

Learning Style of Teachers in Teaching Attitude and Teaching Competency

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ABSTRACT

Teachers are the backbone of the entire education system. Their effectiveness and competencies the foundation on which the edifice of excellence in any society is built. Competency is a concept used to define the capabilities of an individual acquired through learning and education. A teacher performs number of instructional and related activities inside and outside the classroom. These activities are of varied types. The effective organization of these activities would require that a teacher possesses a certain amount of knowledge and also certain attitudes and skills. This is known as teaching competency. In other words, teacher competency refers to "the right way of conveying units of knowledge, application and skills to students". Therefore, an attempt has been made by the researcher to study the teaching competency of schoolteachers in relation to their attitude towards ICT and teacher effectiveness. The study indicate that there is no significant relationship between teaching competency and attitude towards ICT, teaching competency and teacher effectiveness, teacher effectiveness and teachers' attitude towards ICT. The general framework regarding teacher competencies were explained in nine different dimensions as field competencies, research competencies, curriculum competencies, lifelong learning competencies, social-cultural competencies, emotional competencies, communication competencies, information and communication technologies competencies (ICT) and environmental competencies. Teachers' competencies affect their values, behaviors, communication, aims and practices in school and also they support professional development and curricular studies. Thus, the discussion on teachers' competencies to improve the teaching-learning process in school is of great importance.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers need to improve knowledge and skills to enhance, improve and explore their teaching practices. Many of the studies on competencies of teachers focus on the teaching role of teachers in the classroom rather than teachers' competencies. Teachers' competencies have been broadening with respect to reform studies in education, development of teacher education, scientific results of educational science and other fields. Kress pointed out that "the previous era had required an education for stability, the coming era requires an education for instability". Kress' ideas can explain why teachers' professional development should be redefined for sustainability [1]. The aims of education change very quickly depending on the demands of the era requiring more capability. These demands directly affect educational system. Teachers are responsible for operating educational system and they need strong and efficient professional competencies. Teachers' competencies must be reviewed so that teachers' competencies should be redefined depending on the development of the whole life of human and education.

Educators, policymakers and parents agree that the key to improve school education in our country is to appoint highly skilled, effective and techno savvy teachers. Every aspect of school reform depends on highly skilled teachers for its

success. Teachers need even more sophisticated abilities to teach curricula that are more complex [2]. Improving teacher quality is one of the most direct and promising strategies for improving the quality of school education.

Competencies are defined as "the set of knowledge, skills, and experience necessary for future, which manifests in activities". Gupta define competencies as "knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, motivations and beliefs people need in order to be successful in a job." The common understanding related to teachers' competencies is divided into three main areas as field competencies, pedagogical competencies and cultural competencies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this context, the literature about teachers' competencies was analyzed and the new competency areas constituted as seen below concerning the teachers' competencies were tried to redefine depending on different dimensions of teachers' professional competencies [3]. The main feature of teachers' professional competencies can be explained in a way displayed in Figure 1. First of all, these competencies were explained very briefly and only the curriculum competencies were discussed in detail among the other competencies in this paper.

- Field Competencies
- Research Competencies
- Curriculum Competencies
- Lifelong Learning Competencies
- Social-Cultural Competencies
- Emotional Competencies
- Communication Competencies
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Competencies
- Environmental Competencies

