hammond and Rothman (2011) maintain that,
countries with effective teacher education models do not only recruit able candidates; they also screen them carefully to ensure that they have the attributes that make effective teachers’ (p.4).

A case is frequently made in the literature for the importance of rigour in teacher selection (for example, Darling-Hammond and Rothman, 2011). Barber and Moursheed (2007) argue that the best performing school systems adopt effective processes in recruiting and selecting prospective teachers. Their selection processes are designed to test for ‘high overall level of literacy and numeracy, strong interpersonal and communication skills, a willingness to learn and the motivation to teach’ (Barber and Moursheed, 2007, p.20). In Finland, for instance, prospective candidates are selected from among high academic performers by subjecting the applicants to a two-stage selection process. The first stage examines candidates’ academic ability by considering their scores on the high school diploma as well as their scores on the entrance examination. Candidates that passed through this first stage of selection are observed and interviewed ‘through both a written exam on pedagogy and their participation in a clinical activity that replicates a school situation’ (Sahlberg, 2013, p.35).

Because of this rigorous recruitment process, only one out of ten applicants are likely to be selected to study for primary school teaching in Finland (Sahlberg, 2011; Darling-Hammond and Rothman, 2011; OECD, 2003). The recruitment and selection process is organised this way to ensure that the system is recruiting students who possess the required motivation, teaching attitude, teaching understanding, personality, interpersonal and communication skills (Sahlberg, 2011; Sahlberg, 2012; Pozarnik, 2011). Similarly, in Singapore, the recruitment process involves the selection of candidates from the top third of high school students. Most importantly, they look beyond the high scores for candidates with positive attitude, personalities and interpersonal skills and for the willingness of the prospective student teachers to become future teachers (Scalfani, 2008; Goodwin, 2012; Ingersoll, 2007). This is done through an interview with a panel comprised of professors of education and teacher educators at the National Institute of Education, which is the only teacher education provider in Singapore (Goodwin, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Darling-Hammond and Rothman, 2011).

From the ongoing discussion, Barber and Moursheed (2007) would argue that the mechanism for selecting and recruiting teacher candidates in Nigeria is
ineffective. The selection process is solely academic-based and does not aim to measure candidates’ dispositions, skills and motivations to teach. Candidates are recruited after their secondary education, based on their performance on the SSCE and their score on the UTME (formerly known as the JAMB). There is no cap on the number of candidates to be recruited as colleges of education and other higher education institutions have the autonomy and ‘academic’ freedom to select and train as many students as they want as long as they follow the parameters of the selection process (FGN, 2013). This freedom, it has been argued, contributes to the poor selection process in the colleges of education. Kuiper et al. (2008) claimed that the quality of learning in the colleges of education in Nigeria depreciates as they recruit a greater number of students than their resources can cater for. ‘Failing to control entry into teacher training almost invariably leads to an oversupply of candidates which, in turn, has a significant negative effect on teacher equality’ (Barber and Mourshed, 2007, p.21).

In some countries, the recruitment process is driven by the need for specific teachers in the schools. Hence, the recruitment process is tailored towards selecting the candidates that fit such purpose. The Finnish government, on the other hand, has a workforce model to statistically estimate their graduate needs and they use it to ‘negotiate and agree with the teacher training providers on funding and the expected number of graduates [to select]’ (Malinen et al., 2012, p.569). As already mentioned above, there is no cap on the number or any criteria for the characteristics of the students to be recruited in Nigeria; hence, people who are recruited and selected are those who do not aspire to go into teaching as a career but see it as an easy access route into the graduate job market (Avonseh, 1992).

Recruitment and selection has long been identified as a major challenge in the Nigerian teacher education system. Fafunwa in 1974 noted that teacher education in Nigeria attracts candidates who are not able to get admission to their preferred course due to poor academic records. The Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics has reported that enrolment across colleges of education in Nigeria between 2010 and 2016 included 654,372 candidates. Out of these 654,372 candidates, 354,774 students did not have credit in either English or mathematics; in other words, 354,774 candidates did not meet the minimum admission requirements (see section 2.2).
Similarly, Adeleke’s (1999) study of primary student teachers’ perceptions of and attitudes towards teaching in Nigerian primary schools suggested that teacher education in Nigeria attracts poorly motivated candidates. The findings indicated that a majority of prospective teachers intend to use the college of education as a stepping-stone to either a non-teaching career or a secondary teaching career. ‘Teaching in primary school is less attractive than teaching in [secondary school]’ (Ejieh, 2006, p.6) in terms of both salary and status. On the other hand, Ejieh (2006) claims that although the recruitment process does not fit the intended purpose, the programme ‘is serving a useful purpose [by] providing a bridge to university entrance for relatively weak candidates, thereby widening access to university education, which is another educational policy objective of the federal government of Nigeria’ (p.6). But the question remains, what kind of teachers do we want in our classrooms?

Although there may be other practices that add to the improvements seen in some education systems (e.g. Singapore), the teachers’ recruitment and selection process is arguably central to those improvements (Goodwin, 2012; Ingersoll; 2007; Darling-Hammond and Rothman, 2011; Barber and Mourshed, 2007). However, studies that correlate admission criteria to the success of a teacher training programme often ‘ignore the possibility that the very qualities of the particular programme contribute to the correlation, and that a programme with a different [structure] can provide for a different correlation result’ (Falkenberg, 2010, p.7). Coffield (2012) cautions that having effective admission criteria does not necessarily translate to success for the teacher education programme, as the ‘success of a [teacher] education system depends on far more than one central factor’ (p.132).

3.3.3. The teacher education workforce

The teacher education workforce as used in this thesis refers to the teacher educators or the college lecturers (as used in the Nigerian context) as well as the cooperating teacher, also referred to as mentors in many international contexts. Cooperating teachers are included because they are part of the teacher education community which Ganser (1996) referred to as the ‘student teaching triad’ (p.284). It is important to note that in this section, the purpose of literature review is to establish that internationally, there is a consensus that good mentoring is central to
effective teacher training. It is also noteworthy that that the role of cooperating teachers in the Nigerian context may not reflect the responsibilities generally assumed elsewhere under the banner of mentor.

This thesis has broadly adopted Murray et al.’s (2009) definition of teacher educators, which identifies teacher educators as ‘teachers of teachers, engaged in the induction and professional learning of future teachers through pre-service courses and/or the further development of serving teachers through in-service courses’ (p.29). Korthagen et al. (2006) simply define the teacher educators’ responsibility as that of ‘helping student teachers learn… how to help children learn’ (p.1030). They offer support and guidance to student teachers (Koster et al., 2004), ‘facilitate and encourage student teachers’ learning…and model in their own teaching, what it means to be professional teacher’ (European Commission, 2013, p.7). Murray et al. (2009) observed that the diversification of standards for teacher educators in different education systems is mostly driven by the politics and policies of the particular systems. In England, for instance, ‘teacher educators teaching on preservice courses in England are nearly always qualified schoolteachers with considerable experiences of teaching in the school or college sectors’ (Murray et al., p.35). This implies that they are able to model and facilitate effective learning experiences. Notwithstanding, the role of teacher educators depends on the values, focus and objectives of the higher education institution in which they work (Murray, 2014). For example, in a research-oriented university, teacher educators are strongly encouraged to fully engage in research and publication alongside their teaching role on a preservice teacher course; whereas in teaching-intensive universities, teacher educators focus on their teaching responsibility and on the ‘scholarship which [their role(s)] involves’ (Murray et al., 2009, p.35).

In Finland, a master’s degree is the national minimum standard for recruiting higher education teaching staff (Sahlberg, 2011). This standard is also applicable to teacher educators (Niemi and Jakku-Sihvonen, 2011). Although there is no substantial data in the literature to suggest the level of qualification and professional experience of teacher educators in Finland, teachers generally pass through intensive training that enables them to model effective practice (Darling-Hammond and Rothman, 2011; Tryggvason, 2009). This in tum prepares the student teachers for the role of teacher educator in the event they want to become one. Nonetheless, Tryggvason (2009) observed that teacher educators in the Finish
teacher education system use a wide range of methods and approaches in their teaching. She claims that teacher educators model their strategies through their own teaching, which allows student teachers to link theory to practical situations. Hence, ‘when experiencing a new pedagogical or didactical method in practice, a student teacher gets the first experience of the method and can immediately analyse the benefits and limitations of a method’ (Tryggvason, 2009, p.379).

In Nigeria, however, the requirement for becoming a teacher educator differs from the two examples above. The NCE handbook states that ‘a minimum of B.Ed. second class upper will be required to teach the NCE programme’ (NCCE, 2012, p.57); however, the characteristics and professional requirements are underdocumented in the literature. Adeosun et al. (2009) observes that teacher educators do not have the level of professional knowledge required for a teacher educator nor the required training for what they teach. Samuel and Okodoko (2011) claimed that ‘most lecturers in primary education studies departments are not specialist; they lack the knowledge of the content area and methodology of the discipline’ (p.296). This may mean that these teacher educators may not be able to perform their educating duties towards the students. They might also not be able to model good and effective practice through their own teaching, which can constrain effective student teachers’ learning experiences.

As noted early in this chapter, the main purpose of the initial training of teachers is to ensure that prospective teachers acquire the relevant professional skills required to teach effectively in schools. One of the ways of acquiring such skills is through teaching practice (Payant and Murphy, 2012). Student teaching practice is widely accepted as the one of the most important aspects of any teacher education programme as it provides opportunity for student teachers to have first-hand experience of classroom teaching (Ganser, 2002; Kelly and Tannehill, 2012; Glenn, 2006). Hence, having an effective and high-quality mentoring system has been agreed, across the world, as one of the key elements of the preservice teacher education (Butler and Cuenca, 2012; Yavuz, 2011; Jones and Straker, 2006; Mena et al., 2016).

The role of mentoring falls within the capacity of the practice school via the class teachers. These class teachers are known as ‘mentors’ in most of the international literature; in the Nigeria context, however, they are called cooperating teachers. It is important to note that the terms ‘mentor teachers’ and ‘cooperating
teachers’ are used interchangeably in the literature. Their roles are mainly that of modelling and mentoring student teachers (see below). A cooperating teacher (or a mentor teacher) is the ‘teacher whose class the student teacher teaches during their teaching placement’ (Kelly and Tannehill, 2012, p.50). Although Kelly and Tannehill’s definition above also applies to the Nigerian context, the role of the cooperating teacher as noted in the NCE handbook is that of ‘just’ providing guidance and feedback (mostly grades) (NCCE, 2012).

While the details of the cooperating teachers’ role may differ within each teacher education system, the review of the literatures on cooperating teachers has indicated that cooperating teachers do more than simply guide student teachers and providing summative feedback. Effective cooperating teachers provide quality feedback on student teaching (Clarke et al., 2014); they also serve as gatekeepers of the teaching profession (Butler and Cuenca, 2012) in the sense that their feedback is used in summative assessments to determine whether a student teacher is qualified to become a teacher (Ganser, 2002). They are expected to demonstrate ‘effective interpersonal skills, [be] skilled at giving pre-lesson guidance… and willing to listen to student teachers’ concerns and ideas’ (Kelly and Tannehill, 2012, p.50). Irrespective of who the cooperative/mentor teacher is, he or she must be trained to deliver a complete range of supervisory functions and be available to carry them out on a regular basis’ (ibid., p.51).

From this premise, it follows that an effective selection process for cooperating teachers is very important (Gleenn, 2006). Although the selection process for cooperating teachers seems not to be well documented in the literature, Ganser (2002) notes that that the requirement to become a cooperating teacher differs across the US. ‘If requirements do exist, they are usually based on some combination of teaching experience, a master’s degree, and training through courses, seminars or workshops’ (p.381). Most literature, however, does not specify the selection requirement for cooperating teachers. Kansanem (2014) noted that in the Finnish system, the class teachers are selected as cooperating teachers. Yavuz (2011) explained that in Turkey, subject teachers are selected as cooperating teachers irrespective of their teaching experience or qualification. This is also similar to the process of selecting cooperating teachers in Nigeria.
3.3.4. Curriculum development and implementation

Curriculum is said to be a ‘systematic and intended packaging of competencies (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes that are underpinned by values) that learners should acquire through organized learning experience both in formal and non-formal settings’ (UNESCO website, 2017, http://bit.ly/2oHA9OF). Cuban (1995) identifies different ways by which the curriculum could be envisaged. The first one relates to what Cuban refers to as the official curriculum, which defines the objective and content of a programme. It embodies the frameworks, guidelines, syllabi, textbooks, teacher’s guides on content of texts and examinations as well as regulations and policies (IBE-UNESCO, 2017; Cuban, 1995). However, at the classroom level, teachers modify the official curriculum using ‘a range of complex classroom interactions’ (UNESCO website, 2017) to suit their students’ needs. The actual content that is delivered can be referred to as the taught or implemented curriculum. The taught curriculum constitutes how teachers translate the official curriculum into practice (IBE-UNESCO, 2017). This includes the teaching methods, the actual textbook used, course organisation, assessment, and resources used in the actual delivery of teaching and learning activities. Cuban (1995) maintains that ‘the official curriculum and what teachers teach may overlap in the title of the course, certain key topics, and the same text, but can differ substantially in actual subject matter and teaching method’ (p.5).

What the learners actually learned in relation to the official and taught curriculum can be referred to as the learned curriculum (Cuban, 1995). Cuban (1995) argues that the outcome of learned curriculum may differ significantly from the official and taught curriculum because,

results from paper-and-pencil tests certainly capture a portion of what students learn in a class. Beyond what test scores reveal about learning, students learn to recite, review material, locate sources, seek help, avoid teachers’ intrusiveness, and how to act attentive. (p.5) Teacher educators must constantly seek ways to encourage student teachers’ learning, not only in terms of ‘teaching a curriculum of presentation skills, questioning or interpretive discussions [but in terms of] embedding student teachers’ learning in ways that enable them to experience the “doing” of the curriculum more than the information of the curriculum’ (Korthagen, 2006, p.1030).

From the above discussion it can be inferred that for the curriculum to be considered effective, it should meet the demands and learning needs of both the
teachers and the students it is meant to serve. This can be actualized by involving teachers in curriculum development. Alsubaie (2016) argues that ‘teacher involvement in the process of curriculum development is important to align content of curriculum with student needs in the classroom’ (p.107). This is one great feature of the Finish teacher education system. Although the general goal of education in Finland is determined at the national level: ‘local school authorities, schools and teachers have been given the responsibility for the curriculum –making process’ (Westbury et al., 2005, p. 476). This gives the teacher educators in Finland the independence and flexibility to adapt the curriculum and the autonomy to ‘select their own textbooks and other curriculum materials [and to] design their own lessons’ (OECD, 2010, p. 126). Notwithstanding this, critics of the Finnish teacher education curriculum have argued about a lack of coherence in curriculum implementation in Finland. Vitikka et al. (2012) maintained that ‘teachers need clearer guidance on how to plan and develop teaching in line with the educational goals’ (p.7). This is because there is a possibility of inconsistency in teachers’ practices (e.g. student assessment) as they are based solely on their subjective judgement (Sahlberg, 2010a).

Alternatively, the NCCE plans and manages the primary teacher education curriculum in Nigeria, but this planning does not in any way involve teacher educators who are responsible for curriculum implementation. It has been argued this has resulted in the weak link between the primary teacher education curriculum and the primary school curriculum in Nigeria (Akinwumi, 2013, Adeosun et al., 2009). Akyeampong et al.’s (2013) study of teacher preparation for the early primary grades in six African countries in reading and mathematics observed that the curriculum is mainly focused on developing content knowledge. It involves ‘repeating most aspects of the secondary school curriculum in an attempt to improve their subject knowledge base [and] leaves little time for considering how to teach the concepts’ (Akyeampong et al., 2013, p.275).

Hoeben (1994) maintained that the curriculum can be ‘viewed as the first link between evaluation and productivity’ (p.481). It requires constant evaluation to be able to meet the goals it sets out to achieve (Alsubaie, 2016). But building on the work of Cuban (1995), Kuiper et al.’s (2008) evaluation of the curriculum of the college of education in Nigeria indicated that the official NCE curriculum for primary teacher education lacked up-to-date pedagogical concepts, and the method
of teaching a particular subject was either ‘absent or sparsely represented’ (Kuiper et al., 2008, p.7). Kuiper et al. (2008) also maintained that there was no evidence to prove that the course objectives were being attained, as there were no clear assessment procedures to measure the outcome(s) (section 3.8).

This tends to explain why Grossman et al. (2009) have argued elsewhere for an integration of foundation and method courses in teacher education curriculum. They claim that the curricular divide between foundation and method courses affects the link between theory and practice. Lampert (2005) noted that in the US, for example, methods of teaching tend to focus on learning about the methods rather than ‘learning to do to methods’ (p.36). In Nigeria also, the divide between the foundation and the method courses also limits the learning of teaching to a particular module (e.g. EDU 113: Principles and Methods of Teaching at Junior Secondary Level) instead of integrating them with other courses. Having the method course as a standalone module is arguably to place the emphasis of learning on ‘conceptual underpinnings of teaching as opposed to the concrete practices new teachers may need to enact when they begin teaching’ (Grossman et al., 2008, p. 275).

3.3.5 Models of teaching

Teacher education programmes continually seek to develop philosophies and models of teaching and teacher preparation that facilitate student teachers’ learning. However, the most effective and appropriate model is still contested. Orchard and Winch (2015) noted that,

> Across the globe, established methods of preparing teachers have been called into question... In some countries, investment in teacher training continues with particular reference to its academic dimension. Meanwhile in other countries, the academic dimension is being downsized and fragmented, in favour of new types of employment-based learning. (p.7)

Recent debates on the most effective models of initial teacher education have focused on the nature of the teaching professional and specifically the link between theory and practice and the conversation is now turning towards teachers’ ways of knowing (Orchard and Winch, 2015; Winch et al., 2015). The three basic aspects of teachers’ professional knowledge identified in the literature are situated understanding, technical know-how and critical reflection (Winch et al., 2015).
Situated knowledge develops through interactions with professionals and through repeated personal experiences (Winch et al., 2015; Kim, 2011). Kim and Hannafin (2011) explain that ‘teachers negotiate meaning as they learn about and participate in the social practices of the teaching community’ (p.1379). It is usually contextually embedded (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and ‘represents a repertoire of important incidents paired with personal meanings, beliefs, and know-how within certain contexts and cultures’ (Kim and Hannafin, 2008).

However, it is not enough to be knowledgeable about something: teachers should be able to apply what they know or are learning to their own teaching (Mishra and Koehler, 2006). This leads to the ‘technical know-how’ aspects of teachers’ professional knowledge. The ‘technical know-how’ enables teachers to gain sufficient control of their activities. It helps teachers to ‘articulate procedures for attaining these standards, explain what intervention worked, in what circumstances, and they can train others in the application of this procedural knowledge’ (Winch et al., 2015, p.206). The third aspect of the teachers’ professional knowledge is ‘critical reflection’. Guerriero (2013) argues the importance of reflection in teaching, maintaining that,

to make informed pedagogical decisions, teachers must be able to analyse and evaluate specific learning episodes, in combination with contextual and situational factors, and to be able to connect all this information to their specialist knowledge of the teaching-learning process in order to guide subsequent teaching actions. (p.6)

Guerriero’s quote above tends to situate teachers as ‘researchers’, and as researchers, teachers develop their professional knowledge by continuously inquiring not only about their own teaching practices but also about the assumptions that underpin them (Winch et al., 2015). The preceding discussion suggests that the three aspects of teacher professional knowledge are ‘complementary and mutually enriching ways to inform good teachers’ practice as none on its own proves sufficient’ (Winch et al., 2015, p.208). However, they seem to have been conceptualized and translated ‘in ways that are unhelpful’ (Winch, 2015, p.208) into three models of teaching: the craft model, the technical or applied model, and the professional model (McNamara et al., 2017).

The Craft Model of Teaching

The craft model of training teachers encourages student teachers to observe and imitate the strategies of professionals and mentors (Wallace, 1991), just the way
apprentices learn a ‘craft’ (Gove, 2010). Orchard and Winch (2015) highlighted three key features of the craft model to include ‘mastery of the subject, an emphasis on personal authority in the classroom and the ability to make judgements suitable to the current circumstances in the classroom’ (p.13). In other words, experience and intuition underlies this model (Winch et al., 2013). Teachers trained with the craft model are likely to have a good situated knowledge (see above), but may lack the skills needed to apply their knowledge in practice. They may be dependent on ‘personal knowledge deriving from study for a first degree (or equivalent) in a relevant discipline, plus an essentially practical body of craft skills, gained through both the experience of teaching and through watching an experienced teacher’ (McNamara et al., 2017, p.47). Critics of the craft models have argued that in as much as experience and intuition are necessary for good teaching, they are insufficient to facilitate effective teaching and learning (Orchard and Winch, 2015). The craft model has also been criticised for being transmission-based (Hardman et al., 2012), teacher-centred (Wallace, 1991; Altinyelken, 2010), dominated by ‘rote learning and memorisation’ (Dembele and Miaro-II, 2003), and not designed to give student teachers the opportunity to explore what works for them.

The Technical Model of Teaching

The technical model of teaching comprises a combination of the craft model and research evidence. Student teachers are made to observe and imitate practices and made to adopt classroom practices that are informed by empirical findings. Winch et al. (2013) argues that the technical model differs from the craft model because of its acceptance of research. However, the findings of such research are arguably presented as ‘recipes’ for teachers (Winch et al., 2013). Orchard and Winch (2015) argues that, ‘sometimes the work of teachers is cast as though they were executive technicians, told prescriptively by others what to do without needing to understand why they are being told to do it’ (p.11).

The technical model tends to help teachers develop their technical knowledge, as noted in section 3.6. However, although the teachers may know the processes and procedures for completing and accomplishing their tasks, they can hardly understand the values and assumptions they underpin. This is because the model tends to assume that educational systems and classrooms are homogenous and to assume that all evidence of ‘what works’ in the classroom is applicable to all classroom situations and contexts. As technicians, teachers’ develop their
professional knowledge by adhering to guidelines and procedures (Orchard and Winch, 2015) and their ‘activity is guided by a detailed curriculum and circumstantial textbooks with ready-made teaching materials and tests’ (Kansanen, 1991, p.251). Hence, how and what they think about these materials and the implications for their own teaching seems less important.

The Professional Model of Teaching
The professional model trains teachers to become ‘rounded and full professionals, whose practical craft knowledge and disciplinary/subject knowledge base is informed and supplemented by a wide range of research and theoretical knowledge including but not limited to evidence of what works’ (McNamara et al., 2017, p.47). This enables the teacher to respond to different classroom situations accordingly. Teacher education based on the professional model is more likely to produce teachers who ‘can exercise their own judgement in the classroom and make decisions as to whether and how research-based considerations are relevant to how and what they teach’ (Winch et al., 2013, p.6). This implies that teachers themselves are research-literate and able to identify and ‘engage critically with false research as part of their professional development’ (Winch et al., 2013, p.7). Kansanen (1991) defines a teacher trained by this model as an ‘independent professional who plans his work from the very beginning…and organises his daily activities independently; and in principle, he can give pedagogical reasons for his actions’ (p. 252).

What is salient in the discussion above is the extent to which each of the models influences student teachers’ ability to link their theoretical knowledge of teaching to practice. This is so because the model of a particular initial teacher education system influences how its students learn, what they know, and how they can apply their knowledge in practice. Effective teacher education system designs learning to teach activities in a way that it enables student teachers to ‘understand the relationship between the ideas they are taught and the applications they will encounter’ (Hughes, 2006, p.111). Such system provides a platform that enables student teachers to understand what is involved in planning [their] teaching, doing [their] teaching, and reflecting on [their] teaching. (Korthagen et al., 2006, p.1029).

3.3.6. Link between theory and practice: practicum in teacher education

Another main feature of any teacher education system relates to its ability to ensure that theoretical knowledge is accessible to student teachers for effective teaching
practice (Tryggvason, 2009). In the preceding sections, it was argued that teachers’ professional knowledge develops through teachers’ experiences and their interaction with the members of the teacher education community. Korthagen et al. (2006) claims that, ‘a common view of learning to teach includes the assumption that the university-based components of teacher preparation offer the theoretical underpinnings of teaching and that school teaching experience (practicum) offers a situation in which those previously learning principles of teaching are practiced’ (p.1029). With this understanding, Kansanen (1991) indicates that the content of the teacher education curriculum is usually divided into three components: ‘theoretical studies in education, subject matter studies and teaching practice’ (p.255). Kansanen further argues that although the teacher education curriculum is divided in three components, student teachers should be able to link the knowledge constructed from each of the components.

Orchard and Winch (2013) state that the two-thirds of training that student teachers in England are currently required to spend in school-based practice limits the theoretical knowledge of student teachers as more emphasis is placed on practice. Although the practice-oriented approach was adopted in an attempt to restructure the traditional approach, it is criticised as lacking theoretical basics (Korthagen and Kessels, 1999; Korthagen et al., 2006). Student teachers need to understand the basics of what they are doing; they need a sufficient level of theoretical and practical knowledge to be able to function professionally (Orchard and Winch, 2013). Korthagen et al. (2006) maintained that, ‘how to connect theory and practice in such a way that teachers would be able to handle the problems of everyday teaching through theory-guided action’ (p.1021) is still problematic. Effective teacher education programmes design their curricula in a way that allows effective transfer and integration of theory to practice (Korthagen and Kessels, 1999).

Evidence from the literature (e.g. Tryggvason, 2009; Westbury et al., 2005) has suggested that the Finnish teacher education system has an integrative feature that enables an effective link of theory to practice. The system has a strong focus on developing pedagogical content knowledge in which both the teacher education faculty and the subject faculty work collaboratively to effect quality learning (OECD, 2010). Darling-Hammond (2010), explaining the clinical component of initial teacher education in Finland, notes that it encompasses extensive coursework
as well as quality time on practicum. Hence, Sahlberg (2012) concludes that Finnish initial teacher education, ‘is a spiral sequence of theoretical knowledge, practical training and research-oriented enquiry of teaching’ (p.13). This research component is ‘integrated into every separate course within the programme’ (Kansanen, 2003, p.90). This is important because it gives Finnish teachers the freedom to think, organise and decide independently on their practices (Kansanen, 2003). Westbury et al. (2005), on the other hand, note that although the Finnish teacher education programmes integrate theory, research and practice in their curriculum design, they are not properly linked. They argue that,

The theoretical foundations for teaching and subject studies are taught in classrooms on university campuses, while practice-oriented preparation is located in training and field schools with their own staffs and mentors. Many see this spatial and organizational differentiation as creating a dichotomy. (p. 479)

This dichotomy is capable of creating a contradictory experience for student teachers (Kosunen and Mikkola, 2002), not only in the Finnish system but around the world. Grossman et al. (1999) note that, ‘student teachers often find themselves tugged in different directions, with university faculty and supervisors promoting one approach to teaching and mentor teachers and school systems encouraging others’ (p.5).

Another factor that facilitates the link of theory and practice is the ability to maintain efficient collaboration between the teacher education system and the practice school. Westbury et al. (2005) identify this as a common problem in many teacher education programmes. Zeichner (2002) notes that ‘co-operating teachers and teacher educators are often mutually ignorant of each other's work and the principles that underlie it’ (p.61). In England, for instance, Spendlove et al.’s (2010) study of partnership in initial training of teachers also ‘demonstrated the existence of tension between the higher education and school based elements’ of teacher preparation (p.74). Their findings suggest that although both the higher education institutes and their partner schools work towards a mutual goal, their roles are contrasting and competing.

Hence, student teachers are trapped in a web of conflict and confusion as they are expected to ‘operate using concepts of critical and reflective pedagogy that are treated very differently in the two contexts’ (Spendlove et al., 2010, p.74). Edwards (1995) described this in terms of discourse differences – the ‘one powerful
and context free is exercised primarily by teacher educators and researchers and the
other, situationally constrained, mainly by classroom teachers’ (p.601). She noted
that the language difference (in terms of concepts and pedagogy) between teacher
training institutes and collaborating schools could limit student teachers’ developing
skills especially for student teachers’ who are ‘unfamiliar with the more powerful
public discourses’ (p.601). In Finland, Sahlberg (2012) claimed that, ‘there is an
extraordinary close connection between the teacher education department and the
subject faculties’ (p.18). However, there is limited evidence from the literature on
how this collaboration takes place and on its effect on students’ developing
practices. Nevertheless, Kansanen (1991) notes, as a result of the prolonged
teaching practicum in the Finnish system, that student teachers develop a broad
knowledge of teaching and are able to employ their theoretical knowledge and
research skills in identifying what (teaching approach and strategies) works best for
them.

In the Nigerian context, however, there is no evidence that theory and
practice are integrated at all in teacher education programmes. Lewin and Stuart’s
(2003) study suggested that educational theories are well presented and taught in
teacher education programmes in the five African countries they studied. However,
their implications for practice are often not fully explored. They noted that,

> Child development and learning theories are not related to specific
> subjects, such as language acquisition or misconception in science.
> The general professional and pedagogic skills are taught separately
> from the theory, and the only opportunity to bring these together, in
> teaching practice, is seldom exploited for thus end. (p.73)

This tends to explain why the pedagogy of teacher education in Africa is ‘judged to
be of poor quality with little transferability to the classroom’ (Hardman et al., 2012,
p.827). Although it is stated in the NCE handbook that both the colleges of
education and the cooperating school (i.e. practice school) should ensure the
success of the teaching practice exercise, there is no evidence in the literature to
show that this is implemented. In fact, the phrase, ‘theory and practice’ is alien to
the Nigerian context⁴.

Moreover, Nakpodia’s (2011) review of the model of teaching practice in
Delta State college of education, Abraka, Nigeria, indicated that even when student
teachers’ techniques are well taught in the college, their ability to put them into
practice is constrained by the short duration of teaching practice as well as

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⁴ This will be discussed further in later chapters.
ineffective supervision and evaluation. He noted that ‘the period of twelve weeks for practice teaching is too short as it does not provide the student-teacher the sample opportunity to effectively gain the experience which the exercise is intended to encourage’ (p.37). Rather than a way of gaining experience, student teachers tend to see the practice teaching period as a period of assessment for the teaching practice module (Nakpodia, 2011). Hence, students’ teaching practice is seen as an ‘academic course’ rather than an avenue for hands-on experience; this is explored further in Chapter Seven.

More so, Hamilton-Ekeke’s (2016) study of the assessment of teaching practice in Nigeria indicates that at times supervisors do not turn up. Some of the students reported that their supervisors did not give them enough time to reflect on their teaching practice as they rush through the supervision exercise. Nakpodia (2011) explains that some supervisors do not have the patience to discuss their concerns with their students. Hence, the ‘short discussion between the supervisor and the student teacher…which should afford the student teacher the opportunity to appreciate his strength and weaknesses are often ignored because the teacher is in a hurry to move on to the next student’ (p.37). In some cases, Hamilton-Ekeke (2016) also notes that throughout twenty weeks of teaching practice the supervisors only pay one visit to the student, in which he or she grades the student.

Having said that, Korthagen et al. (2006) argue that ‘so long as teacher educators advocate innovative practices that they do not model, illustrate, and read as text in their own teacher education classrooms, teacher education reform will continue to elude us’ (1036). Modelling is a powerful tool in student teachers’ process of learning to teach. Loughran’s (1995) study supports the notion that teacher educators’ dispositions and practices influence their students’ practices. ‘If beginning teachers are to be effective, they must have a model of the various instructional techniques which can be implemented. Teacher educators, then, must model these techniques in their education courses’ (Schuman and Relihan, 1990, p.105).

3.3.7. Assessment practices

Assessment and feedback are important features not only of teacher education systems but also the school system. Bloxham (2008) maintains that assessment practices in teacher education are ‘not very dissimilar’ to that of school assessment
as both share in the ‘tension between assessment for accountability and assessment for learning’ (p.13). Black and William (1998) define assessment as ‘all those activities undertaken by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged’. However, what the feedback is designed to achieve will determine its function in a teaching and learning activity. For example, Black and William (1998) suggest that when feedback is adapted to the teaching needs, then it has performed an ‘assessment for learning’ function.

The function of assessment in teacher education has been widely discussed in the literature. Sue (2008) classified assessment in terms of its traditional and contemporary functions in student teachers’ learning. The traditional function proposes assessment as a certification tool and as a quality assurance. Assessment as a certification tool mainly focuses on providing criteria for candidate selection, measuring levels of students’ achievements, and providing licence to practice (Sue, 2008; Smith, 2016; Shepard, 2000). Smith (2016) referred to it as ‘gate-keeping’ (p.411). This form of assessment is mostly summative as it mainly uses grades to judge students’ learning (Smith, 2016; Sue, 2008). Assessment as a quality assurance tool largely relates to how assessment is used as evidence for stakeholders to judge the efficiency of a teacher education programme (Sue, 2008). Since ‘the main goal of policy makers has been to raise student achievement’, teacher education is burdened with the task of producing ‘efficient’ teachers (Smith, 2016, p.407). Hence, student teachers’ assessment is usually ‘seen as a proxy [in judging] the overall value of [a teacher education] programme’ (Sue, 2008, p.14). Policy makers and other external authorities variously use assessment of teaching performance, assignments and examinations to measure the quality of outcomes of a teacher education system. Smith (2016) claims that using assessment in this way worries the ‘the soul of teacher education’ especially,

when external factors become more central to the education of teachers than the message of seeing the individual person – teacher as well as student - and to create an optimal learning context for each. (p.407)

Smith (2016) referred to the two traditional functions discussed above as Assessment of Learning. Assessment of learning ‘relates to summative assessment at the end of a learning process with the main function of certification, qualification and accountability’ (Smith, 2016, p.409). It is also used to ‘provide evidence of
achievement for public reporting’ (Stiggins, 2012, p.761). Critics of assessment of learning have argued that it is mostly summative and equips student teachers neither for their own learning nor for teaching. Boud (2000) believes that assessment of learning ‘gives the message that assessment is not an act of the learner, but an act performed on the learner’ (p.156). Hence, recent advancement in thinking about assessment has argued for what Sue (2008) refers to as contemporary functions of assessment. Contemporary functions advocate the use of assessment for learning – also known as formative assessment.

Assessment for learning involves a number of strategies to enhance learning, including using self- and peer-assessment, strategic questioning and effective qualitative feedback that identifies steps to improvement (Black and William, 1998). Smith (2016) defines assessment for learning as ‘pedagogical tool’ in which ‘grades become less important [and] the information elicited by oral or written assessment is applied by learners and teachers to strengthen learning’ (p.409).

While summative assessment places ‘judgements about learning in the hands of others [e.g. teachers]’ (Boud, 2000, p.156), formative assessment is ongoing, dynamic and interactive (Shepard, 2000). It provides insight for the teacher on how best to direct the teaching activities in order to enhance learning. Boud (2000) cautions, however, that ‘providing feedback to students to assist in their learning is bread and butter to teaching and learning, but it can become so commonplace that it gets ignored and becomes under-conceptualised’ (p.156). Hence, Brown (2004-05) notes that both summative and formative assessment are important in teaching and learning because students might not listen to our teaching but they will definitely participate in the assessment process, as they are generally very focused on getting a qualification. She therefore argues that emphasis should rather be on ‘exploring how best to ensure that our assessment practices help rather than hinder learning’ (p. 81).

The question therefore is how can assessment (summative or formative) facilitate good student outcomes? First, assessment must be fit for purpose. Brown (2004-05) has noted that it is important to think not only about the what and how of assessment, but also to consider why such assessment is being done. She argues that effective assessment strategies should also consider the appropriateness of the time of the assessment; it should be efficient, inclusive, reliable and doable. Second, feedback must be recognized as a crucial component of assessment. Brown (2004-
05) notes that if assessment is to be integral to learning, feedback must be at the heart of the process (p.84). Boud (2000) argues that feedback must be separated from grades because even though grades are a good indicator of achievement, they limit students’ understanding. He maintains that grades always say more or less. More in the sense that they place a weight of classification on a piece of work which binds the learner to the classification, less in the sense that grades cannot point effectively to the specifics of what can be undertaken for improvement. (p.157)

Third, an effective assessment strategy must be transparent. The assessment criteria should be known to a student so that they ‘fully understand what is expected of them’ (Brown, 2004-05, p.84). Shepard (2000) suggests that assessment procedures should be very clear so that students can follow the same step in evaluating their own work. Boud (2000) argues for a criteria- or standards-based framework in assessment. He warns that ‘without a standards-based framework, learners cannot know whether their achievements are a result of meeting an acceptable standard or simply doing better than other students in the same cohort’ (Boud, 2000, p.156)

Fourth, an effective assessment strategy must present itself to be modelled. Smith (2016) suggests that if teacher educators model effective assessment strategies, then ‘student teachers would gain a deep understanding of the pedagogical aspects of assessment as well as ways to integrate the assessment of their own students into their teaching practice’ (p.419). Shepard (2000) referred to this as knowledge transfer. He argues that assessment should be done in ways that enable student teachers to understand the concepts and transfer them to new situations.

3.3.8. Quality Assurance

Quality assurance has been found to be an important feature of successful higher education programmes (Frazer, 2005). It is defined as ‘the mechanisms, procedures and processes in place to ensure that the desired quality, however defined and measured, is delivered’ (Harvey and Green, 1993, pp. 19). However, the concept of quality ‘is found to be multifaceted and value-laden’ (Law, 2010, pp. 66). Martin and Stella (2007) have noted that ‘quality assurance mechanism used to be highly dependent on national administrative traditions, but nowadays there is a convergence of mechanisms’ (p.19). This tends to explain why each teacher education system takes a particular approach in ensuring the quality of their systems.
(Law, 2010, Burrows, Harvey and Green, 1992). The approach to quality assurance is usually defined by the goals and objectives of the system.

However, Ellis (1993) warns that quality assurance processes should not be mistaken for disciplinary actions. Quality assurance ‘requires not just the detection of defects as in quality control but also their prevention (Ellis, 1993, p.49). The following discussion refers to the different ways in which teacher education systems assure their quality. In teacher education system in Nigeria and elsewhere, the concept of quality assurance is maintained externally and internally, ‘using different mechanisms and quality criteria’ (Becket, 2005, p.1). **External quality assurance** is carried out by external agencies and it focuses on evaluating the overall effectiveness of the individual institutions, assessing the quality of teaching and assessment delivered to student teachers and also monitors the progress of the internal quality assurance system (Komorowska, 2017, Eurydice, 2006). Martin and Stella (2007) define external quality assurance as the ‘actions of an external body…that assess its operation or that of its programmes, in order to determine whether it is meeting the agreed or predetermined standards’ (p.34). The quality assurance agency could be an independent or government agency. Eurydice (2006) stated that the scope of external quality assurance differ in each system but May be concerned with the results of internal evaluation, the content of the curriculum for teacher education, teaching methods (i.e. how the content of that curriculum is taught), or assessment practices. It may also consider the balance between professional training and general education, the management of school placements for teaching practice, potential partnerships with schools and the general human resources management of institutions (e.g. the qualifications required by teacher trainers or their continuing professional development) (p.20).

**Internal quality assurance** includes the processes taken by the training institutions to ensure quality. Sanyal (2013) argues that internal assurance ensures that the ‘institution’s or a programme’s policies and mechanisms [are] in place for making sure that it is meeting its own objectives and standards’ (p.37). The following discussion is structured around three mechanisms of quality assurance identified in the literature which includes accreditation, quality audit, and accountability. The focus here is not to present a comprehensive review of quality assurance but to identify quality assurance processes around the world. It is noteworthy that it is difficult to differentiate between quality assurance in teacher training institutes and
quality assurance in higher institutions generally; hence, this discussion may at times refer to higher education in general.

**Accreditation** refers to ‘a process of assessment and review which enables a higher education course or institution to be recognised or certified as meeting appropriate standards’ (Grant and Meek, 2000, p.vi). Accreditation is fast becoming one of the most widely used methods of external quality assurance mechanism (Sanyal, 2013, Stensaker, 2011). This mechanism is important especially now that most education systems all over the world continually seek to remain competitive. Setting standards for teaching is increasingly attracting policymakers’ interests due to the assumption that defining a standard can improve quality (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Harvey and Green, 1993). Stensaker (2011) review of literature suggested that as a quality assurance mechanism, accreditation is suitable for higher educations who: a) ‘wants to assure at least a minimum degree of quality (especially in highly deregulated and privatized higher education sectors); b) wants a certain degree of uniformity of study programmes; and c) wishes to stimulate increased student mobility’ (p.759). This tends to explain why accreditation is highly valued in the Nigerian system. For the accreditation of universities, NUC (2002), cited in Alani and Ilusanya (2007), stated that the purposes of accreditation are to:

- Ensure that at least the provisions of the minimum standards documents are attained, maintained and enhanced in Nigerian universities;
- Assure employers and other members of the community that Nigerian graduates of all academic programmes have attained an acceptable level of competence in their areas of specialization; and
- Certify to the international community that the academic programmes offered in Nigerian universities are of high standards and that their graduates are adequate for employment and further studies. (p. 302).

For colleges of education, the NCCE is responsible for accrediting new NCE programmes and new NCE courses (Alumode and Onuma, 2016). They approve guidelines that set out criteria for accreditation of all colleges of education in Nigeria (http://www.ncceonline.edu.ng/functions.php). Also in teacher education system in the USA, accreditation also seems to be widely recognised. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher education (NCATE) is responsible for the accreditation of teacher education institutions in the USA. Although, there are numerous debates in the literature on whether accreditation processes assures quality (e.g. Bullough et al. 2003; Eaton, 2003), Sanyal (2013) argues that accreditation is one of the ways in which the government holds teacher education
systems accountable for their activities, especially in ‘systems with diversified providers of teacher education’ (p.39).

Hence, the inspectorate body known as the Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted) carries out external quality assurance for English ITE programmes (as education is a devolved area other UK countries have their own regulatory bodies, for example, in Wales Estyn carries out a similar function). Ofsted inspects the activities of all providers. Its purpose is to ‘provide an independent external evaluation of the Initial Teacher Training programmes’ effectiveness and a diagnosis of what it should do to improve. These judgements are based on the range of evidence available to inspectors, which they evaluate against a national framework’ (Ofsted, 2015, p.5).

