

An Observational Study on the Impact of B.Ed. Internship Program on the Student Teachers: A Reflection on the Internship experiences from the perspective of the Student Teachers

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Abstract

The Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) internship program is a cornerstone of teacher education, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom practice. During this phase, student teachers assume the role of regular educators for a designated period, engaging in various school-related activities. This article presents an observational study exploring the impact of the B.Ed. internship program, focusing on reflections and experiences shared by student teachers. The study aims to identify the strengths, challenges, and transformative aspects of the internship, offering insights for educators, policymakers, and future student teachers. A total of 13 schools (both government and private) were selected under Mokokchung District. The study revealed that the Internship acts as a powerful tool in shaping individuals, developing ethical standards, respecting individual differences and values such as punctuality, flexibility and discipline.

Key words: *B.Ed. Internship, Student-Teachers, Experiences, Reflections*

1. Introduction

The Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) teacher training program is designed as a transformative journey, preparing aspiring educators to become compassionate, skilled, and socially responsible teachers. The program commenced with the emphasis on bridging theory and practice for the whole 2 years of training, and pledged with the commitment to educational excellence, integrity, and inclusivity. Central to this training is the internship

component, which immerses student-teachers in both rural and urban school environments, government as well as non-government schools, ensuring exposure to diverse educational settings. This exposure not only builds adaptability but also deepens student-teachers' understanding of the distinct challenges and opportunities present in varied communities. The program's instructional approach is rooted in the 5E constructivist model- Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate which serves as a foundation for planning and delivering lessons across both Major and Minor pedagogy. This approach places a strong emphasis on interactive, inquiry-driven, and student-centered pedagogy, by sparking students' curiosity, fostering exploration, providing clear explanations, encouraging in depth understanding, and consistently assessing progress.

A distinctive feature of the B.Ed. internship is its strong community approach. Student teachers are encouraged to build rapport with both students and colleagues, recognizing supportive and empathetic teacher-student relationships for a positive learning environment; organize as well as participate in both curricular and co-curricular activities and thereby cultivate leadership, teamwork, and social skills, preparing student-teachers to guide learners beyond academics and into personal and professional growth. Moreover, the program places significant emphasis on developing the social characteristics of future educators. Student-teachers are trained to be approachable, supportive, and relatable, fostering an atmosphere where students feel valued and understood. This humanized approach to teaching is further reinforced by opportunities to interact with diverse communities, enabling student-teachers to appreciate the social fabric of both rural and urban settings and to adapt their teaching strategies accordingly. The main objectives of the internship program:

- a) To bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in a school environment.
- b) To develop professional teaching skills, including lesson planning, classroom management, and student assessment.
- c) To foster reflective practices and critical thinking in real teaching scenarios.
- d) To cultivate professional ethics, confidence, and responsibility as a teacher.
- e) To enable active participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities.
- f) To encourage interaction and engagement with the school community

2. Methodology

This observational study was conducted with 100 B.Ed. student teachers from Mokokchung College of Teacher Education. Data were collected through reflective journal, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews. The objective of this study is to examine the impact and transformative aspects of school internship on the student teachers and the challenges faced. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns and significant insights regarding their internship experiences. Descriptive study method was used.

3. Key Findings

a. Bridging Theory and Practice

Most student teachers reported internship as their first meaningful opportunity to apply educational theories in real classrooms. They found:

- Lesson planning and delivery became more effective with hands-on experience.
- Classroom management strategies learned in coursework were tested and refined.
- Exposure to diverse learners enhanced their understanding of differentiated instruction.
- They realized teaching in real life as different from what they learned in theory due to dynamic environment for which they had to make changes on the spot and try new ways.
- They learned to be flexible. Even with a well-planned lesson, they sometimes had to change their approach in during class transaction depending on students' response.
- Putting theory into action gave more confidence. Teaching ideas like asking higher-order questions or using step-by-step learning made more sense once they actually used them in class.

b. Professional Identity Formation

Internship experiences played a crucial role in shaping the professional identities of student teachers:

- Many described a growing sense of confidence and responsibilities.
- Interactions with mentor teachers and school staff influenced their teaching philosophies.
- Observing different teaching styles helped them develop their own unique approaches.
- Many began to see themselves as actual teachers. Teaching in front of a class and handling real responsibilities made the role feel more real, not just something they were preparing for.

