



TRIAD CONNECTIONS TO PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Teacher Education revolves round instilling skills and abilities to help teachers acquire knowledge of transferring knowledge to learners with ease, referred to as pedagogical competence, hence training institutes were established in realization of this stride. Notably, skills and abilities in instructional design, classroom management, and classroom assessment techniques among others are instilled while undergoing professional training. These attributes when instilled help teachers to design a systematic process of translating a plan of action into set of activities, materials and procedures. But achieving the systematic process alone, which is the instructional design cannot on its own bring about learning, without a robust relationship between students and teachers, which ultimately requires skills and abilities to perform superbly in classroom management techniques as well. But of note, skills and abilities in instructional design and classroom management only, cannot guarantee achievement recorded in lesson delivery, without classroom assessment techniques. Apart from instilling these attributes, a trainee (pre-service teacher) is also expected to proceed for teaching practice upon reaching certain level and academic threshold. During this period, triad directly involved through collaboration includes pre-service teachers, university supervisors and cooperative supervisors. This collaboration gives direction, guidance, supervision and mentoring by supervisors on to the pre-service teachers. Subsequently outcome from this collaboration entails either to consolidate on the strengths observed or make amends to weaknesses observed during the exercise, which ultimately has direct effect on the teacher education as a whole.

Keywords: Pedagogical competence, Triad, Pre-service Teachers

Introduction

Being a teacher does not matter, but being an effective one matters most. To be effective, would-be-teachers, referred to as pre-service teachers (PT) are required to undergo professional training in order to overcome the possible challenges posit by classroom environment. In view of that, teacher training institutes were established at various levels to cater for the needs of Nigerian populace. These include teacher training institutes that trained manpower for primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. The training from these institutes develops in the PTs what Brown, (2018) referred to as pedagogical competence to include attributes such as instructional design, classroom management and classroom assessment. The training requires that, PTs must also undergo mandatory teaching practice

exercise which is carried out to put into practice theories learnt and develop skills of what classroom and school environment entails. Though, prior to embarking on teaching practice exercise by the PT, their academic performance plays an important role, where only those that reach certain level and meet certain academic threshold can proceed (FRN, 2007). Also, during the period of teaching practice exercise, literature has shown a combination of triad to be directly involved in the exercise, comprising the PT, university supervisors [US] and cooperating supervisors [CS] (Portelance *et al.*, 2016). Upon completion of the assignment bestowed on the CS and US, they, then submit a report using a designed template to the universities concerned. Thereafter, reports are made and submitted to the universities concerned by the



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supervisors using a designed template. These reports were further calculated, coming up with a grade for each of the PT, which is further used as part of their academic performance. In view of the forgone, the purpose of the review is channeled towards relationship that exists between and amongst the pre-service teachers, university supervisors and cooperating supervisors (referred to triad) in Nigeria as they performed their duties, especially when pre-service teachers incorporates instructional design, classroom management and classroom assessment techniques while on teaching practice.

Triad in Pedagogical Competence

Teaching practice is a core event in teacher training that any individual undergoing teacher training must pass through. Teaching practice as an event is the avenue created for the PT to put into practice what they learnt in theories (Kiggundu & Nayimuli 2009; Aglazor, 2017). In view of that, any teacher, be it a novice or experienced one must to some extent be competent in mastering the art of teaching very well for successful passage of knowledge to learners. So, invariably, he/she must be in tune with instructional design; classroom management; and classroom assessment technique. Instructional design has been described as the creation of instructional materials, modules or lessons that are channeled towards determining the needs of the learners, defining the end goals and objectives of instruction, designing and planning assessment tasks as well as designing teaching and learning activities to ensure the quality of instruction is effectively and efficiently carried out (Kurt, 2017). Hence, it is seen as a systematic process of translating a plan of action into a set of activities, materials and procedures.

For learning to take place effectively and efficiently, instructional design alone cannot on itself make learning meaningful without a robust relationship between students and teachers. This can only be achieved when there is cohesion, such that orderliness is always observed throughout the period of teaching and learning exercise, as chaotic and disorganized

environment is unlikely to enhance teaching-learning process (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Therefore, the need for a classroom management devoid of any misbehavior is paramount (George, Sakirudeen & Sunday, 2017). Though, effective classroom management is very difficult to describe due to the different views held by various education stakeholders. Egeberg, McConney and Price (2016) are of the opinion that, the only way to describe or understand the concept was to understand the frameworks that categorize the concept, which are behavioural management approach and instructional management approach. Blending the two approaches, (Martin & Sass, 2010) are of the opinion that classroom management can be described as an umbrella term that encompasses teachers' efforts to oversee the activities of the classroom including student behaviours, student interactions and student learning. This description is an indication, that teachers need to blend the two frameworks in order to achieve the desired objectives of passing the knowledge they so desired. With the achievement of instructional design and classroom management by the teachers, what remains was whether what was planned and taught, with the aid of a conducive environment had been achieved or not, which is usually carried out using classroom assessment techniques (Ugodulunwa, 2008).