**Accountability** ‘currently permeates conversations about education at every level, including teacher education and professional development’ (Knight et al. 2012, p.301). In teacher education, most discussions on accountability often point to the extent to which the products of a teacher training institution meet the ‘teacher standards’ of the system (Bloxham, 2008). Setting ‘standards’ for teaching is increasingly attracting policymakers’ interests due to the assumption that defining a standard can improve quality (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Harvey and Green, 1993). This is because ‘standards can guide teacher learning and influence entry, continuation or recognition field’ (Darling-Hammond, 2017, p.295); they are also a measure against which inspection regimes can judge their performance. The definition and methods used in assessing standards vary; they are usually related to the objective of the education system (Whitty, 1992). In England, for example, the standards for teaching are statutory. Prior to 2012 there have been discrete sets of standards for students working towards qualified teacher status (QTS). From September 2012, the ‘standards for teaching’ were merged to become a single document that defines the minimum level of practice expected from all teaching workforce in England (DfES, 2011b). Hence, the Teachers’ Standards apply to ‘trainees working towards Qualified Teachers’ Status (QTS); Newly Qualified Teachers (NTS) as well as all teachers in maintained schools, including maintained special schools who are covered by the 2012 appraisal regulations’ (DfES, 2011, p.3). The Teachers’ Standards (2012) sets out the basic required and expected skills of a teacher.
In Scotland, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC Scotland) regulates the teacher standards. The GTC for Scotland is an independent regulatory body for teachers in Scotland responsible for initial teacher education guidelines, entry requirements and teacher standards (Beauchamp et al., 2013). Teacher standards in Scotland were revised into a suite of Standards in 2013 to provide ‘a framework for teachers to examine, inform and continually develop their thinking and practices’ (EIS, 2015). This suite of standards includes the Standard for Registration, the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning and the Standards for Leadership and Management. The Standard for Registration relates to initial teacher education and it provides ‘a comprehensive and unitary set of benchmark statements which are the requirements for each programme of initial teacher education in Scotland’ (GTC Scotland, 2006, p.1).

Nigeria, the Teachers’ Registration Council of Nigeria (TCRN) sets and regulates the standards for teachers known as ‘Professional Standard’ (Alumode and Onuma, 2016). The Professional Standard specifies the certification and licensure criteria and highlights the ‘minimum set of knowledge, skills, values, attitude, conduct, rights, privileges and obligations expected of a professional (TRCN, 2017, p.2).

The above examples can be likened to what Floden (2012) described as ‘teacher value added measures’ wherein he maintains that the government uses ‘a set of indicators based on value-added scores associated with program graduates. The basic logic linked to these measures is simple: teacher preparation programs should be judged by the quality of teachers they produce’ (p.354). Using standards as a means of external accountability is increasingly ‘used to guide licensing or certification of candidates [and] can guide teacher learning and influence entry, continuation, or recognition in the field’ (Darling-Hammond and Lieberman, 2012, p.154). Although most teacher education programmes mainly take the accountability approach described above, Beauchamp et al. (2013) argue that ‘[good] practice does not reside in the standards’ (p.1). Sahlberg (2010) argues that the value added model of accountability has ‘trapped teachers in a dilemma between schooling for social capital and moral purpose with student-centred pedagogy and learning on one side, and efficiency-driven education with teacher-centred instruction and achievement on the other’ (p. 49). Although there may not be written standards for teachers in Finland, Sahlberg (2007) claims that what exists
in Finland is ‘intelligent accountability’ which is due to the increased autonomy given to schools and teachers. Teachers, schools, education authorities and policy makers are jointly responsible and accountable for raising quality. In addition, Darling-Hammond (2017) posited that this shared responsibility operates through the ‘shared framework that guides the teacher education curriculum across the eight universities that provides [teacher education]’ (p. 297).

3.4. Summary

In this chapter, I took a holistic approach in exploring what was already known, thought and claimed about effective teacher education systems. I reviewed both the international and the local literature in order to identify the range of practices that underpin effective teacher education systems. The chapter argued that the demand and supply of teachers greatly affects the recruitment process. Countries that clearly define the purpose for recruiting teachers tend to attract quality candidates. The review also suggested that the status and images of the teaching profession in a given context determines the quality of candidates it is likely attract. In as much as Wallace (1991) argues that the ‘success of learning depends on ‘what’ the learners themselves bring to the learning situation’ (p.3), this review suggested that the system has greater responsibility in ensuring a consistent and quality teacher outcome – beginning from the curriculum development to the model of teaching and assessment practices it promotes. The chapter also reviewed how good teacher education systems maintain and assure quality at all levels. Conclusively, this chapter highlighted the issues and challenges in the teacher education system in Nigeria. These issues are discussed in detail in Chapters Seven and Eight from the perspective of student teachers. To facilitate the discussion of learning to become a primary teacher, I conceptualise primary education studies (see section 2.3) as an activity system in Chapter Four. The focus is on providing an understanding of primary teacher training processes in Nigeria.
CHAPTER FOUR
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents activity theory as the theoretical framework underpinning this research. Activity theory is employed because the concept of learning cannot be comprehended without an understanding of the system in which it is situated (Jonassen, 2000). In this study, I conceptualised the initial primary teacher education as an activity system, hence I seek to understand how the interactions within the system mediates how student teachers learn to teach. I considered activity theory as a useful framework for defining and examining the initial primary teacher education learning community in this study as it enables ‘a focus on organisational structures as well as on relations between people and how these might influence the construction of the community’ (Guldberg, 2010, p.169).

This chapter presents an overview of activity theory, its underlying ideas and its principles. I start with a discussion on the history and development of activity theory. Then I briefly describe the different versions of activity theory developed by Lev Vygotsky, Alexey Leontiev and Yrjo Engestrom respectively. This is not to argue or show any conceptual links and differences among these approaches, but rather, to make the reader aware of the underlying concepts and variations of activity theory. I also discuss the various elements of activity theory and provide justifications for how they apply and fit in the present study. I acknowledge that there are other variations of activity theory. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this thesis, I adopt a broad definition of activity theory, which Kaptelinin and Nardi (2012) referred to as ‘an aggregated framework comprising a combination of [Leontiev’s and Engestrom’s] approaches’ (p.11).

4.2. An overview and development of Activity Theory

Activity theory can be traced back to dialectical materialism, classical German philosophy and the work of Vygotsky (Roth and Lee, 2007, p.189). It was founded in an effort to understand the human mind in relation to its cultural and social environment (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2012; Kaptelinin, 2013). Activity theory is a ‘clarifying, orienting framework’ (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2012, p.6) and ‘offers a set of perspectives on human activity and a set of concepts for describing the activity’
It is also a tool for analysing the operations of social structures and for ‘designing change when trouble and contradictions become evident in these structures’ (Roth and Lee, 2007, p.188). Hassan and Kazlauskas (2014) simply define activity theory as a theory that explains ‘who is doing what, why and how’ (p.9). Kaptelinin and Nardi (2012) argue that ‘activity theory is not a theory in the traditional sense… [rather] it aims to help researchers and practitioners orientate themselves in complex real-life problems, identify key issues that need to be dealt with and direct the search for relevant evidence and suitable solutions’ (p.6). Hence, ‘activity theorists are not simply concerned with “doing” as a disembodied action’, rather the analysis of the actions are aimed at ‘transforming something’ (Barab et al., 2002, p.77).

Although, it seems to have been widely used for research in information technology, activity theory is increasingly viewed as a potentially fertile paradigm for research in education. For example, Wolf-Micheal and Kenneth (2002) used activity theory to structure the redesign of an urban teacher education program in the USA. Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzanares (2008, p.442) explain that ‘the lens of activity theory can provide insights into change in teachers’ practices’. Buell (2004) employed activity theory in exploring how teachers restructure ‘their teaching through engagement in cycles of planning, enactment and reflection’ (p.1984). Russell and Schneiderheinze (2005) used activity theory to describe ‘how four teachers implemented a constructivist-based learning environment that… enabled them (the researcher) to identify the characteristics and consequences of purposeful efforts at change’ (p.38).

The central concept and the basic unit of analysis in activity theory is the ‘activity’ (Nardi, 1996; Issroff and Scanlon, 2002; Engestrom, 2000; Hashim and Jones, 2007; Kuutti, 1995). An activity is a ‘form of doing [by the subject] directed to an object… which is motivated by the need to transform the object into an outcome’ (Issroff and Scanlon, 2002, p.78). In other words, it is the interaction of a human being with the world (Kaptelinin, 2014). Kaptelinin and Nardi (2012) understood an activity as ‘a generative force that transforms both the subject and the object’ (p.12). Dippe (2006) maintains that the interaction of the subject, object and tools describes every conscious human activity. The subject is the doer while the object is the motive for doing the activity: ‘A subject interacts with the environment through material or intellectual tools to produce an outcome’ (Dippe, 2006, p.2).
The tool is anything used in transforming the object or motive to outcome (Issroff and Scanlon, 2002). How the object is transformed as well as how other components of an activity system mediate object transformation seems to be a major focus of the activity theory (Barab et al., 2002). The ‘components of any activity are organized into activity systems’ (Jonassen and Murphy, 1999, p. 62).

However, the subject, object and tools alone cannot describe the complexity of the relationship between an individual and his or her environment in activity (Issroff and Scanlon, 2002). Engestrom (1987) modified the activity system to include the community, rules and division of labour in order to reflect the interaction of the subject with its social, cultural and historical context (see section 4.3.3). This means that the rules of the activity guide the interaction between the subject and other members of the community. In addition, the extent to which the object of the activity is achieved depends on how the members of the community engage in their individual roles in the system as well as on their ‘shared norms and expectations’ (Barab et al. 2002, pp.78-79). It is important to note that the components of an activity system are dialectic and dynamic and this brings about a continuous interaction in the activity system (Barab et al., 2002); hence, ‘each component presupposes the existence of the others’ (Roth and Lee, 2007, p. 327).

4.3. The various conceptualisations of activity theory

4.3.1. Lev Vygotsky’s concept of activity theory

It is believed that the Vygotsky’s concept of activity theory belongs to the first generation of activity theory (Roth and Lee, 2007). For Vygotsky, the focus of an activity is on the individual. He believed that culture and society are ‘generative forces which are directly involved in the very production of mind’ (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2012, p.14). Vygotsky rejected a ‘straightforward view of culture and society as directly determining and shaping human mind… [then argued that] the only way to reveal the impact of culture on mind was to follow developmental, historical transformations of mental phenomena in the social and cultural context’ (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2012, p.15). He maintained that humans rarely interact with the world directly rather they utilize artefacts to mediate their relationship with the world (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2012; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Hence, the key concept in Vygotsky’s model is ‘artefact–mediated action’. Artefact–mediated action ‘involves an interaction between the individual and mediating artefact (Figure 5).
4.3.2. Alexey Leontiev’s concept of activity theory

The second generation of activity theory was a modification of Vygotsky’s theory of activity (Roth and Lee, 2007). Leontiev developed this model to ‘incorporate societal, cultural, and historical dimensions to an activity’ (Roth and Lee, 2007, p. 189), with focus on the object of the activity (Yamataga-Lynch, 2010; Roth and Lee, 2007). He argues that ‘individual-social dialectic should be understood in the context of communal, object-oriented activity’ (William et al., 2007, p.2). For him, the object is related to the motive of the activity and the unit of analysis is the activity itself (Yamataga-Lynch, 2010; Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2010; Kaptelinin, 2005). Leontiev’s model argues that activity is socially embedded and can be carried out by individuals or by a group of individuals who are bounded by a social system (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2012).

All activities are considered ‘social, including those that are not carried out collectively. Even if people work alone, social and cultural practices, tools, values and so forth determine their work’ (Kaptelinin, 2005, p.9). For supporters of this model, activity emerges because of ‘need’ (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2010). Having a need implies that ‘something should be available to satisfy the requirement of [the need]’ (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2010, p.25). This ‘thing’ that motivates the subject to meet the requirement of his/her need is the ‘object’; in other words, the object motivates [and directs] the subject [towards an activity] (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2010, p.25).
Leontiev’s model of activity has a ‘three layered hierarchical structure (Figure 6) in which the top layer is the activity itself, which is oriented towards a motive [and] the motive is the object, which stimulates [and] excites the subject’ (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2012, p.26). The second layer comprises of actions: ‘Actions are conscious processes directed at goals (what directs the activity) which must be undertaken to fulfil the object’ (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2012, p.30). Barab et al. (2002) argues that ‘activities are achieved through actions; however, actions cannot be understood without a frame of reference to the larger… context through which these actions are realised’ (p.84). This larger context is what Engestrom conceptualized as the community (see section 4.3.3). Operation is the third layer: it involves the process of providing an adjustment to an ongoing situation. They are oriented towards the conditions under which the subject is trying to attain a goal.

In addition, consciousness development for Leontiev is a ‘self-regulated process driven by goals and motives in which individuals or groups of individuals choose to participate [in an activity]’ (Yamataga-Lynch, 2010, p.22). In human activity, ‘the link between what an individual is doing and what they are trying to attain through what they are doing is often difficult to establish’ (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2010, p.24); thus, a possible misfit might exist between the motive and the action. This misfit can be likened to Engestrom’s concept of contradiction (see section 4.4.1). Furthermore, Leontiev’s model of activity theory upholds that tools specifically mediate an activity: ‘tool mediation allows for appropriating socially developed forms of acting in the world’ (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2010, p. 31).

**Figure 6: Leontiev's model of activity adapted from Kaptelinin and Nardi, (2012, p.28)**
4.3.3. Yrjo Engestrom concept of activity theory

The third generation of activity theory is influenced by the Engestrom activity theory model. Engestrom’s concept of activity theory was a modified and extended version of Leontiev’s model. It is sometimes referred to as Cultural and Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), and it ‘endorses the fact that all activity systems are part of a network of activity systems that in its totality constitutes human society’ (Roth and Lee, 2007, p. 200). Although, Leontiev emphasises that activity can be carried out individually or collectively, he did not ‘explore the structure and development of collective activities’ and did not develop a conceptual and virtual representation of an activity system (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2012, p. 33). Engestrom interpreted and depicted Leontiev’s model of activity theory in a triangular form (William et al., 2007) and argues the importance of culture and history in the subject-object interaction, which he maintained, mediates the transformation of the object (Engestrom, 1987). With this, he developed an extension of Leontiev’s model to comprise the community, division of labour and rules, as seen in Figure 7. Barab, Schatz and Scheckler (2004) referred to these components of the activity system as mediators of an activity.

In Engestrom’s concept of activity theory, an activity is defined as ‘systemic formations that gain durability by becoming institutionalised…[and] manifest themselves only through the actions performed by individuals…’ (Engestrom, 2008, p. 204). Like Leontiev, Engestrom upholds the subject-object notion; however, he focused more on the object. For Engestrom, objects are concerns; they are generators and foci of attention, motivation, effort and meaning (Engestrom, 1996, p.3). He argues that activity is evolving and developing (Kuutti, 1995), and as such, ‘societal relevance and impact of activity theory depend on our ability to grasp the changing character of objects’ (Engestrom, 1996, p. 3). This explains why his model is significantly relevant to organisational change. Edwards (
4.4. The elements of an activity system

As mentioned above, the activity system is often represented as a triangle. This triangle consists of seven components: namely, subject, object, community, rules, tools, outcome, and division of labour. Roth and Lee (2006) maintain that these components should be understood as part of a whole. The system itself cannot function well without each of these components, and the components exist only because there is a system in place. Hence, it can be argued that the components of an activity triangle and ‘the activity [system] they reference presuppose each other’ (Roth and Lee, 2006, p. 199).

4.4.1. Subject

In this study, the subject of the activity was the student teachers, whose perspectives were researched. Jonassen and Ronner-Murphy (1999) noted that the subject could be anyone for example, ‘a single designer or a team consisting of designers, a manager, subject matter experts, and media producers’ (p. 64). The subjects ‘engage inter-subjectively by virtue of having some common object that they are working on together, one that embodies their collective motives’ (William et al., 2007, p. 2). Despite working towards a common object, each individual taking part in an activity has a ‘slightly different view and interpretation of the object and purpose of the activity depending on the individual’s position in the division of labour, his or her history in the activity, training and experience’ (Virkkunen and Kuutti, 2000, p.301). Daniels and Warmington (2007) argue for the implication of the subjects’ position in an activity. They maintain that the way in which subjects are positioned
within an activity system could affect its relationship with the tool as well as its relationship with the object of the activity. Subject positioning could also influence the ways in which the ‘rules, community and division of labour regulates individual and group actions’ (Daniel and Warmington, 2007, p.382).

4.4.2. Object of the activity

The object of the activity relates to the ‘problem space at which the activity is directed, and which is moulded or transformed into the outcome with help of physical and symbolic, external and internal tools’ (Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzanares, 2008, p.443). An object of the activity is the ‘goal’ that drives an activity (Virkkunen and Kuutti, 2000). It can also be conceptualised as ‘concerns, generators and foci of attention, motivation, effort and meaning’ (Engestrom, 2009, p.3). Edwards (2010) described the object as the ‘problem that is being worked on’ (p. 67). The object can manifest in both material and ideal forms. In its material form, the object is the real material objects that is being worked on, and in its ideal form, it represents the idea, motive, collective purpose or envisioned outcome of an activity (William et al., 2007, p.3). Notwithstanding, Jonassen and Ronrer-Murphy (1999) noted that the ‘form and functions of object of the activity is likely to be modified as the activity unfolds’ (p. 64).

4.4.3. Tools of the activity

The tools of the activity are also referred to as mediating artefacts. They mediate the interaction between and among the different elements of an activity system. The ‘capability and availability of tools mediate what can be done and the tool in turn evolves to hold the historical knowledge of how the community works and is organised’ (Hasan and Kazlauskas, 2014, p.11). An ‘activity cannot be understood without understanding the role of artefacts in everyday existence; especially the way that artefacts are integrated into social practice’ (Nardi, 1996, p.14). Kuutti (1994) argues that tools can be anything (physical or psychological) used in shaping an activity. In addition, Bannon (1997) notes that the functions of the tools are not static; they may be modified to suit the purpose of the activity. However, this modification could create some tension in the system as the subject may be resistant to the change or find it inconvenient to use.
4.4.4. Community, rules and division of labour

The community is the social setting(s) in which activity takes place (Roth and Lee, 2007). It informs the ‘interactions between the context and people – a relation between settings and the people within those settings’ (Walshaw, 2010, p.109). The people are expected to have an understanding of their respective responsibilities (division of labour) towards achieving a shared purpose object (Jonassen, 2000). Each person or group of individuals represents a perspective from which an activity could be studied and analysed (Virkkunen and Kuutti, 2000). Jonassen (2000) noted that ‘meaningful activity’ cannot be accomplished individually as the ‘ability to perform is predicated on groups of people’ (p. 8). Individuals can belong to more than one community the knowledge and values the individuals acquire in one community may be in conflict with the values and knowledge needed in another community (Jonassen, 2000).

The community of an activity system ‘negotiates and mediates the rules and customs that describe how its members function, what they believe and the ways that it supports different activities’ (Jonassen, 2000, p.103). In other words, the rules of an activity shape the interactions among members of the community (Virkkunen and Kuutti, 2000); it is comprised of norms and regulations that govern the activity (Roth and Tobin, 2002). The division of labour defines the responsibility of each member of the community. It represents ‘how tasks are shared among the community’ (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p.2).

4.5. The activity setting

Activity settings are the physical, social, cultural and/or psychological contexts in which a student’s learning is situated (Goncu, 1999; Super and Harkness, 1986; Grossman et al., 1999). Nardi (1996) notes that ‘context is both internal to people – involving specific objects and goals – and, at the same time, external to people, involving artefacts, other people, specific settings’ (p.76). An activity setting can encourage or constrain a subject’s participation in an activity. In teacher education for example,

All participants, including school-based faculty and administrators and university-based faculty and supervisors, hold beliefs about how someone learns to teach. These beliefs help shape how they interact with and support beginning teachers. These varying and often conflicting belief systems and their relative authority and influence
over preservice teachers often result in both multiple conceptions of the ideal teacher and multiple environmental structures to guide career development toward those ideals incompatible goals to exist, each competing for primacy. (Grossman et al., 1999, p. 5)

In this study, the activity setting comprised of the college of education and the cooperating schools as they represent the space through which student teachers learn to teach. Although these two settings are designed to work towards a common goal, Grossman et al. (1999) maintains that each setting may have their own specific norms and features, which may or may not be compatible with the other setting. The implication of this is that student teachers are likely to be trapped in confusion as to which practice to adopt (Grossman et al., 1999; Spendlove et al., 2010).

4.6. Contradiction as source of change

Contradiction is defined as historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems (Engestrom, 2001, p.137). Engestrom and Sannio (2011) argue that direct observation of contradiction is not possible rather they are identified through its various manifestations. Contradiction can manifests as disturbances (Engestrom, 2000), problems (Isroff and Scanlon, 2002) and tensions (Barab et al., 2002) in an activity system. Disturbances are ‘deviations from standard scripts… which keep the activity system in constant instability’ (Engestrom, 2000, p. 964). When contradiction arises in an activity system, members of the activity system start to deviate from the established norms (Karanasios et al., 2007). Hence, the events that occur and the consequences the participants experience can qualitatively change the participant’s goal and motive for participation, the environment and the activity (Kaptelinin, 2005; Rogoff, 1995), and thus bring about tension in the system. Tensions ‘can be thought of as system dualities through which the evolution and innovation in an activity system can be understood’ (Barab et al., 2002, p.80). Contradictions also manifest as trouble (Roth and Lee, 2007) or instability (Engestrom, 1999) in an activity system; however, they are ‘often the motive of change and development’ in the activity system (Engestrom, 1999, p.381). When contradictions are conscious, they become the primary driving force that brings about development within and between activity systems (Roth and Lee, 2007, p.203). In other words, finding solutions to
contradictions in an activity system brings about organisational change (Engestrom and Sannio, 2011).

In an activity system, ‘the inherent contradictions cannot be overlooked because motives are mixed, purposes are contradictory, and relationships are ambiguous’ (Winter, 1982, p.168). Roth and Lee (2007) further explained that ‘contradictions have to be ‘historically accumulated inner contradictions, within the things themselves rather than more surface expressions of tensions, problems, conflicts and breakdowns’ (p.203). Inner contradictions manifest when a central activity is affected by some action or conditions of the activity (Yamagata-Lynch and Haudenschild, 2009). They come with the ‘coexistence of mutually exclusive elements… and then change and develop over time’ (Roth and Lee, 2007, p.203). There are four levels of inner contradictions: namely, primary contradiction, secondary contradiction, tertiary contradiction, and quaternary contradiction.

Primary contradictions occur when ‘more than one value is attached to an element within an activity’ (Yamagata-Lynch and Haudenschild, 2009, p.509). In other words, they exist within the same component of an activity system (Roth and Lee, 2007). Secondary contradictions exist between any components of an activity system (Roth and Lee, 2007). They ‘occur when a new aspect of an activity is introduced, and the process for assimilating this new aspect into the activity brings about conflict’ (Yamagata-Lynch and Haudenschild, 2009, p.509). Tertiary contradictions occur when the realisation of an activity object is faced by conflicting situations when a new approach to achieving the object is introduced into the activity (Yamagata-Lynch and Haudenschild, 2009). This suggests that tertiary contradiction often follows object transformation especially when the transformation follows a centrally rooted recommendation. Quaternary contradictions occur when a change in an activity results in conflicts with another related activity (Yamagata-Lynch and Haudenschild, 2009). Roth and Lee (2007) noted that in quaternary contradiction, ‘trouble may exist between the central activity and one of its neighboring activities’ (p. 204).

4.7. Mediating artefacts

Mediation is a very important concept in activity theory as it clearly defines how our daily experiences are shaped by the artefacts we encounter. Mediating artefacts ‘connects us organically and intimately to the world; they are not merely filters or channels through which experience is carried’ (Nardi, 1996, p.10). Due to the
division of labour in an activity system, ‘the relation between the outcome of the whole activity (the value created) and the individual actions becomes indirect and mediated’ (Virkkunen and Kuutti, 2000, p.301). And understanding the mediating process enables a focus on identifying what facilitates or constraints the productivity of an activity system (Guldberg, 2010). The focus here is on transforming the object of an activity and this transformation is mediated by the interaction of the various components of the activity system (Barab et al., 2002).

4.8. The use of activity theory in the study

I employed activity theory to describe the prevailing practices within PES and to identify how these practices facilitate effective teacher outcomes. This is because activity theory aligns with my epistemology (section 5.2.1) and allows me to focus on the activities that student teachers take part as they learn to become teachers. Activity theory enabled an understanding of the PES students’ motives and enabled me to identify how the students’ motives align with the objectives and value of PES. It also informs the understanding of the mediating tools that shape student teachers’ learning progress irrespective of their motives (Grossman et al., 1999). Issroff and Scanlon (2002) explain that activity theory ‘facilitates the consideration of interactions in social contexts which is a good starting point for studying contextually embedded practice’ (p.79). Zeichner et al (2015) argues that ‘activity theory acknowledges the community, distribution of work, and rules that affect both individual and collective activities’ (p. 123). He argued that student teachers’ are part of the activity system through their engagement with the college based and school based training. However, while engaging in the teacher training activity, ‘each element of the systems has varying constraints and affordances to support novice teacher learning.

Activity theory provided me with the lens through which to analyse PES processes and practices in Nigeria as well as the social and contextual relationships existing between the two settings – the college and the cooperating school – in which student teachers’ learning is situated (figure 8). The initial training of primary teachers is conceptualized in this study as a learning activity ‘that occurs within purposive and integrated activity systems’ (Jonassen, 2000, p.2). Hence, PES is considered the activity system and the PES students were taken to be the subject of the activity. The tools were taken to be the practices specific to PES. This includes the curriculum, college courses, teaching, and learning and assessment
practices and so on. The communities are taken to be the two learning settings in which student learning is situated, which in this case are the cooperating school and the college of education. The rules include the admission criteria, the lecturers’ norms and other rules that regulate the PES department both internally and externally. Division of labour relates to the role of each member of the community towards actualizing the objectives of teacher education in Nigeria and the object relates to the goal of the teacher education system.

**Figure 8: An activity theory representation of Primary Education Studies**

![Activity Theory Diagram]

4.9. **Summary**

From the discussion above, I argued that activity theory can be a useful framework in studying the practices of a system. Activity theory is powerful in understanding the teacher training experiences. Its flexibility allows the researcher to analyse the same data from different perspectives. I started this chapter with an overview of activity theory. Although there are many variations of activity theory, I considered the aggregated version proposed by Kaptelinin and Nardi (2012) appropriate in this study. This is because the version allows a focus on the learning to teach activity, on its purposes and on how the activity shapes the experience of becoming a teacher.
CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGY

5.1. Introduction

This chapter describes and justifies the methodology used to generate data for this thesis. As mentioned in section 1.3, this study aims to explore how the teacher education system in Nigeria mediates student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach. It addressed these three research questions:

- How do the student teachers articulate their experiences of learning to teach?
- What themes emerged in student teachers’ narratives about learning to teach?
- How do the process, policies and practices of the initial teacher education system in Nigeria mediate primary student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach?

The chapter starts by explaining the overall design of the study – highlighting the philosophical assumptions and conceptual framework that underpins the design. It explains how access to participants was negotiated and established and also discusses the data collection methods employed in this study. This is followed by a discussion of the ways in which the pilot study informed the research process and design. Subsequently, I present the data analysis procedure and introduce ‘narrative’ as a way of making sense of the student teachers’ data within the activity system. As the main goal of this study is to draw from student teachers’ perspective to investigate PES as an ‘activity system’, presenting the interview data as narrative accounts was considered appropriate. The chapter also discusses how trustworthiness was maintained in this study and reflects on the ethical issues that were considered throughout the study.

5.2. Approach to the study

This research was a qualitative study that employed a phenomenological approach to data collection. Qualitative study enables researchers to study a real life issue or problem in a natural setting (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2013). It helps researchers to examine ‘the experience of real cases operating in real situations’ (Stake, 2006, p.3) and to ‘understand and make sense of phenomena from the participant’s point of
view’ (Merriam, 2002, p.6). Although previous research on the teacher education system in Nigeria has claimed that the quality of the products of teacher education programmes is not satisfactory (see Chapter Three), such research has rarely considered stakeholders’ perspectives. Orstein (1995) would have argued that researchers in Nigeria ignore stakeholders’ perspectives because they assume that they could ‘capture and analyse the teaching acts… with their own discourse and methods of translating and evaluation’ (p.2). Such research usually comes up with isolated issues that have little regard for what had transpired in the process of training these teachers. Therefore, I aim for a rich description of learning to teach in Nigeria as experienced by student teachers by taking a phenomenological approach to data collection.

5.2.1. Philosophical assumptions underpinning the research design

It has been noted that the design of a research study depends on the philosophical assumptions of the researcher (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln, 1995; Crotty, 1998; Krauss, 2005). A researcher’s understanding of the philosophical assumption underpinning his/her study is very important in doing a research study. This is because philosophical assumption ‘shapes the [researchers’] belief system and guides how [they] formulate [their] research problem and research questions as well as how [they] seek information to answer the questions’ (Creswell, 2013, p.18). This research was undertaken from a constructionist perspective. This perspective was adopted because I believe that the concept of ‘learning to teach’ consists of multiple realities known as ontology. Ontology ‘concerns the nature of reality’ (Ponterotto, 2005, p.130). It seeks to address questions relating to the nature of existence as well as the structure of reality. These realities can mostly be known through the construct of individuals who are experiencing or have experienced the phenomena and is referred to as epistemology. Epistemology refers to and understanding of …how we know what we know’ (Crotty, 1998, p.8). It is concerned with how we can have knowledge of nature (Sumner, 2006). Ponterotto (2005, p.131) defines epistemology as the ‘relationship between the “knower” (the research participants) and the “would-be knower” (the researcher)’. Epistemology ‘provides philosophical ground for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate’ (Maynard, 1994, p.10).
From a constructionist point of view, it is not easy to ‘accept that the world we experience is without meaning prior to our experience of it; rather, meanings are constructed by individuals as they engage with the world they are interpreting’ (Crotty, 2003, p.43). Student teachers’ perspectives were useful in the holistic understanding of ‘learning to teach’ in Nigeria – what they learn and how they learn to teach. It provided not only a rich description of the way teachers were being trained to teach in Nigeria, but also identified the underlying issues in the pre-service training of primary teachers.

5.2.2. Rationale for adopting a phenomenological approach

Phenomenology draws heavily on the writings of mathematician Edmund Husserl (Gall et al., 2007). It is the study of experiences as lived by individuals (Laverty, 2003; Creswell, 2013; Van Manen, 1990; Moustakas, 1994) and an ‘attempt to break free and see the world afresh’ (Crotty, 2003, p.86): the ‘disclosure of a realm of being which presented itself with absolute certainty, arising from experience (Laverty, 2003, p.23). It ‘describes or interprets the experience as lived by the experiencer’ (Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie, 2013, p.3). Kvale (1996) explains that a phenomenological approach ‘studies the subjects’ perspectives of their world; attempts to describe in detail, the content and structure of the subjects’ consciousnesses, to grasp the qualitative diversity of their experiences and to explicate their essential meanings’ (p.53). A phenomenological approach helps to portray shared or common meanings of a phenomenon as experienced and described by a number of individuals who have experienced it (Creswell, 2013; Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Lester, 1999; Groenewald, 2004).

As mentioned above, a phenomenological approach was employed in this study because it does not encourage predetermined variables as well as presumptions; rather, it posits an approach that ‘aims at establishing a renewed contact with the original experience’ (Van Manen, 1990, p. 31). My focus was not solely on the student teachers’ experiences but rather on drawing from their experiences to explore how the primary teacher education system in Nigeria facilitates or constrains their teacher training experience. I consider a phenomenological approach appropriate to this study because of my view that suggestions for improvement of a programme lie within the perspective of the key users. I also accept that ‘to arrive at certainty, anything outside immediate
experiences must be ignored, and in this way the external world is reduced to the contents of personal consciousness’ (Groenewald, 2004, p.4). Hence, I engaged primarily with the student teachers. I also talked to some head of departments, head teachers and tutors to afford some additional contextual understanding of pre-service teacher education programmes in Nigeria.

Although a phenomenological approach has been widely used in psychological and nursing research, it can be applicable to research in other disciplines as long as it is suitable for actualizing the purpose(s) of the research (Gorgi, 2008). Many researchers in education have adopted the phenomenological approach. For instance, Groenewald (2004) employed a phenomenological approach to study how co-e. Usman (2008) used it to explore how Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria targets the Muslim Almajiri street boys for basic literacy acquisition. Brown operative education can contribute to the growth of talent among South African people. al. (1999) also adopted a phenomenological approach to investigate the ways in which non-specialist student teachers conceptualise mathematics and its teaching and how their views evolve as they progress through an initial training course.

5.3. Research Participants

The study population included all the students of colleges of Education in Nigeria. However, the lecturers (teacher educators) and primary school teachers and the primary school head teachers were considered to also have some potential interesting insights to offer. This was in no way for triangulation purposes but for contextualizing the data from the student teachers. This very large population would require more time and resources than my PhD study was able to offer. Hence, this section discusses the sampling strategy used in recruiting and selecting the participants for this study.

5.3.1. Negotiating and gaining access to participants

Flick (1998) noted that access to participants is an important step in research. This requires the researcher to be flexible, build relationships and also develop and establish rapport with prospective participants (Emmel et al., 2007). However, negotiating access to student teachers was very challenging. As noted in section 2.5, there are 85 colleges of education in Nigeria (Nigeriamuse.com) and as this is a very large population, locating the study in each of the colleges will be over-
ambitious and impossible. Therefore, I choose to locate my study in one of the six states in the South West of Nigeria (see figure 2). This state was chosen because it was convenient (Gall et al., 2007), safe and is within a reasonable travel time from my base than other states in the region. At the time of this study, there were five colleges of education in the state but only two of these colleges have a department of primary education and is government owned. These two colleges were identified as College A and College B. They were chosen to be contrasting in terms of context – College A is located in an urban setting while the college B is located in a rural setting – and also as a result of that the likely population of student teachers that they attracted. The two colleges of education were located approximately 112.9 km away from each other and the local language in both settings is Yoruba. Because of the location of these colleges, I expected a significant difference between the colleges because of their differed locations. This was because of the huge debate on the difference between urban and rural schools – in terms of student characteristics, aspirations, and academic achievement – not only in Nigeria but also across the globe (see Alokan and Arijesuyo, 2013; McCracken and Barcinas, 1991).

On the level of organization and structure, however, the differences between the two colleges of education were relatively limited. The main difference was in terms of their size and ethnic diversity (the urban college being 6 times larger and more ethnically diverse) (see Table 2). There was no difference between the two colleges of education in terms of their curriculum and regulations as the NCCE regulates both colleges. There was also not much difference in terms of students’ characteristics (see Chapter Six). When I arrived to commence my fieldwork in September 2014 the lecturers had gone on strike and they remained so and the campus closed until January 2015. Hence I had to adopt a different approach to the recruitment of my student teacher participants

Access to the research site was sought through the office of the registrar of each college – this is the official process for gaining access to colleges of education (so I was told). Hence, the registrar of each college was the first point of contact in each of the colleges of education. Each registrar requested to see my research proposal, a letter of intent and an identification document from me in order to approve my request. My request was approved two weeks later and I received a written consent from each of the colleges that authorised me to approach the primary education department. When I contacted the departments they provided me
a list of student teacher contacts. I was concerned about the ‘gatekeeping’ aspect of this mode of recruitment but, in the event, none of these students participated in the research (section 5.3.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College A</th>
<th>College B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Located in a semi-urban environment</td>
<td>Located in a rural setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population of over three thousand students</td>
<td>Total population of less than five hundred students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High population of female students</td>
<td>Exceptionally high percentage of female students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed population of male and female tutors</td>
<td>High percentage of female tutors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed population of students from different tribes</td>
<td>Higher percentage of Yoruba-speaking students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time and part-time students are separated. They attend lectures at different venues and times and also do exams at different times.</td>
<td>There is no separate class for full-time and part-time students. They attend lectures at the same time. However, while full-time students do a three-year course, part-time students study for four years. In addition, full-time students do teaching practice in their third year while part time students do theirs in their fourth year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.2. **Selection of student teachers**

In qualitative studies, selection of participants is usually flexible because of its iterative nature (Gall et al., 2007) and the sample size is usually small compared to quantitative studies (Cohen et al., 2011). The selection of participants for this study was done using purposive sampling strategy. Purposive sampling strategy is useful in selecting participants that are likely to be ‘information-rich with respect to the purposes of the study’ (Gall et al., 2007, p.20). Bryman (2012) added that the ‘goal of purposive sampling is to sample participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed’ (p.418). Within the purposive sampling strategy, I employed a snowball sampling technique in recruiting the participants.
Snowball sampling is a ‘sampling technique in which the researcher samples initially a small group of people relevant to the research questions, and these sampled participants propose other participants who have had the experience or characteristics relevant to the research’ (Bryman, 2011, p.424). A snowball technique seeks to recruit participants through ‘contact information provided by an ‘initial contact’ (Heckathorn, 1997; Noy, 2008). It provides access to potential participants when other means of accessing participants are difficult or not feasible (Noy, 2008); which is the situation in which I found myself. The initial contacts I used for my snowballing were the pilot study participants (section 5.4). Through them, I was able to recruit the initial participants. Then the initial participants also referred me to new participants and so on.

However, using snowball sampling might have limited the representativeness of the research participants to the wider population. This is because, first, the total number of people that took part in this study is a very small percentage of the overall population of primary education students. Second, it is possible that the study attracted people with similar experience (Heckathorn, 1997), and there is a tendency that the participants might be a representation of a subset of the entire department. This explains why Cohen et al. (2011) argue that snowball sampling is usually influenced by the researcher’s first point of contact. I mitigated this risk in two ways. First, because I recruited my sample from across the three years of the primary course and across two colleges (one rural and one urban, which meant that the sample as a whole did not share experiences and that there was much less likelihood of class norms and attitudes to be common, or friendships to be close. Second, I employed a respondent-driven sampling strategy recommended by Heckathorn (1997).

Respondent-driven sampling is a form of snowball technique that ‘assumes that those best able to assess hidden populations are their own peers’ (Heckathorn, 1997, p.178). My research population was hard-to-reach in the sense that the student teachers were not on campus at the time of the study. They all went home because of the strike action (see above), but I was able to get in touch with them through their peers. Although respondent-driven sampling advocates the use of incentives (financial or symbolic) to attract participants, I avoided using any form of incentives, as it is against the university’s research ethics. However, I made sure the participants understood the significance and value of this study to their ‘own’
education. I also explained how their opinions could help in bringing about the change to improve the system. This served as the ‘incentive’ that motivated the participants throughout the period of data collection as it resonated with their personal experiences.

I arranged an introductory meeting with each student during which I introduced myself to them and discussed the research purpose as well as the entire research process. All the meetings in ‘College A’ took place at a prearranged space in one of the restaurants near the college at various times. This arrangement was put in place to protect the students’ identities, as they did not want to be identified by any member of staff. In ‘College B’, the initial meetings took place at different places and at different times. I met with some students in their houses, others under one of the trees on campus. During my initial meeting with the student participants, I gave them the information about my research and information about what was required of them. After which, I handed them the participant information sheet for further information. They were asked to decide within two weeks whether or not to participate in the research.

My research design and ethical approval allowed me to interview 20 student participants and my initial sampling identified thirty-five potential participants: of those 12 did not respond within two weeks and of the remaining 23 I selected 20 participants that I judged had the best command of English. Additionally, one of my criteria was to ensure that I had an (over) representation of male student teachers; since female students constituted the vast majority of primary student teachers, I wanted to be sure to elicit any insights there were regarding gender differences. Of the 20 participants that were finally selected only the data from 14 participants were used in the study. The data from the other six students were not shared because they either declined to be recorded (n=4) or, in the event, did not have a sufficiently good command of English (n=2) to conduct the interview such that I had confidence that the student understood what was being asked or that I understood what they were saying. They used both English and Yoruba language in the interview and I had no plan for translation because I did not expect any of the participants to speak in the local language as English language is the medium of instruction and the official language in Nigeria (see section 1.2).

Of the 14 full data sets collected, analysis identified many similarities in the issues that were emerging. All the 14 narratives were analysed using the same
techniques (see section 5.7) and drawn upon in equal measure in Chapters 7 and 8. Space in the main thesis dictated that, in the event, just two narratives from each year group were included in the main text (Chapter Six) and the remaining eight narratives were appended (Appendix 7). I selected the six students for the main text that I felt were most representative of the broad range of issues that had emerged in the interviews. In addition I ensured that – as in the selection of the sample - I included at least two males so any gendered differences might have a presence in the main text. Table 3 details the structure of the sample, giving year of study, gender, age, college, faith and ethnicity of the 14 student teachers. In addition the table will log where the narrative is to be found.

Table 3: Student teachers’ biography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year of Study</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Faith</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abayomi</td>
<td>First year</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gio</td>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Appendix 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankole</td>
<td>First year</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Appendix 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatima</td>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Efik</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemi</td>
<td>Second year</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Appendix 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Second Year</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folu</td>
<td>Second Year</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Appendix 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doreen</td>
<td>Second Year</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ortega</td>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Appendix 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abimbola</td>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Appendix 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akiyemi</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.3. Lecturers, head teachers and cooperating teachers

As alluded to section 1.6 and mentioned in section 5.3, the purpose of interviewing the lecturers, head teachers and cooperating teachers was to have better understanding of student teachers’ data. In college A, the department head invited me to their quarterly staff meeting where I was introduced to other staff. I afterwards discussed my research objectives and process with the lecturers that showed interest. In college B, the registrar directed me to the head of the School of Education. During the meeting, the head invited a tutor from the primary education department to join in the meeting. This tutor became my initial contact for other staff in the college. She represented the Head of Department in this college, as she was not available on that day. I met with each of the tutors in their respective offices.

During each meeting with the lecturers, I discussed the research process and gave out the participant information sheet for further information. I attached a questionnaire and consent form to the information sheet in order to gather biographical information from the tutors and their written consent if they decided to take part in the study. Each tutor was allowed two weeks to decide whether to participate in the study; however, it took about two and half months for some of the lecturers to get back to me. Out of the 15 lecturers that I identified, just eight lecturers (three from college A and five from college B) agreed to take part in the study. However, four of them refused to be audio recorded and one of the other four lecturers whose interview was recorded used both English and Yoruba languages and I was not confident that she understood my questions or that I was interpreting their answers accurately. Moreover, as noted above, I had no plan for translation because I did not expect any of the participants to speak in the local language as English language is the official language in Nigeria (see section 1.2).
Access to head teachers and cooperating teachers was negotiated through the respective colleges (see section 5.3.1). I visited the head teachers in their respective schools and had a discussion about the research with them. I also requested in writing their approval for their teachers to take part in the study. This took several weeks to be approved as the head teachers are rarely present in school. One of the head teachers did not give me access to any of her staff. She was the only participant from her school while the second head teacher let me have access to five of his staff. However, only one of these teachers allowed their interview to be recorded. All the interviews for both head teachers and cooperating teachers took place in the head teachers’ office. In total, two head teachers and five primary teachers were interviewed, but only data from two head teachers and one cooperating teacher were used. The other two cooperating teachers declined to be audio recorded. Table 4 presents the biography of the three lecturers, two head teachers and one cooperating teacher whose data was used in this study. It is important to note that one of the head teachers is also a lecturer in college B but did not count towards the number of lecturers I interviewed.