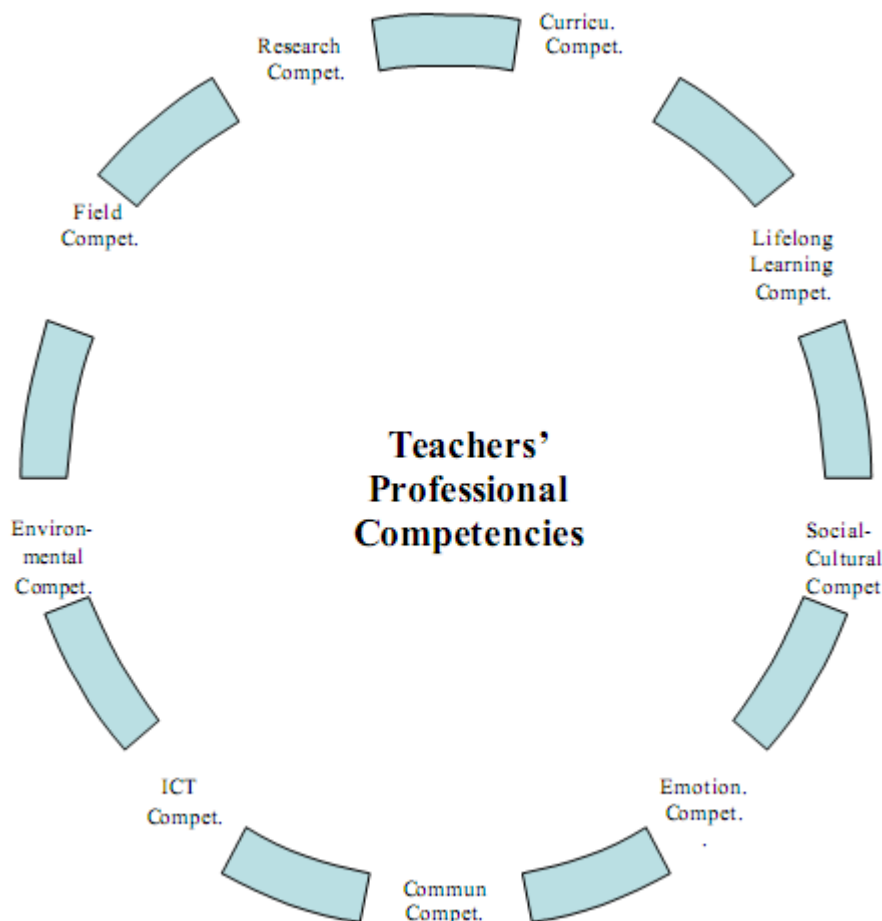


Figure 1. Components of teachers' professional competencies

Field competencies are related to the question of “what should school teach?” They refer to the content that the teacher and students will study. For example, the knowledge of math teachers is the main competency for teachers who will teach in classroom. Field competencies are the main areas of teacher competencies that include academic studies about content [5]. Field competencies are the ones necessary for teachers to conduct their profession. They are the teacher competencies regarding the subjects that teachers will teach or students will learn. Formerly, field competencies were deemed as the most important competency field based on the concept that teachers were the only responsible in transmitting the content. The concept of the one who knows teaches and the teacher is the responsible from learning in classroom changed over time [6]. Within the context of this change, the importance given to teachers' field competencies declined as a result of the changing role of teacher as rather than transmitting the content but being a facilitator enabling students to interact with content.

Research Competencies include the competencies of research methods and techniques, designing and carrying out research in teachers' fields. They support collaboration with

colleagues and other specialists or people who are interested in curriculum studies and education. Research competencies are influential for teachers in following the developments in their fields and developing themselves based on these developments. Besides, the research competencies of teachers are of great importance for students in gaining the scientific thinking and scientific process skills [9]. The research competencies help to improve all of the teachers' competencies and also support research-based teacher education that is a new approach in teacher education.

The curriculum competencies can be divided into two sub competencies as curriculum development competencies and curriculum implementation competencies. Curriculum competencies contain the knowledge about curriculum philosophies and skills in curriculum development, curriculum design, elements of the curriculum development, models of curriculum development, and approaches of designing curriculum development, curriculum development process, selecting and organizing the content, planning the teaching and testing conditions and preparing research for curriculum development. Curriculum competencies are related to the

understanding of the curriculum plans for the teaching and learning. Curriculum competencies are the competencies of teachers oriented towards carrying out their teaching role more effectively [10]. These competencies are related to both theoretical and practical competencies. These competencies defined as learning-teaching related competencies determine the framework of the knowledge and skills that teachers will gain. Without curriculum competencies, it is quite difficult to produce an effective education service in schools. In order to discuss the curriculum competencies more effectively and explain why teachers need them, they can be analysed in two sub-competencies.

Lifelong learning process requires that learners take responsibility of their learning. As individuals, teachers are acting for their own learning in the lifelong learning process. Lifelong learning activity goes through the whole life continuing between individual and the world. Lifelong learning competencies include the abilities of learning to learn, and teachers' responsibilities of their own professional development. Lifelong learning competencies are related to the ability of learning and skills of using the means or tools of learning to improve the learning throughout the human life. Lifelong learning competencies refer to the teachers' responsibilities for their own learning and development of lifelong learning skills for students. It means that lifelong learning includes two main abilities [11]. The first one is related to teachers' own lifelong learning ability and the second one is related to teachers' responsibility to develop students' lifelong abilities. Emotional Competencies are composed of teachers' and students' values, morals, beliefs, attitudes, anxieties, motivation, empathy and so on. They are related to the implementation of psychological consultation and curriculum of guidance in school. Teachers' emotional competencies can help students to learn and students' willingness to learn can be increased if teachers know how to improve the emotional dimension of students' learning. Emotional competencies also help teachers become effective teachers while monitoring the students' learning. Learning requires emotional supports that create positive feeling for learning-teaching process. Teachers become a learning consultant and mentor about learning for their students.