- Having responsibilities helped teachers to grow. From planning lessons to managing the class, and taking administrative roles, they learned that teaching needs a lot of preparation, patience, and maturity.
- Many started thinking more about effective teaching. After each class, they would reflect on what worked well and what they could do better next time. This helped the teachers keep learning and improving.
- Their ideas about teaching became clearer. They started understanding the kind of teachers they want to be, being kind and patient, or being firm and creative.

c. **Reflective Practice and Growth**

Reflective journaling was highlighted as a valuable tool:

- Student teachers became more self-aware and open to feedback.
- They learned to critically analyze their teaching methods and students' responses.
- Reflection fostered resilience and adaptability.
- Writing reflections helped track the progress. By looking back at past entries, they could see how much had improved and what areas still needed work.
- Gave them space to express emotions- of tough days or breakthrough moments, journaling helped them process those experiences and learn from them.

4. **Challenges faced by student teachers during their B.Ed. internship program**

Student teachers commonly encountered a range of challenges during their internship, which can significantly influence their professional development and overall experience. Key challenges identified were:

- a) **Classroom Management Difficulties:** Many student teachers struggled to maintain discipline and manage diverse student behaviors, especially in larger classes or unfamiliar school environments.
- b) **Time Management Issues:** Balancing lesson planning, teaching, assessment, and administrative duties proved challenging for several interns, often leading to stress and fatigue.

- c) **Limited Resources:** Some schools lacked adequate teaching materials, technological tools, or infrastructure, making it difficult for interns to implement innovative teaching strategies or cater to different learning needs.
- d) **Inconsistent or Insufficient Mentorship:** Not all student teachers received regular, constructive feedback from their mentor teachers. Some reported feeling unsupported or left to navigate challenges on their own.
- e) Adjusting to the norms, expectations, and routines of different schools was sometimes overwhelming, particularly for those placed in unfamiliar settings or rural areas.
- f) **Assessment and Evaluation Pressures:** Interns often found it difficult to design fair assessments and evaluate student performance objectively, especially with limited prior experience.
- g) **Workload and Emotional Stress:** The demands of the internship, coupled with academic requirements and personal expectations, led to anxiety and emotional exhaustion for some student teachers.

5. Suggestions

Based on the student teachers' reflections, the following recommendations are proposed:

- a) Provide training to mentor teachers to offer consistent and constructive feedback.
- b) Integrate reflective journaling and peer discussions as core components of the internship
- c) Encourage schools hosting interns to provide adequate resources.
- d) Give more emphasis on classroom management.
- e) Establish continuous support networks to student teachers during and after internship.

6. Experiences and reflections shared by Student Teachers

6.1. Voice from Pedagogy of Language and Social Sciences

“The teaching-learning process becomes more meaningful when learners are not just mere passive listeners, but active participants in constructing their own knowledge. To foster such an environment, I implemented the 5E Model across my English as well as Social Sciences classrooms. This Model encouraged inquiry, reflection, and collaboration while helping learners connect classroom lessons with real-world context. I adapted the model

creatively through role-play, interactive activities, poetry, group discussions, symbolic games and peer learning. Here's how each phase unfolded across the two disciplines:

Engage: To spark curiosity and activate learners' prior knowledge, I introduced topics through relatable questions, thought-provoking scenarios, simple visuals, picture cards and realia. For instance, in English, while introducing Nelson Mandela's character of resilience, I asked questions like, "Have you ever been in a situation where you had to speak up because something was wrong? Did you give up or keep trying? Why? In Social Sciences, to introduce the topic, "Media and Public Opinion," I used realia like newspaper and asked, "What kind of news do we usually find in newspapers?" which led to a discussion on how media influences public perception. These simple prompts invited learners to draw from their own experiences and be curious, motivated and excited to learn more.