Table 4: The biographies of lecturers, head teachers and cooperating teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Goya, lecturer</td>
<td>Mrs Goya has been a lecturer in College B for nine years. She teaches home economics and education foundation courses. She has never been in a primary classroom but did an NCE course at the same college she teaches at. She did her undergraduate in education while working as a lecturer. She was in the process of finishing her master’s degree when this study was conducted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Jane, lecturer</td>
<td>Mrs Jane has 20 years of experience as a teacher educator. She studied the NCE, and did her undergraduate degree and master’s in Education. She teaches research in education and educational psychology courses. She is also the head of the PES department in College A. Mrs Jane had taught in secondary classroom for one year but has never taught in a primary classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Pete</td>
<td>Mr Pete is the assistant head of the PES department in College A. He has 20 years of experience as a lecturer in College B. He teaches home economics and education foundation courses. He has never been in a primary classroom but did an NCE course at the same college he teaches at. He did her undergraduate in education while working as a lecturer. He was in the process of finishing her master’s degree when this study was conducted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
lecturer in College A. He has been a lecturer for 12 years and teaches science and technology courses. His undergraduate degree was in Animal Science, after which he got his first lecturing job. Like the other lecturers above, Mr Pete has never been in a primary classroom and has not done any education courses. He planned to enrol in the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PgDE) at the time of this study.

Mrs Odukoya, lecturer and headteacher

Mrs Odukoya was a lecturer in PES and also the head teacher of the staff school attached to College B. She had been the head teacher for three years at the time this study was conducted. She had 14 years of experience as a lecturer and has a degree in Mathematics Education. She worked briefly in a secondary school before becoming a lecturer. Mrs Odukoya did not let any member of her staff participate in the study.

Mr Lapaja, Assistant head

Mr Lapaja was the assistant head teacher in the staff school connected to College A. He has not had any university education but has been teaching in primary schools for 25 years. He was trained in the 80s in what he referred to as ‘TTI’ (Teacher Training Institute).

Mrs Kotun, cooperating teacher

Mrs Kotun was a cooperative teacher working under Mr Lapaja. She is an NCE graduate and has not done any degree course. She has been a primary teacher five years.

5.4. Data collection methods and procedure

The data were mainly collected using semi-structured interviews with student teachers. My fieldwork notes, the NCE programme handbook, informal observations and informal interactions with the lecturers, however, enabled further understanding of the teacher training context and activities. The informal observations and informal interactions were not planned into the research during the proposal phase; rather, they emerged during the fieldwork as what Mason (2006) calls ‘opportunistic methods’. Opportunistic method emerges when a researcher makes ‘method’ decisions during the data collection process. Mason (2006, p.11)
explains that this can ‘become possible more by accident than by design, especially…where access is available to a potential data source [unexpectedly]’ (p.11).

5.4.1. Semi structured interview with Student teachers

An interview is a ‘flexible research tool ideally suited to collecting data about what people know as well as about their relationships, experiences and feelings’ (Sharp, 2009, p.74). It presents opportunities for the researcher to explore participants’ views and perceptions (Bryman, 2012; Longhurst, 2010) and allows for probing and prompting for more information and clarifications (Barriball, 1994; Cohen et al., 2011). Interviews for this study were semi-structured. Semi-structure interview was considered because it allowed me to focus on the topics specific to my research and at the same time, gave my participants the opportunity to freely express their views. This feature tends to be restricted in structured and/or unstructured interviews. Gay et al. (2009) note that structured and unstructured interviews are at both extremes of semi-structured interviews. While semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility during interview sessions, unstructured interviews can go out of focus if not managed properly (Gay et al., 2009). On the other hand, structured interviews can be restrictive (Cohen et al., 2011), and since they are usually not very open-ended, participants might not have the opportunity to voice their views.

The purpose of the semi-structured interview was to understand how the primary student teachers articulated their learning-to-teach experience. Although the interview was semi-structured, an interview guide allowed specific issues to be addressed during the interview (Bryman, 2012; Longhurst, 2010). Having a list of questions enabled some sort of ‘predetermined order’ during the interview (Longhurst, 2012; Bryman, 2012). The interview questions were asked to each group of participants ‘in almost the same way’ (Longhurst, 2012, p.105), though the order varied according to individual circumstances and their year of study. Nevertheless, the interviews were conversational, open-ended and flexible, which allowed the participants to ‘express their subjective feelings as fully and as spontaneously as they choose or are able’ (Cohen et al., 2011, p.415). From a phenomenological view, Gall et al. (2007) recommends a long interview with each participant in order to obtain a ‘comprehensive description of their experience of the phenomenon being studied’ (p.496). Hence, each interview lasted between 30
and 60 minutes. All interviews were conducted face to face with individuals and were audio recorded.

The interviewing sections started with interview with student teachers. Each section was facilitated with same interview schedule (Table 5); this was to guide the students towards the purpose of the study. It is important to note that the order of questions in this schedule was not strictly followed and the prompts and probes for each student teacher were different as they were dependent upon student teachers’ responses and their year group. However, each student teacher interview started with the question: why did you choose to train to be a teacher?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Interview schedule for student teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Why did you choose to train to be a teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How have your experiences of the training course been so far?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What kind of academic support is available to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How confident do you feel about going for your teaching practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tell me about your teaching practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How confident do you feel now that you have done your teaching practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What kind of academic support is available to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How have these experiences on the course impacted on your attitude towards teaching?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is there anything else you would like to say?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.2. Interview with lecturers, head teachers and cooperating teachers

The purpose of these interviews was not in any way for triangulation purposes. It was rather for contextualising the data from student teachers’ interview. The interviews with lecturers were done concurrently with the student teachers’ interviews as it was intended that it would inform my understanding of the student teachers’ data. They took place in the lecturer’s office and lasted between 15 and 45 minutes. Organising the interview this way allowed me to clarify issues raised by both lecturers and student teachers. For lecturers, the purpose of the interview was to understand their views on the student learning context. It was also an avenue to obliquely raise some of the issues identified in data from student teachers’ interviews. I initially planned to guide the interviews with lecturers using the schedule in Table 6. However, during the actual interviews, the lecturers mainly told stories of their experience of teaching the students. The initial question was the
same for everyone, but the responses and the stories determined the probes. Just as Gay et al. (2009) argue, the interview with the lecturers veered towards an unstructured interview, which made the discussion at times lack focus. Notwithstanding, I used words like ‘who, what, where, when, why and how’ (Gay et al., 2009, p.371) to draw the interview back to its focus. By using these prompts, I stayed on focus throughout the duration of the interview. I also asked questions pertaining to the context of issues raised in student teachers’ interview.

**Table 6: Interview Schedule for lecturers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could you please tell me about your experiences as a teacher trainer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could you please tell me about the module you teach?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the module related or situated in the primary school curriculum?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your expectations of your students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think these expectations are met? Please explain with one or two examples.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviews with head teachers and primary teachers were the last sets of interviews I conducted. This is because it took a long time to get their consent to take part in the study. As mentioned in section 5.3.5, all the interviews took place at the head teacher’s office (as this was the only venue offered) in each of the primary schools. The purpose of these interviews was to get a clearer perspective on what the student teachers told me about their teaching practice experience. For example, one of the students (Ade) claimed that she was not supported during her teaching practice because tables and chairs were not provided for the student teachers while in the cooperating school. Upon speaking to one of the head teachers, I discovered that there was not even sufficient furniture and offices for the permanent teachers. Therefore, instead of interpreting Ade’s concern as lack of support from the cooperating school, I understood it as a systemic resource issue.

In interviewing cooperating teachers I had to be very sensitive because it was clear that the staff were very anxious. This could be inferred from how many refused to have their interview recorded, or be interviewed in the first place, and in this respect the venue of the head’s office was not ideal. For example, one interview started with the open ended question, ‘tell me about your experience of mentoring teachers’. The teacher was very reluctant to talk and in a later (private) conversation
that she was scared of getting queried by her ‘boss’ in case she said anything that might sound inappropriate or would tarnish the image of the school.

5.5. The pilot study

The importance of the pilot study in qualitative research has been greatly emphasized (Kim, 2010; Sampson, 2004). Kim (2010) defined a pilot study as a ‘small scale methodological test conducted to prepare for a main study and is intended to ensure that methods or ideas would work in practice’ (p.191). A pilot study can be used to test any aspect of the main research including participants’ recruitment, data collection methods and interview schedules. In my pilot study, the main purpose was to test my interview schedules. The focus was to see how the questions could encourage participants to talk about their experiences. I also wanted to see how the participants would understand the concepts in the interview schedule and wanted to know whether the questions would generate useful data that could answer the research questions.

Therefore, I conducted an interview with three newly trained teachers using the interview schedule in Table 7. The participants were recruited using purposive sampling strategy (Robson, 2011; Braun and Clarke, 2013) and because of the distance between the researcher and the participants, the interview was conducted over the phone. These three participants were all recently trained male teachers that had graduated from the college, two to three years prior to conducting the interview. Their average age was 21 years. One participant was teaching full-time; another was studying for a full-time degree (mathematics major) and in a part-time teaching job. The third participant did not have a job but was pursuing admission to study for a degree in accounting at the university. Participants were asked to choose a convenient date and time for the interview. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted for about 35 minutes each. As mentioned above, the main purpose of each interview was to test the interview schedule (Table 7) for student teachers. During the initial meeting, the participant information sheet was sent to the participants through the Facebook inbox folder (see figure 9) as they did not want to give me further details about themselves. In the PIS, I asked to confirm their consent by providing me with their contact telephone number so that I can call them. At the start of each telephone interview, participant’s consent was reconfirmed verbally. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.
Although there were some drawbacks as anticipated with the telephone interview, the interview schedule proved to be fit for purpose as it allowed the participants to talk about their experiences. It also elicited insightful data that informed my understanding of the context. Prior to these interviews, I had studied the NCE programme handbook, so I already had an idea of the modules and curriculum,

During the interview, the first thing I noticed was the participants’ use of acronyms in their daily language to the extent that they had forgotten the full meaning: The example of such acronyms were ‘TP’, ‘HOD’, ‘NCE’, ‘NCCE’, ‘HOC’, ‘PES’. As I was not familiar with these acronyms, I initially struggled to make sense of the participants’ stories. However, with continued interaction with the participants, I came to understand what they stood for. Although, this may not be relevant to the interview schedule, it points to some embedded language within the teacher education system. The benefit of this is that my knowledge of the acronyms enabled a good flow between me and my participants during the actual interview. Students were able to relate with me without feeling intimated. In fact, one of the students was astonished at the level of understanding I showed in using these acronyms and he asked me in pidgin (broken) English: how you take know what them mean? (How did you know what they mean)?

Secondly, the students did not understand some of the phrases I used to probe them during the interviews. Such phrases included ‘theory and practice’, assessment, class management, tutor, teacher educators and so on. This meant I had to be cautious in my use of these words during the actual interviews. It enabled me to minimise the ‘label’ I placed on some of the things they say. For example, the terms theory and practice were not well known; students used phrases such as ‘correspond’ to describe how their college learning experiences are linked to their own teaching. Overall, this pilot study taught me about the importance of being aware of contextually embedded issues that might affect how I elicit information from my data sources.

Furthermore, the pilot study revealed the importance of securing the trust of the participants in order to build good rapport. Although the lack of rapport between
the pilot study participants and me was as a result of the distance between us, lack of good rapport affected the richness of the data from the pilot study. Thus, I took my time to build and maintain rapport between the main study participants and myself.

Table 7: Interview schedule for pilot study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERVIEW SCHEDULE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could you please tell me about yourself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Your college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Year of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I ask you how you became a student teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What happened in your life that made you choose to become a student teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What informed your decision to become a teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given what you said about how you became a student teacher, what can you say about your experience so far, as a student teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Your training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Your expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Your tutors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could you please tell me about your typical day during your teaching practice?*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How was it resolved – supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How have these experiences impact on your attitude towards teaching?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflecting on your experience as a student teacher and now as a teacher, what sense can you make out of those experiences?*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Any connections?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Levels of preparedness?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6 Data analysis

The insight for analysing the data was informed by my personal experience as a student teacher in Nigeria and as a researcher. This positioned me as an insider and at the same time as an outsider. As an insider, I had a shared experience with the participants; and I could relate to the data through the reflection on my own experience. This helped me to detach myself from the emotions I had developed during the fieldwork and enabled me to think about the ‘what’ of the data. Groenewald (2004), Moustakas (1994) and Van Manem (2012) emphasise the importance of reflecting on any presumption the researcher has about a phenomenon, while analysing phenomenological data. As an outsider, I was a researcher trained to maintain a critical distance from the context; I paid attention to and questioned every detail I observed or heard during the fieldwork. Other activities such as field notes and informal observations were very helpful in this regard. Thus, information from each of the activities mentioned was taken seriously as they served as signposts throughout the data analysis. They were helpful in understanding some of the participants’ statements. I kept notes and memos to
capture ideas and challenges that emerged at all stages of data collection and analysis; this helped in developing categories and themes from the data (Maxwell, 2013; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Miles et al., 2014).

Data analysis started from the transcription of the audio-recorded interviews (Miles and Huberman, 1994) where all interview data was transcribed verbatim. Deciding on the appropriate data analysis strategy was challenging, as I need to first, understand the ‘what’ of the interview data before analysing for relationships and other casual effects if needed. With this, I was faced with the challenge of how best to capture the complexities of experiences described in the interview data. Further readings and discussion with colleagues as well as the debriefings and feedbacks from my supervisory team were helpful in deciding which analytical strategy to employ. The data were analysed at three levels, which I conceptualised as the micro level, meso level and the macro level. The decision to base the analysis on these three levels was informed by their literal meaning, their theoretical base as well as the objective of this study.

The literal meaning of *micro*, *meso* and *macro* suggest that micro relates to something small, meso relates to intermediate, and macro relates to something broader (Oxford Dictionary, 2011). Theoretically, micro, meso and macro are terms often associated with human development in an ecological context (Bronfenbrenner, 1978). Micro refers to the basic tenet of the context; it represents the immediate setting in which individual experiences are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1978). The meso level relates to ‘a set of interrelations between two or more settings in which the developing person becomes an active participant’ (Bronfenbrenner, 1978, p.209). Macro level encompasses ‘the consistency observed within a [system, which are often] in the form and content of its constituent micro-, meso-… as well as any belief or ideology underlying such consistencies. This developmental process is also described as a ‘proximal process’ (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; p.626). Proximal process is very significant in exploring

the mechanisms of organism-environment behavioural interaction that drive development, and the profound ways in which these mechanisms are affected by characteristics of the developing person and of the environmental context in which the interaction takes place. (Bronfenbrenner, 1995, p.626)

Relating the above discussion to the present study, the micro, meso and macro levels were useful in structuring the analysis of the data. At the micro level,
individual students’ experiences were presented in a narrative form. At the meso level, the interrelations of the individual experiences were identified. This enabled me to explore the student teachers’ common experiences of learning to teach. The macro level took a broader perspective in analysing how the practices, processes and structure of the teacher training system mediate the common experiences identified at the meso level. It is important to note that no attempt was made to analyze either literally or systematically, the lecturers, head teachers and the cooperating teacher’s interview as they were not the main focus of this study. However, their data were instrumental in interpreting and understanding the student teachers’ data (see 5.4.2)

5.7. Data analysis procedure

As explained in section 5.6, data analysis was structured using the tenets of micro, meso and macro levels respectively. Each analytical level aimed to answer one research question. Table 8 summarised the analytical steps highlighting their links to the research question and methodology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical stages</th>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Data from</th>
<th>Analytical strategy</th>
<th>Analytical question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Micro level</td>
<td>How do the student teachers articulate their experiences of learning to teach?</td>
<td>Student teachers</td>
<td>Reconstructing each student teachers’ interview data</td>
<td>How did student teachers perceive their experiences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meso level</td>
<td>What themes emerged in student teachers’ narratives about learning to teach?</td>
<td>Student teachers (Narrative accounts)</td>
<td>Clustering student narrative accounts into themes</td>
<td>How did the participant in this narrative text capture or made sense of his or her pre-service teacher education experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macro level</td>
<td>How do the processes, policies and practices of the initial teacher education system mediate primary student teachers experiences of learning to teach?</td>
<td>Student teachers’ narrative accounts</td>
<td>Activity theory using the activity triangle</td>
<td>What policies, processes and practices of the colleges of education and primary school settings mediate student teachers experiences of learning?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.7.1. The Micro level: Creating student teachers’ narrative accounts

The focus of analysis at this level was to understand the individual student’s experiences of their training. This was presented as narrative accounts of student teachers’ interviews (Chapter Six). Narratives are ‘first person accounts of experiences that are in story format’ (Meriam, 2002, p.286). They provide information about an event and the meaning it carries (Doyle and Carter, 2003). However, there is ‘considerable variation in how investigators employ the concept of narrative and, relatedly, in the methodological assumptions investigators make and the strategies they choose for analysis’ (Reissman, 2013, p.71). Reissman (2013) described three possible perspectives in analysing stories. The first perspective considers the entire life story (e.g., biographies). The second perspective organises stories around the characters, settings and plot, and the third perspective encompass large sections of talk and interview exchanges – extended accounts of lives that develop over the course of the interview (p.72).

Despite these variations, narratives share certain basic characteristics in meaning-making in relation to personal experience. They can ‘reveal how culture shapes understanding and how developmental change affects personal identity’ (Meriam, 2002, p.286). Doyle and Carter (2003) argue the significance of narrative in studying pre-service teacher education practices. They assert that ‘much of the practical knowledge teachers acquire from teaching arises from actions in situations—the essential ingredients of story. And to understand pre-service teachers’ development, it is necessary to capture the stories within which this knowledge and understanding are embedded’ (p.131). Narratives allow the ‘report of those experiences which might otherwise not be made public by other ‘traditional’ [research] tools’ (Clough, 2002, pp.8-9).

The decision to create narratives of student participants’ interview data was influenced by the richness of the data generated in response to the interview questions. Reissman (2013) recounts and emphasises the possibility of having a lengthy story in response to carefully crafted interview questions, which ideally could have been a list or short sentence. Coffey and Atkinson (1993) describe this as ‘naturally occurring interaction [and maintain that] the forms and genres of such stories must be preserved’ (p.80). This is based on the ‘phenomenological
assumption that experience can, through stories, become part of consciousness’ (Cortazzi, 1993, p.48). ‘Stories in research interviews are rarely so clearly bounded; they often contain paralinguistic (uhms), false starts, interruptions, and other subtle features of interaction’ (Reissman, 2013, p.72). This often affects how stories are analysed, structured and interpreted as it is quite challenging to decide on which segment of the story to focus on. This explains why Reissman (2013) argues for having clear boundaries when creating stories. The boundaries are often shaped by ‘the researcher’s theoretical sensitivity and analytic re-descriptions’ (Merriam, 2002, p.287).

Creating a narrative account from each set of student interview data was the first step in analysing the data generated for this study (Chapter Six and Appendix 7). Its focus was on the first person account of student teachers’ own experiences. It helped to make explicit the experiences of each participant and enabled me to see how the experience of one participant connects to that of other participants. Using narrative as the first point of analysis helped me to ‘resist the fragmentation of experience into thematic categories (Reissman, 2013, p.96); and as such I was able to ‘preserve the form of the data’ (Coffey and Atkinson, 1993, p.80). It also enabled an understanding of ‘individual and collective action and meanings, as well as the processes by which social life and human relationships are made and changed’ (Laslett, 1999, p.392).

Furthermore, presenting the students’ interview data as a narrative account captured the uniqueness of each participant’s experiences and provided rich data on their individual training experiences (Lieblich et al., 1998). Each narrative was presented in the ‘first person voice’ and in the words of the participants. Using first person voice guards the researcher against distancing the participants from the data and against ‘intruding easily’ on the data (Seidman, 2013). However, the overarching challenge in construction of narrative is that ‘people often do not tell stories in a linear manner’ (Beal, 2013, p.1). In order to stay as close as possible to the participants’ voice, I took the following steps:

- Transcribed each interview data verbatim
- Copied and pasted the responses into a single file to make up a story.
- Crossed out duplicated statements from the story as well as irrelevant statements.
- Wrote out the acronyms in full; however, the course codes were left untouched. The reason for this is to make the stories readable and understandable for readers who are not familiar with the context.
• Re-organised the story into a more coherent order by moving the statements around (i.e. cut and paste) and adding explanatory statements – in square brackets [] and as footnotes (see appendix 4).

After re-organising student teachers’ interview data into coherent narrative accounts, I provided my reflection of the student teachers’ lived experiences of learning to teach pointing out the main events that characterised those experiences.

5.7.2. Meso level: Clustering student narrative accounts into themes

At this stage, the focus of the analysis was on the common experience (clustered into themes) across the student narrative accounts (Cohen, 2013; Campbell et al., 2004; Hustler et al., 2003). The purpose was to identify themes inherent in the student experiences of learning to teach in Nigeria. Thematic analysis is predominantly used in qualitative analysis (Van Manem, 2011; Miles et al., 2014; Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is a tool for identifying and summarising patterns in a text (Miles et al., 2014; Braun and Clarke, 2006). Analysing for themes provides an explanatory avenue of ‘recovering structures of meanings that are embodied and dramatized in human experience represented in a text’ (Van Manem, 2011, p.1). In this study, thematic analysis informed an understanding of the issues that emerged from the student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach.

The themes were derived by grouping categories of meanings together (Creswell, 1998, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Groenewald, 2004; Miles and Huberman, 1994) using a phrase that expresses the identified structures of meaning embodied in the narrative texts. In interrogating and making sense of the individual narrative account, I asked, ‘how did the participant in this narrative text capture or made sense of his or her pre-service teacher education experience?’ This question enabled me (at this stage) to understand the data in its ‘own right with its own meaning’ (Groenewald, 2004, p.18; Moustakas, 1994, p.93). Moustakas (1994) explains that the task is that of describing in textual language just what one sees, not only in terms of the external object but also the internal act of consciousness, the experience as such the rhythm and relation between phenomenon and self. The qualities of the experience become the focus; the filling in or completion of the nature and meaning of the experience becomes the challenge. (p.91)

More so, Van Manen (1990) explains that ‘any lived experience description is an appropriate source for uncovering thematic aspects of the phenomenon it describes’
(p.92) and thematic analysis reveals different perspective that can be written up through conceptual thinking (Grbich, 2013). Analysing for common experience revealed the commonalities in the data gathered from different participants (Van Manen, 1990) and addressed the second research question: *What themes emerged in student teachers’ narratives about learning to teach?* Miles and Huberman’s (1994) explains that ‘analytical progression involves starting from telling a “story” about a specified situation (what happened?) support this arrangement…to formalizing the elements of the story; locating key variables, to building…a model [of] how the variables are connected’ (p.91).

In phenomenological terms, this level of analysis defines the ‘essence’ of student teachers’ learning of teaching. The essence of an experience is described as the ‘common feature of experience’ (Starks, 2007, p.1374), without which the experience would not have been the same (Water, 2015). Identifying the essence of an experience is important in analysing data that were generated with phenomenological approach (Greenwald, 2004; Walter, 2015; Starks, 2007; Laverty et al., 2003). It is argued that the common way to identify the essence of an experience is to cluster the chunk(s) of data that captures and enables the understanding of the phenomenon being addressed into themes (Stark, 2007; Van Manen, 2011; Groenewald, 2004). This thematic analysis was facilitated by Van Manen’s (1990) line-by-line thematic approach to the analysis of phenomenological data. The approach suggested four steps:

- Transcribe the audio-recorded data verbatim: I transcribed all the interview data by myself. Doing the transcription was helpful in familiarising myself with the data. I also ‘captured features of talk such as emphasis, speed, tone of voice, timing and pauses’ (Bailey, 2008, p.128), which were very helpful, not only in analysing, but also in discussing the data. Verbatim transcription also enabled me to create a narrative account of the student teachers’ experience (see section 5.7.1 and Chapter Six).

- Highlight and code every single sentence or sentence cluster to identify keywords and patterns that emerge: This was initially done using computer assisted software known as MAXQDA (appendix 5.1). However, as it was an iterative process, I also used Microsoft Word to move and cluster sentences into categories (Figure 10).
• Cluster the keywords into phenomenological themes: The statements through its assigned phrases were clustered into themes by deleting repetitive and overlapping phrases (Moustakas, 1994; Groenewald, 2004). This process was also iteratively done throughout the analysis period (appendix 5.2).

• Use the emerged themes to construct textural-structural descriptions: From the three steps above, four major themes were generated (Chapter Seven). These themes enabled me to describe the collective experience of student teachers using ‘verbatim examples’ from the narratives (Moustakas, 1994, p.121).

**Figure 10: Sample extract of initial codes using Microsoft word**

Not everybody is willing to do PES (Primary Education Studies). It is one thing or the other that brought them to the college. Mostly it is because of the cut off mark of the department and over population in other departments, for example, business education, education technology etc. that people see themselves in PES. May be, there was not enough space in other departments so they have to bring them down to PES department. For example, it is not in my agenda to do PES... Yes, I wanted to do education but not PES. So I just had to take it like that. This is because I have stayed at home for 8 years because of my financial background... It is not as if I want to be a teacher but it is where the fate took me...

Our course has been good but in some way, it is very tough. I just have to play along with it – I don’t have choice... It is not easy to study and work at the same time. After school, I run around to get money because we are going to do our matriculation this month and we’ve been given deadline to pay our school fees. So I have to look for money to pay up the school fees. Again, it is not easy to adapt to new faces, the lecturers are not helping. A lecturer can just come in and say ‘everybody pick up your pen and tear a sheet of paper, test early morning!’ For example, we went for strike and when we came back the man just came in and said he wants to administer a test... I did not even read... I was shouting, sir, I didn’t read... he was less concerned about me and said he is going to administer the test. So I don’t have choice, I really want to be educated...

They are teaching us how to bring up a child and how to communicate with a child right from childhood to adolescent age... I is very interesting but because of the stress – I do not have time to read most of the times... I feel good because the way they taught me sometimes makes me happy, though it is not all of the lecturers. Because some will come in to teach and you fall asleep because you do not like the way they teach. It is not because you don’t like the subject but because of the way they teach. He will just be talking without addressing any issue. But some of them when they see that you do not want to follow their teaching; they will teach us like primary school students. So although we are more than that, it just inspires us to know about them and to make you familiar with the course. You will even want to work with him to know more about his course than others. The way they approach us determines the way we are going to listen to what he has to say.

5.7.3. **Analysing the system mediation on student teachers’ experiences**

At this stage, the focus of analysis was on the primary teacher education system. The purpose was to understand how the individual student’s experiences (Chapter Six) and their common experiences, clustered into phenomenological themes (Chapter Seven) are mediated by the operations of the learning system in which
they are embedded. To achieve this, the activity theory triangle was considered (see Chapter Four). This analysis aimed to answer the third research question: *How do the processes, policies and practices of the initial teacher education system in Nigeria mediate primary student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach?* It is important to note that literature was incorporated into this chapter in order to situate the finding into the exiting body of knowledge of learning to teach.

Using the activity triangle, the primary education studies course was conceptualised as an activity system which is made up of the community comprising both the college of education and the cooperating school in which learning to teach (object) takes place (see Chapter Eight). Learning to teach was adopted as the object of the activity because it depicts the overall purpose of teacher education. Blackler (2000) refers to this as a ‘given object’. Members of the community included the students, lecturers, cooperating teachers and head teachers, who had various responsibilities for student teachers’ learning of how to teach (*division of labour*). These responsibilities were facilitated by the practices (*tools*) of the system, which include the curriculum, teaching and learning processes as well as the assessment and feedback procedures. Overall this was governed and regulated by both the formal and informal norms and polices (*rules*) of the activity system. The activities of the primary education course were studied from the viewpoint of the students (*subjects*).

### 5.8. Trustworthiness of the research process

How best to evaluate the trustworthiness of qualitative data has been vigorously debated in the literature (Guba, 1981; Maxwell, 1992; Anney, 2014). Gay et al. (2009) maintain that the notion of trustworthiness has to do with the ability of the qualitative researcher to ‘justify and defend the accuracy of their study’ (p.375). I employed Guba’s (1981) strategy in maintaining trustworthiness throughout this study. He recommended four criteria for assessing trustworthiness to include: credibility of the study, transferability of the study, dependability and confirmability of the study. Anney (2014) made them clearer using questions:

- How do we know or determine the applicability of the findings of the inquiry in other settings or with other respondents?
- How can one know if the findings would be repeated consistently with the similar (same) participants in the same context?
• How do we know if the findings come solely from participants and the investigation was not influenced by the bias, motivations or interests of the researchers? (p.276).

5.8.1. Credibility

Credibility refers to a researcher’s ability to demonstrate that his or her research finding is a plausible representation of the participants’ data (Guba, 1981; Gay et al., 2009; Anney, 2014; Krefting, 1990). Krefting (1990) referred to it as the ‘truth value’ of the findings. Anney (2014) argues that researchers who want to maintain credibility throughout their study should aim to answer the question, *How can a researcher establish confidence in his/her findings?* Or how do we know if the findings presented are genuine? (p.276). In maintaining the credibility of this study, I ensured that only participants who had direct experience with PES were recruited (section 5.3). This provided credible information about student teachers’ experiences and about the teacher education system, which according to Krefting (1990) can also be recognised by others who share similar experiences. I also emailed the transcripts and the final versions of the narrative accounts to all participants to check my understanding of their views. Anney (2014) noted that member checks are a very important process for ensuring credibility.

5.8.2. Transferability

Transferability refers to the researcher’s ability to demonstrate that his or her result can be replicated in a similar context (Gay et al., 2009; Anney, 2014). This was demonstrated in a number of ways. First, I provided ‘thick description’ (Geerts, 1973; Holloway, 1997), for example, of the teacher education system as seen in Chapter Two. I also presented full and authentic student narratives and detailed each process and strategy that I employed throughout the course of this research. Second, I located the research in a theoretical framework so that other researchers could assess the similarity and applicability of various aspects of my findings to other situations through a common theoretical framework (Kilpatrick, 1981). Third, I ensured that only the participants whose characteristics matched my criteria were selected for the study. Following Anney’s (2014) suggestion, I used purposive sampling to enable me to focus only on individuals who had the experience of the phenomenon I was researching.
5.8.3. Dependability

Dependability refers to the ‘consistency of the finding’ (Krefting, 1990). To ensure the consistency of this study, I used what Anney (2014) referred to as peer examination. Peer examination involves having a discussion with someone who have is ‘either a qualitative research or have experience of qualitative research’ (Anney, 2014, p.279). My discussions with my supervisors and my colleagues who are also doing qualitative research were useful in limiting my ‘insider effect’ on the findings.

5.8.4. Confirmability

Confirmability ‘is concerned with establishing that the data and the interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer’s imagination, but are clearly derived from the data’ (Tobin and Begley, 2003, p.279). I demonstrated the confirmability of my finding by first, locating this study in two colleges and data was collected from students across each of the three years of study. Secondly, I ensured that all the steps and decisions taken throughout the process of doing this research was documented, as evidenced in this chapter.

5.9. Ethical Issues and Considerations

Before going onto my fieldwork, I applied for ethical approval, and received it on the 18 August 2013 (see Appendix 6). This approval confirmed my research to be low risk, as I was not meant to have direct access to primary school students. However, Orb et al. (2001, p.94) maintain that ‘although ethical review boards scrutinize most research proposals, the researchers are ultimately responsible for protecting the participants’. This Orb et al. (2001) notion guided my ethical considerations throughout the period of the study. I ensured that proper consideration was given to all identifiable ethical issues that emerged during the research process. I initially wanted to seek permission from the Director of NCCE but none of my efforts to contact his office was successful – my emails were not responded to and my request for appointments were never confirmed. However, I sought advice from the Lagos state Ministry of Education, where I was told to contact the colleges of education directly. On this note, I requested permission to situate my research in each of the colleges and to identify my participants through the registrar of each of the participating college of the education (see section 5.3.1).
However, I initially had issues with recruiting and selecting student participants recruited through the college due to the lack of trust between them and myself. I subsequently used a snowballing strategy to recruit participants yet despite assuring the student teachers of the anonymity of the research process, not all of them that accepted to take part in the study. Nonetheless, I was able to recruit the intended number of 20 student teachers for this study. During the first meeting with each participant, I discussed the aim of the research with them and provided them with detailed information of what was involved in the research (Creswell, 2007) in a written form. After which, I sought their informed written consent. I also informed the participants that participation in the research was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. In addition, I obliged to the request of four cooperating teachers who declined to be audio recorded as they wanted to protect their identity. I also respected the privacy and confidentiality of any participants who, at various points during the interview, requested that the audio recorder be turned off, especially when they wanted to give out what they called ‘implicating’ information. I was extremely sensitive to participants’ responses and did not press them for information when I became aware that they were anxious about the information they were being asked to reveal. I returned the transcribed interviews to the participants for validation and subsequently deleted some data, as the participants came back to say ‘I never meant to say that’ or ‘that wasn’t what I wanted to say’. It is important to note that although data emerged from ‘opportunistic methods’ used during the study, it was made clear to everyone involved that the outcome of the meeting would not be included in the research but would inform my understanding of the context and my interpretation of the data.

Moreover, some of the issues raised by students were anonymously discussed with the lecturers, head teachers and heads of departments through the interview process. Caution was taken in describing the research context in order to avoid any form of identification. This helped to maintain the confidentiality and the anonymity of my participants. During data analysis and discussion, data were entirely confidential and were anonymously reported. Even when the participants mentioned names in order to give a clear explanation, care was taken in ensuring that those did not reflect in the data. No real names of participants and locations of the colleges were used in order to protect the identities of the participants as well as
the identities of the participating colleges of education. I also checked with the participants to ensure that they wanted their story included in the final reports.

5.10. Summary

In this chapter, I started by presenting the overall design of this study. I also discussed the rationale and philosophical stance that underpin the research and presented rich detail on the process of data generation and analysis. This included a detailed account of my participant recruitment strategy and a thick description of the data collection methods. I described the protocols and procedures I used in the semi-structured interviews, which were the main data source; I also described the NCE programme handbook, which provided an ancillary source. I also explained and demonstrated the analytical steps I employed in the study. The chapter concluded by reflecting on the strategies employed to ensure the trustworthiness of research findings and discussing the ethical decision that I made in the study.
CHAPTER SIX

STUDENT TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING TO TEACH: NARRATIVE ACCOUNTS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the first analytical stage that addresses the first research question: How do the student teachers articulate their experiences of learning to teach? As noted in section 5.3.2, 14 student teachers – six males and eight females – participated in this study. These 14 participants were selected from both College A and College B. None of the students were married but two of the girls were engaged at the time the data was being collected. All of the student teachers got into the college of education with a Senior Secondary Certificate and Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (formerly known as JAMB\(^5\)). Out of the 14 student teachers’ data, six narrative accounts are presented in this chapter; because of the constraints of word length the remaining eight narrative accounts are set out in Appendix 7. The six narrative accounts included in this chapter were selected to be representative of the range of issues that emerged in the entire data set; the narrative accounts in Appendix 7 feature similar characteristics and experiences.

Interview data from all the 14 student teachers were reconstructed into narrative accounts as noted in section 5.7.1 because, as Riessman (2013) argues, the responses to interview questions are in form of lengthy story, the genre of which needs to be preserved (Coffey and Atkinson, 1993). The reconstruction was done with limited modification to the data including removal of repeated phrases for ease of understanding (see appendix 4). This approach was considered the first step in analysing the data because it enabled me to focus on the individual student teachers’ perspectives and to identify how each personal experience connects to the other (Bold, 2012). The chapter seeks to understand student teachers’ experience and understanding of their initial teacher training programme. It is important to note that the focus of this study is on the (primary) teacher education system and not specifically on the individual experiences. The student teachers’ narrative accounts are, however, the principal data source for understanding the practices and processes of the teacher education system in Nigeria. They serve as the basis for the second analytical step, which is the thematic analysis (to be found in Chapter

\(^5\) See the Glossary
Seven) of the entire data set of 14 narratives (those in this chapter and Appendix 7),
and the third analytic step, which is to discuss the teacher training system as a
whole using the lens of Activity Theory.

The narrative accounts below are grouped according to student teachers’
years of study and presented in order of year group. This is to enable the reader see
the progression and changes in perception (if any) from year one to year three. Each
narrative account in this chapter is followed by a short commentary. The purpose of
this is to provide my reflection on the student teachers’ holistic lived experience in
the context of their individual biographies, informed by my interaction with them
during fieldwork and my contextual knowledge of the system. My commentaries
are intended to explore how the teacher education system might have shaped their
individual experiences. In this, it complements the main thematic analysis in
Chapter 7, which fragments the characteristics of the 14 individual student teacher
participants as it aggregates the data set as a whole.

6.2. The narrative accounts

6.2.1. Year one student teachers’ narrative accounts

Year one participants comprise two female (Gio and Fatima) and two male
(Abayomi and Bankole) students. They are aged 20, 18, 27 and 18 years
respectively. Gio and Fatima have previous teaching experience; Abayomi has
worked for eight years prior to his college admission while Bankole has never
worked but has been re-sitting Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME)
6 so as to gain admission to his desired university and course. Apart from Fatima,
one of these students wanted to study primary education but their low scores in
entry examinations restricted their studying of their first choice of course. Gio,
Abayomi and Kayode are students of College A, while Fatima is a student of
College B. All four year one students were interviewed within their first six months
in their college of education; and although this means their experience of the system
is necessarily limited, their accounts capture their perceptions of the system whilst
their ‘noticing’ is sharp and fresh and before they became familiarized with the
ways of working. The narrative account of Fatima and Abayomi are presented
below while those of Gio and Bankole are in Appendices 7.1 and 7.2 respectively.

6 entry exam for tertiary institutions
Abayomi

Not everybody is willing to do PES (Primary Education Studies). It is one thing or the other that brought them to the college. Mostly it is because of the cut off mark of the department and over population in other departments, for example, business education, education technology etc. that people sees themselves’ in PES. May be, there was not enough space in other departments so they have to bring them down to PES department. For example, it is not in my agenda to do PES... Yes, I wanted to do education but not PES. So I just had to take it like that. This is because I have stayed at home for 8 years because of my financial background... It is not as if I want to be a teacher but it is where the fate took me...

Our course has been good but in some way, it is very tough. I just have to play along with it – I don’t have choice… It is not easy to study and work at the same time. After school, I run around to get money because we are going to do our matriculation this month and we’ve been given deadline to pay our school fees. So I have to look for money to pay up the school fees. Again, it is not easy to adapt to new faces; the [lecturers] are not helping. A lecturer can just come in and say ‘everybody pick up your pen and tear a sheet of paper, test early morning! For example, we went for strike and when we came back the man just came in and said he wants to administer a test… I did not even read... I was shouting, sir, I didn’t read… he was less concerned about me and said he is going to administer the test. So I don’t have choice, I really want to be educated...

They are teaching us how to bring up a child and how to communicate with a child right from childhood to adolescent age... It is very interesting but because of the stress – I do not have time to read most of the times... I feel good because the way they taught me sometimes makes me happy, though it is not all of the lecturers. Because some will come in to teach and you fall asleep because you do not like the way they teach. It is not because you don’t like the subject but because of the way they teach. He will just be talking without addressing any issue. But some of them when they see that you do not want to follow their teaching; they will teach us like primary school students. So although we are more than that, it just inspires us to know about them and to make you familiar with the course. You will even want to work with him to know more about his course than others. The way they approach us determines the way we are going to listen to what he has to say…. I have been gaining a lot from them – how to address people, how to talk, my dress code and most things...

We are improving. Most of the teachers now are dealing with Internet. You chat about your concerns and even send our notes online. There is one woman in my

7 End up doing
department; the woman is very gentle. From the way she talks, you will know that this woman if you go to her, she will understand you very well than any other lecturers. Other lecturers will hear you but will not know how to help you... [However], it is not everybody that loves seeking help. For example, I don't like to expose myself. I don't go to anybody in school. But it get to a stage that I could not hide it any longer, because it is affecting my education, I sought permission to take some time out to go and work before coming back to school. Sometimes I will miss class, test, assignments and other activities. Like one of our lecturers gave us assignment some time ago and instructed that we submit the assignment before 11 am on that same day. I wasn't around, the assignment was to be done online, and we are not going to submit a hard copy. So I felt bad when I was told. I wanted to meet the lecturer to discuss the issue but I thought it wasn't necessary at that time...

Since I have been in the college [of education], I have not seen the score of any test that I have written... I have been in the College for six months and we will be sitting for exam next month. I have not seen the scores of any test I have done. I haven't been told my weak points – I do not know the area of my study that needs improvement but we have been doing test. Early morning they can just call us and say ok we are having test... Some of our lecturers do not come to class; it [the college of education] is a government school so they will just come and be very unserious about what they do. There is one incident that happened the other day, we were already told that we will be having test so when he came in he just said … ok everybody just tear a piece of paper; this was after we had vacated for December holiday. So the man just said we are having test on the 31st December 2013. So instead of us to go home for holiday he said that we should come to school, that we will be having test. So when he [the lecturer] came in, he just said we should write our name, the course we are doing and our departments - so that was the test [and] we should submit the test. ...It is not attendance; any day we are doing test we don’t sign attendance. Just write the test and submit. He did not give us any question; just our name. So we started asking ourselves “is this why this man asked us to come to school?” and he said the test we did carries forty marks… just to write down your name and your course.

Commentary

Abayomi is a 27 year old male student from college A. He is a first year and one of the students who did not intend to become a teacher but was desperate to get away from home and embarked onto the PES course as there was no other choice because of his grades. His sole motivation was to become educated and to have a higher degree (certificate) than a secondary school certificate. In common with many
Nigerians, Abayomi had a great belief in destiny, and despite not wanting to be a teacher he believed that fate had led him to the PES course and he was not in any way resentful.

Abayomi’s narrative account suggests that he struggled to meet his learning responsibilities; and this was a dilemma for him. There was no funding for him and in fact for most student teachers in Nigeria. Hence, Abayomi worked full time to support himself and pay fees and at the same time studied full time. This resulted in him missing out on some learning activities, especially assignments. On this latter matter he was greatly aggrieved, even as a first year student, he was aware of the shortcoming of the college systems and instances two ways in which the assessment process was flawed: the assessments were sometimes not meaningful (for example just writing your name); and often there was not sufficient time to prepare for the test/assignment as some lecturers gave no notice and required assignments to be submitted on the day they were given.

On the whole, however, Abayomi seemed to have enjoyed the little time he had spent on the course and spoke in very positive terms about some of his lecturers, but noted that the attitude of others had impacted negatively on his learning to teach experience. Power relations between the students and their lectures inherent in his narrative account, however, seem to suggest that students have little or no say in the decisions pertaining their learning. Some lecturers seem to be disrespectful in not following the recommended college calendar, for example, Abayomi and his course mates were understandably aggrieved when they were made to come in for a test on the 31st of December when the college was in fact meant to be on Christmas holiday. This points to a potentially dysfunctional system where lecturers’ activities were neither moderated nor monitored. The lecturers seemed not to be accountable for their actions and also not accountable to any line manager; there appeared to be no performance management, quality assurance or monitoring systems in place.

