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Abstract

Education is the ability to meet life's situation, it is a character building process, enhancing one's personality and making him/her rational, capable, responsive and intelligent. Competency standards are concerned with application of professional knowledge and skills within the workplace and are underpinned by teachers' professional values. Competence is usually associated with highly professional performance and there is a direct link in the field of education between a teacher's professional competence and pupil performance. The paper discusses teacher training and professional competencies and suggest the measures for enchancement and development.

Keywords : *Teacher training, professional competency, teaching-learning.*

Education is the ability to meet life's situation, it is a character building process, enhancing one's personality and making him/her rational, capable, responsive and intelligent. Twenty first century is characterized by the emergence of multiculturalism due to industrialization, urbanization, globalization and disintegration in the family system. It is described as the century of stress and strain. Since, education is viewed as an instrument to develop the cognitive qualities, tolerance and understanding of people, it should prepare the younger generation to understand and face the realities of globalization. In this context, the schools and the teachers have more responsibilities in molding the character of the students. Thus, the role of the teacher in the society is vital for its improvement.

The quality of education is a central theme in education systems. The quality of education is increasingly judged by focusing on pupil performance, what pupils actually learn, and how well they learn it. A number of studies have been conducted with the purpose of understanding how quality in education is achieved. Grauwe and Varghese (2000) focus on the textbook as the key factor for improving quality in education rather than on teacher competence, but in some of the literature teacher competence is singled out as the key factor (Westera, 2001, Medley and Shannon, 1994, and Shulman, 1986). This study will highlight the importance of the relationship between teacher competence and pupil performances particularly in a situation where resources are very limited and where many factors contribute to the inadequate performance of pupils. To achieve a high quality of education in the era of Education for All is not an easy task. In order to give access to education to the whole population the state needs to build and develop many schools, to supply a large numbers of teachers, and to provide the related educational resources; and as Kanu (1996, p.180) asserts "apart from the quantitative dimension, the qualitative dimension is also staggering in

its proportion." A very high proportion of teachers at primary and secondary school level have no professional teaching qualifications, many of them not being educated beyond secondary school level. Conducting a study in Pakistan, Kanu found that there was no observable difference in quality between trained and untrained primary teachers and, given the very low salaries paid to teachers, there tended to be no immediate desire among unqualified teachers to improve them academically or professionally.

A study conducted by Miguel and Barsaga (1997, p.120) considered factors affecting pupil performance, investigating the variables of teacher, student, parents and community, and concluded that the teacher was the key factor in student achievement. The quality of education depends on the quality of teachers, particularly in the initial stages of education when the pupils are at an early age, and especially in the rural areas (Châu, 1996, p.116). If that is so, then the quality of primary school teachers, both academic and professional, cannot be overly emphasized. Training plays an important role in improving the quality of education in schools. The professional quality of the trained teacher depends on the quality of the curriculum to which the teacher was exposed and the ways in which it is implemented. In Mozambique, the teachers in the upper primary or second grade (EP2) generally have little academic and professional training, as is indicated in the SACMEQ II study (2003). A similar situation prevails in Pakistan, as documented by Kanu (1996). Kanu notes that in these circumstances teachers have serious limitations in actively participating in the successful implementation of new curricula or methods.

Five Dimensions of Teachers' Work

Facilitating Student Learning

Assessing and Reporting Student Learning Outcomes

Engaging in Professional Learning



Participating in Curriculum Policy and Other Program Initiatives in an Outcomes-focused Environment Forming Partnerships within the School Community

Competency Standards

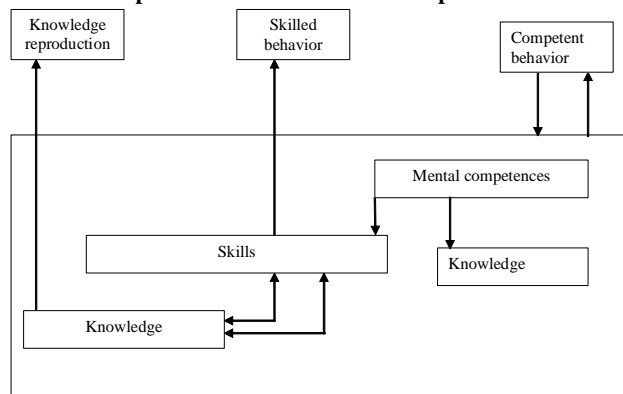
The term competency standard refers to “a combination of attributes underlying some aspect of successful professional performance” (Gonczi et al., 1990, p.9). Competency standards are concerned with application of professional knowledge and skills within the workplace and are underpinned by teachers’ professional values. Each competency standard is a statement of the level of competency a teacher exhibits for that dimension.