Explore: This stage allowed learners to interact actively. In English, they engaged in reading with comprehension, peer tutoring, and group interpretations of the texts. In Social Sciences, the learners analyzed picture cards, scenarios, discussed media tools, etc. They were encouraged to think critically, share ideas, collaborate, and participate actively. For instance, to explore the role of media in democracy, they learners were engaged in a mock election where learners took on roles as candidates, media reporter and voters where the reporter interviewed the candidates, and the voters discussed the promises and made their decisions. Learners enjoyed this hands-on activity-based exploration, often sharing insights of how it made them understand the topic better than passively listening.

Explain: The learners in this stage expressed their understanding through presentations, discussions and impromptu role plays. For instance, in English, while learning about unity through sports, the learners were asked to do an impromptu role play of the scenes of division and unity through-sports to enhance their understanding better. In Social Science class, while explaining the role of media in shaping public opinion, some learners answered verbally, some in writing. I supplemented these with clarifications and additional content as and when required. These allowed misconceptions to be addressed, and helped learners connect their insights to the content. They often shared that these active involvement made lessons more memorable and enjoyable than traditional lectures.

Elaborate: Learners applied their knowledge and understanding creatively in new contexts and real-life situations. For instance, in English, they composed Haikus about importance of fairness in daily lives after learning about apartheid and also composed paragraphs analyzing the resilience shown by Nelson Mandela. In Social Sciences, after learning about role of media in shaping public opinion, learners were asked to evaluate biased and unbiased versions of the same story to enable to have awareness of importance of free press by assessing the two different narratives.

Evaluate: In this stage, assessments were done to evaluate learners' understanding of the day's topic. These included quizzes, reflective writings, worksheets, and group feedback sessions at the end. In both English and Social Sciences, I revisited key questions on the day's topic, where the learners would share what they had learned. This helped me become aware and identify the areas they understood well and also the areas where they needed further scaffolding and reinforcement. This made learners to be more aware of their learning progress, take ownership of their learning, and become more motivated to learn. This made learning more meaningful and retention for a longer period of time.

Implementing the 5E Model in both English and Social Sciences truly transformed the classroom environment into a vibrant space of exploration, discussion, and creativity. Learners responded positively to the 5E Model. Learners were not merely recipients of content but were active meaning-makers, thinkers and collaborators. The variety of activities allowed learners with different strengths to shine-whether in writing, speaking, or performing. Their enthusiasm, participation, and deeper comprehension affirmed the success of this method. Learners felt more included, valued, and eager to learn more. Many said they looked forward to the class because they knew they would get to do something-play, discuss, act, or create. It also reminded me that when the learners are trusted to think, express, and explore, the classroom transforms into a space of joy, discovery, and meaning making also fostering deeper understanding, lasting retention, and the shared delight of uncovering ideas together”.

6.2. Voice from Pedagogy of Science and Mathematics:

“The Constructivist 5E Model provides a structured framework for creating meaningful learning experiences that build upon students’ prior knowledge. Throughout my teaching experiences, I implemented this Model with notable success, particularly in my science and math classes.

The Model begins with Engagement, where I activated students' prior knowledge through open-ended questions, class discussions, and introductory activities that connected scientific concepts to real-world contexts. This phase proved especially effective with Class 7B students, whose eagerness to learn and strong knowledge foundation made initial engagement particularly dynamic.

During the Exploration phase, students investigated concepts through hands-on activities, interactive models, and experiments. I observed students testing predictions, conducting investigations, and comparing ideas with peers' activities that fostered collaboration and critical thinking. The use of realia and interactive models enhanced this phase significantly.

In the Explanation phase, students articulated their understanding while I introduced scientific terminology and clarified misconceptions. My incorporation of language competency development, using Nagamese for Class 9 and both Nagamese and English for Class 7B, proved valuable here, helping students express scientific concepts more clearly.