**Fatima**

I am a full time student but my friends (pointing at them) are part time students. We do lectures together. I have gone to meet the research [admin] officer to tell me the difference between part time and full time studies. I have [also] gone to my academic adviser and my
HoD [Head of Department] to know the difference. I entered through JAMB and them (pointing at her friends) through Pre-NCE. We receive lectures together and do everything together but they will spend extra year. My question is, what will they be doing in that extra year? So that means they will be receiving extra lectures that I will not receive...

Our curriculum is [built] mainly [on] primary school curriculum. That is why we are called PES students. We learn how to teach primary school subjects and then teach those subjects in primary school when we go to teach... [Our training] is going well and it is very interesting... Method of Teaching course is a general course [see appendix 3.2]. The man teaches the same topic every time. According to our tutors, they said they are just welcoming us to the college. So the lectures aren't too much. But they promise that in the next year, they will cover all the topics as supposed. It is not as if they are not teaching but they are not really going deeper.

For example, one of my lecturers said we are like babies, fresh babies out of secondary school. So they are still treating us like babies but as time goes on they will give us the bony part of the work. But there is nothing like that in departmental courses. Departmental courses are going on well. It is just the general courses that the lecturers are not always available. You go [for the lecture], you wait for them; either they come late or by the time you get there [lecture], they will start telling you “get out”. At times they will insult us... But they are coming up sha...

I have passion for children; I’d already started teaching before I knew that I would come to this college; I taught for three years. The first job I did after my secondary school education was teaching. I taught in three schools within the three years. I taught Nursery one, Nursery two and Primary three. I saw the way children are being treated. They are not being given the knowledge they required. That was what really pushed me into studying for a teaching course. I have a genuine reason to be here. I did Jamb so with that I got admission. [But] I think it is not all of us that are here for learning. Most people come to the college just to obtain a certificate that is higher than secondary school certificate. Some come to college so that they can get the certificate to establish a school...so most people don’t go to school [College of education] with the aim of being a teacher...

Some teachers do not teach the course they studied. For example, people that did combination courses like SOS/CRK [Social studies/Christian Religious Knowledge course],

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8 A foundation course for NCE courses
9 Primary Education Studies
10 They are doing the simple part of the course and will progress to the complex part later on in the course. See last paragraph of Glory’s narrative
11 ‘Slang’ meaning ‘anyway’.
12 Entrance examination to higher education level
13 One cannot own a school in Nigeria without acquiring a qualification in Education
by the time you go to primary schools, even most secondary school, head teacher [of the school] will ask you to teach the subjects you did not study. Can someone give what [he/she] does not have? Even my friend (pointing at one of them) did not choose PES; it is not her desire. The college just chose it for her because, she wanted to study business administration and the college said that because she does not have mathematics, she would not be able to study business education. So they push her to study PES. This is what led to what I said about people getting the course they don't want. It is just like I want a pen and my mum gives me pencil. So students grudgingly do the course, not out of passion, but because they have no choice, it doesn’t come from their mind…

I am happy about my course because it is very interesting. The way the lecturers explain things in class; and gist with us that when we get to the class we taught children how to do ‘this and that'; then she will demonstrate it for us. I am happy about the social studies we learnt yesterday. If am asked to teach the topic we were taught yesterday, I will be able to teach the topic… It depends on the lecturer shall. This social studies lecturer is a new lecturer. She is very interesting; there is a way you interact with people that even if you are not teaching a topic or the course well, people will be able to gain some knowledge. The way this new lecturer interacts with us encourages us to learn. There are other lecturers that are good but there are others that we just manage to attend their lectures. …[Some] lecturers force their books on us. …Yes we are meant to buy the books but most of the lecturers assign us a number when we buy their book. You can’t do their test without the number. They don’t have passion to teach us. It is as if they are forced to teach us.

After the class, the lecturer gives us assignment and gives us a specific time to submit them. After doing it individually, we hand it over to our HoC [Head of Class] who passes it on to the lecturer. At times at end of the class, she might decide to administer test… The assignment they give involves huge money. They ask us to go to Internet to find out some information. After getting the information, we start typing it; print it and spiral bind it. All these involve money. And at the end we score two over ten. And we don’t know why we have two, no comments on our work. How do we improve? At times, we do presentations. After the presentation, the lecturer will ask us to write our name. When we write our name, she will give us four over ten despite our efforts. We do not know why we have four over ten14.

**Commentary**

Fatima is 18 years old and a first year female student in College B. She has three friends with her during this interview; they were not able to participate in the study themselves as they did not have a sufficiently good level of English but

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14 Scoring four out of ten marks
occasionally they nodded or smiled. Fatima had ‘a passion for teaching’ and she had three years experience as a teacher after leaving secondary education and prior to her admission to study PES. She applied to study PES as a first choice and was one of the four students (among the 14 participants) who indeed wanted to become primary school teacher. Fatima was, however, aware of the motivation of other students on the PES course. She gave examples of how the college offered PES as an alternative to prospective students’ choices, and explained that most students accepted PES as there were no other possible options. From her years as a teacher prior to her training, Fatima was also aware that once in school, teachers were often required by the headteacher to teach subjects other than the ones for which they had been prepared.

Fatima’s narrative account was one of those that pointed to the unclear and flawed policies in the primary teacher education system. She noted that both full time and part time students attended classes together hence she could not understand the difference between the two pathways and its career implications; not least that part time students were required to study for an extra year. How this impacted on her learning to teach experience is not clear from her narrative account, although she appeared concerned that she was possibly missing out on an extra year of learning.

Fatima’s account also identified the difference across the curriculum between general and departmental courses. General courses are taken by all students in the year irrespective of their discipline, so the class sizes can be up to 1000; departmental courses, however, are taken by students within the discipline (eg PES) and the classes are much smaller, around 30 (see section 2.5). Fatima claimed to have positive experiences with her departmental courses, which she found interesting; and she thought that the lecturers were serious, taught well and had good interpersonal skills. She did, however, report negative experiences with the general courses. Fatima gave instances of the poor teaching and negative attitudes of many general course lecturers. She claimed that the lecturers often didn’t attend lectures and were frequently late. Some of the lecturers were also reported to require student teachers to buy textbooks, which also served as an assessment criteria in the sense that student teachers were only allowed to do an assessment if they had bought the book. Like Abayomi, Fatima understood the flaws in assessment strategies of some lecturers, despite just being in her first year. She
noted the financial commitment and the emotional stress students experienced while doing their assignments. She was frustrated that often no justification was offered for the scores. In one instance, she spent a lot of money and time in doing an assignment for which she received a very low score (2 out of 10) but no feedback was forthcoming from the lecturer to explain the score or how she could improve upon it.

6.2.2. Year two student teachers’ narrative accounts

Four female second year students participated in the study. Their pseudo names are **Yemi, Rebecca, Doreen and Folu** and they are aged 21, 21, 20 and 23 respectively. Rebecca and Folu had teaching experience prior to their teacher training while Yemi and Doreen did not. Rebecca and Folu really wanted to study primary education that they intentionally applied to study PES. Doreen never wanted to study primary education but could not get admission to study her preferred course. Yemi already had NCE admission to study Education Management but she changed to PES as she thought it would be less stressful. Yemi, Rebecca and Folu are students of College A while Doreen is in College B. Below are the experiences of Folu and Doreen. The narrative accounts of Yemi and Rebecca are in appendix 7.3 and 7.4 respectively.

**Folu**

I love to be a teacher; I learnt it from my sister. She graduated from this college. I didn’t want to become a teacher then; but she came back from school one day and she told me that I should enroll in the NCE [National Certificate in Education] programme. And I said, no problem but before I come to your school, I will like to teach first in order to have teaching experience. So I applied and got a teaching job, I was asked to teach primary two. I have not gotten admission [at that time]. I just wanted to know if I would be able to teach. So, I just went and luckily, my head mistress told me that if I want to study education that I should go for an NCE [National Certificate in Education] course – [because] teaching suits me. She says that if I have not received training and am this good; when I go through training, I would be better. So she encouraged me... And I went back to my sister to ask her how [to] get admission into the college of education, and she told me to first buy JAMB [Joint Admission and Matriculation Board] form\(^{15}\), then every other thing follows. So I got the JAMB form and

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\(^{15}\) The exam is not free. Forms are purchased from designated centres or agents of JAMB at a cost set by the Board
luckily for me, this college offered me admission. So, I was happy and confident that I am going to be very good in teaching.

My previous teaching experience cannot be referred to [as] experience at all. I don’t see it as an experience because then I did not know anything about set induction\(^{16}\), I don’t know anything about methods [of teaching]. All I know is to go to class and teach. It is an experience but not an effective one. I did not know anything about teaching. I cannot even make sense of the things I did. I can’t even relate that experience to what I am learning now. I only did it for money and to know [how] it feels to be a teacher. I only went there to put everything I learnt from my secondary school to the kids. I was lonely for two years and decided to apply for a teaching job. Everything seemed well but it was when I came to this college of education that I now understand what I was doing then. Primary education is the foundation of learning and the foundation is very important. When the foundation is not solid, everything is nothing.

So primary education is ok for me… I decided not to teach in a higher class because some of the students there do not have strong foundation so we teachers need to be more familiar to the foundation which is primary education studies… I did apply to study PES [primary education studies]… We borrow courses\(^{17}\) from all other departments in the college. Though we don’t go deep, we touch their courses. For example, social studies is a department on its own but we study [it]. Music is a department on its own but we study music. We touch every other course in the college. So primary education studies is huge because we study all the other courses in the college. We do up to 20 courses.

Microteaching is a very sweet course. It is interesting because microteaching enables you to know the different methods you can use to teach the pupils and it teaches you how to use instructional materials in school. Some of the teachers nowadays teach without instructional material. With this practice, the teacher cannot deliver his or her lesson well. But when you have your instructional material – may be you want to teach them A-Z – you have to write the A and cut it out on a cardboard and showed them this is [the letter] A, then the people will repeat after you. But when you don’t have instructional material, it is impossible for the kids to easily learn how to identify [the letter] A. Microteaching theory and practical parts. We are in semester one of part two\(^{18}\) now, so we are doing the theory part but we will do the practical part in second semester. In this theory, we are doing written stuff; we are being taught how we are going to teach in class because a trained teacher is not

\(^{16}\) Set induction is about getting them [students] ready, inducing them into the right mind-set (http://changingminds.org/explanations/learning/set_induction.htm).

\(^{17}\) Referring to elective courses

\(^{18}\) Second year
meant to go class without instructional material. If you are a trained teacher that passed through college of education, you are meant to go to the class with instructional materials. So this microteaching teaches us on how to be a qualified teacher and a well-trained teacher. So in the theory part, we are being trained on what we are going to be doing when we get to the practical part. Then in the practical part, before you even get to the school, for example, I will be asked to come out to teach my fellow students as if am teaching primary school pupils. So my lecturer is going to be there, he will observe the way I am teaching and at the end, score my performance...

Other department goes for excursion\(^\text{19}\). They go to some other places but PES [Primary Education Studies] students go to schools to observe what teachers are doing in class because we are the ones to handle the foundation. It helps us to know the important aspects of teaching and how to focus our mind doing what is right as a teacher. So students from other departments teach SS (secondary school) classes; they can teach in both junior and senior secondary school classes but PES students are going to teach in primary schools and school observation is very important for us to understand how primary school teachers work. So this is the main reason we go for school observation... The way we handle primary school pupils is different from the way we handle secondary school students. So it is very important that we observe the activities of primary school teachers...

School observation is very important. It has helped me a lot. Before I went for observation, I didn’t know that some teachers go to class and talk and leave without bothering whether the pupils understand what was taught or not. During my school observation visit, I observed that after teaching a class, the teacher has to ask to them questions in order to identify the extent the pupils understood the topic. I also learn that it is good to follow up on slow learners otherwise, they will draw you back. We observed both the teacher and the pupils. Because if you say you are observing only the teacher, what happens to the pupils? Some of the teachers do not use instructional materials and some do not use lesson plan. …They are trained but some have decided not to follow the right steps. They take their work for granted and are not serious at all. But some of them when they see us, they will start putting things in order and would say – they have come to observe us... So it is very important we observe both teachers and pupils. School Observation really helps in teaching practice because it prepares us for teaching practice. Everything you see in observation is what you will do during teaching practice...

\(^{19}\) Apart from PES, other departments undertake excursions in place of school observation
Folu is a 23 year old second year female student from College A. She is among the four student participants who claimed they wanted to study PES. Folu’s account suggested that she was now very committed to a career in teaching, yet coming to this decision had been a slow process; despite having an elder sister as a role model. Folu had already spent two years at home since leaving school before, what she recalls as, her pivotal conversation with her sister. Folu’s decision to study PES at College A was clearly initially influenced by the role model she had in her sister; but she storied the decision to get a teaching job, prior to going to college, as her decision alone, made in order get some experience as a teacher to test both whether she would like teaching as a career and whether she would be any good. Folu refers to primary education as the foundation of all levels of education in Nigeria. Hence, she thinks that PES students deserve the most rigorous preservice training. This was potentially very instrumental to how Folu responded to her experiences.

Folu’s account is dissimilar to most of the other participants in that she hardly voiced any negative learning experiences; throughout the interview, Folu showed deep enthusiasm for PES. Her account suggested an overall positive learning to teach experience; she found especially beneficial the fact that she could reflect on what she was being taught in relation to her previous teaching experience. She saw her previous teaching strategies as ineffective; and was able to reflect on the mistakes she made in the past as a teacher and on the ways she would respond differently if faced with a similar situation now. This may in part be due to fact that she had been frustrated for three years without an understanding of what she is doing. Hence she believed that PES has helped her feel more effective as a teacher.

Folu perceived the PES curriculum to be comprehensive. She thought that the curriculum was very good as it incorporated elements of courses from other departments (up to 20) and thereby broadening the knowledge horizon of PES students. Folu, notably, did not expand upon if or how the programme design helped students to integrate the knowledge from the different courses. Folu also noted as a positive experience that while students from other departments in the college of education went on ‘excursions’ in their first year; PES students undertook school observations. Folu saw this as an excellent opportunity for prospective primary teachers to observe real classroom; although again she does not mention any opportunities factored in for PES students to reflect as a group upon what they
had seen, or how it linked to other theory or methods classes. She, of course, with her previous experience as a primary school teacher to draw on, was in a much better place than most other student teachers to learn from these experiences.

Doreen

The thing is I never expected to come here in the first place but I just found myself here in the school of education. It was when I graduated from secondary school in 2008 [and could not get admission] for all those years. I sat for JAMBS\textsuperscript{20} but no admission [and] time was going, I had no choice. I didn’t even know that I was going to study education because in 2010, I was shortlisted in one of the colleges of education but I said [that] I cannot [study in] a college of education. But when my [younger] brother graduated from secondary school, he worked for some years. But he [later] did JAMB ‘once’ and got admission immediately in the same school [university] I took my result too and was rejected. So it was the Dean of that school [the university] that actually said since time is going that I should come to this college [referring to her present college] that he has worked here before. He directed me to one lecturer in the school [her present college]. So that was how I came to this school. So when I got here, I had to carry on with what is happening because I had no choice…

And concerning how this school is being run, I would say it is fair and good. This is because they don’t lecture us in this school, they teach us. They start from the scratch so that we can understand…they teach in Yoruba\textsuperscript{21} and English language so that we won’t have problems – it won’t be like ahah!,\textsuperscript{22} they didn’t teach us very well. I know some schools that the lecturer will just come to the class and just said “buy hand-out and read it for my exams” or pay for my test…

Concerning our courses, we don’t get to see our lecturers often. We have some courses that we’ve not started at all and it happened last semester. It was at the dying minute [towards the end of the semester] that we saw the lecturer and the lecturer was even blaming us that we did not look for her. We always look for them but they are not always around. We have less than a month to our exam and we’ve been looking for some of our lecturers and they are nowhere to be found. And after everything, when we see the lecturers, they will put the blames on us. When we go to their office, we don’t meet them and we don’t know them physically. We just know their names but had it been we see them in their offices we will recognise them. But close to exam they will resurface and just give handouts and say go and do this or that. And we have no choice because we need to read and pass our exams.

\textsuperscript{20} She did the JAMB examination more than once
\textsuperscript{21} Yoruba is one of the Nigeria’s languages. It is the language spoken in the south west of Nigeria
\textsuperscript{22} Exclamation word used to show ‘blame’
So another challenge is our result. We don’t see our result on time; some people here have carryovers but they don’t know the courses they are carrying over. If the exam is to start now, they do not know the courses they need to retake. We have not seen the first semester result [of first year] let alone the second semester result… Now the current year ones are starting examination late April and those that have carryovers in first semester of our first year do not know the courses they have failed. And they will want to take this exam but how will they know the course to retake? We are little and should be seeing our results earlier than any other department. We 200 level students are not up to thirteen students in number… I was expecting someone to ask questions [on our results] because I know that when we leave the meeting, everybody will be complaining that they have not seen their scores. That meeting was an avenue for us to talk. I am a kind of person that if I do not see my result on time, I will run around to see it… but it is not everybody that has that confidence or boldness to go to lecturers’ office to request to see their results.

We see our general courses results through the lecturers. Even the departmental courses and general courses should be put together and be pasted. But when they are not pasted on time, we try to see the results through the lecturers involved. We don’t meet some of the lecturers but it is not their fault because they believed that we should have seen it in our department. When you go to some of the general courses lecturers, they will tell you that they have taken the results to our department. They will ask us to go to our HoD [Head of Department]. We’ve gone to our HoD and she is not always available. Today is the second time [I] am seeing her this year. She doesn’t stay in the office. And we were told that when we have problems we should go to HOD but when you go to them they don’t provide any help.

We need someone to ask our lecturers [on] how long it will take them to prepare our results so that we can focus on when to expect our result. It’s been more than eight months that we did our first semester first year exam and we haven’t seen our result. Our course adviser said that there were mistake in the results and they need to rectify it before pasting the results… Here in this school, we don’t speak out; we don’t have right, they don’t give us opportunity to voice out our problems and express our feelings. If you stand up to say anything the lecturer will deal with you his or her own way. That is the problem we are having. This is why so many of us did not say anything during the meeting. We had something to say but were afraid to say anything.

Another thing is the issue of handout. Some lecturers force you to buy handout as a criterion to pass. If you don’t buy their handout you will not pass - especially in general courses. They still collect money to show us our result. It is going to be part of Continuous Assessment score… The assignments and the tests are just to checkmate myself [to know] how well I have done. It is not everybody that sees it as a way of checkmating his or herself. How can we learn from assignments when a lecturer gives you assignment today and
expect you to submit it tomorrow and you have other assignments to submit on the same date. You have no other choice than to copy. I also do it. Here we will be given assignment today and submit tomorrow. I don’t do it; I just copy. There is an assignment I did that I haven’t submitted; I copied on that assignment... The submission date has passed and we haven’t even submitted it. So there is nothing I can learn from such assignment.

I don’t know if I will end up as a teacher. I am here because I found myself here not that I actually desire teaching job... We’ve not gained much for TP [teaching practice]. We’ve not done much [on microteaching]. We just started [microteaching] last week. He just gave us course outline and has given us assignment... We did not do school observation [course]. We have not done it because the lecturer put to bed\(^23\). There was nobody to take her place. We went to her to complain about the course and she said that she is going to see the HOD [Head of Department] concerning this. We have gone to her severally and she said she has not met with the HOD. I went to her personally and she asked us to choose a day we will be going to the school, which we did. She told us to pick up letter regarding this [from her office] but the letter wasn’t ready on the day. Since that time, we’ve not heard from her. We went to her again and she said that the school was almost closing – I mean the primary schools.

**Commentary**

Doreen is just 20 and a second year female student of College B. She is the head of class\(^24\) and as evidenced in her narrative account, she is articulate, fluent in the English language and outspoken. This interview took place immediately after all the PES students in College B had a meeting with the Dean and the staff of PES department. Doreen is one of the student teachers that neither intended to become a teacher nor wanted to study PES. Her SSCE result limited her ability to get university admission and she had already spent three years at home after her secondary school education. She became desperate when her younger brother got a university admission before her. This desperation is common in Nigeria because culturally, and often socially as well, she would have been expected to have been in higher education before her younger brother. Doreen explained that a family friend influenced her admission to study PES. Although it is not clear from the narrative

\(^{23}\) Had a baby

\(^{24}\) Class representative
whether or not she met the minimum entry requirement, the interference is that the family friend had a part in facilitating the process. This exemplifies the ‘corrupt’ practices that underline the selection processes not just in the teacher education system in Nigeria but in Nigerian higher education in general.

On one hand, towards the beginning of the interview, Doreen’s account instanced the positive aspects of PES. She claimed the school was well run (‘fair and good’); although subsequently she said nothing that supported this conclusion, quite the reverse. She spoke highly of some lecturers who ‘teach’ rather than ‘lecture’ and was especially pleased by the fact that they used Yoruba language partly as a medium of instruction. To Doreen, it made the course easy to understand. On the other hand, Doreen listed an extensive array of failings of the system and individual lecturers, some of whom did not attend lectures and were ‘nowhere to be found’. Doreen noted that instead of taking responsibility for their actions, they blamed the students for not reminding them of the lectures. This again suggests abuse of power in the lecturer-student relationship and accountability and monitoring issues. It questions the effectiveness of the quality assurance processes in the system. Doreen gives a particular example of the students who never did the school observation course in their first year because the lecturer in charge was on a maternity leave. Nothing was done to ensure that the course was covered, despite that fact that it was one of the core courses in PES. This also suggests lack of effective management systems and policies or lack of available financial or human resource.

A significant proportion of Doreen’s account is related to assessment. She gave three instances where the assessment system and processes were flawed and indeed corrupt. First, student teachers did not see their results on time. In fact, sometimes the results were released one year after the test was taken; making it impossible for student teachers to plan how to re-sit the courses they failed. Second, there was often not enough time for students to do their assignments (a complaint that was echoed by Abayomi); thus, they copied from each other or the internet and did not learn from such assignments. Third some lecturers forced students to buy handouts, upon which they understood the result of their assignment would depend. Fatima also reported that such corrupt practices, bordering on coercion, were entrenched throughout the system.
6.2.3. Year three students’ narrative

Data from four male and two female year three students were shared in this study. They were known as Ortega, Akiyemi, Abimbola, Paul, Maje and Ade. At the time of the fieldwork, all of the year three students were near the end of their teaching practice exercise. Although these six students expressed different concerns about their teaching practice experience, Ortega, Paul, Maje and Abimbola still maintained that they would love a teaching career despite the ‘perceived’ challenges; whilst Akiyemi and Ade never wanted to teach in the first place. Akiyemi, Abimbola, Paul, and Ortega were from College A while Ade and Maje were from College B. The narrative accounts of Ortega and Akiyemi are presented below while the narrative accounts of Paul, Abimbola, Maje and Ade are presented in appendices 7.5 to 7.8 respectively.

Ortega

Teaching practice is going well – though it has good and bad side. The good side is that am being given the opportunity to practice what I have been taught in the College. To see if am on the right track or not. And the bad side is the issue of instructional material. We have to source for books ourselves at times, we buy it I mean our instructional materials. For example, I had wanted to teach ‘first aid’ one day, and you know I needed first aid box. I went to the office of the headmaster to get the box but there were no drugs in first aid box. Only the ‘empty’ box is there. If I was to use, how do I start showing the children that OK, This is first aid box… what about the drugs? How do I show the pupil the contents of a first aid box? The contents were not there. I had to go and buy some of the contents with my money to show the pupils. Moreover, instruction material is not what one supposed to spend money on. The school should provide them. But in this case, it was not there. My College is not giving me support… In terms of providing instructional materials, they are not giving us any support. We provide for it ourselves...

Our supervisors only come every now and then to look at what we are doing there. Maybe, we are doing what we are supposed to do. They do not even give us a call [when they want to come] to know [whether] we are present…or we are well dressed… So they come and assess us; to look at our teaching skills, our method of teaching, our class management, how we can carry the students along. So, that's what they came to do.

We did [class management] under principle and method of teaching under Edu 113 in 100 level, we did it under Micro Teaching practical and theory… We laid more emphasis on it [classroom management] in microteaching practical. Without passing Micro Teaching practical, you won't do this TP [teaching practice]. There are some of our colleagues that...
didn’t do it. They have to do it next year because they failed microteaching practical. …They [lecturers] have told us what we should do – set induction, how to gain their interest. It is called hook. How to hook the students to gain their attention… Our teaching methods; step-by-step presentations, what the teacher should do and what the students should do. What you are expected from the students. So we have been taught all that. So, it makes it a little bit easier for us.

So when we get to the school we just have to do what we are asked to do but it doesn’t always work in all situations. I'll give you an example; my Micro teaching lecturer said how you could get the interest of the learner is like one, when you just come to class, you can get it with silence. You can just do that (he stood quietly for few seconds) and when they look at you, they will start positioning themselves. But some students [pupils] can be unruly at times. They would start disturbing the class. So, not all they said you should do works. We just have to devise other means that we can use to get their hook. You talk so they can know that you are around. You ask them to stand, sit - stand, sit - stand, sit - stand again. Then, all of them will know that a teacher is around. Stop [you] what are doing? Put all books away! When they are still writing, [you say to them] I give you two minutes to write! In two minutes, they will do what they have to do in time.

In Principle and Method of Teaching [course], we are taught how to write a lesson note. And there is no way a teacher could be able to perform well and effectively in the class without an adequate lesson note. I think a lesson note should be a guide for a teacher. You should be able to use my lesson note… We talked about that [assessment] in our method of teaching and we talked about the effects of evaluation and the types of evaluation. And I got to understand we have formative evaluation and summative evaluation. When you ask questions periodically, that’s formative and when you ask questions at the end of the class, [it is] summative. So it’s helping…I prefer when I use formative. I ask them questions periodically to know maybe they are following.

I normally use the questioning method. After teaching for some time, I ask questions. After teaching for some minutes, I ask questions again, [and] I ask questions at the start and end of the lesson… We are taught all these in methodology. Let me take microteaching [for example]...we were taught how to use instructional materials, when to use it, what the teacher should evaluate and when to set induce\textsuperscript{25}. So, all those things we learnt under Micro Teaching and under Principle and Methods of Teaching. I don't know about any other person, but it helped me a lot.

The College gives us moral support. I am very close to some lecturers. When I face some kind of difficulties, anytime I have the opportunity to come to the school, I go to Mr Huji and Mrs Hakeem and said to them, I encountered this kind of problem. They will give me

\textsuperscript{25} Attract pupils attention
advice. They give me moral support to do this. The college don't give us financial support! They [college] don't provide instructional materials for us!

I am learning a lot; am learning that sometimes, some students can make you angry. Especially these children that are unruly as I said earlier, they can do things that will make you go haywire. So you just have to comport yourself. At times, you are asked to explain a topic; you go to the Internet and make your findings. We do periodic test, you are given assignments on what you have been taught in class. And after that they assess you by examination... So when you now do well, you see it in your result... When you are given an assignment, at times, they will mark it and give back to you through HOC [Head of Class] to see what you have done. Sometimes, if they don't do that, the lecturer will come to class [and say] that the test I gave you, most of you didn't do well. And you will now do the correction. 'This is what I expected you to do... So, when it comes out in the exam, you will know that, this is how to tackle it’... When you do the test, they mark it [and] give it back to you to see what you have done. At times, some lecturers come to class and call your marks... After we had finished the exam, they placed the results on the notice board or the information centre. So that is how you know the result of what you have done...

I think I should use the same way [our lecturers assesses] us with test and assignments [to assess my students]... When you give them home work to do, when they bring it the next day, you go through it one after the other. The ones that didn't do it well, you tell them: 'this is what I expected you to do. This is how to do it next time'. The ones that do it well... 'thumbs up for you. You can do more next time'. We also give students weekly test. We give them test on what we taught them for that week. So they have done only one exam. During their first term exam – I was there, So, I helped my co-teacher in conducting the exam, setting the question, marking and recording it. So it has really helped me a lot from the way we are being assessed there. So I just use that kind of method to assess my children.

School Observation is a course on its own. When we were in second semester of 100 Level, we did School Observation. We were sent to some schools to look at what they do there. And what we are going to check in that schools are: one, their method of teaching. Two, the atmosphere of the school, is it neat, is it dirty? Even the teachers, how regular are they in school? Maybe they are absent in the class or they abscond from their duty. So we have to assess them... And the children feedback, we even have to go and check the kind of instructional materials they have there in that school. What is being hung on the walls of the classrooms School observation course has helped me to develop my subject knowledge.

There are so many things that are not structured well. For example, the attitude of lecturers. Some lecturers boycott classes [and it] is not good. And some lecturers don't even

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26 Not in terms of research finding. This relates to what he finds when they are asked to write on a given topic.
care if you understand or not. I've seen a lecturer that when you ask questions on areas you
doesn't understand, they get angry. Then, what are they paid for? Some [lecturers] don't
even come to class. Some will just say, go and buy textbook and You start reading
textbook\[27\]. Some will just give you course outline and they would leave you all to yourself.
During examination\[28\], they will set your exam and you must pass. So, I think these are the
areas that are not good – that suffers in the NCE [National Certificate in Education]. They
need to be monitored by external supervisor from NCCE [National Commission for Colleges
of Education]. They (NCCE) [should] just come without informing them to look at what they
are doing. The ones that are good are doing their jobs...some are really doing their job. I
shouldn't say all of them. Some are really doing their jobs.

For example, Mr. Shoyode is really helpful. I don't like science because I was a
commercial student when I was in secondary school. On coming here, Mr. Shoyode made
me like science. So he's really doing his job; he's always there and his door is always open.
When you need anything, you ask...he's not even the HOD... He's really trying... but I will
not mention the names of those who are not trying. ...This has effect [on me] because, this
people we call our lecturers... are our mentors. We see them as our mentors. They are the
one that are supposed to break it down.

For example, in psychology, I've told you we have individual differences and the
way we learn. The level of how we acquire, store and retain knowledge is different. Some
[student teachers] can read, some can understand very well and can be able to retain it
[information] while some can't. But, when they see a lecturer that can put them through, it
[what they read] will store\[29\]... So it's really affecting some people. It is really having an effect
on me because I need them to tell me more at times especially mathematics. You know you
can't read mathematics on your own; the lecturer has to put you through. That's the reason
why some students find mathematics so dreadful... mentioning the name – Math alone!
They are urinating [on themselves]. That's one of the ways Mr. A not coming to class affects
us. We need them to be there to tell us what to do. You won't even meet some in their
offices to put you through...

I really want to teach. It has been my passion to teach ever since I was a kid. I
wrote my instinct and idea on anything I can see. I love to teach. I have loved it from the
beginning. I'm even the Tutorial Committee Chairman of my school of education. So I teach
tutorials to 100 level students. I have jobs being assigned to me by the president of the
School of Education. They knew I have the zeal to teach. It's what I really want to do. I am
pursuing a career in teaching and nothing else. I have an aunty as a teacher and I like the

\[27\] This implies that those lecturers do not attend class. They only provided the course outline and asked
the students to read up on their own.

\[28\] Despite the fact that these students were never taught, they were expected to sit for the exam.

\[29\] Students will learn
way she teaches. So my aunty used to help me. She's a primary school teacher. Ever since I came here, I've been reading her lesson notes. I'll take her lesson note and read them. So I've known how to write a lesson note even before coming here.

Commentary

Ortega is a 26 year old third year male student in college A. He is one of the student union executives and Chairman of the Tutorial Committee in the School of Education in College A. The tutorial committee organizes tutorial for students. It is the committee that Gio and Abayomi referred to in their accounts as being very helpful in their learning to teach experience. Being in the position of power as a union executive as well as the chairman of the Tutorial Committee arguably gave Ortega privileged access to the lecturers in the college and a slightly different perspective upon the system and its ways of working. Talk about Gio and Abayomi. He is one of those participants who show a passionate interest in teaching. His interest was kindled when he was a boy, in part as a result of having an aunty who was a teacher.

Ortega’s narrative gives a detailed account of the various practical teaching focused courses. He, together with other students, mentioned the micro teaching practical assessment, the passing of which was a requirement for teaching practice. The NCE programme handbook (see section 2.4) refers to this as a course but in practice the course is a one off assessment that lasts about 10 to 15 minutes (see Akiyemi’s account below). Failing or missing this assessment, carried with it the exceedingly harsh penalty of having to wait another full year before undertaking teaching practice. Ortega reported both positive and negative experiences of learning to teach. In terms of positive experiences, Ortega appreciated the fact that he was having a hands-on experience of teaching and instanced the ways he had modeled the practices and skills he learnt from the college. Contrary to the accounts of many students, his reporting of the assessment processes encountered, from some lecturers at least, is positive. He explained how his lecturers assessed his class and claimed that he used the same methods to assess his pupils, for example, he used formative and summative evaluation and questioning methods to inform his teaching. He also discovered the dynamics of teaching and realized that what worked in one situation might not work in another. He also noted that he learned how to control his emotions as a teacher. A science lecturer came in for some very
positive comment and the pastoral support offered by another two of his lecturers was also an important aspect of his positive experience at the college.

However, Ortega gave other instances of negative experiences with his learning. The major issue for him, in common with most participants, was the attitude of the lecturers. He noted that some lecturers did not care about their students and in fact, got upset when students asked for help. He reported that some lecturers did not turn up for lectures and when they did, they did not teach properly. Rather, they provided students with the course outline for the semester and asked them to read up on it. He noted that this attitude of lecturers impacted negatively on student teachers and affected their learning journey. Even as a student, Ortega was of the opinion that these lecturers were being irresponsible and lacked commitment to their work. He also understood the flaws of the quality assurance processes in the system and recommended that lecturers must be monitored and made accountable for their actions.

Ortega’s also noted what he saw as systemic failings in the support offered by the college, particularly for teaching practice. He complained of infrequent and unannounced supervisory visits. And, most especially, lack of resources and/or financial support offered by the college (and indeed the cooperating school) to provide students with necessary teaching materials for teaching practice. He was one of a number of the participants that revealed they had used their personal money to buy resources, in Ortega’s case items missing from the cooperating school’s first aid box.

**Akiyemi**

We pass through some stress being a first time [teacher]. That was why they instill in us to do microteaching for us to know the task ahead of us. So when we first of all did microteaching, though it was very different from teaching practice…[it] took us not more than 10 - 15 minutes when we teach people in the classroom. But in teaching practice, we experience a very different thing with very different individuals… For us, we are still integrating [in our teaching practice school]. It is a very rural area. So we find it very difficult to identify the [academic] ability of those students. In my class, for instance…if you ask me to pick the brilliant ones that can really catch up when you want to teach them, I can pick not more than three students out of 42 students I have! …When my external [supervisor] came, I discussed it with them... Most of their teachers are their [pupils] major problem! Because one, what do we call a formal education when we are using own local language to teach?

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30 Referring to the class teachers
That's the major problem they are having there. As I am now, if I want to teach them, will I first of all speak English? No, I will first of all speak in their native language before translating to English. Without that, am just saying blah..blah..blah to the students.

So in our first week, we didn't get that right and in about two to three weeks the HM [Head Master] now called us… We met with the HM and he told us to use the native language first before using English language. So with this in a day, they ought to be doing like five to six subjects but with their different level of understanding, we…normally do two or three subjects. Some students when you write on the board, it will take them hours to copy what is on the board… I teach primary three. From Primary one to Primary six are the same thing. There is no difference there. When we got there [school of teaching practice], they don’t have timetable. The teacher will just get into the class…same subject they treated [taught] last… that’s what they are going to do. The teachers only teach Math and English language. They can even repeat one subject or one topic for four days on Mathematics! So their problem is out of hand but the teachers are not competent; that is the only thing and the main reason.

When we got there, we were eight in numbers. I handled one class, some handled two, and some handled three. When I discovered that my co-operative teacher used to teach them Math and English only, I couldn't teach them that31. So I take on Social Studies and other subjects that they are not taking. I remember really that they taught us in the college that as a teacher you ought to observe your student to know those that are brilliant, those that are average and those that are low. So when we got there [school of practice], that was the system [strategy] we used when we teach. For example, if am teaching, I will go round, when am teaching, I will make their evaluation to see if this person is really following me or not. Then, what I observed again from what they taught us is that, if you are talking alone, the pupils will just be looking and they will lose their concentration. So we are encouraging them individually to perform some kind of things - throw questions to them. Not that they didn’t know it. But their language stops them from understanding you. Until you tell them in their own language they will now understand what you are talking [about]...

I still use one method that they taught us in the school, which is group learning. So in a class, most especially when I teach them passage32 reading, I discovered that these three students are the ones who can read fluently. I now call [them] –they made their seating arrangement like this – [using his hands to demonstrate a circle seating arrangement]. I put one student in the midst of the rest. Then [this] one student will read and they [other children in the group] will read after him/her. So, that is how am doing before I could get some pupil that read but they cannot finish it so I will back them up. When they are reading, they will get to a word and pause. So I will now ask one pupil that knows how to read everything to be

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31 He chose to teach them the subjects they haven’t been doing
32 Reading comprehension
putting them through\textsuperscript{33}. So, even those that are brilliant there, we discovered that they have been to private school before coming to that school. So they are the ones that are boosting the knowledge of the student they meet there. So that's the problem we are facing there...

My College could not offer any help because after we have started the teaching practice, we are not to come back to the school [college] for any purpose. Until our supervisor came to the school [college], then we discuss our problem with him or her before they put us through. We cannot come to the school [college] because if we come to the school [college] and one of our lecturers sees us, they will think we are joking with our teaching practice. [They would think] we are not participating [in the teaching practice], so we cannot leave the school premises. I don't have anybody or my lecturers’ contact in my phone but there is one thing Mr. Tee usually do... He made us to [learn how to use the] Internet. Anything … that is giving us difficulties, we can easily contact him through that... It's like WhatsApp. So, he made it a learning group. If we tell him, he will correct us immediately – which is very good. The last time my supervisor came... he discovered himself that the children are not...listening to what I am saying. They don't understand English. So when I applied Yoruba language, he was surprised that I am using Yoruba language but he saw that when I use Yoruba language their [pupils] response was in multitude. After the class, he credited me [and] he gave me kudos. For me to detect their weakness, he said I really tried...

What we learnt in the college corresponds with what I am doing in teaching practice. For example, one, they taught us [that] if you are teaching primary schools, you do not do the talking alone, you make it student centered. Number two, you start from known to unknown. Three, you must back your lesson with a concrete instructional materials which is colourful. As a teacher, the kind of teaching techniques you are going to use must be in demonstration or something like that. So I discover that there was a day I was teaching...I taught religion. So in my first lesson, I didn't make use of any instructional material. So they didn't get me so I went back and make some drawings and paintings. The next day I taught that same topic. When I showed them that instructional material, they now understood what I taught them last. I was the one doing the questioning and they gave me perfect answers. This happened [when] they were seeing the instructional materials showed to them. ...So [in] the college, we passed\textsuperscript{34} through some kind of course [called] Instructional materials. We can improvise if we cannot use our money to get it, we should think. We should have the ability to think and be creative… Without instructional materials, a lesson cannot be achieved. So if I didn't have anything to use as an instructional material, I will improvise. Improvisation matters a lot...

\textsuperscript{33} He asks the brighter students to help other students in their reading. Nigerian primary classroom promotes mixed ability

\textsuperscript{34} Were taught
I evaluate them before I introduce the lesson… In the middle of the lesson, I will still pause to evaluate. Because if you did not evaluate them at the middle of the lesson, it seems you are not even bothered if they understand the topic or not. If I finish, I will evaluate to summarise the whole thing [the lesson]. I learnt this here at the College of Education. There is a topic at our college that we [called] microteaching. They gave us some skills that we can use in the class. So evaluation is part of the topics in Microteaching course. We have practical and theory. In the theory aspect, we have some skills, which we can use to assess our students. They gave us all the strategies. We even have set induction. What you will do to gain the attention of the students is set induction. We have microteaching course in two aspects: the theory and the practical. We first of all do the theory [and] we [do] exam. Then [in] the practical, we carry out what we are being taught. So that leads to microteaching…

What I experienced in this college is that, one cannot be a student of this college and be doing anyhow or playing with your course. When we are in 200 levels, they make us to know that it is mandatory for us to pass microteaching. Because if you didn't pass micro teaching theory, you are not eligible to go for teaching practice. So with this fear, any 300 level student will tell [you] the course they did very well is micro teaching! They [college] said [that there is] no remedy for any student who fail [microteaching]. There is no partiality about that. If you fail the theory, no remedy! You will carry the course over; so you will wait for extra year. That is number one! The other one is [we] work hard because it is mandatory. For them to make it [compulsory] they know that for us to go for teaching practice, the theory is like evidence that these person knows what is going there to do. So if you fail it, that means you are not ready to go to teaching practice. And every student can see the importance of this microteaching; [it] really helps.

From there, the practical aspect gives us a little confidence before going to teaching practice. Because [we do it] in the midst of our mates. We taught each other. From there we are gaining some kind of confidence that we are going to take to teaching practice. When we get to the [teaching practice] school, before we go to the class, they [would] give us...a textbook to go through. That's why we are being given a lesson plan. We plan on how the lesson is going to be directed. We plan it. After planning the lesson note, even myself I do some practice because we must to follow everything we write in the lesson note. I could remember what my supervisor said [that] a teacher who does not prepare his or her lesson note cannot work very well in the class. He cannot not be stable; He will be going offline… I experienced it! One of my peers, he did not prepare, so his supervisor came all of a sudden! He didn't prepare his lesson plan so he was not able to operate very well. He was just going out of key\(^{35}\). We all know that he didn't prepare well. As a good teacher, you ought to

\(^{35}\) Out of point
prepare your lesson; go through it step by step because in our lesson note we have various objectives – What we expect the people to know at the end of the lesson. That is our main objective. If the pupils fail to know that, the lesson for that day has not been accomplished. So everything about a lesson must be followed step by step...

My statement goes on teaching because when our external supervisor came, she came from Ondo state. She asked us about what our experience in teaching. And I responded that teaching is very easy. She asked me what I saw that made me to say teaching was very easy [and] I say teaching is very easy because when I was in secondary school I said I cannot be a teacher! I cannot teach. Even I cannot stand in front of a crowd to express myself. But all of a sudden, I found myself in a college of education. So I found changes in me. All the things I was saying when I was in secondary school now changed. When she asked me my experience in teaching practice, I told her I experienced so many things because me as a person, I had a change in talking to somebody. Even in public, I can express myself very well. Even my communication skill changed. My self-confidence everything changed...

Is not easy o! To me, I will love to teach. But, what [I] am facing right now – what I have in mind doesn't relate to teaching. What I have in mind is very different from teaching. Because am a footballer and I play for the school [college] team and I have that in mind that this is a positive  way for me than teaching. I still think that I can teach but anyone God says should come my way I will do it...

Commentary

Akiyemi is a third year male student teacher in the college of education. He loves football and would prefer a career in football to teaching. He is one of the students that claim they are passionate about teaching but do not really want to teach. He did his teaching practice in a primary school located in a rural area and taught just primary three pupils (unlike some of his peers in the school who taught in two or even three classes). He was very concerned about the standards in the cooperating school, the quality of their staff and the effectiveness of their teaching and learning activities. Akiyemi claimed the school had no timetable and that in classes one to six the teachers mainly taught just two subjects - English and maths - rather than the five or six they were meant to teach.