Teaching Competency

Competence is usually associated with highly professional performance and there is a direct link in the field of education between a teacher’s professional competence and pupil performance. There are two distinct meanings of „competence in education. From a theoretical point of view, competence is understood as a cognitive structure that facilitates specified behaviors. From an operational point of view, competence seems to cover a broad range of higher-order skills and behaviors that represent the ability to deal with complex, unpredictable situations. This operational definition includes knowledge, skills, attitudes, metacognition and strategic thinking, and presupposes conscious and intentional decision making (Westera, 2001). The general concept of operational competence, according to Westera (2001), can be explained as follows:

“An individual’s cognitive structures contain considerable theoretical and practical knowledge. This knowledge can be made available to the outside world by way of reproductive skills (i.e. speech, writing, pointing, etc.), or can become supportive to skills and the associated skilled behaviour”

Westera (2001) offers a schematic view of the common operational definition of competence



Source: Westera, 2001

Fig.1 : A competence model, according to common definitions

Characteristics of Profession

National Education Organisation has listed out the following points to determine professions which are also carried out by teaching profession.

- To equip with intellectual tendencies.
To acquire opportunities for various kinds of skills and abilities.
To generate the desire for service than for personal gain.
To generate its own standards.
To provide opportunities for regular and systematic promotion during the period of service.
To possess strong professional organization behind it.
To acquire training.

Professional attributes

Professional attributes outline the characteristics that are readily identifiable as essential to effective teaching. These attributes ensure teachers are prepared for the challenges, demands and obligations of teaching. The Framework describes the way teachers work with students, parents/caregivers, colleagues and others. Professional attributes provide the underpinning values, beliefs and skills for the decisions and actions teachers make in their day-to-day work. They describe the attitudes and behaviours through which teachers demonstrate their ability to facilitate student learning.

Attribute Descriptors

Effective teachers throughout their entire teaching career demonstrate the following professional attributes.

Collaborative

Teachers demonstrate good interpersonal skills by creating opportunities to communicate and share knowledge, ideas and experience with others. They seek assistance from colleagues and are keen to consider and act upon advice offered. Teachers acknowledge and encourage students, parents and caregivers as partners in learning.

Committed

Teachers are dedicated to educating young people and act in the best interests of students.

They enjoy meeting the challenges encountered in educating others and are inspired to make a difference. Teachers are devoted to the educational, personal, social, moral and cultural development of their students and aim to teach them how to be life-long learners and active members of society.

Effective Communicator

Teachers have a presence that creates a positive influence on students’ behaviour. They can articulate their thoughts and ideas whilst modifying their language according to the context and audience.

Ethical

Teachers respect the rights of others by acting with consistency and impartiality. They have an understanding



of the principles of social justice and demonstrate this by making just and fair decisions.

Innovative

Teachers are creative problem solvers who are willing to take risks in order to find new and enterprising solutions to educational issues and are inventive when developing educational programs. They provide learning experiences that engage student interest and enhance student learning.

Inclusive

Teachers treat students with care and sensitivity by identifying and addressing their educational, physical, emotional, social and cultural needs. They are astute in recognising and responding to barriers that inhibit student outcomes.

Positive

Teachers are supportive and constructive in their interaction with others. They show flexibility in an ever-changing work environment and are willing to consider critically and implement change. Teachers are advocates of their profession.

Reflective

Teachers are insightful in analyzing their professional practice and can demonstrate evidence-based decision-making. Teachers draw upon their professional knowledge to plan a course of action and determine goals that improve their practice and student learning. They are informed professionals who avail themselves of professional learning opportunities in order to examine critically new and emerging educational trends.

Teacher Training and Professional Competence

Many factors contribute to the quality of teaching, such as the professional competence of the teacher, which includes subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of teaching and learning, curricular knowledge, teaching experience, and certification status (Shulman, 1986, Grossman, 1995, Westera, 2001). Darling Hammond's (1999) findings indicate a consistent and significant positive relationship between the proportion of well-qualified teachers and student achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading and mathematics assessment. Teacher effectiveness depends on how well a teacher performs in the classroom, and this is dependent on how competent the teacher is. The literature (Chapman and Mählck, 1997, Kanu, 1996, Châu, 1996) emphasises the importance to the performance of the pupils of the quality of teacher who has well developed subject knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and curriculum knowledge.

According to Chapman and Mählck (1997) pre-service training is "the single most widely employed strategy (by itself or with other strategies) to improve instructional

quality. This comes as no surprise. One of the most widely held beliefs underlying both national and international educational development activities are that the most direct and efficient way to improve instructional quality is to improve the content pedagogical expertise of teachers through increased levels of training." Shulman (1986) reinforces this idea by stating that all three types of knowledge, content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and curricular knowledge should be included in pre-service teacher training programmes.

Competence and Teacher Effectiveness

When thinking about competences, concepts such as performance and effectiveness are involved because competence is directly linked with effective performance in complex situations as it is thought to serve as a causal factor for success because "competent performance presumes competence" (Westera, 2001). Thus, three conceptual dimensions of teacher quality that are commonly used in making judgments about teacher's work, include teacher competence, teacher performance and teacher effectiveness. The first two dimensions have been discussed but teacher effectiveness refers to the results a teacher gets or to the amount of progress the pupils make toward some specified goal of education is defined in terms of what the pupils do (Medley, 1982.)