The Elaboration phase extended learning through additional activities and problem-solving scenarios. The analytical method I employed complemented this phase, allowing students to apply their understanding to new situations.

Finally, the Evaluation phase included various assessment strategies-worksheets, multiple-choice questions, oral evaluations, and achievement tests. These product-based assessments effectively measured students' mastery of science concepts

Throughout this constructivist approach, I observed students building new ideas upon existing knowledge, constructing meaning through experience, and developing deeper conceptual understanding. The model's effectiveness varied between classes, with Class 7B showing particularly strong outcomes due to their prior knowledge and enthusiasm for participatory learning.”

6.3. Community outreach program

- “We were required to conduct a community outreach program to meaningfully engage with the community. The community, where our rural internship was based consisted of scattered households and a relatively smaller population, which posed a unique challenge in terms of outreach planning. Our team

unanimously decided to visit a Government Middle School for the outreach initiative. The school provided a suitable and welcoming space to carry out our community-based activities. Our program was centered on the theme, "A Second Chance", with a focus on the 3Rs-Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle, to promote environmental awareness in a way that was both educational and engaging. We presented a short play under the same theme, showcasing the harmful consequences of improper waste disposal, particularly when waste is dumped into water bodies. The play illustrated how such actions lead to pollution, illness, and further degradation of natural resources. Eventually in the play, the community comes together, with individuals donating land for proper waste disposal and committing to practice the 3Rs as a collective resolution."

- "A community outreach program was organized on the theme, "Creating Conversations" with the objective to share ideas and create valuable conversations with the youths concerning their career and unhealthy lifestyles of youngsters. We initiated a dramatic strategy called Conscience Alley under the topic, "Career" to explore multiple facets of a character's choice within a specific dilemma based on their career choices, followed by a group discussion where we shared about several career choices and career options available for the youngsters. The youths also took superb participation in the role play based on the unhealthy lifestyles of youngsters. Overall, the objective of the program was successfully fulfilled. The feedbacks from the participants were encouraging as they commented on the impact the program had on them and their outlook."

6.4. Excerpts from Reflective Journals-

"Building rapport with the learners was an important part of my journey. From the moment I entered the classrooms, I knew that establishing a warm, interactive environment was crucial. I introduced fun check-in activities like 'touch your head, knees, and shoulders,' where I would say the wrong body part, and the learners had to follow along. The laughter and engagement created a light-hearted, positive atmosphere. These activities helped me build strong, trusting relationships with the learners. The bond we shared became so strong that my last day became an emotional farewell which is a testament to the power of connection, reminding me that teaching, goes far beyond the lessons we impart-it's about the relationships we cultivate."

“One of the most inspiring aspects of the school was the mentorship program. Every teacher was assigned a small group of learners, fostering personal connections and individualized support. This mentorship was not limited to academics, it also extended to maintaining communication with parents, strengthening the connection between home and school. It was heartening to witness how this system provided the learners with the support they needed, ensuring that their educational journey was holistic.”

“The rapport I built with the Class 9 and Class 6 learners was truly special. They would often come to me with their personal stories, eager to share their experiences. This allowed me to see beyond the classroom, understanding the learners as individuals, not just students. On my last day, as I entered the Class 6 classroom, each student approached me with a gift or a letter, and we shared a tearful, emotional farewell. This moment was a powerful reminder that teaching is not just about transferring knowledge—it is about leaving lasting impact on the hearts and minds of the learners. Additionally, I received letters of appreciation, gratitude and admiration for my time spent with them. These letters left a huge impact on the reminding me of the difference I had made in their lives and reinforcing the idea that teaching is not just about imparting knowledge but also making meaningful connections that last a lifetime.”