The language of instruction, however, seemed to be Akiyemi’s main concern. According to the National Policy on Education, English language should

Football is a better career path for him
be the medium of instruction in school in primary four and above (section 1.5.1). Pupils in primary one to three, such as Akiyemi’s class, are expected to learn in their local language. However, the shock expressed in Akiyemi’s account of the pupils’ English language skills suggests that he may not have been aware of the language policy and was not prepared for moments like the one he experienced except when he and others was told by the head master – after two or three weeks of struggling with the language issue – that the pupils of the cooperating school did not speak nor understand Pidgin English let alone being proficient in English language. This exchange implied that the headmaster was not implementing the national language policy in his ‘very rural’ school and also, as noted above, that Akiyemi’s was not aware of the national language policy, meaning it was possibly not well integrated into the college’s primary education curriculum. Although the PES curriculum included some language courses, its purposes and objectives seem not be either well understood by the student teachers or by the lecturers, judging by the way one of Akiyemi’s supervisors responded to the revelation that his class did not speak or understand English.. Additionally, the language courses are undertaken in the second year when students would not know in which region, school or class they were to undertake their teaching practice, and hence which language capability they may need.

Notwithstanding, Akiyemi also had some very positive reflections on his experiences.. He noted that his micro teaching experience gave him the confidence he needed for the actual teaching practice. Although he claimed that micro teaching was very different from teaching practice in terms of time, commitment, learners and teaching, he strongly believed that the things he learnt while in the college ‘corresponded’ to the real classroom practices and he was able to apply those teaching theories to his classroom practices. One example of such was using the ‘group learning’ method he learnt from the college to teach his English reading class. Like Ortega, he implemented formative and summative assessment strategies he had learnt at college and also took from college the importance of concrete instructional materials; but unlike Ortega from the beginning he learnt to improvise rather than spend money buying materials for resources.

6.3. Summary

This chapter presented the findings from the student teachers’ interviews in a narrative form. The narratives portrayed the student teachers’ lived experiences of
their training and answered the research question: *How do the student teachers articulate their experiences of learning to teach?* Data were collected from 14 student teachers across the three years of the NCE programmes in two colleges of education and was analysed and presented as narrative accounts (see section 5.7). Six narratives out of the 14 narrative accounts have been presented in this chapter (see section 6.1), together with commentaries; the other eight are to be found in Appendix Seven. It is notable that those student teachers with previous teaching experience were more positive about their learning to teach experience than those without previous teaching experience and still sought a teaching career despite noting a number of challenges in their training. The narrative accounts presented in this chapter (and those in appendix seven) help to articulate the informal and formal practices, rules and other micro activities involved in the initial training of primary school teachers in Nigeria. It provided an understanding of how student teachers perceived their training – its strengths and weaknesses, its effectiveness, the challenges and dilemmas it presented. These issues are discussed further in Chapter Seven.
CHAPTER SEVEN

EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING TO TEACH: THEMES EMERGING

7.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the themes from the analysis of the issues, challenges and opportunities that emerged from the student teachers’ narrative accounts in Chapter Six and in appendix Seven. It answers the second research question: *What themes emerged in student teachers’ narratives about learning to teach?* And will draw on the narrative accounts to understand student teachers’ perspectives on their teacher training experience. Evidence and examples in the form of direct quotes from student teachers’ narrative accounts are cited, where necessary. I also discuss issues pertaining to specific colleges, where appropriate. This chapter is mainly data driven and portrays the ‘essence’ of student teachers’ lived experiences of learning to teach (Creswell, 2013). The analysis of student teachers’ narrative accounts suggested four broad themes.

The first theme relates to their motivation for registering on the course. This is important, in the light of the growing number of debates internationally on the quality and characteristics of teacher education candidates (section 3.3.2). The second theme relates to student teachers’ experiences of teaching and learning issues. This breaks down into three subthemes: teaching activities and the qualities and behaviours of their lecturers; the medium of instruction in both the college and school; and student voice. These are considered important because every teacher education system aims to develop and produce teachers who can deliver what Mourshed and Barber (2007) called ‘the best possible instruction for every child’ (p.5); hence, every activity should aim towards developing student teachers’ skills and knowledge of teaching. The third theme discusses student teachers’ perceptions of their practical teaching activities. These activities included school observation, micro teaching and the teaching practicum. The focus was to highlight the experiences (positive and negative) of taking part in these activities and to understand how their college based experiences had mediated these experiences. The fourth theme focuses on understanding how student teachers perceived and utilized the resources available to them.
7.2. Motivations for studying Primary Education Studies (PES)

An analysis of the student narratives suggested that student teachers were attracted to the course for various reasons and their narratives suggested that at some point in their decision to study PES, one or more factors below were considered and prioritised.

7.2.1. PES as an alternative choice for higher education

The data suggest that only four out of the 14 student participants chose to apply for PES; the other 10 student participants did not specifically apply to study primary education. They were studying the course as an alternative because they were not able to get on the course they had wanted: three of the students wanted to do secondary education while the remaining eight students wanted to do a (non-teaching-oriented) university course. All of the students in question had low grades in their university entrance exam (JAMB), and an NCE course seemed to be the only available option for access to a higher education qualification. The data implied that student teachers believed the college’s selection and recruitment process to be easier and more accommodating than that of the university. Since the entry requirements for the NCE are generally lower than the entry requirement for degree courses (see section 2.), most student teachers leverage this opportunity to acquire higher education. Although these 11 students did not meet the admission requirements for the degree course they had wanted, they did meet the NCE admission requirements.

However, the challenge here is not whether or not these students met the entry requirements; the problem lies with whether they are suitable as teacher candidates (see section 3.3.2). As noted above, only four out of the 14 students wanted to study primary teacher education. The PES course was offered to the rest of the students as an alternative option. Abayomi (section 6.2.1.) noted that,

Mostly it is because of the cut off mark of the department and over population in other departments, for example, business education, education technology etc. that people sees themselves in PES.

Fatima (6.2.1) gave one such example where the college, instead of rejecting an underqualified candidate, offered her the primary education course as an alternative:

Even my friend...did not choose PES [primary education studies]; it is not her desire. The college just chose it for her because, she wanted to study business administration and the college said that because she
does not have mathematics, she would not be able to study business education.

Although both Abayomi’s and Fatima’s comments above suggested that the college of education compels potential candidates to study PES, it is of course entirely within the candidate’s right to reject the offer.

In addition, Abayomi (section 6.2.1) spoke of his enrolment to primary education as an opportunity to be educated; while Bankole (appendix 7.6) and Doreen (section 6.2.2) indicated that they had limited choices for higher education and could not ‘afford’ to spend another year at home. The phrase ‘to avoid staying at home’ is commonly used to portray students’ desperation to secure higher education admission in Nigeria, as evidenced in Bankole’s comment:

* I have to start this NCE programme to avoid staying at home next year. I needed to start doing something before time runs out.

One interesting observation is how often student teachers justified their higher education choices as ‘God’s will’, destiny and ‘divinely prearranged’ rather than a personal decision. For example, Gio (appendix 7.1) stated,

* I didn’t apply for Primary Education course; I applied for business education. But maybe it is the way God wants it – that since I love children, I should be able to play with them, which was why I was given primary education.

Abayomi referred to his choice to study primary education studies as ‘fate’ because it was the only programme he could financially afford. Bankole believed that even though he never wanted to be a teacher, there was a reason that God had made [him] study primary education studies. This suggests a predisposition of the student teachers to invoke a conviction in ‘the will of god’ in respect to many of their experiences on the course and in life generally.

### 7.2.2. Higher education as a pathway to employment

Although colleges of education offer ‘certificate’ programmes, they are classified as tertiary (higher) institutions in Nigeria (see section 1.5.4). McCowan (2014) notes that ‘higher education is booming in Sub-Saharan Africa… [and] over the years the higher education system has been expanding at almost twice the global rate’ (p.2). This could be as a result of the common belief that higher education qualification guarantees better employment opportunities in Nigeria. Hence, ‘tertiary qualification is thought to be useful in only a formal sense (not because of what is to
be learnt, but because of the certificate obtained) as it is believed to open up opportunities for well-paid employment’ (Kuiper et al., 2007, p.10). This point is also evidenced in the data. Some student teachers’ accounts suggest that the NCE qualification serves as a pathway to the job market. For example, Yemi (appendix 7.3) claimed that the NCE qualification was not restricted to teachers in schools but could be used in any company. Paul (appendix 7.5) and Akiyemi (section 6.2.3) noted that even though they love teaching as a career, they would rather take up a different employment opportunity. Fatima (section 6.2.1) argued that some people just needed the NCE qualification to be a certified educationist:

Most people come to the college just to obtain a certificate that is higher than secondary school certificate. Some come to college so that they can get the certificate to establish a school...

Thus supporting Kuiper et al.’s claim above, the higher education course choices of many students are not driven by its academic benefits but rather, for the likelihood of using the qualification to gain employment. However, Bankole cautions that even a tertiary certificate is not a passport to the ‘job of your dreams’:

In Nigeria after...your tertiary education you find it hard to get job. Almost ninety seven to ninety eight percent of employed Nigerians are not working in their field. They do not have passion for what they are doing.

Makoni (2014 confirms that the ‘assumption that merely being a university graduate guarantees easy passage into the job market is not entirely true’. McCowan (2014) argues that the increase in the higher education population in Sub-Saharan Africa has affected the quality of its graduates. Hence, ‘employers across the region complain of a lack of basic, technical and transferable skills (McCowan, 2014, p.3). From this perspective, it can be argued that the student teachers are ignorant of what is obtainable in the labour market. McCowan (2014) argues that most of the time, graduates’ understanding of employment is ambiguous, and, just as Bankole noted above, ‘many of those in employment are not engaged in graduate level work, or are not in work that corresponds to their degree area’ (McCowan, 2014, p.5).

7.2.3. Influence of family and friends

Evidence from the data suggested that family and friends influenced eight out of the 14 student teachers’ higher education choices. Folu’s (section 6.2.2) elder sister and the Head teacher of the school where she had taught before enrolling on the course
encouraged her to apply for a primary education course, and Rebecca’s (appendix 7.4) account suggested that she was motivated by her father’s role as a teacher. The accounts also suggested that, in the light of their university grades, the advice received by other students, from family members, colleagues and friends, motivated them to enrol on the course. Maje’s (appendix 7.7) and Gio’s (appendix 7.1) mentor advised them to apply for the teaching course, and Yemi’s (appendix 7.3) mother and aunt advised her to use the college of education as a stepping stone to university education. The data also indicated how family and friends could also influence the admission process. Doreen (section 6.2.2) explained how the Dean of the course she had wanted to study connected her to the lecturer who helped her secure admission. Maje’s and Ade’s recruitment were facilitated by their parents’ contacts at the college of education as they made their entry application to the college after the application window had already closed as evidenced in Ade’s comment:

_The admission was about to end on Monday and I came on Sunday. My dad just remembered that he had someone (a friend) in this college... The person helped with my admission process and asked me to choose a course. So, that was how I was admitted in the school._

The evidence above indicates the extent of corruption in the system. It is likely that Ade’s admission eligibility was not properly investigated as she already had an insider who could facilitate the process.

### 7.3. Teaching and learning issues

Hirst (1971) argues that ‘the intention of all teaching activities is that of bringing about learning’ (p.9). Ramsden argues that learning in ‘educational institutions should be about changing the ways in which learners understand, or experience or conceptualise the world around them’ (Ramsden, 2003, p.6). This section discusses teaching and learning issues that emerged from student teachers’ narrative accounts.

#### 7.3.1. Teaching activities and qualities and behaviours of lecturers

Student teachers’ perceptions of the teaching activities and competence, qualities and behaviours of their lecturers were overall the most frequently occurring theme; they described them in various ways. Firstly, some student teachers (a minority) described a positive impact of some of their lecturers’ teaching behaviours. For example, Yemi (appendix 7.3) explained how the teaching approach of one of her lecturers enhanced her understanding of teaching practices and contributed to the
success of her school observation course. She also applauded the confidence and other great qualities of the lecturer:

This lecturer was always prepared. So when he comes he does not look at the textbook. He just writes the topic on the board and explains and whenever he is explaining and you check the textbook, they say the same thing. So I believe he is always prepared before coming to class.

Folu (section 6.2.2) and Rebecca (appendix 7.4) also gave a positive account of how one of their lecturers always made sure that they had a good understanding of what he was teaching:

One of my lecturers is very good. He normally focuses on people that were absent from the previous lesson. I think he is doing this so that we will know how to handle our pupils. (Folu)

An interesting notion of teaching and learning inherent in the narrative account of Doreen and Fatima is that they were being ‘taught’ and not ‘lectured to’. Doreen, for example noted: ‘they [lecturers] don’t lecture us in this school, they teach us. They start from the scratch so that we can understand’. This can be understood in the light of student-centred learning. A student-centred approach to teaching seeks to ‘actively involve the student in the learning process rather than allow the student to passively gather information from a delivered lecture in the more traditional “sage on the stage” method of instruction’ (Slunt and Giancarlo, 2004, p.985). However, it is not clear whether Doreen’s comment related to the (teaching specific) departmental courses or the faculty general courses. Possibly the former, because Doreen’s later comments contradict her initial statement:

We don’t get to see our lecturers often. We have some courses that we’ve not started at all and it happened last semester. It was at the dying minute that we saw the lecturer and the lecturer was even blaming us that we did not look for her.

The overwhelming weight of evidence in the data set, however, suggested many negative experiences with teaching activities especially with issues related to the delivery of lectures of the general courses. In the college of education, courses are classified into departmental and general courses (section 2.5). The data suggested that the delivery of general courses was relatively poor. Evidence from the data suggested a more positive experience in departmental courses than in general courses. For example, Fatima distinguished between her experiences of the departmental and general courses:
Departmental courses are going on well. It is just the general courses that the lecturers are not always available.

Yemi’s (appendix 7.4) account suggested that often the general courses were never delivered and in such cases lecturers usually returned before the exam to give students specific readings from which they would assess them:

Some lecturers don’t come to class. But when they come, they will explain a little. But it is only that little they taught us they will ask during exam. They don’t go beyond what they had explained...

The above evidence suggests that lecturers’ lack of commitment to teaching student teachers. Ortega questioned some lecturers’ behaviour towards student teachers:

Some lecturers don't even care if you understand or not. I've seen a lecturer that when you ask questions on areas you don't understand they get angry. Then, what are they paid for?

The implication of these teaching behaviours is that the student teachers would not have access to key aspects of the PES course because some lecturers did not deliver their courses and did not offer the necessary support. The student teachers consequently would be less likely to be motivated to read up on these courses. Hence, their knowledge base of teaching would be limited. Ortega (section 6.2.3) noted that,

Some [student teachers] can read, some can understand very well and can be able to store and retain it [information] while some can’t. But, when they see a lecturer that can put them through, it [what they read] will store.

Another issue relates to the inability to model lecturers’ teaching strategies, which do not portray the ideal teaching experience for student teachers. I, for example, observed a home economics lecture in which the lecturer introduced a new topic and then asked the students to write on the topic without offering any form of introduction. Then she left the room to chat with her colleague in the next room. She came back after 45 minutes to end the class without explaining or initiating a discussion on the said topic. Whether student teachers’ answers to the given task were correct, useful or aligned to the course objective seemed to be of little interest to the lecturers. The interesting point to take from this personal anecdote is that the lecturer’s behaviour was not moderated even though an observer, known to be a researcher from the UK, was in the room; leading one to the conclusion that the lecturer thought this entirely normal and appropriate teaching behaviour. Evidence
from the data also suggested that student teachers often believed that experiences like the one described above were appropriate and even positive. For example, Ortega said,

\[ At \ times, \ you \ [students] \ are \ asked \ to \ explain \ a \ topic; \ you \ [students] \ just \ go \ to \ the \ Internet \ and \ make \ your \ findings. \]

The comment above could be read as meaning that this approach was useful in developing student teachers’ enquiry and research skills, but Ortega’s later comments suggested that he thought this approach did not always facilitate an effective learning experience:

\[ I \ need \ them \ to \ tell \ me \ more \ at \ times \ especially \ mathematics. \ You \ know \ you \ can't \ read \ mathematics \ on \ your \ own; \ the \ lecturer \ has \ to \ put \ you \ through. \]

More so, Ortega expressed dissatisfaction with the attitude of some of his lecturers toward teaching and learning. He mentioned that many lecturers did not come to classes and, therefore, did not execute the job they were paid for. He added that some lecturers just made the students buy textbooks and read them without teaching the content:

\[ Some \ will \ just \ give \ you \ course \ outline \ and \ they \ would \ leave \ you \ all \ to \ yourself. \ During \ examination, \ they \ will \ set \ your \ exam \ and \ you \ must \ pass. \]

Fatima and Abayomi also indicated that the teaching behaviour of some of their lecturers did not motivate them. Fatima explained,

\[ There \ are \ lecturers \ that \ are \ good; \ but \ there \ are \ others \ that \ we \ just \ manage \ to \ attend \ their \ lectures... \ They \ don't \ have \ passion \ to \ teach \ us. \ It \ is \ as \ if \ they \ are \ forced \ to \ teach \ us. \]

Abayomi mentioned that at times he got bored in class, not because he did not like the course but because of the lecturer’s teaching approach. He then concluded: ‘the way they [lecturers] approach us determines the way we are going to listen to what they have to say’.

7.3.2. Medium of instruction

Student narratives have indicated some issues with the language used to teach primary education studies. English language is officially the second language in Nigeria and also the Nigeria’s official language (see section 1.5). In the Nigerian education system, English language is the official medium of instruction from primary four. This is mainly because the school population in Nigeria speaks
diverse languages, even in relatively local communities; therefore, using any language of instruction other than English language is problematic. It is expected that all teachers and lecturers have a good command of English language. However, data suggests that lecturers in the colleges taught in both English and local language, as evidenced in Doreen’s comment:

_They [lecturers] teach in Yoruba and English language so that we won’t have problems – it won’t be like ahah! they didn’t teach us very well._

Although for Doreen, using both languages enabled effective understanding of the subject matter; its implications for the education system are complex. First, the language policy is inefficiently implemented, as it is considered unacceptable to teach in a language other than English, especially in higher education. The national policy on education states that from the fourth year of primary school upwards, ‘English shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction and the language of immediate environment shall be taught as subjects’ (FGN, 2004, p.16). Second, using a local language as a medium of instruction in the college of education not only breaks the language policy, it also affects student teachers’ grasp of the English language. Typical examples of extremely poor grasp of the English language can be found in the individual student teacher’s narrative accounts in Chapter Six and in Appendix 7 (eg Paul and Abimbola). Additionally, a number of prospective participants could not be included in the study because their English language skills were too poor (see section 5.3). However, it seems more likely that the lecturers did not have a good command of English themselves. For example, I could not share the data from one of the lecturers I interviewed because of her poor command of English language (see section 5.3.4). Such a lecturer might not be able to properly teach her course using English. Third, primary school teachers are generalists in Nigeria. This means that not only do they have to teach all primary subjects using the medium of English but also teach English as a subject. However, as argued earlier, the student teachers are not all good, or even competent in their spoken English, let alone written English; hence, they might not be able to teach effectively the English subject content.

Moreover, as already noted above, the national policy on education requires the native (local) language as the medium of instruction for Primary One to Three. However, the teacher education curriculum is not specific and clear on this language policy. PED 118 is a mandatory PES course that
requires student teachers to learn one of the three main Nigerian languages as part of their training (see appendix 2.3). The purpose of this course is to enable student teachers demonstrate knowledge of the language they have chosen to learn. However, as evidenced in Akiyemi (section 6.2.3) and Abimbola (appendix 7.6) accounts, the purpose and implication of the language course seemed not to be fully explained to the student teachers. Their accounts suggested that they were unaware of the policy that expects them to teach using local language if they teach in Primary One to Three. Hence, Akiyemi and Paul (who happened to be able to speak Yoruba) experienced a reality shock over the inability of most of the pupils to understand the English language.

_We met with the HM and he told us to use the native language first before using English language... I teach primary three. From Primary one to Primary six are the same thing. There is no difference there..._

The inability of the pupils to understand, communicate and learn through the medium of English could be explained in three ways. First, the cooperative school is located in a predominantly Yoruba-speaking rural area. Second, the parents of these children may not have attended school, hence would be unlikely to be able to speak English and thus the pupils may not have the opportunity communicate in English language at home. Third, the school is substandard and does not have quality teachers; hence, the teachers themselves might not have good grasp of English language. Akiyemi’s opinion was that the most of the teachers in this school were not ‘competent’. He added

_When we got there [school of teaching practice]... they don't have timetable. The teacher will just get into a class...same subject they treated [taught] last... that's what they are going to teach._

This raises issues about the quality of cooperating schools that student teachers do teaching practice. The data suggested that student teachers have total freedom to choose any school for teaching practice. Paul noted that,

_There are some substandard schools, which you cannot choose. By the time...we've chosen the school [and] have submitted the form, our teaching practice directorate...would go to each school. So that if the school you have chosen is not qualified enough, you are not going to be assigned to that school._
However, it is not clear from the statement above on what the criteria that qualify a primary school as a teaching practice school are and how the college ensure the consistency of the teaching practice experience across the different cooperative schools chosen by student teachers. Although the NCE handbook states that ‘cooperating schools should be surveyed and contacted before student-teachers are posted to them’ (NCCE, 2012), it is merely for the purpose of rapport between the college and the cooperating schools. There is no evidence from the NCE handbook that the quality of the cooperative school is assessed.

7.3.3. Student voice

The data indicated no appreciation of the value of student voice in the teaching and learning process, even at the most basic of levels, let alone regarding empowering students or involving them in decision-making. There was no opportunity for student teachers to express freely their confusion or opinions concerning their learning. Students generally did not get the opportunity, or were not sufficiently bold, to express their dissatisfaction or suggestions for improvement within their programme. Even when such opportunities arose, the fear of being punished stopped them from speaking up, as evidenced in Doreen’s account (section 6.2.2):

*Here in this school, we don’t speak out; we don’t have right, they don’t give us opportunity to voice out our problems and express our feelings... If you stand up to say anything the lecturer will deal with you his or her own way.*

The implication of the evidence above is that instead of criticising or questioning the system’s practices, student teachers accept and absorb whatever they are told, even when they feel it is wrong. The danger of this is that student teachers are likely to become passive learners and just focus on ‘how to please lecturers and gain high marks’ (Ramsden, 2003, p.8) rather than focusing on learning the subject content. It could be argued, however, that this relates to the sociocultural values in which teaching and learning in Nigeria are embedded. In most African schools, students learn by ‘carrying out orders from the teacher’ (Tabulawa, 1997, p.201). They are expected to conform to all instructions, even when the order seems inappropriate or meaningless. Asking questions that challenge or interrupt an elder or someone in a position of power is considered disrespectful and unacceptable. This value has been
and is being passed on from generation to generation, and it affects student-teacher interactions in schools.

Secondly, there are power-related issues, especially with the interactions between student teachers and the lecturers. The data suggested that student teachers do not have adequate access to, or a good rapport with, some of their lecturers. This is evident in Gio’s observation that she would prefer to seek her fellow student teachers’ support because

“When you go to a lecturer...they will tell you “but I taught you in the class, I don’t have the time now. I have one thing or the other that am doing”... Then he or she will just go away.”

Although Bankole described his lecturers as ‘friendly’ and ‘easy going’, he also preferred to go to his seniors, who were always accessible and available at any time to help him with any challenges he was having in his studies. There seems to be ‘fear’ among the student teachers that stops them from reaching out for their lecturers, even when they have the opportunity to do so. This point also manifested during data collection, when about 42 percent of the student teachers recruited for the study withdrew, as they were afraid that they would be penalized for their views. From the evidence above, it is clear that Gio and Bankole are anxious about discussing their challenges with the lecturers; instead of seeing this as a challenge, they believed that seeking peer support is part of their training.

### 7.3.4. Assessment and feedback

Student narratives suggested that the process of assessing student teachers was somewhat vague. The process was neither regulated nor monitored; hence, each lecturer adopted procedure(s) and criteria that suited them and their course units. Evidence from the data suggested that what was assessed and how it was assessed was entirely based on the lecturer’s discretion. The lecturers assessed students’ learning in various ways without being open about what counted towards the students’ final grade. For example, Abayomi noted,

> we were already told that we will be having test so when he came in he just said ... ok everybody just tear a piece of paper...he just said we should write our name, the course we are doing and our departments - so that was the test.

In addition, student narratives indicated some discrepancy between what was being learned and what was being assessed. Yemi noted,
He [lecturer] would ask us to throw tennis ball into one basket... The lecturer will keep five small balls and a basket in front of you and ask you to throw the balls into the basket. So, your score depends on how many you are able to throw into the basket. Like the one we did yesterday, I was able to throw one out of the five balls into the basket and my score was one over five.

From the evidence above, it seemed that the lecturer was evaluating the extent to which the course objective was achieved. The course aimed to train the student teachers how to ‘teach, coach and officiate sports and games using different methods of teaching physical education in the primary school’ (NCCE, 2011a, p.12). Although Yemi recognised the lecturer’s assessment strategy as a ‘practical approach’ to assessment, the assessment seemed to focus only on the students’ mastery of a specific sport skill rather than focusing on how the student teachers were developing the skills required to teach physical education as a subject in primary schools.

The variable assessment strategies highlighted above, it could be argued, resulted from the lack of principles and guidance on assessment and feedback in the NCE handbook in Nigeria. The NCE programme handbook course objectives, course contents and topics, and mode of teaching as well as the course units (also see section 2.3), but there was no guidance on how each course should be assessed. Hence, lecturers are free to do what they want, as they have no requirement to ascertain the extent to which the objective of the course is achieved or to evaluate their own assessment strategies.

Furthermore, student teachers’ narratives indicate some dissonances with the feedback processes. While some students are happy with the feedback they receive, others indicated that they receive little or no feedback. Fatima observed, 

At times after submitting their work the lecturer will ask us to write our name. When we write our name, she will give us four over ten despite our efforts. We do not know why we have four over ten.

The absence of assessment feedback in student teachers’ learning journeys is problematic as they are not able to identify their improvement needs, as evidenced in this comment:

Since I have been in the college, I have not seen the score of any test that I have written... I have been in the College for four months and we will be sitting for exam next month. I have not seen the scores of any test I have done. I haven’t been told my weak points – I do not know the area of my study that needs improvement but we have been doing test. (Abayomi)
Doreen complained that it could be up to a year before student teachers saw their results; in the meantime they were expected to attend courses and retake failed exams. In most cases, students did not get the chance to re-sit the examinations, as they did not see their results in time. Doreen explained that the delayed turnaround of their results did nothing to encourage effective teaching and learning practice:

*We don’t see our result on time; some people here have carryovers but they don’t know the courses they are carrying over. If exam is to start now, they do not know the courses they need to retake.*

### 7.4. Teaching practice experience

Zeichner (2002) emphasises ‘student teaching as a critical aspect of preservice teacher education’ (p.59) as it provides hands-on learning of the art of teaching for student teachers. Student teachers reported that their teaching practical courses introduced them to classroom realities. It gave them opportunity to extend their skills and knowledge to a real classroom. As discussed in section 2.4, the PES curriculum is organized in such a way that student teachers observe classroom teaching in their first year, do micro teaching in the second year, and then experience teaching practice in the third year. The school observation course helps ‘student teachers to understand some of this classroom practices’ (Rebecca). Abimbola intended to leverage the school observation exercise to check whether the teaching strategies of classroom teachers corresponded to what he had learned from the college:

*You are to observe... [whether] the teacher is really teaching them or not... we also check to know if they are using the syllabus. Some teachers will just say - look I am tired, ’let me just give them anyhow work’. You have to observe them to know whether the teacher is well [and] neatly dressed; whether he is outspoken...And if he is wrong.*

The data above positions Abimbola as an assessor rather than a learner. However, this could relate to the objective as well as the assessment procedure of the course in which student teachers are expected to ‘explain effective methods use by the teacher in managing his/her class’ (NCCE, 2009, p.18). Setting aside the conflicted situation in which this places the student teacher reporting on his host teacher. The features that Abimbola has been primed to observe are not ‘effective methods of managing his/her class’ but personal characteristics.
The microteaching aims to give second year students the opportunity to observe and take part in practical teaching (NCCE, 2009). Folu noted that, Microteaching enables you to know the different methods you can use to teach the pupils and it teaches you how to use instructional materials in school.

Microteaching is organised as two courses across the two semesters in the second year: namely, theory and practical. This organisation should allow for a smooth transition from theory to practice. Rebecca elaborated the difference between the micro teaching practical and micro teaching theory course:

We do exam on the theory part of microteaching but in the practical part, you will teach your colleagues while your lecturer observes you. During the practical, you will teach your fellow students as if they are your pupils. The idea is that when you get to the main school, you will be able to do it very well.

The evidence above complements the objective of the course which is to allow student teachers to ‘take active role in supporting the teacher [their fellow students and be able] to plan a series of lessons in one subject that show progression and reflect children’s learning’ (NCCE, 2009, p.20). With this definition, one would expect an ongoing activity where student teachers’ teaching skills and ability to plan lessons are progressively reviewed. However, Folu’s comment below indicated that it is in fact a one-off assessment:

In the practical part, I will be asked to come out to teach my fellow students as if am teaching primary school pupils. So my lecturer is going to be there, he will observe the way I am teaching and at the end, score my performance.

After micro teaching courses, student teachers do a six-month teaching placement as part of their course. This is organised to take place in the first half of their third year, which runs from mid-September to April and covers two academic terms in the primary school. Although they have already done two practical courses in their first and second year of study, student teachers acknowledge that both microteaching and school observation course differ significantly from practicum. They indicated that practicum gives them a clearer perspective of a real life classroom teaching and presents more challenges than the school observation and micro teaching courses:

There are more challenges in teaching practice than in the microteaching practical. For example, when I was doing
microteaching practical, I never even think about going to school to use Yoruba [language] to explain anything to anybody. (Paul)

However, the overarching dilemma in the student teachers’ practical experience concerns if and how student teachers are able to apply their college learning to practice. The data suggested that some students end up teaching subjects or age phases for which they are not trained; although again there was no awareness on the part of the students as to how this came about. For example, Maje noted that she taught KG 2 instead of primary school. The impact of this arrangement is that student teachers are not likely to connect their knowledge base with their present classroom as the two curriculums differ significantly. Both the student and the cooperative teachers also have a serious dilemma regarding the nature of support required. Kuiper et al. (2008) recognizes this as one of the major theory and practice issues in teacher education in Nigeria. They argue that most teachers in Nigeria do not teach in their area of specialization.

More so, the data indicated a disjointed relationship between the colleges of education and the cooperating schools. One would expect the two learning settings (cooperating school and college) to collaborate on students’ practical learning. However, the data implied that the practice schools only provided the platform for teaching practice, and the cooperating teachers were involved in only a limited way in the student teachers’ practicums. The organization and assessment of student teachers during teaching practice exercise were reported to be mainly the responsibility of lecturers. Paul’s narrative suggested that the cooperating teacher’s major role is to sign student teachers’ lesson notes.

_There is a space in the teaching practice booklet that co-operating teacher sign before the supervisor [signs] but the assistance HM signs it because they believe that there are some co-operative teachers that their lesson note is not ‘that’ effective._

In NCE, cooperating teachers are expected to be the first assessors of student teachers. They are meant to sign off the students’ lesson planning notes to indicate they approve the lesson note. But as noted in Paul’s comment above, it seems that the head teachers do not even believe that cooperating teachers have the capacity to mentor student teachers (see also 8.6.3).

Furthermore, student teachers reported a lack of support from cooperating teachers. Ade, Paul and Akiyemi claimed that they waited for their lecturers to

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37 KG pupils are meant to be taught by Early Childhood and childcare education teachers.
provide the required support. However, Akiyemi as noted earlier in section 7.3.2, argued that the cooperating teachers in the school where he did his teaching practice are not competent; hence, they might not be in the position to offer the necessary support. Ade also pointed out that her cooperative teachers neither mentored nor supported her:

They never encouraged us or corrected us. They only looked for the slightest opportunity to insult us. They don’t call us for one-on-one meeting to correct us, instead they always talk about our mistakes in general meetings.

The experiences reported above do not align with the expectation of the programme. It is stated in the NCE programme handbook that ‘cooperating schools shall provide continued guidance to the student teachers during the exercise’ (NCCE, 2011, p.8), but importantly, not what this guidance should involve, so in effect this does not happen.

7.5. Learning resources

As ‘learning to teach requires that new teachers be able to understand and respond to the dense and multifaceted nature of the classroom’ (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p.6), teaching environments should provide learning opportunities that enable active learning experiences into which student teachers can integrate the knowledge in their own classroom practice. One of the many ways of creating effective learning opportunities is by providing adequate learning resources. Learning resources are conceptualised in this study as physical or nonphysical materials that assist student teachers in their learning. This could be finance, human, equipment, software, text and so on. The data suggested insufficient learning resources at both the co-operating schools and the college of education. Firstly, student teachers noted limited teaching materials for both staff and student teachers at the co-operating schools. Instructional materials and textbooks were not readily available and there was no financial support to enable the students provide the required instructional materials. For example, Ortega noted,

We have to source for books ourselves at times, we buy it – I mean our instructional materials. For example, I had wanted to teach ‘first aid’ one day, and you know I needed first aid box. I went to the office of the headmaster to get the box but there were no drugs in the first aid box. Only the ‘empty’ box is there...The contents were not there. I had to go and buy some of the contents with my money to show the pupils. Moreover, instruction material is not what one supposed to spend
money on. The school should provide them. But in this case, it was not there.

Secondly, the data suggested limited access to internet facilities and computers. There seems to be increased emphasis on the use of internet for learning in the college of education in which student teachers are expected to do to their assignments and other related tasks using the computer and at times, on the internet:

*when we go to lecture halls for classes, they will tell you this days, you don’t have to write assignment on paper, you have to go online, surf the net... So that means they are teaching us how to use the computer.*  
(Gio)

Although this is a welcome development as it enhances student teachers’ information technology (IT) skills, which are required to fit into the dynamic world of education, it is an expensive process for student teachers. The college owned few computers, which tended to be outdated; hence, student teachers were not able to utilize them. The students reported that they spend money at the cybercafé to have their work typed and printed to be able to meet with the assessment requirements. This is expensive for student teachers, as they do not get any bursary or financial support from the college or the government, as evidenced in Fatima’s comment:

*The assignment they give involves huge money. They ask us to go to internet to find out some information. After getting the information, we start typing it; print it and spiral bind it. All these involve money.*

This is worrying because the teachers’ knowledge of information and computer technology is well integrated and recognised in the objective and the curriculum of teacher education in Nigeria (section 2.4). There are four information technology courses in the curriculum (see appendices 6.1 – 6.4). These courses are meant to teach student teachers about computers, technologies and their applications to classroom settings. But the technologies and computers are not readily available. Bankole (appendix 7.2) is concerned about the lack of up to date technology in the colleges of education as it has been argued that the use of ‘modern teaching materials offer contemporary learning experiences’ (Okobia, 2011, p.90). He noted in his account that there was no ‘steady power’ (constant electricity supply) in the college or even projectors in the college except for a few lecturers who attended class with their personal iPad or laptops. Hence, lecturers’ notes were written on black board from which student teachers copied (Kuiper et al., 2008). This also reflects lack of alignment between the course objectives and teaching activities (section 7.3). Despite requiring physical and technological equipment for effective
teaching of the courses mentioned above, it can be inferred from this study that there is no such equipment in the college. Therefore, it is not unlikely that the student teachers will struggle to use them in their own teaching, as they do not have experience or knowledge of how to use them.

7.6. Summary

In this chapter, I have presented and discussed the four key themes that emerged from student teachers’ narrative accounts. The themes evident in synergies that emerged across the student teacher data set indicated the types of challenges, dilemmas and dissonances that students encountered in their college and practicum experiences. The first theme centred on events that motivated student teachers to study teaching and particularly primary education. The data suggested that student teachers’ eagerness to obtain a higher education qualification and eventually to secure a job influenced their decision to study PES. Since most of the student teachers did not qualify to enrol for their first choice of higher education course, the NCE became an alternate option. Data also suggested that student teachers’ motivation was in some cases influenced by the advice of family members and friends.

The second theme centred on the teaching and learning experiences of student teachers. This theme had four sub-themes. One of the most discussed sub-themes related to student teachers’ perceptions of their lecturers’ teaching competences and behaviours. Issues surrounding the medium of instruction in the college of education and its implication for the students’ teaching practice were also highlighted; this raised concerns about the consistency of teaching experience across the system. Data also suggested that there was lack of student voice in the process of training teachers. Data also suggested that there was an absence of student voice throughout the teaching, learning and assessment processes. The power dynamic inherent in the system indicated a lack of rapport which in some cases amounted to abuse of power between student teachers and their lecturers. The final sub-theme, assessment and feedback, was also a matter of great concern to the student teachers. They argued that the assessment and feedback process was inconsistent, lacked transparency, and was primarily summative. A noted consequence of this was student teachers were not able to observe a mode of effective assessment practice and particularly formative assessment of learning, from which to learn.
The third theme related to teaching practice activities. Students’ narrative accounts suggested that their experiences had not been very productive in working towards the realisation of the objective of the teaching practice. The evidence indicated that the organisational and interpersonal relationships between college and teaching practice school was generally quite dysfunctional, the roles of the various stakeholders in supporting and assessing the students ill-defined and even less well understood by individuals. The fourth theme focused on experiences of interactions with learning resources, both in school and in college; this again proved a significant challenge in many ways in both settings.

Each of the themes discussed in this chapter raised significant issues regarding the overall process of training primary teachers. These issues will be discussed further in Chapter Eight using the tenets of activity theory, set out in Chapter Four, and-with reference to literature reviewed in Chapter Three.
CHAPTER EIGHT

ANALYSIS OF LEARNING TO TEACH IN NIGERIA

8.1. Introduction

As evident in the literature reviewed in Chapter Three, teacher education programmes are ‘embedded in institutional contexts that are important in shaping not only what happens, but also why and how’ (Loughran et al., 2008, p.407). This chapter will build on the themes that emerged in Chapter Seven and employ activity theory (see Chapter Four) to address the third and overarching research question: How do the processes, policies and practices of the initial teacher education system in Nigeria mediate primary student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach? In activity theory terms, the chapter focuses on how the subject (student teachers) of the activity relates to the entire system. It discusses how the object (learning to teach), tools (curriculum, practical teaching, and assessment), division of labour (roles of the members), rules (policies and norms) and the teacher education community mediate student teachers’ experiences of learning to become teachers.

Specifically, Primary Education Studies (PES) was conceptualised as the activity system as it represents the social context in which student teachers’ learning of the art of teaching (the activity) was situated (see chapter Four). The training was located in two settings – the college of education and the cooperating school. These two learning settings represent the community in which student teachers (subjects) learn to teach (object) in order to become primary school teachers (outcome). Student teachers are exposed to the curriculum, teaching and learning activities as well assessment activities (tools) that facilitate their learning. Each member of the community has roles to play (division of labour) towards the activity. These roles are governed by the policy, beliefs and norms (rules) of the course and that of the National Certificate in Education (NCE).

In contrast to Chapter Seven, this chapter is not so data driven. It builds on the issues identified from the student teacher data in Chapter Seven and uses information from the head teachers, lecturers and cooperative teachers to develop a contextual understanding of the systemic issues. This is because the success of a system does not depend on any single individual; rather, it depends on both the
individuals and the context in which the activity is embedded (Biggs, 1996). Activity theory enables an understanding of how the social context and the learning environment – its members, policies and practices – influence learning outcomes (this is described in detail in Chapter Four).

8.2. The Subject of the activity

The subject of the activity system refers to the individual or group of individuals whose perspectives are being researched (Barab, Schatz and Scheckler, 2004; Jonnassen, 2000). As this study was mainly drawn from the student teachers’ perspective, they (student teachers) were conceived as the subjects in this study. Individually, each student teacher’s account (see section 6.2.1 -6.2.3 and appendices 7.1 -7.8) depicts their personal views about their learning to teach experiences. When taken collectively, the experiences shared some commonalities that enabled an understanding of how the policies, practices and process of the teacher education programme influenced the actualization of its purpose(s). One of the key characteristic features of the subject of an activity system – especially when it comprised of group of individuals - is that, despite working towards a shared object, their actions and purposes for engaging in the activity often differ (Virkkunen and Kuutti, 2000). This characteristic was manifested in this study in the way that the student teachers’ motivation for studying PES varied. Eleven out of the 14 student teachers who were recruited into PES, did not want a career in primary teaching. They were attracted to the NCE programme because they could not get admission to study their preferred courses but met the criteria to study at NCE level (see section 7.2.1). It was also widely believed, and advised by family members and friends, that studying PES would increase the possibility of their getting a good job (out of teaching). And this also informed their motivation for studying PES (see section 8.2). This was argued to result from poor social status of the teaching profession, and particularly primary education in Nigeria, where it is ranked among the lowest of professional careers (section 3.3.1). However, the NCE qualification, on the other hand, is seen to be a stepping stone onto other higher education courses and other professions because of the common belief that any higher education qualification obtained creates opportunity for better employment (Kuiper et al., 2008).

Jonassen and Rohere-Murphey (1999) and Kuutti (1995) noted that motives are usually pre-planned. However, the motives are ‘not rigid or accurate
descriptions of the intended action, but rather are always incomplete and tentative’ (Jonassen and Rohere-Murphey, 1999, p. 65). This is particularly apposite for the subjects of this study whose plan to study PES is tentative and would change if a better opportunity had presented itself. The inefficient selection process tends to attract a range of applicants who are less interested in the course (Ejieh, 2005) than the qualification they would obtain at the end of it. Interestingly, some of the student teachers implied this in their narrative accounts. Paul, for instance, noted that he loves to teach but would prefer to work in an organisation where he would be better paid. Akiyemi reported that he would prefer to be a footballer than to be a teacher. These students know that the people who work in many other career categories are better paid and have higher status than teachers, as noted by Bankole below:

In Nigeria the government is not really commending teachers. Teachers are not recognised in the society compared to doctors, lawyers and engineers. The government should at least give teachers extra attention, improve their social status so people will have the zeal, and be enticed to teaching job. (Bankole)

Moreover, the admission process is mostly academic based (section 2.6); there is no evidence in the NCE handbook that student teachers’ dispositions and motivations should be considered as part of the selection process. The importance of evaluating student teachers’ dispositions during the selection process was highlighted in section 3.3.2 and was extensively discussed in the literature (for example, Harrison et al., 2006; Casey and Childs, 2011). Teacher education systems that are perceived to be effective – for instance, the Singaporean system (section 3.3) – follow procedures that enable a thorough scrutiny of the prospective teacher candidates and recruiters are able to make an informed decision. Darling-Hammond and Rothman (2011) note that ‘countries with effective teacher education models do not only recruit able candidates, they also screen them carefully to ensure that they have the attributes that make teachers effective’ (p.4). In the systems that Darling-Hammond and Rothman described above, a teaching career is attractive and competitive and therefore would attract more qualified prospective candidates (section 2.4.2). In the Nigerian context, however, unemployment is high; and hence, studying for a teaching course is viewed as one of the easiest access routes to the job market as a whole (Kuiper et al., 2008). The implication of this is that it is
difficult to foresee the contradictory motives of some of these prospective teacher candidates.