It is established beyond doubt that there lies a strong relationship between teacher competence and effective teaching. Teaching competence also bears the marks of perception, value and beliefs that the individual carries when she enters teacher training programme. This view is supported by Hirst (1990); Koetsier, Wubbles and Korthagen (1997). While echoing similar views, Joram and Gabrielle (1998); Anderseon, Blumenfeld, Pintrich, Clark, Marx and Peterson (1995); Wubbles (1992); Zeichner and Gore (1990) stated that most student teachers enter programme with already established set of beliefs. Bodycott, Walker and Lee (2001) advocated similar views by stating that earlier formed beliefs and principles are part and parcel of student teachers' personality. Perceptions and expectations of profession form the beliefs. Richardson (1996) highlighted that beliefs are formed due to accumulation of prior experiences in home and at school. Kagan (1992) reiterated that students always bear in memory their days as students and impressions of good teachers.

It is established beyond doubt that there lies a strong relationship between teacher competence and effective teaching. Powell (1992); Hollingsworth (1989) in their studies revealed that in the perception of pre-service teachers content, knowledge and ability to communicate form the foundation of good teaching. Wade and Moor (1992) stated that teachers need knowledge of pedagogy and training to develop themselves as adept teachers confident of their own ability and with a faith on the



potential of the students. Pajares (1992) believed that attitudes, expectations, perceptions of student teachers during training period must be taken into account by teacher educators. This can extend help in inculcating values and desirable competencies among student teachers.

The Secondary Education Commission (1953) defined that 'we are however, convinced that most important factor in the contemplated educational reconstruction is the teacher – his quality, his educational qualifications, his professional training and the place he occupies in the school as well as in the community. The reputation of a school and its influence on the life of the community invariably depend on the kind of teachers working in it.'

Similar views were expressed by the Indian Education Commission (1964 – 66) regarding the role of the teacher. The commission opined that 'of all different factors, which influence the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the quality, competence and character of teachers are undoubtedly the most significant'.

'Schools are the nurseries of the Nation' and 'Teachers are the Architects of the future' are no mere figurative expressions but truthful statements, as significant as they are suggestive. Victories are won, peace is preserved, progress is achieved, civilization is built up and history is made in educational institutions, which are the seed beds of culture, where children in whose hands quiver the destiny of the future, are trained and from their ranks will come out when they grow up, statesman and soldiers, patriots and philosophers who will determine the progress of the land. In their attitude to life and their approach to problems they will bear the imprint and the influence of the training they received at the hands of their teachers. The teacher's role is thus as important as his responsibility is onerous.

'The good teacher must enlighten by his example, show wisdom in his discourse and restraint by his silence; he must help the willing with a welcoming encouragement; overcome the recalcitrant with a patient determination and check the exhibitionist with a reasonable superciliousness. What he stands for, important for all times, is of paramount importance in the deepening blackout of spiritual and intellectual values by which our age is oppressed' – C.E.M.Joad.

The imperative that the entire process of teaching learning transaction depend on the efficiency of a teacher, who is in turn able to manifest potentialities of a child into actuality, be accepted with no hesitation. Teaching learning process cannot be undertaken in vacuum but it is a positively directed action, for which teachers are to be endowed with teaching competency.

The old saying that teachers are born and not made can

not be accepted at the present time. As a modern, well – trained teacher one must first learn what and how to teach each child. He has to develop the professional competences needed for teaching. According to

Hoyle Joyce Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned natural activities which are intended to be direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute through these to quality of education in the classroom. Unless a high degree of professional qualities and commitment are inculcated in teacher's personality the training programme would remain incomplete. For this reason the development of professional teaching competencies are highly needed to produce enriched teacher for the society. The professional competencies needed for a good teacher and for his teaching may be classified under the three major competencies namely Instructional Competences, Organisation Competences and Evaluative Competences.

Instructional Competences

Conceptual Competence

Context Competence

Transactional Competence

Competences to develop teaching learning materials.

Competences related to use of latest information and

Communication Technologies in Teaching Learning Process

Organization Competences

Competences related to identifying resource.

Competences related to mobilize resource.

Management Competence

Adjustment Competence

Competence related to organization co- curricular activities.

Competence related to working /dealing with parents.

Competence related to working with community and community members.

Co-ordination Competence

Evaluative Competence

Construct evaluative items. Conduct tests.

Assessment procedures.

Interpretation of results.

Acquired with new trends in evaluation

Conclusion

Teachers who consider their job as a profession should not work with pecuniary motives, but with a sense of dedication for the cause of education. The development of the professional competency of a teacher is incomplete unless it follows certain professional ethics or code of conduct. Be an ideal teacher along with the above mentioned professional competences, the teacher



education should help the teacher to adopt the following professional ethics of teaching.

Related with students.

Related with parents.

Related with college / other professional organization / union.

Related with own profession, responsibility of systems and management.

Teacher is a maker of man. He is the builder of a nation. He is foundation of all education. He is the light kindling other light. Hence it is the primary task of any nation that it should give highest importance and highest effort in producing a good teacher mass. In order to do so, it should provide ample opportunities to the teachers & teacher educators to be well equipped with the professional competences and adopting the professional ethics. Again in addition to these two aspects, they should be motivate to attain study group, study of professional, writings and conference for their professional development.

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