Social-cultural competencies include the knowledge about social-cultural background of students and teachers, local, national and international values, democracy and human rights issues, team and collaborative work with others, and social studies. All of them provide freedom to students and teachers in learning-teaching process and also promote the learning. The individuals become social and cultural being in social life. Thus, there is a strong relationship between learning and students' social-cultural background. Some of the learning theories discussed learning as social cultural context and teachers' social-cultural competencies can promote students learning. Humanistic approach and social theories can be put into practice in the classroom by means of teachers' social-cultural competencies. Communication competencies include communication models, interaction among teachers, students, social environment and learning topics. Teachers also have competencies in using oral, body and professional language in

their fields. Communication competencies include voice, body language and words such as speaking, singing and sometimes tone of voice, sign language, paralanguage, touch, eye contact, or the use of writing. They include communication skills in intrapersonal and interpersonal processing, listening, observing, speaking, questioning, analyzing, and evaluating.

Information and Communication Technologies-ICT competencies are based on using tools and technical equipment's for the reaching, disturbing and transferring the knowledge. They include any technology that helps to produce, manipulate, store, communicate, and/or disseminate information. ICT competencies are concerned with the use of technology in managing and processing the information includes all technologies for the manipulation and communication of information. It means that the ICT competency is very important to improve the communication in the learning and teaching process. Environmental Competencies can be defined as competencies for ecological and environmental safety. [4]Explained that ecological/environmental aspect is a dimension of the sustainable development of teachers. Knowledge, attitudes and skills about ecological system and environment such as keeping clean and available environment, management of ecological resources, being aware of ecosystem, feasible uses of natural resources, availability of natural resources can be defined as Environmental competencies. Figure 1 the framework of teachers' competencies. Nevertheless, Figure 1 is not sufficient and it must be improved by further studies depending on the development in all of areas of human life.

TEACHING COMPETENCE

A teacher's competency in 21st century, according to [7] is indicated by the fact that a competent teacher should have firm knowledge of the curriculum of his/her subject and to use technology into the curriculum. Formal system of education depends on three components that are curriculum, student and teacher. Teacher's role is to impart education and education builds societies.

The concept of competence is a relatively new approach that structures the vision of teaching. Competence refers to a potential ability and/or a capability to function in a given situation. Competency focuses on one's actual performance in a situation. This means that competence is required before one can expect to achieve competency. Thus, competence makes one capable of fulfilling his/her job responsibilities. Competency is determined by comparing current work functioning with established performance standards developed in the work environment according to a specific role and setting. According to [8], —competencies in education create an environment that fosters empowerment, accountability, and performance evaluation, which is consistent and equitable. The acquisition of competencies can be through talent, experience, or training. For delivery of quality education, we need quality teachers who are committed to teaching and equipped with necessary knowledge, skills and competencies for effective teaching. Teaching competency includes teaching behaviour and teaching skills. Teaching behaviours can be linked with

knowledge of the subject matter and its presentation. The teacher acquires that knowledge through his continuous efforts and learns presentation during their training which determines his effectiveness. The teaching competence of a teacher refers to the set of knowledge, abilities and beliefs a teacher possesses and brings to the teaching situation. Each specific type of competence is called competency. Teaching competence is the sum total of all the competencies possessed by the teacher that are used in the teaching situation.

TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

Teacher effectiveness is a relationship between teachers, pupils and other persons concerned with the educational understanding. Teaching competence is a combination of traditional ideas that were propounded by the great educators in the past on one hand and at the new ideas like- systematic approach to education on the other hand. The term —teacher effectiveness is used broadly, to mean the collection of characteristics, competencies, and behaviour of teachers at all educational levels that enable students to reach desired outcomes, which may include the attainment of specific learning objectives as well as broader goals such as being able to solve problems, think critically, work collaboratively, and become effective citizens. [9] Considered that teacher effectiveness is a matter of the degree to which a teacher achieves the desired effects upon students. He defined teacher competence as the extent to which the teacher possesses the requisite knowledge and skills, and teacher performance as the way a teacher behaves in the process of teaching.

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ATTITUDE TOWARDS ICT

Attitude towards ICT is the predisposition of a person to respond positively or negatively towards computers and related technologies. It affects everything the person does with the computer and in fact reflects what experience the user has and is hence a determining factor of the user's behavior towards computers. Additionally, the user's computer attitude provides the user with a framework within which to interpret the effect and the integration of computer in the user's life.

CONCLUSION

Teaching competences are focused on the role of the teacher in the classroom, directly linked with the 'craft' of teaching - with professional knowledge and skills mobilized for action. Success of teaching entirely depends on the level of teaching competence of a teacher. There is a positive relationship between teaching competence and students' academic achievements. A competent teacher teaches his/her students in a meaningful way. In the present study results shows that there exists no relationship between teaching competence and attitude towards ICT, teaching competence and teacher effectiveness and teacher effectiveness and attitude towards ICT. This means teacher's attitude towards ICT did not contribute much to their competence and effectiveness. However, ICT skills and their effective use for creative and conducive classroom environment are essential for effective teaching learning process. There is a need to encourage the use of ICT in classroom teaching.