From an activity theory perspective, the tensions have been generated from within the system. First, the National Policy on Education (2004) stated that primary education is the ‘key to the success or failure of the whole [Nigerian] system’ (p.14); yet, the community of the Primary education system seems to comprise of individuals from the lowest academic status. The primary schools are staffed by teachers with the lowest higher education qualification in Nigeria as the entry requirement for PES and in fact for teacher education courses generally are relatively lower than the entry requirements for other courses (see appendix 8). In 2017, the official UTME cut-off mark for university entrance was reduced further from 180 to 120. This went down to 100 marks for colleges of education (Vanguard online, 2017). The implication of this is that the teacher education system in Nigeria will continue to attract prospective candidates from the lower academic performing categories (Avonseh, 1992).

8.3. The Tools of the activity system

Tools refer to the artefacts (tangible or intangible) that aid in transforming the object to outcome. They are used to transform an object of an activity into an outcome (see section 4.4.3). Jonassen (2000) argues that the subjects’ interactions with the tools of an activity shape how they perceive the activity. Hence, an ineffective ‘tool can alter the activity [adversely]’ (Jonassen, 2000, p. 7) and in turn can affect the overall outcome of the activity system. The following discussion centres on the different tools identified in this study and on how these tools facilitate or constraint effective teacher outcomes (Hasan and Kazlauskas, 2011). The four major tools identified were discussed below:

8.3.1. Teaching and learning practices

The Curriculum
The curriculum as noted in section 3.5 is comprised of the knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn through their daily teaching and learning experience. This makes curriculum an important tool in the teacher education system. Cuban’s (1995) framework provided insight into the different ways through which the curriculum can be effectively embraced and implemented (see also section 3.5). Even though the curriculum is usually produced as just one official document,
teachers’ ability to modify the content to suit their students’ learning needs defines its efficiency. The content of a curriculum should meet students’ needs (Alsubaie, 2016) and should be suitable to promote the growing knowledge of student teachers. Gio’s account (appendix 7.1) exemplifies how the curriculum as a tool can effectively mediate how the subject perceives an activity:

*I realised that this course is wider than I thought. I found out there is more science, more technology, more mathematics. Not just the primary education I was thinking... The course gives me wider view of what I am going to face in the outside world.*

Similarly, Folu (section 6.2.4) and Rebecca (appendix 7.4) expressed their satisfaction with the content of the curriculum as evidenced in section 7.3.1. Their stories both indicated that the curriculum content of their teacher training had exposed them to the knowledge they required to teach at the primary level. Ortega also mentioned how the content of his college-based training facilitated his knowledge of practice:

*They [lecturers] have told us what we should do – set induction, how to gain their interest...Our teaching methods; our presentations; step-by-step presentations...what the teacher should do and what the students should do. What you are expected from the students.*

However, the data as a whole suggested that the curriculum as a tool was ineffective. Firstly, this study suggested the lack of alignment of the ITE curriculum with the primary school curriculum. As noted by one of the head teachers, student teachers’ content knowledge was targeted at a higher level than that needed for primary teaching. It is evidenced in this study that even the lecturers and the students seemed unaware of this misalignment. Secondly, student teachers’ training focused more on learning the theoretical methods than on the practical usage of these methods. Kuiper et al. (2008) argue that the official Nigerian curriculum design offers more general skills than pedagogical skills. This in turn influences how the lecturers plan and teach the delivered curriculum course. Grossman et al. (2009) observe that a disarticulation between theory and practice is a common phenomenon in most teacher education programmes in Africa. In the Nigerian PES system, this is manifested in the way the teaching methods curriculum is designed and delivered as a standalone course (see appendix 3). The problem with this practice is that that student teachers tend to learn just the mechanisms of teaching and may not have difficulties linking them to the subjects...
they teach. And, as noted in section 3.5, unless the divide between learning about teaching methods and practising the methods are fully addressed and integrated in the teacher education curriculum, the link between theory and practice will continue to widen (Grossman et al., 2009).

More so, as it was noted in section 7.3.2, English is the Nigerian official language and the medium of instruction in schools. However, it is expected that pupils in Primary One to Three classes are taught in their local language. This means that student teachers are expected to be aware and prepare to teach using the local language (of that area) if they happen to do their placement in a lower primary classroom. However, evidence in section 7.3.2 suggested that student teachers, and some of their lecturers, were not aware of this policy. Although there is a compulsory course known as Nigerian languages (PED 118), in which student teachers are required to select and learn one of the Nigerian languages (see appendix 2.3), as a tool this course seems not to be well aligned to the language policy noted above (see figure 9). Firstly, student teachers can choose whichever one of the Nigerian languages they prefer to study; but they do so at a time when they have no idea within which local area they are to do their placement. Secondly, the purpose of including the language courses in the PES curriculum is so that the students will be able to use it as the medium of instruction in lower primary classes. However, the objectives of the course itself (figure 9) are simply to give student teachers a basic knowledge of the language. As a consequence, students may not even realise that they are required to have a good grasp of the local language to be able to teach in lower primary classrooms, as evidenced in Paul and Akiyemi’s experience.

Figure 11: Language Course Objective

PED 118 Nigerian Languages in Primary Education 1 (2 credits) C

Objectives
At the end of the course, students should be able to:

a. demonstrate knowledge of the language.
b. Explain the use of grammar in a Nigerian Language.
c. Use songs, poems, sounds and stories to teach a Nigerian Language
d. Form words and sentences in a Nigerian language
e. Express the meaning of simple sentences in a Nigerian Language
Teaching activities

As discussed in section 7.3.1, student teachers reported a positive impact of the college courses on their developing teaching skills and knowledge. Students with previous teaching experience (for example, Folu, Rebecca and Gio) explained how the college course refined and improved their teaching knowledge. Others (for example, Akiyemi and Bankole) recalled that their interpersonal skills as well as their personal qualities such as shyness, code of dressing and confidence have improved. This highlighted some level of satisfaction with teaching activities in the college. However, there seems to be tension between students’ expectations and lecturers’ expectations in terms of how teaching and learning activities should take place. While student teachers thought that their lecturers should discuss and explain the course topics in depth to enable them to develop a detailed understanding of the subject matter (section 7.3.1), the lecturers, who participated in this study, on the other hand, felt that the student teachers were not serious with their studies:

So the questions should be: Do the students come to school? Do they come on time? Because my PES students have the history of coming late to general course classes. They will be at the back and will not hear anything. (Mrs Jane, College A lecturer)

Notwithstanding, the evidence suggested that lecturing is the method predominantly used to teach student teachers. Maje and Ortega maintained that the lecture method is the most feasible method to be able to manage the large class sizes seen in most colleges of education (see section 2.5). This however, positions lecturers as knowledge transmitters and the students as knowledge receivers (Altinyelken, 2010), and as Lewin and Stuart (2003) would have thought, this method of teaching does not enable teachers to have a sense of the primary school setting in which they are expected to teach. This situation is endemic not just in the teacher education system in Nigeria, but also across most African systems (Akyeampong, 2002). Akyeampong and Stephen (2002) argue that the historical background on which education in Africa is founded influences its structure. They argued that education in Africa was built with ‘a culture of strict discipline to train ministers, catechists and later teachers’ (Akyeampong and Stephen, 2002, p.272). Although, the government took over the education system, the organizational structure, processes and practices of the missionary regime were carried over and maintained. Nevertheless, more progressive learning approaches such as learner-centred approaches, reflective practices and active learning are gradually making their way
into the Nigerian teacher education system, as evidenced in the NCE programme handbook and in Paul’s comment:

*During workshops, they called the lecturers together explaining this child-center [approach] to them....So they just gave us little clue about this child-centred approach. I gained from it, so I used this method especially in basic science class.*

However, Akyeampong (2002) argues that ‘the assumptions upon which such approaches are based are not recognizable in the African context, causing their value to be compromised and relevance restricted’ (p.2). In most African schools, students learn by ‘carrying out orders from the teacher’ (Tabulawa, p. 201), which results in the ‘tradition of knowledge transmission’ (Akyeampong and Stephen, 2002, p.269). Such a teaching and learning tradition does not present opportunities for student teachers to develop and adopt new pedagogical approaches.

Although teaching activities have a way of ‘facilitating the circulation of school knowledgeable skill into the changing identities of students’ (Lave, 2010, p.158), evidence suggests that student teachers might have adopted what Entwistle and Hilary (1990) called a ‘surface approach’ to learning (p.172). This approach enables such students to adopt strategies (such as rote learning) that help them ‘pass’ their courses (Biggs and Tang, 2007), rather than deep learning towards achieving the course objectives. This however could happen for three reasons. The first reason relates to the perceived ‘technical model’ of initial teacher education in Nigeria in which students develop or learn passively in lectures by just adhering to guidelines and curriculum instructions (section 3.4.2). In such situations, student teachers are likely to lack the ability to judge the teaching activities (Kansanen, 1991) and might not have a clear understanding of what constitutes best teaching practice (Jessop and Penny, 1998).

The second reason relates to the lack of alignment in the system. At times, the curriculum document is unclear about what it intended to achieve, as argued above, and at other times, the plot is lost during the transfer of curriculum to practice as evidenced in the language issue discussed above, as well as in section 8.4.5. Kuiper et al. (2008) claim that the ‘lack of integration between teaching practice, subject methodology and education studies diminishes the effectiveness of [teaching and learning activities]’ (p. 8). In addition, the ‘extent to which any teaching is successful is at least due to the extent to which it exemplifies alignment
between objectives, teaching and learning activities and assessment’ (Biggs, 1996, p.71).

The third reason relates to the tension between the students’ motives and the system expectation (object) in relation to the teaching and learning activities (tool of the activity). As most students already had other career plans, their efforts were focused on ‘passing’ the course and attaining the qualification rather than developing the expected skills. Although it is expected that the course focuses on developing student teachers’ knowledge and skills for primary school teaching, evidence suggested that the course structure tends to focus more on students’ mastery of the subject matter; thereby, neglecting its application to practice. Korthagen and Kessels (1996) described this as ‘failure of practice (the way of handling the knowledge) or the present incompleteness of the available knowledge in the social sciences’ (p.18). As noted in section 3.7, student teachers’ ability to link theory and practice is crucial in their learning of how to teach as they need a well-integrated knowledge of theory and practice to teach in school.

The point above explains why student participants worry about how to apply their college experience in practice. Maje from College A and Ortega from College B reported that on some occasions they struggled to relate their college based learning to teaching practice. Maje recalled,

*I tried the method we were taught in school but it seemed not to be working. So I sat to think, I can’t just be reading all the time to the kids – what will I be reading and when will it end? Since the objective I wanted to achieve that week centers on A and B; am I going to continue singing A and B throughout the week? So I had to create [a teaching method] that would draw the pupils’ attention to the topic.*

**Lecturers’ competency and behaviours**

In section 3.4, I alluded to the fact that lecturers are responsible for the professional development of student teachers. Data indicated that a number of students (e.g., Folu, Rebecca and Bankole) spoke very positively about the fact that the lecturers seemingly model good practice and guide the student teachers’ learning journey. However, the data suggested that many lecturers in PES lacked the commitment to teach; and their behaviour neither encouraged student teachers to learn nor modelled good classroom practices (see section 7.3.1). Analysis of the three participating lecturers’ profile (section 5.3.4) indicated that none had ever had any experience of teaching in a primary classroom, they had no practical experience to
offer to the students. This raises issues about their knowledge of primary education content and teaching methods. As noted in section 3.4, PES lecturers in Nigeria are not specialists in primary education and do not have the required expertise to work with prospective primary teachers (Adeosun et al., 2009; Samul and Okodoko, 2011). This also raises questions about the recruitment and qualifications of the teacher education workforce. Although this is not within the scope of this study, the literatures reviewed in section 3.4 noted that a vital prerequisite of good teacher education systems is to recruit a competent workforce. Competent lecturers are more likely to offer the required support and guidance needed for effective teacher outcomes (Koster et al., 2004).

8.3.2. Learning resources

The data suggested there were inadequate learning resources both at the college and at the cooperating school. Student teachers reported that there was neither free internet access nor computers to aid their learning during their college based training (see section 7.5). In addition, data indicates that student teachers learned mainly from course materials that were produced by their lecturers in the form of handwritten notes or typed booklets – popularly known as hand-outs in Nigeria – which were sold at a profit (for the lecturer) (Kuiper et al., 2008). Kuiper et al. (2008) note that at times, ‘students are required to copy notes from the blackboard as the main source of building up a knowledge base in any course…as there are no course materials offered to students as an integral part of the learning process’ (p.9). The evidence suggested further that at times, instead of serving as a learning resource, the handouts/textbooks became a requirement to take part in assessment exercises as evidenced in Fatima’s comment:

Lecturers force their books on us. Yes we are meant to buy the books but most of the lecturers assign us a number when we buy their book. You can’t do their test without the number.

Although the quality of these handbooks/textbooks could not be evidenced from the data, Fatima’s comment demonstrates dubious, bordering-on-corrupt practices in providing learning resources to student teachers. As above, Ortega mentioned that instead of teaching the students appropriately, some lecturers provided them only with course outlines and asked them to read them up. Hence, students tended to depend mostly on their own notes, copied from the blackboard, as well as on the
handouts provided by the lectures. Kuiper et al. (2008) maintain that these ‘materials [student notes] do not play a coherent and pervasive role in the provision of a strong cognitive and structure-giving basis for the development of the required professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of an effective teacher’ (p.11).

8.3.3. Assessment and feedback

Assessment

The NCE programme handbook emphasizes the importance of effective assessment in student teachers’ learning experience. Boud (1995) argues that ‘every act of assessment gives a message to students about what they should be learning and how they should go about it’ (p.38). Rowntree (1987) quoted in Gibbs and Simpson (2004-05) claims that ‘if we wish to discover the truth about an educational system, we must first look to its assessment procedures’ (p.4). This is because ‘it is assumed that assessment has an overwhelming influence on what, how and how much students learn’ (Gibbs and Simpson, 2004-05, p.3). Although the NCE programme handbook noted that ‘teacher educators need to know and use assessment procedures for learning and not just to gauge student teachers’ mastery of content or skills’ (NCCE, 2012, p.25), there is no documented guidance and due process on assessment and feedback in the handbook. This results in the variability of assessment procedures evidenced in this study, in which each lecturer adopts procedure(s) and criteria that suit them and their course units. They assess students’ learning in various ways without being transparent about what counts toward the students’ final grade, as evidenced below:

Me personally, I base my assessment on forty percent while the exam is sixty percent. If I don’t use the attendance, I can use the assignment; I can use their test or their practical work. (Mrs Goya, lecturer)

Goya’s comment implied that what and how assessment takes place entirely depends on the individual lecturer’s discretion and student teachers might not be aware of the criteria by which their assessment is based. It also raises issues about the purpose of assessment in the teacher education system. As reviewed in section 3.8, assessment serves four main purposes in teacher education systems. These include the following: a) assessment provides the means of measuring levels of achievement through certification; b) it is used for quality assurance purposes; c) it provides insight for teachers to better align their teaching strategies to students’ learning needs; and d) it offers ‘lifelong learning capacity’ that enables student
teachers to effectively apply their knowledge of assessment in practice. In this study, however, it seems that assessment strategies in PES were mainly geared towards certification. None of the ones described in this study was in line with the purposes outlined above (see section 7.3.4). Rather, they indicate how ‘power’ is assumed and deployed in the system, as evidenced below:

One incident happened the other day...this was after we had vacated for December holiday... So instead of us to go home for holiday he [lecturer] said that we should come to school that we will be having test. So when he came in he just said we should write our name, the course we are doing and our departments - so that was the test [and] we should submit the test. (Abayomi, first year student)

This questions the extent to which the course objectives are achieved and the extent to which the lecturers understand the purpose of assessment in learning to teach. As noted in section 3.8, effective assessment strategies not only measure students’ learning, they also equip the student teachers to apply it to their own teaching. Hence, lecturers are expected to be ‘clear about what they want students to learn and what students should have to do in order to demonstrate that they have learned at the appropriate level’ (Biggs, 1996, p.361). Moreover, the evidence suggested that most assessment strategies reported in this study lack structure and consistency. For example, Doreen reflected,

How can we learn from assignments when a lecturer gives you assignment today and expect you to submit it tomorrow...I believe that she should have given us about a week to do the assignment so we can really prepare for the assignment....I don’t do it; I just copy...So there is nothing I can learn from such assignment.

Scenarios such as the one described by Doreen are variously indicated in the study. This in effect can discourage students from participating in such in the future and as such limit what students can learn from such assessment activities in relation to their own practice. Boud (1995) argues that although ‘students can, with difficulty, escape from the effects of poor teaching, they cannot (by definition if they want to graduate) escape the effects of poor assessment’ (p.35). Hence, it is expected that ‘assessment structure should be reliable, valid, credible and relevant’ (NCCE, 2011, p.25) to the learning objective. Ramsden (2003) observed that most lecturers in higher education do not understand that ‘assessment is fundamentally about helping students to learn and [about helping] teachers to learn about how best to teach [their students]’ (p.178). This point is buttressed by Davis and Dargusch (2015), who argue that assessment practices in teacher education programmes should not only
focus on measuring attainment, but also on enabling student teachers to ‘gain knowledge and understanding about… [how to] design and carry out assessment for various purposes in their classroom’ (p.177). Boud (1997) noted that the efforts towards learning improvement in higher education ‘must confront the ways in which assessment tends to undermine learning’ (p.35).

In addition, evidence suggested that student teachers were subjected mainly to a summative form of assessment (see section 7.3.4). As argued in section 3.8, effective assessment strategies are dynamic. They are not only offered at the end of a topic or term; rather, assessment is integrated within the teaching and learning process (Shepard, 2000; Bloxham, 2008). Although the NCE handbook suggested a regular assessment of student teachers ‘not based on summative scores’ but on ‘on measuring successful development of the attitudes, skills and knowledge expected of an accomplished teacher’ (NCCE, 2012, p.26), there is no evidence from the study indicating that this is applied in practice. In fact, most assessment practices reported in this study were grade oriented and the purpose was mainly to measure student achievements. Although the assessment strategy described by Mr. Pete, a lecturer from College A tends to be interactive and different from the usual ones, it was also summative:

There is one thing that I do for them [student teachers] that is very good. It is called Progressive Teaching Tools. I give them their note, and I now divide their notes into exercises. I label it in drill – (e.g. drill one…drill two etc.). So, you come I will ask you question on each drill topic. We go on like that through drilling and that’s their Continuous Assessment. So where ever you stop is where I’m going to score you. If within 15 weeks we are able to finish the drill, that’s 15 over 15, but if within that 15 weeks you are able to do two, that’s two over ten.

Feedback

As noted in section 3.8, assessment feedback is integral to the learning of teaching. This is also recognised in the NCE handbook, where it is stated that ‘learning opportunities include student teachers being given regular feedback on their performances’ (NCCE, 2012, p.24); however, the process through which this is done is not clear or well documented. Scott (2014) has noted that for feedback to be useful, it ‘must be timely, regular, sufficiently detailed, legible (if hand-written), comprehensible, consistent and pitched at an appropriate level’ (p.50). Evidence from this study, however, indicated that assessment feedback was mostly grade based, less detailed (if hand-written or verbal) and at times unavailable. For
example, Abayomi, a first year student in College A, claimed that he had not received any feedback from any of his tests and assignments since he started his course about three months earlier. Doreen noted that it usually takes about a year to see their examination result (see below) and Fatima noted that her lecturer did not provide detailed feedback in one of her presentation assignments; she only got a score-based feedback (4 out of 10) and did not know why she was graded that low. The preceding discussion points to the fact that grades are yet to be separated from feedback as Boud (2000) would have suggested.

Moreover, Davis and Dargusch (2015) note that for a feedback to facilitate effective learning outcomes, it should be an iterative process. However, the data suggested that teaching practice exercises were not effectively assessed. Although the NCE handbook stated that ‘the whole lesson and not just part of teaching practice should be assessed; and that the assessor [supervisor] should be knowledgeable in the appropriate subject matter and in methodology’ (NCCE, 2012, p.18), this was different in reality as Mrs Goya from College B reported that the college randomly allocated student teachers to supervisors. This is consistent with Kuiper et al.’s (2008) findings that indicated that ‘supervision is not always done by a teacher in the same subject area as the student teacher’ (p.10). More so, the teaching practice guidelines indicate that about 80 percent of teaching practice responsibilities is allocated to supervisors despite the fact that they are not always on-site to offer the required support to student teachers. This seems to explain why there is gap in communication and lack of collaboration between the colleges of education and the primary schools.

Moreover, Doreen highlighted an issue with their result turnaround. Student teachers do not see their results on time. As noted above, assessment tends to assume only a summative role, as student teachers do not receive detailed feedback from most of their continuous assessment. Hence, they do not know where and how to focus their efforts in the subsequent assessment activities. This practice seems to be the norm in assessment, not just in higher education but also in the entire education system in Nigeria. It has resulted in teachers’ lack of understanding of the use of assessment and its impact on achieving educational outcomes (Nenty et al., 2007). Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) note that the improper use of assessment in teacher education creates a problem of ‘moving from intellectual understanding to enactment in practice’ (p.525).
8.3.4. Practical teaching experience

Zeichner (2002) emphasises ‘student teaching as a critical aspect of preservice teacher education’ (p.59) as it provides hands-on learning of the art of teaching for student teachers. In section 2.5, I noted the three courses prepare student teachers for their practical teaching; these courses are intended for students’ transition from college learning to placement. The first of these courses was the school observation course whose objective is to enable first year student teachers to observe and evaluate in-service teachers’ performance. However, evidence suggested that student teachers’ understanding of the course objective is not well grounded:

*We were asked [by our supervisor] to look at the class teacher’s lesson note [lesson note] to see if it is okay and properly arranged. So what I did was that when I got to the school, I met with the class teacher...and requested for her [class teacher] lesson note; she actually gave to them to me... and I checked through [and] it was ok (Yemi)*

From Yemi’s comment above, it appeared that the student teachers may have been told to focus on identifying weakness in the classroom teachers’ strategies rather than, more broadly, reflecting on what they were learning from the teacher. This is also evidenced in the assessment procedure for the course in which students were asked to produce reports of their observation of teachers and their classroom. In such scenario, what student teachers are likely to learn from this course is limited as they are explicitly instructed to explore and critique rather than to reflect on whatever practice they observed. Moreover, such practice is not likely to enable student teachers reflect on how they can model what they observed in practice. As noted above, the outcome of the school observation course is presented as a written report, on which their supervisors would assess their performance. What is not clear from the NCE handbook or from data is the criteria upon which the reports are graded and the process by which the quality of this teaching experience is measured.

The second part of the practical teaching course is the micro teaching which takes place in the second year (see section 2.5). Although, data suggested that the student teachers did not see any problem with the structure of the course, its organisation was problematic. As noted in section 2.5, the micro teaching course was organised to run over two semesters with the theory part in first semester and the practical part in second semester. However, data suggested that the theory part took place in just one day. Although, both the theory and practical parts of the
course are one unit course each, evidence suggested that the practical part is also done in only one day through the semester. And, the lecturers award the marks on that same day. Again, this assessment is summative; and the short period of practice is not enough to enable student teachers to develop a secure knowledge of the teaching strategies required for placement.

The third part of the practical course is the placement, which is known as ‘teaching practice’ in the Nigerian system. Teaching practice is widely regarded as an important activity in teacher education programmes. It is also noted in Nigeria that teaching practice ‘provides student teachers with an opportunity for the acquisition of necessary professional skills through practical experience’ (NCCE, 2012, p.28). However, as with other courses discussed above, the organisation of the teaching practice tends to limit student teachers’ ability to apply their college learning to their teaching practice. First, it is evident that some student teachers undertook their teaching practice in a different phase from the one they were trained for. For example, Maje taught a kindergarten class despite being trained as a primary school teacher. This practice contradicts the requirement for teaching practice, which stressed that ‘the posting of students on teaching practice shall take into account their subject combinations’ (NCCE, 2011, p.6). Doing teaching practice in the educational phase other than the one studied is likely to limit student teachers’ ability to reflect and link their theoretical knowledge to their classroom practice both in terms of subject and pedagogy. Asiyai (2016) argues that ‘a student teacher by consistently reflecting on what he/she is doing, develop his/her mastery of the theory and practice of teaching and learning’ (p.85).

Moreover, as noted in section 2.5, initial primary teacher preparation in Nigeria is designed to take place in both the college of education and the cooperating school with the assumption that student teachers learn and develop theoretical knowledge through the college-based courses and then use the theories to practice in real life situations in the cooperating school (NCCE, 2011). Although it is expected that the cooperative schools play an active role during the practicum, as evidenced in the NCE handbook, Mrs Odukoya (a head teacher) argued,

*I do not offer any support to the students during teaching practice because the programme is designed in a way that students get all the supports they need from the college. They do methodology classes, micro–teaching course, school observation courses and orientations and seminars before they start their teaching practice. I do not get involved in the training of teachers even though I know it is not*
The staff school is like a laboratory to the college and they should be fully involved in every stages of students’ training.

The comment above indicates that the cooperating schools are not fully, and often not even partially, involved in student teaching practice. On the other hand, however, Mrs Jane (a lecturer) complained about the lack of cooperative teachers’ involvement during student teaching practice. She claimed that

*The reality is that most times, the co-operative teachers help them [student teachers]. When we go there [cooperating school], we also complain to the co-operative teachers that we do not see their comments in the students’ lesson plan (Mrs. Jane, lecturer).*

These contradictory comments from Mrs Jane and Mrs Odukoya suggest an issue within the system. It also raises the question of whether or not the college of education and the cooperative school know and understand their respective responsibilities during teaching practice activity. And if they do, do they choose to ignore or not implement them? This, however, could be as a result of contradictory requirements which create confusion about how members of the teacher education community perceive their roles (see section 8.7). On the one hand, the system expects the colleges of education to organise ‘orientation/induction workshop before the teaching practice exercise. The aim of this exercise [workshop] is to acquaint [student teachers] with appropriate information/experiences, and use of assessment profiles’ (NCCE, 2011, p.7). From this perspective, the cooperative school assumes that the college already prepares the student for teaching practice, hence, minimal or no input is required from the cooperative schools. This point is made clear in Ade’s comment below:

*The class teacher did not open the lesson note talk more of checking it. They do not care to check our lesson note. My supervisor even asked me if my class teacher looked at my lesson note or corrected me, I answered NO. They [co-operating teachers] said we should have known all these before coming to do teaching practice.*

Ade’s comment implies that the cooperating teachers are aware of their responsibilities but are refusing to undertake them. On the other hand, however, it is likely that the cooperative teachers are not well trained as mentors and do not have the required knowledge and capacity to mentor student teachers. Hence, one could argue, being aware of their limitations, they avoid the responsibility. The ongoing discussion nonetheless indicates a polarised system where both the college of education and the cooperating schools operate in isolation. It also suggests that the
teacher education system in Nigeria does not encourage effective collaboration between colleges of education and cooperative schools. The importance of collaboration in teacher preparation has been widely researched (Edwards, 1995). Spendlove (2010) highlights that the ‘development of pedagogic belief and expertise is achieved by a network of experience’ (p.65). This implies that if the college and the cooperating schools appropriately collaborated with each other, student teachers’ learning could be well supported and the system objective achieved.

Moreover, teaching practice is also an assessed course; hence, student teachers focus more on passing the course than learning practical teaching that will benefit their teaching career (Nakpodia, 2011). Although, it is clearly stressed in the NCE programme handbook that

Supervision of teaching practice does not only mean assessment for award of marks but, more importantly, giving feedback to student-teachers so as to guide their future performance and professional development as teachers. (NCCE, 2011, p.7)

Evidence suggested that supervisory visits were mostly assessment visits that end with little or no ongoing detailed feedback. This point is made clear by Nakpodia (2011) and Asiyai (2016) who argued that lack of effective feedback inhibits student teachers’ ability to reflect and improve on their developing teaching competences. Such visits are likely to ‘create a division between the student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach in school, and the assessment requirements of passing the course’ (Douglas, 2010, p.39). Furthermore and in contrast to the teaching practice requirement that obliges supervisors to make frequent visits to student teachers during their teaching practice, supervisors pay just a one-off visit to their allocated student as evidenced in Ade’s comment:

My supervisors were four, one for attendance, one for lesson note only; they won’t ask you to teach. But some, it is only ---- I don’t know why they come. For example, they will check lesson note and ask us to practicalise our teaching. But other ones only check the lesson notes. When one of them comes, he/she does not come again. (Ade, 3rd Year Student).

8.4. Rules: norms and regulations

The rule of an activity system specifies and regulates the actions and interactions among members of the community (Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzanares, 2008; Virkkunen and Kuutti, 2000). It inherently shapes the interactions within a
community and governs the norms around how responsibilities should be shared. (Jonassen and Rohere-Murphey, 1999). First, one of the many features of an effective teacher education system is its ability to get quality candidates to become student teachers (see sections 8.3 and 3.3). Hence, it is expected that the rules governing the selection process should be rigorous and robust, to ensure that only the qualified candidates are attracted to the course. However, evidence from this study suggested that the admission process in PES is not well structured and rigorous enough to attract quality candidates (see Section 8.3). As already noted in Section 7.2.1, the academic requirements for selecting prospective teachers are relatively lower than those of other professions. And since the requirement is lower, it tends to attract candidates who are using it as a stepping stone to a higher qualification and to a better career. In as much as these candidates qualified to study for the course because they met the NCE minimum entry requirements, their belief and motivation does not support the aim of the teacher-training course (see section 7.2). Furthermore, because the status and pay of the teaching profession, particularly in the primary phase, is low in Nigeria it does not attract candidates who otherwise might have been enthusiastic about teaching.

Moreover, as the selection process is only academically based (section 2.5), there is no means to judge the motivations and dispositions of candidates that apply for the course. This greatly affects the quality of candidates attracted and selected for primary teaching (section 3.3.2). Ability to attract and to select quality teaching candidates has been one of the major long-term challenges in the history of primary teacher education in Nigeria. Fafunwa (1974) notes, among others, that prospective teachers in Nigeria are usually ‘people who join teaching profession from necessity rather than from choice; people with poor academic records and thus, could not get admission into their desired courses and people who have had secondary education but could not proceed to higher education due to lack of [financial sponsors]’ (p.82). Avoseh (1992) also argues that even in universities where minimum admission requirements are the same across faculties, the faculty of education attracts undergraduates in the lowest 10 percent or at best, bright students who have failed to secure admissions into other faculties: such students have no commitment to teaching when they finish their program. (p.202)

As a consequence, PES has become a fertile ground for candidates rejected from other courses. It also reflects Akinbote’s (2011) stance on how the NCE programme
is filled with people who are considered underqualified for other courses. Kuiper et al. (2008) maintain that ‘primary education is generally looked down upon as a professional field in Nigeria, and within the last resort option for colleges of education, it comes at the end of the queue of favored choices’ [sic] (p. 10).

Furthermore, literature reviewed in section 3.3.2 indicated that most teacher education systems have workforce planning models and recruitment strategies and run marketing campaigns. This means that they know how many teachers they need to recruit in each subject specialism and plan advertising campaigns to target likely applicants. This enables them to attract a suitable pool of potential candidates from which to select those that meet the admission criteria. This is not the case in the Nigerian context as there is no recruitment strategy or caps on the number of candidates that the Nigerian Colleges of Education can recruit. Neither the federal government nor the NCCE has control over who is recruited or how the selection of potential teaching candidates is done. This is evidenced in the number of students that reported that they had applied to study other NCE courses but were moved to PES (see section 7.2.).

Second, it is expected that the student/lecture ratio should be 25:1 according to the NCE programme handbook, to ensure effective student involvement. However, data indicated that this rule is not being adhered to in the college. Evidence suggested large classes (of hundreds and even a thousand) especially in general courses, which make it difficult for student teachers to effectively engage in such lectures. One of the lecturers acknowledged that the large classes prevent the students from having an effective interpersonal relationship with the teachers:

*General courses may not be feasible because of the number of students offering them. In General courses, they come together with students from other departments, they use the big hall for this. That interpersonal touch is not there (Mrs Jane, lecturer).*

Third, there seems to be limited systematic regulation for teaching and learning activities in PES. The NCE programme handbook outlined the criteria for entry and graduation, course units and their respective contents and objectives as well as the methods of teaching to be adopted (NCCE, 2009). There are no rules around how the ITE curriculum is implemented. This results to power dynamic within the system in the sense that lecturer are empowered to implements the curriculum thereby creating their own individual rules which includes but not limited to how
lecturers handle student attendance (absentees and late comers), how carryover (re-sit of failed course units) is regulated as well as how assessment is carried out. For example, Mr Dapo described one of his rules or strategies for teaching and assessing his students:

*There is one thing that I do for them [the students] that is very good... I give them their note, and I now divide their notes into exercises. I label it in *drill*. Like [example] drill one...drills two... Like chapter by chapter. So you come and I ask you question... The fact is some of them will still not come for the drill. They are scared. They are not confident of themselves. But what I do is enforce it... and that’s their *Continuous Assessment*. So wherever you stop is where I’m going to score you. Within 15 weeks we should be able to finish the drill..., but if within that 15 weeks you are able to do two, If it’s just my course, that is 2 over 40 (Mr Dapo, lecturer).*

Though Mr Dapo described the above as a ‘good’ strategy, there is a possibility that the students resort to memorising the contents of the chapters rather than ‘learning’ from them. They only read the assigned chapters as it is part of the ‘class rule’ or criteria for continuous assessment. The consequence of this is that the students are left in a situation of ‘learning to pass’ rather than ‘learning to teach’. It also leaves them with no option than to accept whatever they have read, as questioning or wanting to have a detailed understanding of the content would result in late completion of the drill and a low continuous assessment score.

The preceding discussion points to the lack of adequate monitoring and quality assurance processes in the PES system. Ebisine (2013) argues that the purpose of quality assurance is to ensure that the minimum standards – as stated in the NCE handbook – are attained, maintained and enhanced (p.2). The NCE handbook stated that each college of education should have internal assessors responsible for quality checks and monitoring. But there is no indication in the data that the teaching and learning activities are being monitored for accountability purposes. Mrs Jane reported:

*In this system, we don’t really monitor lecturers. It is not secondary school when you have supervisors that come from time to time to check what the teachers are doing. In Nigeria tertiary institutions, we don’t do that.*

The consequence of not having formal procedures or effective quality assurance processes is that it empowers the lecturers to set their own rules regarding how they teach the students. These rules often create tension within the system, especially for the students. For example, it is required that students re-sit any course they fail
(carryover), but one of the requirements set by some lecturers for re-sitting is that students must re-attend the course, as evidenced in Goya’s (a lecturer) comment: *I have a rule that says that if you don’t attend my class, you cannot take my exam.* Students are aware of this rule but claim that frequently course grades are not released in a timely manner and may even take as long as one academic year; hence, they often do not know which courses they have failed and need to retake (see section 7.3.3).

The dilemma is that these standards cannot be questioned or criticised by the students – as they are not in the position to do so. Daniel and Warmington (2007) argue that the ‘way in which subjects [of an activity system] are positioned with respect to other subjects within an activity system reflects on the rules that regulate the activity’ (p.382). Although the NCE programme handbook indicated that a third party team called ‘external supervisors’ is set up to monitor teaching and learning activities, their responsibility is limited to auditing lecturers’ assessment instruments and to verifying whether students turn up at their respective cooperating schools.

From the preceding discussion, it can be inferred that the absence of some basic procedures relating to teaching and learning activities in PES tends to put students in difficult situations. They are not sure of the best way to deal with certain issues regarding their learning and there is no clear process on how to approach the issues. Hence, student teachers tend to accept whatever they experience as being ‘divinely’ planned rather than challenging it. The lack of student voice evidenced in this study (section 7.3.3) also militates against challenging authority. One consequence of this situation is that these students may see this as acceptable practice and pass this on to their students if they find themselves in the classroom.

### 8.5. Division of labour: responsibilities of members of the community

In activity theory terms, *division of labour* refers to how roles and responsibilities are distributed among members of the community (see section 4.4.4). The entire teacher education system is embedded in the interaction of the members of its community. These members ‘engage with the aim of their actions and those of the cultural practices within which they act…with the view to function as competent and critical participants in the society and in a profession’ (Wardekker, 2010, p.245). The three key members of the teacher education community identified in
this study were student teachers, lecturers, and cooperative teachers. Ganser (1996) referred to these three key members as the ‘student teaching triad’ (p.283).

8.5.1. Student teachers

Student teachers are meant to come from a pool of students who are enthusiastic about becoming primary teachers; the data suggested that most of the students did not intend to become teachers. Rather, they were attracted to the course because it was the only option to enter higher education and the job market (see section 7.2). Despite this, it was expected, according to the NCE handbook, that by the end of the course PES student teachers would ‘become teachers with sufficient knowledge of the primary school curriculum, skills, attitude and methods to enable them teach the subjects of Primary 1-6 as contained in the National Curriculum’ (NCCE, 2012a, p.56). However, as Williams et al. (2007) would have recognised, the extent to which student teachers engaged in their academic learning in the college was mainly influenced by their interaction with other members of the community. First, the system did not value student teachers’ voices (see section 7.3.3) and did not give student teachers the opportunity to freely express their evaluative comments about their learning activities.

Second, teaching activities did not support teachers to reflect on and improve their own teaching practices. Evidence indicated that lecturers’ teaching behaviour discouraged student teachers from engaging in active learning (section 7.3.1); teaching activities did not encourage interactive and active learning as they were mostly lecturer-led and lacked consistency. This point is clearly illustrated by Lewin and Stuart (2003), who argue that teaching and learning activities in Africa are mostly prescriptive and authoritarian, which seems to position student teachers as mere knowledge receivers with limited ability to explore or improvise their own practice. Kansanem (1991) would refer to the model described above as a traditional model of teacher education, which does not encourage student teachers to understand the implication of their learning activities or how to apply what they learn to their own classroom teaching.

Third, as argued in section 8.4.4, assessment and feedback practices were not transparent enough to enable the student teachers to model them. Assessments were mostly summative and feedbacks were mostly as grades. Fourth, insufficient learning resources limited student teachers’ ability to engage in their academic learning. The evidence suggested that the learning resources, such as textbooks,
computers, internet, etc., are not readily available (see section 7.4). Student teachers pay for their computer and internet usage and rely solely on their lecture notes for learning.

Fifth, as noted above, student teachers are expected to know how to teach the Primary one to six content. However, the data suggested that student teachers rely so much on their educators for their personal and academic development, they have limited control over what and how they learn. Hence, they find it difficult to translate their college-based knowledge into practice, especially where the real classroom scenario is not a reflection of what they had learnt (see section 7.4). They struggle to make links between their college courses and practical teaching because their teaching practice courses are not well aligned to provide adequate knowledge for effective teaching practice. This point is explained further in Zeichner (2010) who noted that, with the exception of a few assignments in methods courses that students are asked to complete in their field placements, student teachers or interns and their cooperating teachers are often left to work out the daily business of student teaching by themselves with little guidance and connection to campus courses. (p.91). Also as noted in section 8.7.2, it seems that the college actually let the student teachers take responsibility of searching for placement school. This creates lots of tension especially for student teachers as they seem not to know what to expect from such school; especially as these cooperating schools are not vigorously reviewed by the college.

8.5.2. Lecturers

In the PES system, lecturers are responsible for planning, teaching and assessing the PES taught curriculum. According to Cuban (1995), taught curriculum relates to how the official curriculum translates into achievable outcomes (see also section 3.5). However, the evidence suggested that some of the lecturers are unprofessional and uncommitted to their teaching (see sections 7.3.1 and 8.4.1). Their teaching behaviours did not motivate student teachers to engage in meaningful learning. For example, Abayomi noted that he became less interested in some of his lectures in which the lecturer’s teaching strategies does not engage him. More so, Kansanen (2014) suggested that to provide quality learning experience for student teachers, teacher educators should have specialized knowledge in the field. This seems to be
a challenge in PES, as none of the participated lecturers had prior experience of primary teaching (see section 7.2.1).

Furthermore, another role of profound importance filled by lecturers in PES evidenced in the NCE handbook and in this study was liaising with the schools and cooperating teachers in supervising and assessing teaching practice. This responsibility has been widely documented in the literature and is often linked to collaboration and partnership in initial teacher education (see Zeichner et al., 2010; Edwards, 1995; Spendlove et al., 2010). However, the evidence suggested that there is limited communication between the lecturers and the cooperating teachers. For example, Ade noted,

*I can remember when our supervisor came and saw our lesson notes from the first week to the 10th week were not signed. She kept asking what was going on. The student teacher now answered, ‘my class teacher hasn’t been around. Then supervisor confronted the class teacher who rudely answered and asked if there was any problem with her absence’.*

Ade’s comment did not suggest a good relationship between the lecturer and the cooperating teachers. Question(s) such as the one asked by the lecturer in the excerpt above could have been deliberated upon by the lecturer and the cooperating teacher if they had maintained a healthy collaboration and rapport. Hence, as argued in section 8.4.5 and elsewhere, student teachers’ practical teaching skills cannot develop effectively in such an environment.

### 8.5.3. Cooperating teachers

The cooperating teacher’s role in initial teacher education has been widely debated in the literature. Evidence from the literature indicated that effective cooperating teachers do not just provide summative feedback, they serve as role models, gatekeepers and mentors to student teachers (see section 3.4.1). As noted earlier, in section 3.4.1, the main role of the cooperating teachers is to guide student teachers during teaching practice and to also provide summative feedback. In as much as this responsibility is arguably less than that assumed by cooperating teachers in other parts of the world (see section 3.4.2), the data indicated that the cooperating teachers in PES are not involved in any form of student teaching assessment, either formative or summative. They are not fully involved in the actual training, mentoring and guiding of student teaching practices (see section 8.4.5). Ade noted
that the cooperating teachers did not see mentoring as part of their roles as they leave their work entirely for student teachers to do:

*the practicing teachers are collecting salary and they do not do anything in a day. All they do is to cross their arms and legs and not doing anything... The only thing they told us is at least we've done this before it is not a big deal.* (Ade)

Furthermore, the data suggested that the role of cooperating teachers also includes assessing and providing feedback on student teachers’ lesson notes. However, Mrs Jane, a lecturer, noted that the cooperating teachers do not often do this. Ade reported that in addition to not assessing and providing feedback, as required, neither were they accountable to anyone for not doing it (see section 8.6.2). Evidence also implied that the cooperating teachers might not have had the capacity to assess the lesson plans:

*There is a space in the teaching practice booklet that co-operative teacher sign before the supervisor [signs] but the assistance HM signs it because they believe that there are some co-operative teachers that their lesson note is not ‘that’ effective.* (Paul)

## 8.6. Community: the college and the cooperating schools

The community embodies or situates an activity and its members work towards achieving a shared object. As noted in section 8.2, PES was conceptualised as an activity system where student teachers’ learn to become primary teachers. Their learning takes place in both the college and the cooperating school settings. These two settings made up what Roth and Lee (2006) would have referred to as the social context within which the activity (teacher training) takes place. This section discusses how these two settings mediate student teachers’ learning to teach experiences. The focus is to understand how student teachers’ learn to teach at the boundaries between their college’s based courses and their teaching practice. This will inform a discussion of the inherent contradictions (Jonassen 2000) in the system and how they influence other elements of the activity system. The three systemic practices that mediated student experience of learning to teach in this study are discussed below.