“My urban internship was an experience that profoundly shaped my understanding of teaching and its true essence. It challenged me to adapt to be creative in the face of adversity, and to find innovative ways to connect with learners. The lively environment of the urban school, with all its noise and chaos, taught me the importance of perseverance and the ability to engage learners no matter the external distractions. But more than the challenges, it was the relationships I built that left the deepest impact. I realized that teaching is not just about imparting knowledge it's about connecting with students, understanding their needs, and guiding them on their journey.”

“The mentorship system in the school reinforced the power of personalized support, while the appreciation and emotional farewell from the learners reminded me of the lasting impact that a teacher can have on a student's life. The letters of gratitude I received were a testament to the fact that the bonds we build with

learners are often more significant than the lessons we teach. These moments of connection and affection reaffirmed my passion for teaching and deepened my commitment to the profession.”

“As I reflect on my time in the urban school, I realized that I have learned not only how to be a better teacher but also how to be a more compassionate and empathetic human being. The lessons I learned here will stay with me throughout my career, and I am more determined than ever to create environments where learners feel valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential. Teaching is a calling that requires patience, resilience and above all, a deep love for the learners. The impact of this experience will echo in my life for years to come, reminding me that the true essence of teaching lies in the hearts we touch, the minds we inspire, and the lives we change.”

“The outreach experience served as a powerful reminder that education does not exist in isolation within the four walls of a classroom. The community plays an essential role in shaping the values and attitudes of learners. When schools and communities collaborate, the learning process becomes more grounded and sustainable. This realization strengthened my belief that teaching is not merely a school’s responsibility it is a shared societal mission.”

“Reflecting on my rural internship, I am left with a deep sense of gratitude, humility, and renewed purpose. The experience taught me that meaningful education is not confined to the sophistication of infrastructure or the abundance of resources, but rather it is found in the strength of relationships, the sincerity of purpose, and the unwavering spirit of those who teach and learn. I witnessed how a school with limited physical means could still provide a nurturing and value-rich environment for its learners. The calm order, spiritual grounding and discipline that shaped daily life at the school offered me not just professional insights, but also personal growth.”

“The unwavering enthusiasm of the learners, the care and dedication of the teachers, the genuine warmth of the community, and the support of my fellow interns all came together to shape an experience that will stay with me for years to come. It reminded me that teaching is far more than delivering lessons it is about listening,

observing, empathizing, and adapting. It is about walking alongside learners as they grow and encouraging them to believe in their potential, even in the face of limitations.”

“More than anything, this internship reaffirmed my belief that education is a collaborative effort, one that thrives on compassion, shared responsibility, and connection. It encouraged me to view challenges not as obstacles, but as opportunities to be creative, patient, and resilient. As I move forward in my journey as an educator, I will carry with me the lessons learned, the quiet strength of discipline, the beauty of simplicity, and the powerful truth that the heart of teaching lies in service. It was a transformative one that not only shaped my approach to teaching, but also reminded me of the kind of teacher, and person.”

7. Conclusion

The B.Ed. internship program marks a transformative phase in the professional journey of a teacher trainee. It bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom and the practical demands of the teaching profession. Through this immersive experience, interns are introduced to the multiple responsibilities of a teacher, including lesson planning, classroom management, student assessment, co-curricular involvement, and interpersonal communication with the teachers at school and with the community. One of the most significant takeaways from the internship is the professional development, evolving from passive learners to active educators, gaining confidence in managing a classroom and catering to diverse learner needs. Moreover, the internship offers valuable opportunities for self-reflection, encouraging one to assess own performance, identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, and refine teaching practices accordingly. This reflective practice fosters a mindset of continuous learning and professional growth. Through this internship program they learned the importance of respecting diversity, maintaining confidentiality and upholding the values of fairness and inclusivity in education. These experiences contribute to the development of a well-rounded, responsible and reflective educator, ready to make positive impact on the lives of the students. Thus, the B.Ed. internship is not merely a requirement but the cornerstone of teacher education. The hands-on experience with guidance from the mentors and support from co-interns made this journey of internship a memorable and meaningful one, laying the foundation for a lifelong journey of learning, teaching and contribution towards education system.

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