### 8.6.1. Alignment between college courses and the primary school subjects

In teacher education programmes, the Nigeria PES system inclusive, student teachers’ learning is usually located both in the university and in school. Student teachers’ learning is argued to be structured this way because it enables them make
links between the theories they learn in the college and their teaching practice (Hughes, 2006; Korthagen and Kessels, 1999; Spendlove et al, 2010; Zeichner, 2010; Korthagen et al., 2006). Orchard and Winch (2013) maintain that a sufficient level of knowledge – both theoretical and practical – is needed to function as an effective teacher. As a community in an activity system, members or group of members are expected to share similar knowledge (Jonassen, 2000. However, evidence from this study, suggested that the college courses are not well aligned the primary school subjects. This misalignment is likely to bring about some contradiction in the activity system. Contradictions occur when there is a misfit of purpose between and among elements of an activity system (see section 4.6). For example, contradiction can be seen to be manifested in three ways within the community element of the activity (PES) system.

Data showed that the level of instructional material (a tool of the activity) seemed to be conceived differently by the college and the cooperating school. Student teachers’ narrative accounts (e.g. Ortega and Akiyemi) reported positive experiences of improvising and using instructional material in their own teaching. They claimed that the instructional materials enabled their pupils to connect and understand the topic they had taught them. But on the other hand, Mr. Lapaja (a head teacher) observed that the instructional materials prepared by student teachers in his school were not fit for purpose; the instructional materials were of a higher level than appropriate for primary school pupil’s cognition. He believed that this was because the college curriculum was not targeted appropriately to prepare student teachers for primary school classrooms.

Jonassen (2000) sees this as a source of conflict within the community of an activity system as the knowledge that student teachers’ acquired in the college seems to contradict its application in practice. Jonnasen (2000) suggest that ‘individuals must continuously alter their beliefs and actions to adjust to the socially mediated expectations’ (p. 9). But the issue is that neither the student teachers nor their lecturers appeared aware of the head teachers’ concerns. Zeichner (2010) noted that teacher educators most often, ‘know very little about the specific practices used in the… classrooms where their students are placed (p.91). Hence, the support they can offer is limited (see section 8.7.2).

For students, Paul (who had been a student in Mr Lapaja’s school) noted that it was mandatory to submit the instructional material to the head teacher alongside
the relevant lesson note for review; and yet there was no mention of this head
teachers’ concern in his account. The above points to two things: lack of effective
collaboration among the members of the community (see section 8.7.2) and lack of
effective feedback strategy (see section 8.4.3). Adding to the problem is the issue,
raised by a number of students, of the limited resources in terms of funding and
provision of instructional material in the cooperating school setting (see section
7.5). Student teachers are left with no choice than to either improvise or use their
own funds to buy instructional material (see Maje, Akiyemi and Ortega); which
might not be appropriate for its intended purpose, as noted above.

Secondly, data suggested an inherent dilemma with English language as a
medium of instruction in both the college and the cooperating school. There seems
to be tension over the correct use of the English language as the medium of
instruction in schools. In Nigeria, English language is the unifying language and the
medium of instruction from primary four and above. The purpose (object) for this
was to ensure easy communication between students and teachers and even among
the society at large especially as Nigerians speak diverse languages. Data however
suggested that the language policy is not effectively adhered to either in the college
(see Dorren’s account) or in the cooperating school (see Akiyemi and Paul’
accounts) as there was evidence that both lecturers and cooperating teachers
reverted to the local languages in teaching (section 7.3.2). Yamagata-Lynch and
Haudenschild (2009) would deem this a tertiary contradiction in an activity system,
as it appears that the application of the language policy in the PES system
contradicts its primary purpose in the entire education system. Tertiary
contradictions occur when there is a conflict in actualising an object due to the fact
that individuals are introducing new ways of achieving the object (Yamagata-Lynch
and Haudenschild, 2009). This systemic problem could also arise as a result of
faulty policies in the system (Roth and Lee, 2007). For example, in section 8.4.1,
where curriculum was conceived as a tool, it is argued that the language policy was
not well integrated in the PES curriculum. Data also suggested that the curriculum
implementation in schools is not duly monitored as indicated in the commentary on
Akiyemi’s account in section 6.2.4. Such practices are unlikely to make student
teachers aware of not only the language policy but also its implication in their own
teaching.
Thirdly, data suggested lack of alignment between the shared object of the community. The purpose of PES is to train primary school teachers (see section 8.8); hence it is expected that student teachers will do their teaching practicum in a primary classroom. But evidence suggested that the student teachers seem not to always teach the class they are trained for. This causes a primary contradiction in the system caused by the conflicting object. Primary contradiction occurs when an element of an activity system is ‘double sided’ (Karanasios et al., 2017). The conflicting shared object seems to make it hard for student teachers to effectively connect and use the knowledge acquired in the college in their current classroom as both curriculum are not same. For example, in Maje and Ade’s account, instead of teaching a primary school classroom, Maje was offered to teach a KG 2 class while Ade taught a nursery class. Although, Maje noted that this practice happened as a result of shortage of kindergarten teachers in the cooperating school where she did her teaching, it reduces the possibility of achieving the purpose (i.e. Obejct) of PES in Nigeria.

8.6.2 Collaboration between college and cooperating school
Evidence from the study suggested limited collaboration effort between the college and the cooperating school. Zeichner (2002) noted the importance of a clearly defined collaborative relationship in maintaining an effective initial teacher education system. As a community, with a shared objective (section 4.4.4) of producing effective primary teachers, it is expected that both the college and the cooperating school work together in achieving this. But data seems to suggest that little or no relationship exist between the two settings as revealed in two instances. The first instance was on the choice of placement school. For example, Paul claimed that student teachers are expected to choose their own placement school. This tends to contradict the rule of the system which expected the college to review and have a good rapport with each intended cooperative school. But as indicated in study, the above relationship seems not to exist. Rather, student teachers are left to build such responsibility themselves in the quest to get a cooperating school. The outcome of this disjointed relationship between the college and the cooperating school was that some of the student teachers got into cooperating schools with very low quality and could hardly learn from the cooperating teachers as expected (see Paul and Akiyemi’s accounts).
In the second instance, data revealed a disjointed support for students during teaching practice. Although this could be as a result of the differed value that could exist in different communities (e.g. college train teachers and primary schools teach pupils) as note by Roth and Lee (2006), both the college and the cooperating schools are expected to act as a ‘unified’ community in not just PES but in teacher education in general. However, Spendlove et al. (2010) observed that student teachers struggle to cope with the disparity in the operations and structure of the two settings in which their learning is situate; and this could limit student teachers’ learning of how to teach. Although the NCE handbook states that the cooperative teachers should be assigned a vital role during teaching practice (NCCE, 2012), in effect, they are not fully involved in the actual training, mentoring or guiding of student teaching practices (see section 8.4.5). Students are meant to be supported in learning and reflecting on teaching practice, but they cannot learn and reflect because the cooperating teachers neither seem to know nor were trained on how to mentor them. Hence, the evidence suggested that student teachers get help and clarification only during their supervisors’ visits (see section 7.4).

Moreover, there appeared to be conflicting understandings, between the college staff and the cooperative school, of the co-operative teacher’s responsibility for student teachers on teaching practice as noted in section 7.4. Findings suggested that, lecturers assumed that cooperative schools should be fully involved in student teaching practice, while there was evidence that the cooperative schools saw themselves just as a place for students to complete their teaching practice course (see section 8.4.4). This raises concerns about how specific and detailed the NCE handbook guidelines are. Collaboration is a very important concept in the teacher education system and if effectively integrated could bring about positive learning outcomes.

8.7. The Object of the activity

The object of an activity refers to the goal that motivates the activity (Jonassen and Ronrer-Murphy, 1999). It is the driving force or the focus of an activity (Engestrom, 2009). One of the key features of the object is in the change that occurs in its function during the activity (Nardi, 1996). Jonassen and Ronrer-Murphy (1999) noted that this change often brings about conflicts in actualising the purpose of an activity especially when the subjects’ actions and intentions for taking part in an activity differ (see section 8.2). In teacher education systems, the object is to train
student teachers to become qualified teachers. But as noted in section 4.4.2, the form and function of this object often seems to be influenced by the interactions within and among elements of the activity system. In this study, for example, two groups of students emerged. The first group (Gio, Folu, Maje and Fatima) already had teaching experience prior to their training hence, their actions and perceptions were well aligned to the object of the programme.

On the other hand, those without previous experience, and with no intention to become teachers, seem to have contradicting views about the object of the programme. Even after reporting positive experiences within the system, they still insisted that they would not want to teach. For instance, Paul claimed that his interaction with the college courses (tools) had boosted his confidence and love for teaching and that the child-centred method had made his teaching experience easier; however, he still insisted that he would not be a teacher, because he considered it not of sufficient status. Paul’s decision to not become a teacher illustrates how the system’s policy and practice did not influence teacher outcome. The poor status of teaching profession – primary teaching especially – in Nigeria is well known (see section 3.3.1) and unless this improves the teaching profession will not attract high calibre candidates.. Even, Abimbola and Ortega (despite wanting a teaching career) noted that they wished to further their education as they did not want to settle for the minimum higher education qualification, given it only attracts meagre pay.

Furthermore, Ade’s account illustrates how a dysfunctional system can dissuade previously motivated candidates from positive outcomes. Ade (appendix 7.8) noted how student teachers were insulted for slightest mistakes. Her account indicated that lack of collaboration in PES (see section 8.7.2) and lack of effective support system in her cooperating school dampened her enthusiasm to become a teacher. She noted, however, she would consider the teaching profession if she was offered a job in a school with an efficient support system.

In addition, for the object of an activity system to be achieved, all members of the community are expected to collaboratively work (Walshaw, 2010). Members or group of members are expected to understand their various roles (see section 4.4.4) within the community. Data suggested, however, that the effort towards achieving the shared object seems one sided as student teachers’ voices were not listened to or valued. It was also noted in sections 3.4.2 and 8.4.1 that the model of teaching and learning in PES was very traditional, lecture-based, teacher-centred
and autocratic. It did not enable student teachers to question or critique practice. Lecturers held all the power as they had the autonomy to plan, teach and assess the curriculum as they wished; and, evidence suggested that they were not readily available to teach or offer advice to students. Such behaviour provides limited support to students’ developing skills in terms of theory and practice (Korthagen et al., 2006) and diminishes their motivation to learn. Conversely, Odiri (2011) claims that ‘when students noticed that their teachers are hardworking and have concern for them, it motivates them’ [sic] (p.19). Abayomi also noted that when they did teach, the lecturers’ presentation style was often demotivating: “Some [lecturers] will come in to teach and you fall asleep because you do not like the way they teach. It is not because you don’t like the subject but because of the way they teach”. Similarly, Omolara and Adebukola (2013) maintained that students enjoy classes where teachers are passionate about their subjects. They further argue that a teacher’s inability to clearly explain key subject concepts could constrain student learning.

More so, Roth and Lee (2006) noted the interconnectivity among the element of the activity system (see section 4.4). They maintain that dysfunctionality in one element of an activity would affect the function of the other. This is manifested in this study not least in the disconnection between the college courses and student teaching experience. This point was extensively discussed in section 7.4, where it was argued that student teachers experienced problems applying their college course in teaching practice. For example, Maje claimed that it was hard to manage her class because what she was taught in the college was not applicable in her practice. She also argued that neither her lecturer, nor the cooperating teacher, had modelled class management as evidenced in this comment,

"...It [class control] is very difficult. Even some of the teachers here do not know what class control is. They just approach it the way they like; they don’t do it well... They [our supervisors] only supervise us. They only tell us that we need work more on our class control. But how do we learn this? The people we have come to learn from are not doing it, how do we learn then?"

8.8. Summary

This chapter built on the issues that emerged from the student teachers’ data to answer the research question: how do the process, policies and practices of the
*initial teacher education system in Nigeria mediate primary student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach?* The discussion was facilitated by activity theory as it enabled an understanding of the underlying issues in the PES System. Findings suggested that although student teachers are working towards becoming a primary teacher, the motives of them are by and large, contradictory to the goals of the teacher education system and resulted mainly from the lack of rigour in the selection process that enabled less motivated and capable students on the course. The purpose of the system should have been to attract and recruit quality candidates, but the selection criteria do not reflect this purpose. It was noted that teaching and learning activities do not seem to align with each other. The primary school curriculum is not well aligned to ITE curriculum; hence it does not provide the level of knowledge student teachers needed to teach at the primary school level. More so, evidence suggested that there is increased emphasis on theory and little focus on practice; hence, student teachers are faced with greater challenges when trying to apply their theoretical learning in practice. The lecturers’ assessment and feedback strategies also do not offer opportunities for student teachers to learn how to use assessment and feedback in their own teaching. Hence it was noted that the teaching and learning practices did not enable students to experience what could be called effective teaching practices.

The discussion in this chapter also pointed to the inherent power dynamic within the system. This resulted from greater autonomy given to lecturers over teaching and learning process. The consequence of this is the lecturer’s controls all teaching and learning processes including assessment and feedback without being accountable to anyone. And as evidenced in this chapter, some of the lecturers, especially those teaching general courses, tend to be unserious and uncommitted to their job as they are not being monitored. This in turn affects student teachers’ eagerness to learn. Corruption practices also mediated how student teachers’ learn to teach in the sense that student teachers are made to buy textbooks in exchange for grades. In addition, the lack of collaboration between the college and the cooperative school affects not just the support student teachers received but also what they can learn from their teaching practicum exercise.
CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

9.1. Introduction

This thesis explored how the Nigeria primary teacher education system mediates student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach. The research adopted a mainly phenomenological approach to examine the learning to teach experiences of pre-service teachers and to identify from these experiences, if and how the processes, practices and policies of primary teacher education facilitate quality teacher outcomes. Semi structured interviews with student teachers was the main data generation method used in the study. Semi structured Interviews with lecturers, cooperating teachers and head teachers as well as the NCE programme handbook provided contextual information that added to the understanding of the student teachers’ interview data. Data were analysed in two steps. The focus of the first step was to identify how student teachers articulated their learning to teach experience and was presented as a narrative account. It answered the first research question: *How do student teachers articulate their experiences of learning to teach?* Six narrative accounts, were presented in Chapter Six and each was followed by the researcher’s reflection on the student’s narrative. These accounts were chosen to exemplify as full a range of issues emergent from the data set as possible. The remaining eight narrative accounts were appended in appendices 7.1 to 7.8.

The second step of analysis was a thematic analysis of the issues that emerged from the whole data set of student teachers’ narrative accounts which yielded four themes, namely: motivations for studying Primary Education Studies (PES); teaching and learning issues; teaching practice experience and learning resources. The findings were presented in Chapter Seven and answered the second research question: *What themes emerged in student teachers’ narratives about learning to teach?* Building on Chapters Six and Seven, Chapter Eight used the tenets of activity theory to discuss the findings of the study. It answered the third and overarching research question: *How do the processes, policies and practices of the initial teacher education system in Nigeria mediate primary student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach?*

This chapter summarises the key findings of this study. It discusses the contribution to knowledge; highlighting areas that the study has added to the
understanding of learning teach experience both in Nigeria and in the wider literature. This chapter also explains the limitations of the study and makes some suggestions regarding the improvement needs of the PES course.

9.2. Summary of key findings

9.2.1. Student teachers’ voice

This study has generated an understanding of how the practices, processes, policies and structures of the Nigerian teacher education system impact upon the potential of students as key stakeholders to have a voice. The issue of student teachers’ voice arose during the research in a number of different guises both methodological and empirical. Methodologically, part of the rationale for this study was to give student teachers the opportunity to reflect upon, evaluate and articulate their experience of teacher training. Empirically, however, the data indicated that three things militated against students articulating their experiences. First to note, the cultural norms in the Nigerian education system: a factor that emerged as fundamental and pervasive throughout the data and as a lens through which all the findings were read. Students’ voices were inhibited by the traditions and cultural norms embedded in the Nigeria education system, and the wider Nigerian society, as these do not encourage questioning and critical thinking skills to be valued or taught in schools (section 7.3.3). Hence, it was apparent from the data that some student teachers may have accepted and believed that the activities they experienced were customary and characteristic of the norm(s) of all teacher education systems.

Second, a culture of fear was endemic at some level amongst most of the student teachers. Most of the students were anxious and cautious about the opinions they expressed, as evidenced in Dorren’s narrative account in Chapter Six. Fear did not only limit student teachers’ voice, it also stopped them from seeking learning support, especially from their lecturers, as evidenced in the accounts of Gio and Bankole. Nevertheless, most of the student teachers in the sample were able to overcome their anxieties, and had sufficient confidence and critical thinking skills to be able to stand outside the system, question its practices and processes and express their beliefs and perceptions (positive and negative).

Third, this study suggested a pervasive power imbalance existed not only between student teachers and their lecturers but within the entire teacher education system. As noted above, student teachers did not speak up as their lecturers had the
authority to pass or fail the students without being questioned. The lecturers’ activities were not monitored and there was no due process for accountability or evaluation. As noted by one of the lecturers from College A, the college allows student teachers to evaluate their lecturers at the end of every semester. However, this exercise was reported by students to be not effective because only a few student teachers participated and there was no evidence to show that these opinions were considered. Most importantly, there was no system in place to protect the identity of the students that took part in the exercise as individual lecturers oversaw the exercise during their lecture period.

9.2.2. Collaboration between the college and the cooperating school

A strong and clearly defined collaborative relationship between higher education institutions and teaching practice schools is fundamental to the effectiveness of initial teacher education (Zeichner, 2002). This study indicated that four key issues troubled this relationship. First, there was no capacity within the system to train or support cooperating teachers in their role of mentoring student teachers. The indication was that cooperating teachers did not engage in mentoring because they thought it was not their responsibility (see section 7.4 and below); but, even if this had not been the case, the cooperating teachers were arguably not capable of mentoring because they did not have the necessary knowledge or training. Paul and Akiyemi reported that, in their opinions, some of the cooperative schools were ‘substandard’ and the cooperating teachers were ‘incompetent’ in their normal classroom teaching. Moreover, there was no evidence of dialogue between cooperating teachers and supervisors about mentoring support or joint assessment in order to sharpen cooperative teachers’ knowledge and judgement. Since the lecturers rarely spent quality time in the cooperating schools (section 8.6.2), there is no likelihood that the teacher education system would build capacity and quality in mentoring.

Second, the communication of information amongst the teacher education community about what is required in teaching practice sees not to be well defined in the system. For example, the NCE programme handbook does not explicitly allocate responsibilities in a ‘division of labour’ between the colleges of education and the cooperative schools (see below). It simply states that the cooperating schools should provide continued guidance to student teachers during their teaching
practice. This arguably contributed to the lack of support highlighted in section 7.3.3 and 8.7.1 as there is little or no guidance to how this should be done. As discussed above, even the cooperating schools and teachers with the closest relationship to the college did not understand themselves to have any advisory relationship with the students. They saw their responsibility as limited to monitoring attendance and punctuality, rather than mentoring student teachers.

Third, there were no clear links between the college courses and teaching practice experience. In Nigeria such links are interpreted not as a theory and practice model (this concept is not understood) but rather as the ability of student teachers to reflect on their college courses and see how the things that they learnt in college could be applied, or they use the term ‘correspond’, to their teaching practice experience. The study suggested most students experienced a significant reality shock as they struggled to cope in the classroom. A number of issues emerged repeatedly across the data set: once in a school, some students were deployed in a classroom age phase or subject they were not trained for; others were surprised to discover that the children did not speak or understand English language in primary 4 and above, or did not seem aware that in primary 1 to 3 the medium of instruction was meant to be the local language; some students reported not having the linguistic skills to teach in the required local language, whilst others clearly did not have the capability to teach English well; and finally, the PES curriculum did not align well with the primary curriculum (see also below).

Fourth, the NCE guidance (programme) handbook is not detailed and specific enough to quality assure and regulate the system’s activities. As noted above the nonspecific nature of the ‘rules’ contributed to the confusion about how the responsibilities for student teachers on teaching practice were conceptualized by both the lecturers and the cooperating teachers (see above and also section 8.6). It also resulted in the variability in teaching and assessment processes identified in this study (see below sections 9.2.3 and 9.2.4). And although the handbook recognized the need for quality assurance in the system, no due process, and evaluative or quality improvement measures were documented. More so, data suggested that student teachers were expected to choose the cooperating school in which to do their placement (see section 7.4). However, the criteria and the process through which the college was expected to quality assure the schools were not well documented and there was no evidence that it did in fact take place. Hence, again
there was no attempt to maintain the quality and consistency of teaching practice experienced in the system.

9.2.3. Teaching and learning

A number of key findings pertained to teaching, learning and assessment activities within the Colleges of Education. First and foremost, the pedagogic model adhered to by the majority of lecturers was, for the most part, one of teacher-centred and lecture-based instruction. In the PES system, the student teachers were positioned as knowledge receivers rather than co-constructors. The study indicated that teaching and learning methods to which student teachers were subjected, lacked interactive or active learning experiences, which are considered good practice in higher education and particularly teacher education internationally (see section 7.3.1). Such a pedagogical model was particularly unhelpful in primary initial teacher education because it did not lend itself to the modelling of good primary practice for the classroom. This is not in the least unexpected because as noted in Section 8.4.1 none of the five lecturers that participated in this study had ever taught in a primary classroom.

Second, evidence suggested a serious lack of professionalism and competence in the behaviours of a number of lecturers. Further, the embedded power relations within the system, taken together with the traditional teaching methods referred to above, meant that most student teachers did not have the opportunity to develop relationships with their lecturers. As a consequence the student teachers were not motivated to learn.

Third, preparatory teaching practice experiences did not give student teachers the opportunity to experience and learn the appropriate strategies for primary teaching. The teaching observation undertaken in Year 1 was not well structured to facilitate reflection and learning. The microteaching course undertaken in Year 2 was equally not likely to develop the teaching skills required at this stage. The microteaching practical offered very limited learning opportunities for student teachers as it involved just a one off microteaching exercise, and that was with a small group of their peers rather than a class of children. There was also, as noted above, evidence in some student data, and in the literature, that the curriculum of the PES course was not well aligned with the primary school curriculum. This suggestion was supported by an observation of one of the head teachers who noted that student teachers’ instructional materials were not suitable for primary schools.
Fourth, the medium of instruction in both the college and school seemed not to receive adequate attention either in curriculum planning or in teaching and learning activities; its implication to the entire school system seem to be not addressed. As evidenced in section 7.3.2, student teachers were taught in both the local (Yoruba) language and in the English language. This is strictly against regulations in higher education institutions in Nigeria and is not even allowed, as suggested by both Doreen and Mrs Goya (a lecturer), for clarity purposes. The medium of instruction in higher institutions is expected to be the English language (see section 1.2); this is so that students can study in any institution across Nigeria, irrespective of the local language they speak. Since students move around the country, it is probable that not all the student teachers in the college understand the Yoruba language.

From the narrative accounts presented in Chapter Six and the Appendices and from the preceding discussion, it can be inferred that many student teachers’ grasp of the English language is poor. It appeared that some of the lecturers also did not have good grasp of English language. This is noted in section 5.3.4 where it was reported that one of the lecturers’ interviewed spoke both in local (i.e. Yoruba) and English languages and was unable to articulate a full English sentence. This speaks of the poor quality of the teacher candidates and their lecturers who are both expected to be fluent in English both as a subject and as a medium of instruction. More so, as discussed in section 8.3.1, the data suggested that the structure of the language course was not helpful for student teachers as they did not appear to be aware that their knowledge of these local languages were needed to teach in primary school especially from grades 1 to 3. This also suggested lack of integration between policy and practice.

9.2.4. Assessment procedures

The assessment processes were the cause of a lot of concern and anxiety to many students. Four key issues emerged. First, there was a lack of clarity and transparency in the processes;, student teachers claimed to rarely know what was being assessed, for what purpose, against what criteria and they never saw a marking scheme (see Sections 7.3 and 8.4.3). The what, when and how of the assessment was not clearly and explicitly communicated to the student teachers, as Biggs (1996) would have argued was good practice. Hence, it could be argued that Yemi believed that throwing balls into a bucket was a good practical way of
assessing the Physical Education course (Section 6.2.2) because she could at least understand that the marking of her assessment would relate directly to the number of balls that landed in the bucket.

Second, it was reported that there were no deadlines for marking and getting feedback from assignments/examinations, and this was a matter of particular frustration. As a result student teachers reported that it was often months and sometimes up to a year for marks and feedback to be received. This was despite the fact that students were required to retake any examinations they failed before registering for the following year.

Third, and one of the main reasons for the shortcomings in the assessment process identified by students, was that there was no regulation or guidance from the NCE programme handbook on how assessment should be approached. Rather, the system empowered the lecturers to be in total control of their assessment procedure and approach. As a consequence there was often no consistency across courses and clear alignment between course content and course assessment, the latter often did not complement the teaching and learning process. It did not have a clear focus or provide student teachers with the opportunity to learn the effective use of assessment in their own teaching. Perhaps, the worst example of blatant abuse of power in respect of assessment was reported by Abayomi, a first year student, whose class was required to stay behind over the Christmas break to take an examination, and in the event they were simply required to write their names on a blank examination paper.

Fourth, another consequence of the empowerment of lecturers and lack of system monitoring (see section 9.2.6) was that corrupt practices – dubbed ‘the Nigerian factor’ by one of the head teachers – were endemic within the system. For example, students reported that they were required to buy textbooks and handouts (printed notes) from lecturers, and that the lecturers noted which students had or had not purchased the resources (which were reportedly linked to exam papers).

9.2.5. Selection process

Two key findings related to student teachers’ recruitment emerged from the data. First, as Barber and Mourshed (2007) argued, getting the right candidates to become teachers is one of the key ways of improving the school system. But when the selection process is not well positioned to attract those best candidates, then the
objective of the activity/[ system may never be achieved. For example, only eight out of the 14 student participants had seriously considered a career in the teaching profession. Out of these eight, only four students seriously considered primary teaching. The rest of the students believed that the NCE programme, because its entry requirements were lower than those of other higher education courses, was a pathway to higher education or to the job market (see section 7.2). For these students, teacher training was not about learning how to teach but about using PES as a career ladder.

Second, the selection process for the NCE programme was not sufficiently robust and rigorous to attract good quality teacher candidates. The entry requirements for the programme were not only lower than the entry requirements for other higher education institutions but they were entirely academically based (section 2.4). There were no strategies to evaluate the dispositions and personal qualities of the prospective teacher candidates. This resulted in the recruitment of student teachers who were not well equipped to teach because they did not have the dispositions or the academic abilities to become effective teachers.

Third, the government does not allocate or control in any way the numbers of students entering the colleges, or monitor the number of teachers in the system, so has no strategy for ensuring the adequacy of the workforce. There are also no internal processes in place to check the efficiency of the recruitment process. A further consequence of this lack of government oversight and funding and the commercialization of higher education is that for the colleges of education ‘more students’ means ‘more money’; and so they tend to recruit a large number of student teachers irrespective of their suitability for the course. One consequence of this is that much of the time, the available resources and infrastructure are inadequate to cater for the large student population.

9.2.6. Quality Assurance

One recurring issue embedded throughout the data in every constituent part of the initial primary teacher education system was the lack of measures for maintaining the quality of the system. There was no evidence from the study to show that there were quality assurance systems in place to check and maintain quality in the processes, practices, resources or structures of the teacher education system. In particular, there was a total lack of evidence of any internal monitoring of the
recruitment and selection procedure, or of the teaching and learning and assessment processes.

At the system level although external examiners were appointed to quality assure the assessment of courses, they only checked the question papers and did not moderate the marking (no marking schemes were ever produced) or the outcomes (see section 8.6). There were no external inspections or other quality assurance processes in place.

At the individual course level lecturers were not held to account in any way. They were in total control of the content and the teaching, learning and assessment activities of their courses and they were not monitored in any way; a fact that the lecturer in College A thought entirely appropriate. Yet evidence emerged in the study of lecturers: not turning up to teach, being late, inappropriately extracting money from students, setting unsuitable examinations, not returning feedback for months and in some cases not until the beginning of the next academic year (see section 7.3.1).

9.3. Contributions to knowledge

This study claims methodological, empirical and theoretical contributions to knowledge. As argued elsewhere in this thesis (for example, Sections 1.1 and 3.2) the research based literature on teacher education and especially initial teacher education in Nigeria and in other related African countries is very limited. Hence, this study contributes significantly to the literature in this region and specifically adds greatly to the knowledge of the Nigerian teacher education context.

First, the study offered useful empirical insights into the systemic failures of the teacher education system in Nigeria (see 9.2 above). It did so, importantly, by giving student teachers a voice and in doing so it elicited insights not previously seen in the literature (see above). For example, it was able to report not only that many of the subjects of the study, the student teachers, were embarking upon teacher education without any intention of teaching, but understand better, in their own words, their reasons. It was able to document from the Nigerian students teachers’ perspectives the difficulties they reported experiencing when navigating the teaching, learning and assessment tools of the system, which were totally under the control of their lecturers. The extent of the dysfunctionality of the collaborative relationship between the college and cooperating school in the teacher education
community, as reported by the student teachers, was evidenced. As was the lack of clarity relating to the division of labour amongst key individuals in that community. The study identified lack of detail in the NCCE policies and guidelines and a failure to implement systems to monitor the rules that were specified. Cultural and social factors were also identified as militating against the quality improvement of the system.

Second, this study offered methodological insight and new perspectives on how research on student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach could be approached not just in Nigeria but in similar contexts. As noted above, most Nigerian literature is predominantly non-research based and the research-based papers available are based on studies using mainly quantitative questionnaire surveys. Giving voice to student teachers, key stakeholders in the system, has allowed them reflect freely and in their own words on their teacher training experience. Using a phenomenological approach in collecting data for this study has shown that the approach, relatively new in the Nigerian context, is a powerful force to not only generate useful data, but to afford insight into the whole system from a unique perspective and, importantly, to begin to make a small move towards positioning student teachers as having an important contribution to make to the drive to improve the quality of the teacher education system in Nigeria.

Third, activity theory as the theoretical lens in this study contributed to the understanding of how the social interactions within the teacher education system, and the structures and cultural context in which the interactions were embedded, influenced learning to teach activities. Evidence from this study, for example, suggested that the problems of the primary teacher education system in Nigeria emanate not just from the individual members of the teacher education community, but are fundamental, multifaceted and endemic throughout the teacher education system. Further, as noted above, activity theory was particularly useful in focusing, not just on individuals, but on the entire system. It was a framework by which to disaggregate and scrutinise the separate elements of the system particularly the division of labour between the key players in the community, the curriculum and assessment tools of the system and the rules that regulate the tools and the division of labour and their impact on student teachers’ experience of learning to teach. The use of Activity theory is innovative in the Nigerian context and is little known in any discipline of research in Nigeria. In the developed world, activity theory has
been used in research in many social science disciplines including teacher education. However, these researches, especially ones on teacher education, most often focus on a particular activity (e.g. teaching practice) or particular individuals rather than on the teacher education system itself.

9.4. **Limitations of the study**

There were two significant deviations from the initial research design; otherwise the plan followed and achieved its set objectives and did not require any additional ethical approval. One such deviation was that the fieldwork schedule was interrupted by a three month national strike action by college lecturers, which meant that the fieldwork period had to be extended by three months. This meant that it was not possible to follow up in person, as planned, on participants’ comments, however, the interview transcripts were sent to participants via email or post for respondent validation. It also meant that recruiting participants proved more challenging (see below). A second deviation was that it was not possible to recruit five recently trained teachers from across the two college research sites into the sample as there was no national or state database of new teachers and the colleges of education did not keep a record of their student teachers’ employment. The strike also exacerbated this problem. Hence, I restricted the participants to 20 current students (plus five teacher educator/headteachers for contextual background). This meant that there was no measure of the outcome of the activity system but since the data collection approach was phenomenological, and the outcome of self-reported, the claims that could be made about the outcome would inevitably be limited.

In terms of the limitations of the original research design, the initial participant sample of 20 student teachers across two colleges was small-scale. As noted in Section 5.3.2, the University of Manchester research design and research ethics approval panels sanctioned the sample as appropriate for the study. However, the claims made in the findings are only made in respect of the sample and through them to the two colleges. Section 5.8 sets out my argument in relation to the trustworthiness of the research process including specifically transferability of findings through mechanisms such as ‘thick description’ and links though a common theoretical framework.

Additionally, all colleges of education across Nigeria are identical in organisation and follow the same NCE regulations, deliver exactly the same curriculum and exist within the same socio-cultural settings; hence, it is not unlikely.
that the issues identified in the two colleges targeted would be found to reflect many of those in the population as a whole. I was authorised by the government to site my research in two colleges of education and I was provided a list of students to approach. I was very concerned about the implications for participant confidentiality and anonymity but in the event none of the students listed were willing to participate. The occurrence of the strike (mentioned above) made alternative recruitment methods more of a challenge so I adopted the snowball sampling technique recommended for use under such circumstances (see Section 5.3.2). The associated risks (see Section 5.3.2) I mitigated as I recruited my sample from two different colleges and within each across the three years of the primary course. This meant that in the sample as a whole only very small groups of students might have shared experiences/ class norms/ attitudes/ close friendships. Thirty-five possible participants were initially identified though snowball sampling, 20 of these were selected for the participant sample, using mainly language competency criteria (see section 5.3.2). All 20 were interviewed but data from only 14 of the participants were reported in the study. The data from the other six students were used as contextual data but not reported on because they either declined to be recorded (n=4) or, in the event, did not have a sufficiently good English to conduct a productive interview (n=2).

9.5. Suggestions for policy makers and practitioners and for future research

9.5.1. Suggestions for policy makers and leaders

i. The admission criteria for colleges of education should be reviewed at both the national and the college of education level. The selection process should aim at recruiting the best students in terms of academic performance and dispositions. As evidenced in this study, prospective primary teachers tend to be recruited from amongst the lowest academically performing students. This threatens the actualization of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria and means that primary education in Nigeria will not improve.

ii. Further, it will not be possible to recruit students with the potential to become effective primary teachers unless more qualified and suitable individuals are attracted to apply and this will not occur until the status and salary of the profession is made commensurate with that of other
comparable professions and most particularly with that of secondary teachers.

iii. There is need to improve the organisation and coordination of teaching practice in Nigeria. Collaboration between the colleges of education and the cooperative schools should be a central element in the delivery of the Nigerian teacher education system and the roles and responsibilities of the various parties should also be explicit. Internationally, collaboration in the form of a robust and equal partnership in the design and delivery of initial teacher education has been found to be of vital importance in the most effective teacher education systems. Also, there is need for capacity building and mentor training for the cooperative teachers. This is to enable them to develop the relationships and skills they require to effectively mentor the student teachers. The PES system needs to assure the quality of schools in which student teachers do their placement. Rather than allowing student teachers to choose where they are going, the college administration should be responsible for selecting schools, building a good rapport and partnership with them and developing capacity and quality of mentor support in the partnership.

iv. There should be clarity about language use in both the college and the school. Student teachers should be told in good time about the language(s) they are expected use in their own teaching and there should be adequate instruction for the students in the relevant local languages at appropriate times.

v. The curriculum and the NCE programme handbook for Initial Teacher Education should be reviewed to ensure that the curriculum is fully aligned with the primary curriculum and that guidelines provide detailed instructions as to how teacher education activities should be structured, taught and assessed. In particular, teaching and learning activities should involve a more learner-centered approach and teaching activities should model good primary practice.

vi. Effective quality assurance processes should be introduced for monitoring teaching activities, assessment and other course related practices; these should always include student evaluations. There is also a need for more
effective quality assurance of the examination system. A performance management system should be introduced for lecturers.

vii. Although not the focus for this study, it became apparent that the lecturers often did not have appropriate professional qualifications or attributes for the role. Hence, there should be a structure in place to ensure that only lecturers with appropriate qualifications, expertise and experience are recruited to teach at the colleges.

9.5.2. Suggestions for future research

i. Further studies could explore in detail the characteristics and perspectives of members of the teacher education community as these would offer fresh and further insight on how the teacher education system could support effective learning experiences for student teachers.

ii. An observation study would be useful in order to see at first-hand the teaching and learning experiences of primary student teachers.

iii. It would also be helpful if lecturers in the colleges of education were to undertake practitioner action research in order to review, evaluate and improve their various practices and processes.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: MA Findings

1.1.1. Percentage of students that scored at least ‘C’ in English (2007 to 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type of school</th>
<th>Total no of students that sat for exam</th>
<th>Total no of students that scored at least ‘C’</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>66023</td>
<td>10579</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>84569</td>
<td>52927</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>11021</td>
<td>16.92</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
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<td>62176</td>
<td>66.58</td>
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<tr>
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<td>60831</td>
<td>20368</td>
<td>33.48</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>88228</td>
<td>73067</td>
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<tr>
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<td>14769</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>82189</td>
<td>60608</td>
<td>73.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WAEC (2012)

1.2. Percentage of students that scored at least ‘C’ in Maths (2007 to 2010)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type of school</th>
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<th>Total no of students that scored at least ‘C’</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>82,189</td>
<td>60,608</td>
<td>73.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WAEC (2012)
Appendix 2: Inclusion Criteria

2.1 Inclusion criteria for colleges of education

- Must be government owned
- Must have a department of Primary Education.
- Must have full time students
- Must be willing to allow the researcher access to the college and its facilities
- Must be located in Southern Nigeria (Northern Nigeria is excluded due to safety precautions).

2.2 Inclusion criteria for selecting Research participants

- All participants must be able to speak and understand English language as this would be the language of communication.
- All participants must be willing to participate in the study
- Student teachers must be in full time studies.
- Tutors must be teaching at least one primary education course
- Cooperating teachers must have at least one student teacher attached to their class
- Head teachers must be heading a primary school currently use for teaching practice.
Appendix 3: Primary teacher education curriculum

3.1. Sample course content and guideline

Course title: Principle and methods of teaching  
Course code: EDU 113  
Credit unit: 2  
Guideline: Institutions could schedule this course in the 1st or 2nd semester in year 1 as appropriate to their local environment.

Objectives
At the end of the lesson, students should be able to:

i. Identify objectives and categories of objectives in the teaching – learning process: Instructional objectives, Behavioural objectives, expressive objectives, etc.

ii. Formulating Behavioural Objectives

iii. Know the principles underlying the choice of teaching methods

iv. To know the types of instructional methods, techniques and approaches in teaching (at least two examples are to be selected for treatment from each of the types below):

v. To know the distinction based on degree of teacher and student/pupil activity.

Type 1
Teacher – centred methods: Lecture, Story Telling, Demonstration methods etc.

Type II
Student – centred or pupil – centre methods; project (individual/Group), discovery (individual/group), inquiry (individual/group), discussion method, play method etc. Differentiation based on degree of individual student/pupil or Group involvement.

Type III
Group instructional methods: storytelling, lecture, demonstration, discussion, folklore, etc.

Type IV
Individual instructional techniques: Question and answer, tutorial, programmed instruction, computer – assisted instruction, etc.

Type V
Conventional/traditional methods: storytelling, lecture, discovery, project, demonstration methods etc.

Type VI
Innovative or new strategies: programmed instruction, computer- assisted instruction, discussion, inquiry methods etc. Methods of teaching population and family life (Pop/FLE) including value clarification. Preparation and presentation of lessons; classrooms management; characteristics of a good teacher.
### 3.2. General Education courses

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<td>History of Education in Nigeria</td>
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<td>EDUC 112</td>
<td>Educational Psychology (Child Development)</td>
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# 3.4. Primary Education courses

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<td>PED 129A OR</td>
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<td>OR</td>
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<td>PED 129B</td>
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### Year two – semester one

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\(^{38}\) Christian Religious Studies

\(^{39}\) Islamic Religious Studies
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**Note**
Courses with * and ** implies that one of the courses elective must be selected
Courses with ‘C’ status are compulsory
Courses with ‘E’ status are elective
One of the courses with suffix ‘A’ or ‘B’ must be offered

<sup>40</sup> Primary Education
Appendix 4: Editing of interview data to produce a narrative

Key:

- **Green colored text was deleted from the extract either because it was unduly repetitious or because it was not felt to add anything to the content or understanding of the data. Word count was also a significant consideration.**
- **Blue colored text was restituated so that the narrative flowed more coherently**
- The three dots at the beginning or end of a statement indicates where:
  - the interviewees' train of thought changed
  - statements were deleted
  - beginning or end of a situated text

[Not everybody is willing to do PES (Primary Education Studies)] It is one thing or the other that brought them to the college. Mostly it is because of the cut off mark of the department and over population in other department e.g. business education, Education technology etc. that people sees themselves in PES. May be there was not enough space in other department so they have to bring them down to PES department. For example, it is not in my agenda to do PES… Yes, I wanted to do education but not PES. So I just had to take it like that. This is because I have stayed at home for 8 years because of my financial background... I wouldn't want us to talk about this, it is my family stuff… It is not as if I do not want to be a teacher but it where the fate took me to… I mean my destiny so I have to take it like that…

Our course has been good but in some way it is very tough. I just have to play along with it. I don’t have choice… During the teaching sometimes when they started singing – sing about ‘common everybody’… I think I can still remember all those songs… so I will be just like me how can I teaching and singing? For what? It is not easy but I have to adapt. It is also not easy in some other way, for example I school and I work because during the time I go to work. So it is not easy to study and work at the same time. After school I run around to get money because we are going to do our matriculation this month and we’ve been given deadline to pay our school fees. So I have to look for money to pay up the school fees. You know that secondary school experience is different from college experience because of population. Normally you will meet population in secondary school but this one is different. Everybody is on their own; you can just be doing what you want to do. You attend the course you want to attend and leave the ones you do not want to attend.

Again, it is not easy to adapt to new faces the lecturers are not helping. Again lecturer can just come in and say ‘everybody pick up your pen and tear a sheet of paper’ test … early morning. For example, we went for strike and when we just came back the man just came in
and said he wants to administer a test. I did not even read... I was shouting.. sir, I didn’t read... he was less concerned about me and said he is going to administer the test. So I don’t have choice, I really want to be educated... If the government should look into this and help the needy to go to school. In their own time, education was free… so why are they suffering us? Most of us are hassling to get what we have and to see ourselves through school...

They are teaching us how to bring up a child and how to communicate with a child right from childhood to adolescent age. And other things they are teaching us is that for example, am a teacher, he said if you want to take a class, you will just walk in greet the students and write the date and subject you are taking and you just stop there. So it is the students that will bring up the topic. If you want to teach the topic “Family”, you call up two students and say: you are Kehinde- you are the mother, taye is the father. So you can bring a third student - funmi as their child... so you can now ask, so what are they? One of them will stand up to say Family. So the students are the ones to bring up the topic. According to what he said, you have nephew, grandmother and grandfather when they come together, they are just external family. And when there are only mother, father and children it is called internal family.

...It is very interesting but because of the stress ... most of the times I do not have time to read. It is just little time that I have to do whatever thing I want to do... You know some of our lecturers ... may be it is their own behaviour... [extract 1] since I have been in the college; I have not seen the score of any test that I have written. I don’t know may be... I have been in the College for 4 months and we will be starting exam next month and we’ve not seen any of our test scores. I haven’t been told my weak points – I do not know the area of my study that needs improvement but we have been doing test. Early morning they can just call us and say ok we are having lecture by... some of our lecturers do not come to class. So we just have too... You it is government school so they will just come and be very unserious about what they do. There is one incident that happened the other day, we were already told that we will be having test so when he came in he just said ... ok everybody just tear a piece of paper... this was after we had vacated for December holiday. So the man just said we are having test on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013. So instead of us to go home for holiday he said that we should come to school that we will be having test. So when he came in he just said we should write our name, the course we are doing and our departments - so that was the test ... we should submit the test... It is not attendance... any day we are doing test we don’t sign attendance. Just write the test and submit. He did not give us any question… just our name. So we started asking ourselves “is this why this man asked us to come to school?” and he said the course we did carries 40 marks... just to write down your name and your course... [end of extract 1] I feel good because the way they taught me sometimes makes me happy. Though it is not all of the lecturers. Because some will come in to teach and you fall asleep because you do not like the way he teach. It is not because you don’t like the subject but because of the way he teaches. He will just be talking without addressing any issue. But some of them when they see that you do not want follow their teaching; they will teach us like primary school.
students. So although we are more than that, it just inspires us to know about them and to make you familiar with the course. You will even want to work him to know more about his course than others. The way they approach us determines the way we are going to listen to what he has to say. I have been gaining a lot from them. How to address people, how to talk, my dress code and most things. [extract 2] It is not everybody that loves seeking help. For example; I don’t like to expose myself. I don’t go to anybody in school. But it get to a stage that I could not hide it any longer, because it is affecting my education, I sought permission to take some time out to go and work before coming back to school. You know sometime I will miss class, test, assignments and other activities. Like one of our lecturers gave us assignment some time ago and instructed that we submit the assignment before 11am on that same day. I wasn’t around and the assignment was to be done online. So we are not going to submit a hard copy. So I felt bad when I was told. I wanted to meet the lecturer to discuss the issue but I thought it wasn’t necessary at that time [end of extract 2]. I think we are improving most of the teachers now are dealing with internet. You chat about your concerns and even send our notes online. There is one woman in my department, the woman is very gentle. From the way she talks you will know that this woman if you go to her, you would know that if you go to her, she will understand you very well than any other lecturer. Other lecturers will hear you but will not know how to help you…

*extract 1 moved here
*extract 2 moved here
Appendix 5: Sample step for thematic analysis

5.1. Sample extract of initial codes using MAXQDA

Initially, right from my secondary school I never thought of coming to teaching but I have some teachers - brotherly teachers – (fellow teachers) that always advise me to go for teaching course or to go to the College so I can become a teacher but I was a science student when I was in the Secondary school. My first attempt exam – WASC [West African Examination Council] - I have 6 credits but I could not have credit in Chemistry. That made me go for another exam, which was NECO. I made five credits in this one and no chemistry again. I also attended another exam – that was NECO [National Examination Council exam] – the November one. So instead of having improved result, the result was getting lower. It was then that I decided that wherever this result will take me to I am ready to go, I am tired of staying at home. So, that was what I did. Luckily, I taught after my secondary school. It was after two years I passed out of secondary school that I got admission into the College of Education. But during those days, I taught in a nursery school. Those my days as a nursery school teacher helped me to improve [and] to develop interest in teaching in lower class especially in primary school. That was why I talked to one of my father’s friend (my father is a farmer) who is a lecturer. His (my father’s friend) advised me to come to this college as this college is a College of primary education; a college specifically organised to train primary school teachers.

So we are learning all subjects done in primary schools because we are PES [Primary Education Students]... As PES students we are required to teach all primary school subjects. So we are very busy. ...[In] our method of teaching [course] this second semester of our year two, ... all the courses we have been doing since the beginning of this semester are based on [5]. The first thing we were taught in each course is the methodology of teaching primary school subjects such as CCA (Cultural and Creative Arts), Agriculture, and Yoruba and so on...

In such courses after introducing the course, what follows is the methodology. There are play-way method, demonstration method, project method, exposure method, question and answer method, field
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emerging themes</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivations for studying PES</td>
<td>Alternative choice for higher education</td>
<td>Did not meet admission requirement for university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To further my education</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I wanted to be a teacher</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I wanted to be a primary school teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No choice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>College offered me as an alternative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Belief in fate and destiny</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Desperate to get away from home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathway to employment</td>
<td>Higher education guarantees better job</td>
<td>NCE not limited to teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence from family and friends</td>
<td>Family/friend helped with admission (eg Father)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family advised to study PES (eg Aunty)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head teacher encouragement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family/friend was a teacher (eg father, aunty)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching and learning issues in college</td>
<td>Activities, qualities and behaviours of lecturers</td>
<td>Lecturers’ teaching methods/attitudes are positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students asked to buy textbooks/handouts from lecturers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes, Categories and codes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecturers’ teaching methods/</td>
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<tr>
<td>attitudes are negative (eg do not turn up</td>
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<td>to classes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium of instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of both English and local language in</td>
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<tr>
<td>the college of education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of local language in primary school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students feel they cannot express their</td>
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<td>views freely</td>
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<td>Students fear of punishment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of rapport between students and</td>
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<tr>
<td>lecturers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited access to lecturers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment and feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecturers have sole power to decide what,</td>
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<tr>
<td>when and how to assess students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecturers give no guidance on assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delayed turnaround of results</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching experience practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>School observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students encouraged to observe and assess</td>
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<tr>
<td>classroom teachers’ as a negative model</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5.2. Themes, Categories and codes
Appendix 6: Ethical Approval document

Dear Happiness,

Ref: PGR-8304490-A1

I am pleased to confirm that your ethics application has now been approved by the School Research Integrity Committee (RICT) against a pre-approved UREC template.

If anything untoward happens during your research then please ensure you make your supervisor aware who can then raise it with the RICT on your behalf.

This approval is only for the Ethical Approval Application, you are still required to have received approval from your Panel before carrying out any research.

Regards,

Gail

Gail Divall | PGT & Quality Assurance Administrator | Room B3.8 | School of Education | Ellen Wilkinson Building | The University of Manchester | Oxford Road | Manchester | M13 9PL
Tel: +44(0)161 275 3390 | www.education.manchester.ac.uk | School Ethics www.education.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/ethics/

For information on ethical research within the University, please refer to www.researchsupport.manchester.ac.uk/Governance/Ethics
APPENDIX 7: Student teachers’ narrative accounts

7.1. Gio

Actually, I have taught for three years before I came to the college. I actually have this passion for teaching... [because] I love kids. I know that if I teach any child – I mean the ones I have come across no matter how dull they are, they get to understand... I finished secondary school very early so immediately I finished, I...picked up a teaching job. So when I started, it wasn’t easy because I was in the preparatory class where you have to take care of the kids, feed them, bathe them, sing for them when they are crying... But after a while I got used to it... I didn’t apply for Primary Education course; I applied for business education. But maybe it is the way God wants it – that since I love children, I should be able to play with them, which was why I was given primary education...

When I applied for JAMB (UTME), I was hoping to get admission into the university... I had education in mind but not primary education. When I applied to the University I wanted, they said that I did not get up to the cut off mark they needed. I just saw that since there is no much difference between university and college of education – the difference is the certificate – and I can still further my education from there. When I was completing the form, I met a mentor – my very close friend – who is older than I am. So when I asked him: what do you think of doing education course in College of Education? He said it is very good, as a woman I will advise you that since you have this teaching ability, you go for it. So I told myself that since I have the mind to do this thing and someone has already given a go ahead... so I said no problem and I went for it...

Most times what they lecture us, I just feel like wow! So this is the whole thing I was doing... ok this is the right way to do it and am sure that when I go back to classroom I will be able to teach much better than I did without training... It has been interesting – the singing, the dancing, the clapping. I didn’t like it in the first place when it was given to me; I was complaining: how can I do primary education? What will they teach me? ABCD? It doesn’t make sense to me. [But] after a while I realised that this course is wider than I thought. I found out there is more science, more technology, more mathematics. Not just the primary education I was thinking... The course gives me wider view of what I am going to face in the outside world. Ok, this is what I am going to see and this is the kind of people I am going to meet. You know, normally not everybody is of the same IQ. You have to know how to cope with this child because this child is not too brilliant. And I have to cope with that one because that one is very brilliant and is able to grab very fast... I have to sing, play, and do so many things because it is hard for him/her to understand easily...

We use CA’s [Continuous Assessments. What they have taught, they will ask you to put down in a test or give you assignment. They just want you to write it in a paper as what you have gained so far - In your word, not the exact word [of the teacher]; not copy and paste. In my own

41 At first
42 Referring to when she gets a job
43 Understand what is being taught
assessment, the whole thing - to me - has opened another kind of [thought]...may be this is what God has created me to do. This is what my talent is all about and there are different ways to explore it... I have learnt courtesy, how to interact with people, you know- teaching goes with feeling... When I was teaching\(^44\), although I wouldn't say I was perfect then – I didn't have this broad idea of how to handle a kid. Although we play with them sometimes when you've talked to the kids for the first, second and third time, you will get angry and leave the child. But as I came here, I have learnt how to be patient with my pupils. I have been able to understand pupils better.

...When I need support, I go to fellow students first because most times discussing with students help a lot. When you discuss with your fellow students, it won't be like when you go to a lecturer and they will tell you: 'but I taught you in the class, I don't have the time now I have one thing or the other that am doing'. And then he or she will just go away. But when you meet your fellow students, they will be glad to help most times and when they illustrate with examples you will understand.

The college structure is okay because [of] the way they [courses] are being arranged for us to be able to cope in the first year before they bring the more complex work. The topics they teach, how they teach them, the system are very okay. I am enjoying it here... We have done the general orientation [induction]; but the departmental one – we are about to do it next Friday. In the general one [orientation], we were educated about parts of the school; where you can go to if you need help; whom you can ask for help academically, counselling etc. If you need help academically, you can go to your HoC [Head of Class] and ask: ‘how can you help me with this?’ Since he is the HoC he knows who to meet and he will direct you to them.

For PES to improve, people have to work with technology. As technology advances, education should advance with it. Like for instance, when we go to lecture halls for classes, they will tell you, these days, you don’t have to write assignment on paper, you have to go online, surf the net\(^45\) and after surfing the net, you have to print it on a printed paper. So that means they are teaching us how to use the computer. So those people that do not know how to use computer will have to learn how to use the computer

\(^{44}\) Previous teaching experience
\(^{45}\) internet
7.2. Bankole

Actually, I didn’t decide to be a teacher. Because of the [low] score I got in JAMB\(^46\) (Joint Admission Matriculation Board) examination. I have no option than to enrol into the college of education. So I have to start this NCE (National Certification on Education) programme to avoid staying at home next year. I need to start doing something before time runs out\(^47\). When I joined the NCE programme, the settling\(^48\) was very tough because I didn’t expect something of such. So I have to take things at ease… I did not expect to be primary education student. It is because of my SSCE (Senior Secondary Certificate Examination) result that I was given the course. I applied for Economic/ Social studies but they gave me primary education studies and I didn’t expect the course to be stressful. The subjects we are offering\(^49\) are up to 15 subjects [courses]… and I just have to take it like that…

So far so good, it’s been interesting because the lecturers are really trying and they do say, anything worth doing at all is worth doing well. So I have to put more effort and believe there is a reason I’m here and there is a reason that God has made me to be here. The course is surprising and strange to me. There are some secondary school things we were taught, there is a limit to it but here they are going further that the limit. They are teaching us in a way that if you go out you would be able to express yourself better…

I am learning mathematics, English but I think the main thing am learning is about how to be a passionate teacher in the sense that when you are teaching children, you have to understand that some children can be stubborn and at the same time too playful. So it is now left for you to know how to manage these individuals and you have to be able to be calm; don’t condemn any student at all for their response. Just try to encourage them so that nobody will feel neglected and nobody will feel like the best in class…

[I] am learning how to develop my ability to face the crowd and not being shy and [how] to develop my moral and to be very educated… I am learning to change my mode of dressing, the way I talk – things I should say and things I should not say; the kind of words I speak in class. I am learning how to manage the classroom and manage the character of different individuals because students do not have the same attitude or character…

The lecturers have been trying and the school management have their own part too. But for me, the school management is not well organised. For example, after you pay school fees, you have to go through stress before you can register as a new student. You have to start running here and there to sign up for things. We are at the computer age; they can just programme everything on the system. Students can just go to the ICT room and just complete [the registration]. But here, you have to go here and there

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\(^{46}\) See glossary

\(^{47}\) He used the phrase to indicate an eagerness to process his admission before it gets late. See Doreen’s version

\(^{48}\) Settling down on the programme

\(^{49}\) Courses being taken
to sign; it is kind of stressful. And you can’t do two things at a time when you are stressed, you can’t learn… Our lecturers are friendly and they are easy-going people, so you can walk to them [for help]. But mostly we do go to our seniors. There is this group in the school that is meant to tutor us but these people are also students. They are available anytime to tutor us. So when you go to them they will put you through things that are not clear to you.

In terms of assignment, there are excess of assignments... There are some assignments that you go to the [primary] schools and you have to observe the way they are doing things. And there are assignments you have to make research about how some subjects are being taught. And you have to prepare at the level whereby if a student should ask you a question you will be able to answer. We are doing assignments that help us to do a lot about our intellect and we are doing assignments that will help us get through the teaching practice... Sometimes they give us feedback; some feedbacks are written, some are spoken… They have been commending our abilities that we’ve been trying compared to former year one students. They said we are the best… We have a group on Facebook that after submitting assignments, names of students that did assignments will be listed on the group [so that] everybody see if your name is not there… If the performance of the students is not what is expected, they will come to class and tell us how we can improve our mistakes...

In Nigeria after your secondary school or your tertiary education you find it hard to get job. Almost 97 to 98 percent of employed Nigerians are not working in their field. They do not have passion for what they are doing. So they are just doing it to get an earning to be able to feed. And for this, the government has to improve because in Nigeria the government is not really commending teachers. Teachers are not recognised in the society compared to doctors, lawyers and engineers. The government should at least give teachers extra attention, improve their social status so people will have the zeal, and be enticed to teaching job… Internet facility should be provided in the colleges of education; government should try at least to provide material to aid learning… For example, when receiving lectures in the college of education, we need to use materials such as projector for better understanding. But sometimes there is no electricity, no projector – so if the lecturer is a good one he will bring his laptop or iPad to teach us. But assuming it is a kind of computer room everything will be bold and students will be able to access

7.3. Yemi

...So when we got to the School Observation School, we were asked [by our supervisor] to look at the class teacher’s lesson note to see if it is okay and properly arranged. So what I did was that when I got to the school, I met with the class teacher – we were allocated to different classes – and requested for

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50 Too many assignments
51 Appreciates teachers
52 Clearer visibility due to large/increased font sizes
53 The cooperating school, where students are placed for School Observation course (see also section 2.3).
54 Same as lesson plan.
her [class teacher] lesson note; she actually gave them to me... and I checked through [and] it was ok. But I also looked at the students’ [i.e. pupils] attendance [sheet] to see if they are coming to school regularly and also look at the teacher's mode of teaching. I also looked at the students’ assignment book to see whether the teacher gives them assignments regularly. So at the end of course – I think we did it for six to seven weeks – we were given a report book so that we can record whatever we see... We submitted the record book and the lecturer gave us mark.

We already did a course in hundred level55– ‘Principle and Methods of Teaching’. It was a general course – a compulsory course for all NCE [National Certificate in Education] students. The course is about teacher’s way of teaching. Actually, the man taught us how a lesson note should look like. He taught us about how...a good teacher should behave. As a good teacher, you have to obey, you don’t need to be late to class; he taught us so many things. And he also taught us the rules and regulations of teachings. ...The teacher56 demonstrates a lot. He’s not lecturing us but teaching us... Most of the time he asks us to write our lesson notes and bring it to him... He normally uses instructional materials whenever he is teaching us the course. He teaches us as if he is teaching primary school students. He started from simple to complex... He comes to class regularly with his lesson note and instructional materials. He teaches us as if we are kids... It [the course] has taught me to be an effective teacher and it has taught me...that when I become a teacher tomorrow57, there are so many things I need to know...

Your students should always meet you in class; you need to show a good example to your pupil. So I believe that when I get to my teaching practice school, I am going to use all that I have been taught in the college. We also need to follow up on slow learners by giving them assignments. Also as a teacher, you need to give homework to your pupils so that it enhances their learning. This is what he does to us all the time. He gives us assignments at the end of each class. I learnt that it is good for a teacher to be prepared before coming to class. You don’t just come to class and start stammering58. This lecturer was always prepared so when he comes he doesn’t look at the textbook. He just writes the topic on the board and explains and whenever he is explaining and you check the textbook, they say59 the same thing. So I believe he is always prepared before coming to class. I also learnt not to be shy as a teacher [because] there are teachers that will [teach] that course, but because of shyness, they cannot explain anything. They will tell you to go and read about it but for him he explains all.

Microteaching is more or less like principle and method of teaching [course]. It is a course that has both theory and practical parts. We do theory in first semester and practical in second semester. It is still about a teacher’s way of teaching. What a teacher should do and what a teacher should not do. It also talks about lesson note, the way a teacher should behave, entry behaviour in the class, behavioural objective. It is just like principle and method of teaching course [but] more enhanced... We may be asked

55 First year
56 Referring to the lecturer
57 In the future
58 Being incoherence due to unpreparedness for the lesson
59 What the lecturer says aligns with facts in the textbook
that as a teacher, how do you think you can impact on your students educationally? I remember the first assignment the man [micro teaching lecturer] gave us was to write lesson notes and with that experience I had in writing lesson note in hundred Levels [first year], I was able to write it.

So when you get to second semester, you can now do the practical... Then as a student, you will bring your instructional material to school, they can arrange about ten students from the same level – our course mates, we normally group ourselves and one lecturer will supervise each group. So you choose a topic you think you specialize on and start teaching it on the board. And your colleagues will be asking you questions as if they are your pupils... Then when am done, another person will start... We do test and assignments on them. And we are going to do exam too. We get feedback. Most of the lecturers do return our scripts. So you know your fate and your score – may be two over ten or five over ten – in order to improve before the exam. We normally do two tests before the exam...

We do lots of assignments, texts and exams though some of our tests are practical especially in PHE [Physical and health education]. He [lecturer] would ask us to throw tennis ball into one basket... We get feedback immediately. They tell us our scores, like the lecturer will keep five small balls and a basket in front of you and ask you to throw the balls into the basket. So, your score depends on how many you are able to throw into the basket. Like the one we did yesterday, I was able to throw one out of the five balls into the basket and my score was one over five. But he gave us verbal feedback. There is no information on [why you have a particular score] but somebody like me should sit back and think about why I got that score – maybe I didn’t read very well or I may have played all through the semester. So I will have to sit back and look at the textbook again and look at what I wrote to cross check why I failed. As such I will try to improve...

There are so many challenges in the school, after paying your school fees and you want to change your teller60, you will have to queue in the bursary61 [department]. In the ICT [information and Computer Technology], when you want to print out your course form, you will have to wait longer because of large population. We are always given assignments – to Google and go to websites. There are so many challenges but we just have to be patient. Some lecturers don’t come to class. But when they come, they will explain a little. But it is only that little they taught us they will ask during exam. They don’t go beyond what they had explained. It has effect on me but I don’t look at those lecturers. I focus on the good ones and make them my role model...

I would say that for one to be an effective teacher, the person must go through the college of education. Because when you get there [College of Education], you will be exposed to many things especially the microteaching. This is reason the teachers that went through the College of education are always different from those ones that just passed through the university. I don’t want to be a teacher. I can only be a teacher if am employed in a government setting. I don’t want to work in a private sector. Most private schools don’t pay their teachers well. So but in government schools – although it is difficult

60 Bank receipt for tuition payment
61 College finance office where students get their receipt
to get a job, they pay well. I am not here because I want to teach; I am here because of my [low] result. Then my mum’s friend advised me to start from NCE [National Certificate in Education]. It is easy to get admission to the university with NCE result. Moreover, NCE is not for teachers only, it is for everybody. You can decide to teach or not to teach after you graduate. It all depends on individuals.

7.4. Rebecca

I decided to be a teacher from my dad. My Dad is a teacher and I love the way he teaches. He has taught me once when I was in primary school and I really love the way he taught. He also graduated from this same college. I so much love teaching because you gain much thing from teaching. You [can] even educate yourself by teaching… I wrote JAMB [Joint Admission Matriculation Board] exam and chose the college as one of my choices. Luckily, for me the school chose me… I chose to go into primary education because it is the basic or the root of all other education courses… I remember my experience as a teacher before coming to college. I made use of lesson notes but one thing I did was [to] jump topics. If I don’t understand a particular topic in the syllabus, I move to the next topic. And it is not meant to be like that; a teacher has to follow the syllabus. Assuming I was trained then, I wouldn’t have done that; I would have followed the syllabus. Even if I don’t understand, I would have looked for an alternative way of doing it even if it means going to other teachers for clarifications.

All our departmental courses are lively and primary education deals with any other course in the department. There is nothing going on [in terms of the courses] in the department that we don’t know…though we don’t really go deep… We have to study all primary school subjects, general courses, citizenship courses, everything. The difference there is just the name – Like Basic science – is integrated science; Educational technology is introductory technology… And there is a way we are being taught, like the Educational technology, we have so many [things] they use in teaching us the course. We can prepare anything. We can make a plank, even build up a table, so many things – in fact, they even teach us how to build a house in Educational technology… You have been taught everything within primary education.

We do exam on the theory part of microteaching but in the practical part, you will teach your colleagues while your lecturer observes you. During this practical, you will teach your fellow students as if they are your pupils. The idea is that when you get to the main school, you will be able to do it very well… School observation is meant for PES [Primary education studies] students alone. No other department goes for school observation… They [students from other departments] are still going to teach [in secondary school] but we are the one to teach primary school students. We really need the strategy to handle the pupils properly. School observation helps us to see the methods teachers makes use of; to know if the pupils understand what the teacher is teaching them and to know if the teacher makes use of the instructional materials; to know if the compound and environment is conducive for learning… It [school observation] helps to prepare for microteaching… – the way you teach, your set induction, your
closure, the way you enter the class and your instructional material. School observation helps you to understand some of this classroom practices during micro teaching course.

At times, we get feedback. If we do test, some of our lecturers return our scripts to enable us know our performance. But in exam, the scripts are not returned to us. They [lecturers] sometimes write short notes on the scripts. And for some lecturers, when they administer a test and discover that your performance is low, the lecturer will advise us to go read more and then arrange another test date. …The way my departmental English lecturer told us to asses our pupils is what he does. For example, If I teach a particular topic this morning, when I enter class next time, I will have to ask them their `previous knowledge’ before I start a new topic. Even him [the lecturer] makes use of that. Whenever he comes to class, he must ask us about the previous knowledge. Even if you were not present in the last class, you will have to get the note from your course mate to avoid embarrassment [because] there is no way he would come to class without asking us questions. Even when you told him that you did not attend the last lecture, he would ask you why you attended the present one without updating your note and without preparing for the class. He doesn’t allow us to attend his lecture without being prepared and without proper reading and understanding of previous lecture.

7.5. Paul

[Teaching practice] is going well but...due to the environment of the place that we are doing our TP, some of these children… are being affected with their language... When you are teaching them, if you don’t bring yourself low to their level, you can't perform what you are ought to do there... Before I [teach] them anything, I make sure my lesson note and my instructional material is ready; what [I] am going to teach them this week, I would have planned since last week… I would have taken it to the assistant HM (Head Master/Mistress). They will be the one to sign after checking the lesson note. There is a space in the teaching practice booklet that co-operative teacher sign before the supervisor [signs] but the assistance HM signs it because they believe that there are some co-operative teachers that their lesson note is not ‘that’ effective. They even collected their [co-operative teachers’] lesson note to check and make some corrections. So assistant HM said that we should bring it directly to them...

Like now, I want to take them living things and non-living things next week. I will have prepared this week. So that by the time I get to their class, I won't have a problem ...and moreover I believe in child centered teaching... The first time I got to that school, I separated the ones that... that can't speak English at all [from the ones that can speak English language], I try to create [time] during long-break to bring maybe five of them together. So I pick the one that can speak very well, put him in

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62 Term use in the Nigerian context to mean the assessment of pupils’ understanding of the last topic
63 Teaching practice
64 For example
65 teach
their middle and say read for them! And by now with the four months that we have been reading, some of them are trying [to] make little short statements [like] this is a board! They are doing it perfectly now…

...So what happened was that, during workshops they called the lecturers together explaining this child-center [approach] to them. They now said we the student teacher can join. So I now volunteer myself that I don't mind to be there. So they just gave us little clue about this child-centred approach. I gained from it, so I used this method especially in basic science class... When you take bulb, you put it up, you take the battery, you connect the wire from the ground. I explained everything; I now bring all those things to the class. I now said who could do it? So one of them... said: 'Ah, we need to hold the bulb like this'. Another person helped us hold the battery; another person... helped us fix the wire. We kept on watching as they were doing it perfectly. Child centered approach is helping the teacher a lot... But, we were not taught in our own lesson. They did not explain it to us. We were only given the methods of teaching. I now wonder why we haven't been taught this child centered approach. It even helps the [co-operating] teacher.

Our college is trying their best [although] it depends on our supervisor. If our supervisor sees the challenges we face, they will take us to one class and ask us, which challenges are we facing? What have we gained? Lots of questions like that make us share our own opinion... And they will put us through some things that we don't understand. That's what the supervisors do... Our external moderator comes from another college; they were like the supervisor of our supervisors. There are some supervisors that will say... ah! that place is too far, I won't go. They [external supervisors] will be the ones to supervise them [our supervisors]. One of our external moderators was around last week. He supervised us, asked us our attendance book, asked us the challenges we are facing again... He just asked us question based on our teaching practice...

We did microteaching theory in school [college] before doing microteaching practical. It [microteaching theory] prepares us for the microteaching practical while the microteaching practical prepares us for teaching practice. If you don't pass the microteaching theory, you cannot go for the micro teaching practical. In microteaching practical, we were asked to be in group of five or ten. So after choosing, they gave us one supervisor that will supervise us... We presented individually and we were scored individually... The difference between microteaching and teaching practice is that microteaching is within the minimum of two people to twenty people who are your classmates. While in teaching practice, it is between you and your pupil; you can have fifty pupils in class...

There are more challenges in teaching practice than in the microteaching practical. For example, when I was doing microteaching practical, I never even think about going to school to use Yoruba to explain anything to anybody. But our predecessors already told us their experience with these... So all these things made me to worry... When I get there [teaching practice school], is it Yoruba

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66 Exclamation word
67 Exclamation word
68 Using local language for instruction in school
that I will be speaking? Is it going to pay[^69] them? How are they going to understand English language? So, these worries give me more courage that when I get there first, I should try to differentiate those people that can speak English and those one that they cannot speak English…

The college is not doing anything about this language barrier. The college should be aware. During my teaching practice when my supervisor came, I was taking this topic…on domestic animal, so when I got to one page, I just have to make use of Yoruba language to make the children understand what am saying. So the supervisor said because you put on glass[^70], he put on glass. You are now promoting the glass abi[^71]? Me too was afraid. And I said to myself, I hope I've not implicated myself. But, when he was through with [supervising] me, we packed ourselves to one place and he explained to me that he loved what I just did. He really understands that when I spoke in Yoruba the children [responded well]. He now said that he loved the way I [used] Yoruba with the English language…

Before now, colleges are using RLA [Rapid Learning Approach], which makes them transfer us to any school of their choice but now they are not making use of the RLA – you are the one to pick your school. So before you pick a school you are going to teach, we had to go to that school first to observe some things there… You only go to the school that can accept you; you can choose private schools as well. But there are some substandard schools, which you cannot choose. By the time we've chosen the school [and] have submitted the form, our teaching practice directorate informed us that after submitting it, they [the Directorate] would go to each school. So that if the school you have chosen is not qualified enough, you are not going to be assigned to that school.

…Actually, teaching through my method –child centered – that I tried even when I wasn’t asked to use it, makes teaching easier for me as a teacher. With this method, I can teach because I like teaching; I like the stress; but due to personal reasons I cannot teach. The payment [teachers’ salary] makes me draw back a little bit. I don't think teaching is more okay to that extent. It is not that I don't love teaching; I love teaching. But if I find another job[^72], I [will] take the job. But I still believe that, our government are trying their best and they are still promising us that they are still going [to] bring out more and more of it. So if they can change o[^73], I can dedicate myself to teaching.

7.6. Abimbola

Teaching practice is very interesting. I really love it… Teaching practice makes us to know what is going on in the school… We have been taught [but] they say practice make it perfect. So we have been taught the theory aspect…we need to make it happen [practical] in order for it to become real… In the theory aspect, you have the teaching strategy; you have the technique and the method. These are the three things you are going to be taught… You have to know the kind of method that will befit the children. Because its not everybody that can learn at the same rate. You have some people that you will teach

[^69]: Wondering if using Yoruba as a language of instruction will benefit or be useful for the pupils.
[^70]: Eye glass
[^71]: Local word use informally at the end of a question.
[^72]: A better job in another establishment
[^73]: Exclamation word
that will not understand easily. So there are some methods that we are going to use for them to understand easily. That's why all those method we [were] taught [were] in the theory aspect, we have been doing the teaching practice for about four months.

In my TP [teaching practice], I teach Basic four\textsuperscript{74}… Normally, they [supervisors] just want to look at your techniques. The way you are teaching it. You can teach all the whole subjects, but mostly, you write a lesson note on a particular subject. Mostly I wrote lesson note on Mathematics… Mathematics is just about principles… The mathematics we are studying here in Nigeria is the same…everywhere in the world… That's why if we finish this our course here within next month, they have a card [certificate] they are going to give us. They call it TRCN, which means: Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria. It's like a ticket that you can use to teach in any part of the world. That means if you go to America, you are going to show them that this card proves that you are a bonafide\textsuperscript{75} teacher…

As we all know that this teaching practice is a course on its own… Some people will say it is stressful but for me it is okay because this teaching practice is something that will enable us to know how to teach. It is something that we want to do; that we have been taught to do and I believe that teaching is fun… To me, I am really teaching because I want to have this first-hand experience. You cannot expect that I want to teach to have score… Teaching is part of me. Because that is what I love doing. I just love teaching… I have taught just once\textsuperscript{76}… But that time, I was not a qualified teacher then. But now I know the difference between a teacher and a cheater\textsuperscript{77}. Because then, we are teaching in order to earn money but now I am not looking at the money aspect, but I am imparting knowledge into the children's life. In the future, if the children see me, they [would] say ah!\textsuperscript{78} This person imparted this on me. They will never forget me. So that's just the main reason…

I want to tell you about the library process because the library is just like a guide to the student. Maybe when given an assignment, you can just go to the library to read. We also have the E-learning - the electronic learning center. You can just use it to access the computer. We believe that this in kind of world we are in is a computerized world. So we…believe in using the E-learning center to learn. Also, I believe in using instructional material. Because we have been told that as a teacher, you must never do without your instructional material. I've already learnt how to build up my own instructional materials from my college courses without having to buy them. They make it compulsory in the entire course.

I mean every course has different instructional material. Social studies [instructional material] is different from that of Mathematics. There is also a course called instructional material. It taught me how to make instructional materials by myself. I don't depend on computerized or the one they are selling [in the market]. Instead, I just think and just form a little instructional material by myself… If I have any sort of problem in my class and I don't really know how to handle it… I can just put the children on suspense: ‘Watch out in my next class, am going to prepare for this’. I can because of that, come to the school and

\textsuperscript{74} Year four
\textsuperscript{75} qualified
\textsuperscript{76} Had previous teaching experience
\textsuperscript{77} A common phrase use in college A for people who teach without a teaching qualification
\textsuperscript{78} Exclamation word showing satisfaction
ask or seek for formal information about that particular thing I do not really understand… If [it] is possible, I can just come to the library to search…

In the school observation, it is just like teaching practice but teaching practice is more [detailed]. [In] school observation, you are to observe the students, the way they do, [whether] they are really learning [and whether] the teacher is really teaching them or not. We have the process by which the teacher will be teaching and some students will not focus. Instead of them learning, they will be playing… Knowledge is not being passed to such a child… And again, we want to look at the method the teacher is teaching, does it correspond with the one they teach us in the school… We also check to know if they are using the syllabus. Some teachers will just say - look I am tired, ‘let me just give them anyhow work’ . You have to observe them to know whether the teacher is well [and] neatly dressed; whether he is outspoken… And if he is wrong, you just we have to take note of what they are supposed to be doing.

You are not going to observe only the classroom. You observe outside the classroom – maybe the assembly. Is it how it is supposed to be? And again, they [supervisors] will tell us that if we go outside there, [we should] please ‘look at the mistake they are making. You are not supposed to make this kind of mistake. This is not the way we teach you guys. You people should go outside and do the right thing. They [supervisors] make us to do the right thing’. They observed us during school observation [course]\(^{80}\)… we [need to] show them that this is what we really observe; we will write it like a project… So now that I am in the classroom, it's no more imaginative… We’ve been taught about the method of teaching the areas we can teach… So when we now go out there, we now have to apply those methods we are being taught to teach those pupils…

...The school [college] does not really give us any support. The only support given is to just come to supervise us; to know how we are doing. Are we really doing it right? They came just to supervise us to know whether we are really doing what they asked us to do. Everybody is assigned a supervisor… And also, we are going to have an external [supervisor], that one is not from my school [but] from another college that will come and check [whether] you are really doing it or not…

Teaching is what I love doing…because being a teacher is very good. It is fun. Because I don't believe that teaching is just about taking or believing in the money you are being given or paid for. My plan is also to be a teacher. I want to be a teacher yeah! Am going to teach but I am still going to further my education. I can do Guidance and Counseling course because I believe that I've already known about the children. Now, how can I guide and counsel them? That is what [I] am looking forward to.

7.7. Maje

I taught KG [Kindergarten] two instead of the primary class that I was trained to teach though it was just in the school I practiced… It is because students from other department were also posted to the school and the school is a primary school. So they had to assign them to primary school and assigned those of us from Primary Education studies to KG and nursery classes… They said we have knowledge of how to

\(^{79}\) Some teachers come to class unprepared

\(^{80}\) Ideally, school observation is meant to be supervised
teach early childhood classes because we do have joint lectures [with early childhood students] and again they have shortage of Kg [Kindergarten] teachers… It went well but I discovered a lot. We were taught in school [that] it is not every topic or subject that you teach but with the little material that you bring into the class you can quickly make the pupils understand what you wanted to teach them.

For instance, I wanted to teach them LETTER WORDS – because I was given the English alphabets to teach – to identify those letters, relating them with objects, know how to recite and [so on]. What I did was that I [divided] the diaries into two because we have six weeks [in each half term]… so I just took two letters per week and I tried to cut and design cardboard sheets with different markers and write the letter ‘A’ with the objects. So even without telling the child [when] they see it [on the blackboard], they will start: Aunty see APPLE; my mum gave me apple yesterday. So they can easily identify those letters with the aid of objects drawn by the sides. So they know that ‘A’ is for APPLE…

I tried the method we were taught in school but it seemed not to be working. So I sat to think. I cannot just be reading all the time to the kids - what will I be reading and when will it end? Since the objective I wanted to achieve that week centers on A and B; am I going to continue singing AAAAA andBBBBBB throughout the week? So I had to create [a teaching method] that would draw the pupil’s attention to the topic. Even without telling them that this is this…. In fact some of them really amazed me; there are some [pupils] before I left there, they can read [and] can identify Capital and small letters…

I had another [teacher] that checks my lesson plan. She studied primary Education Studies. [She] is in nursery one and two but they assign her as my cooperating n teacher because she studied PES [Primary Education Studies]. So she was the one checking my lesson plan [because] she knows the rules that guides PES [Primary Education Studies]. …She checked it [lesson notes] every weekend. I do submit on Friday and pick it up on Monday. So I write my lesson note in advance. …She [cooperating teacher] does not monitor me, my school supervisor does. She [cooperating teacher] does that occasionally when she visits her colleagues who is the teacher am staying in her class. She can now talk to me. She can say to me: I saw you when you were teaching letter “A” though the letter was okay but you should not have allowed them climb the chairs. There was another day I was tired and I sat down to teach them but she told me that to carry the pupils along you have to do as you want the pupils to do. So is just these two times that she corrected me and I appreciated it…

The problem we also faced was instructional material. Materials to produce instructional materials were not readily available. I expect this school (being a fee paying school) to have these materials available. The highest material we had access to was the cardboard sheet. We had to run around to get maker pens. Even at that our supervisors appreciate our work when they see them. The school partially supports us: at least they gave us cardboard and maker pens at times – that’s all…

It [class control] is very difficult. Even some of the teachers here do not know what class control is. They just approach it the way they like; they don’t do it well… They [our supervisors] do not know [about our co-operative teacher’s class control]. They only supervise us. They only tell us that we need to work more on our class control. But how do we learn this? The people we have come to learn from are not doing it, how do we learn then? Class control is difficult as there is nothing in place to draw people’s
attention and to calm them down… Yes I will teach. I will do the little I can and leave the rest. It is just to help the situation. For me to have realized the problem, I need to be ready to contribute my own effort to control and correct the situation. I will teach.

7.8. Ade

Any situation we find ourselves, we just have to adapt to it. It is not that coming to [do] NCE in this school favored most of us. But at least anywhere we find ourselves we try to adapt to it. Throughout my three years course, it has been stressful but at least we just have to adapt to it… It is not that I purposely came here to do NCE [National Certificate in Education]. I have been to good schools from my secondary school days. My secondary school education was at technical college [and] for me to have studied in a technical college and now in NCE programme – instead of going to University – is not funny… That is why when the opportunity came to study for NCE, I had no choice than to grab the opportunity. I did not even know about this school. My dad told me about the school. The admission was even late81. The admission was about to end on Monday and I came on Sunday. My dad just remembered that he had someone (a friend) in this college. He then called the person to help with my admission. The person helped with my admission process and asked me to choose a course. So that was how I was admitted in the school...

In my own [teaching practice] school, there were challenges [such as] coming late to school. Even it got to the extent that they had to appoint a teacher to stay by the attendance book so that any one that comes at a minute pass 7:50am must not write their names under the line. And this is not supposed to be. At least, they have to be considerate. For example, there were two guys that walk long distance to and fro the school every day. It was only a few times that he was allowed to join school bus. So they have to consider people like that… They should have known that we were there for a while and most of the teachers relaxed that we are student teachers. Imagine us teaching 50 pupils alone: you write and the red pen you are using will be almost finished in a day. You write their assignment on their papers because they are nursery pupils. You write and circle one to one hundred for them. You do their class work, you shout, you sing. The worst is that the school does not want to see you sit down. Immediately they see you sitting down they will start talking…

So the stress was much because of the way the teachers treated us. They never encouraged us or corrected us. They only looked for the slightest opportunity to insult us. They do not call us for one-on –one meeting to correct us; instead, they always talk about our mistakes in general meetings. Meanwhile the practicing teachers are collecting salary and they do not do anything in a day. All they do is to cross their arms and legs and not doing anything. At least the class teachers were once student teachers; they should have been more supportive and helpful than they were. The only thing they told us is at least we’ve done this before it is not a big deal. We know what we did during our time and meanwhile everything they tell us is what we accept and do.

81 She got admitted into college at the very last minute
My supervisors were four, one for attendance, one for lesson note only; they won’t ask you to
teach. But some, I don’t know why they come. When one of them comes, he/she does not come again.
…Our supervisors commended my teaching; they said in fact they were impressed. When they inspected
us, at least some of them started bringing their children to my [practice] school. They commented that
they were impressed, satisfied and we should keep it up. [They said] that the performance [was] what is
expected from us.

All the marks [from each supervisor] will be summed up as a grade…There is no feedback, just
result in form of grade. After checking the lesson note they comment on it… So there was comment on
every lesson note the supervisors inspected… This has taught me how to improve my teaching for
example, Evaluation – what we expected the learners to achieve. How to improve our voice –voice is
also part of what our supervisors assessed; class control, how you can manage the class, timing…, how
you achieved your objectives and how you ask questions in order to carry them along and in order to
know if truly the objectives have been achieved. There is a space in the lesson note for evaluation where
you write down the questions…

[But] from nursery aspect, you can’t ask previous knowledge because they will not be able to tell
you anything. You ask questions on what they learnt from that topic. Then, you try to enlighten them
more on the topic before going to the next topic… We were told how to do them in the college. Before we
went for teaching practice, we were told what to do… That is the essence of microteaching. So we
already know how to do all these did not open the lesson note talk more of checking it. They do not care
to things before going for teaching practice… If you decided to do something new, it is okay; but you
need to ensure that the class teacher and your supervisors accommodate that…

The class teacher was supposed to check our lesson note but they do not do it. If they see your
supervisor is coming, they will rush through your lesson note to sign it. I can remember when our
supervisor came and saw our lesson notes from the first week to the 10th week were not signed. She
kept asking what was going on. The student teacher now answered, ‘my class teacher hasn’t been
around. Then supervisor confronted the class teacher who rudely answered and asked if there was any
problem with her absence. She intentionally wanted to tarnish the student teachers image where her
supervisor is. If I see any one going to that school for teaching practice, I will discourage the person.
Appendix 8: Sample UTME criteria for Universities

University of Ilorin

DEPARTMENT CUT OFF MARK REMARK
Medicine and Nursing 240 (O’ Level result with one sitting only)
Nursing 240 (O’ Level result with one sitting only)
Anatomy, Bio chemistry, civil engineering, Mass communication, Business administration, electrical, Microbiology engineering, Pharmacy-. 200
Accountancy, Geology, Mechanical Engineering, Industrial Chemistry 210
4). Computer science, computer engineering. 190
5). Law, 220
6). Vet medicine, 230
7). Other courses not listed above. 180 (e.g, English, Economics, and other educational education, e.t.c )