Classroom assessment techniques have been described as means put by teachers on the spot in order to evaluate students' reaction to instruction and as well as to measure students' learning. Classroom assessment, allows teachers to intervene in rectifying observed deficiencies in their teaching and as well as students' learning outcome. Mostly, classroom assessment is formative in nature and speedy as it often consumes just a few minutes, so flexible, anonymous for students, and can be positive learning activities measuring writing and critical thinking skills besides enhancing student motivation (Yusuf, 2017).



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Triad Responsibilities to Pedagogical Competence

One of the major steps that all PT must go through in their professional training career is teaching practice. Hence, a period where PT are provided with an opportunity to apply their pedagogical knowledge and skills in practice. Thus, serves as a period where they can understand their role in the larger profession and in the extended operational environment of the school. During this period, PT are mostly in interaction with two people, which includes the CS and US. These two groups give guidance and corrective measures, as well as feedback to the PT while on teaching practice exercise (Flushman & Vertemara, 2017). The US are the teachers that trained the PT during their professional training in both the subject matter and the pedagogies. On the other hand, CS are the host school teachers where the teaching practice exercise is taking place, and were assigned the duty of mentoring, as well as supervising the PT by ensuring that all required standards are adhered to. This, they do by making sure, that, PT to some extent experience the sense of accomplishment that comes from intensive engagement with students over time, thereby leading in gaining experience of the day-to-day life in real classrooms and the school settings. Thus, the triad combined forms the nucleus of finding solution to problems of putting theories, strategies, and methods learned by PT into practice (College of Education Temple University [CETU], 2019). However, literature is short of clarity on roles and responsibilities performed by the two supervisors, but still CS were adjudged to have greater influence on the PT than it does the US (Tom, 1996) while teaching practice is ongoing. This is because, the time spent by PT with the CS during the exercise outweigh the time they spent with US (Portelance, Caron, & Martineau, 2016). Therefore, reviewing the roles and responsibilities of CS as it relates to teaching practice is a necessity. In view of that, (Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching [CELT], 2020) categorically states that, apart from being role models and evaluators, mentoring is the uppermost role and

responsibility expected of CS during teaching practicum.

From the forgone discourse, Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) using Lai (2005) as a guide were able to describe and outline the roles and responsibilities of the mentors. Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) are of the opinion that, most of the approaches, especially in PT education, mentor is seen more as an experienced individual than the mentee, or that the mentor has or can provide knowledge and skills that the mentee wants or needs, thereby suggesting a hierarchical relationship. But, Lai (2005) in his submission suggested mentoring to be far above only relationship, but also incorporates developmental and contextual components. This implies that, mentoring as an event must revolve around three traits to give a quality description of the concept. These traits according to Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) include relational, developmental and contextual. They submitted that the relational strengthen the bond existing between mentors and mentees during practicum, while developmental describes how mentors and mentees develop personally and professionally to achieve set goals. Contextual refers to cultural and situational features of the mentoring setting. Using this approach as suggested by Lai (2005), Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) were able to synthesize the literature and came up with 11 identified possible mentor's roles as it relates to teaching practice exercise to include; supporter, model, facilitator, assessor, collaborator, friend, trainer and teacher, protector, colleague, evaluator, and communicator.

The US being the bridge between the PT and the host school is an important personality that forms part of the triad in teaching practice exercise. Being the connector, US has double role to play in order to meet the demands of the other two members of the triad. Therefore, they are expected to, apart from encouraging the CS, they should also use their knowledge of pedagogical competence in guiding, mentoring and evaluating PT. In response to this, CETU (2019) came up with 15 different essential roles and responsibilities expected of the US in order to fully guide and mentor PT while on teaching



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practice exercise. On the other hand, being new to the environment, PT are expected to use the course work and emerging knowledge learnt while undergoing professional training to adequately overcome any challenge that may arise (CETU, 2019). In view of that, the role played by the PT while undergoing teaching practice exercise is the case of a mentee, who mingles between US and CS, therefore, it requires collaboration with both (Bukari & Kuyini, 2015). Based on this, the role expected of PT is guided by prior knowledge acquired and subsequently entry guidance received from the CS. Furthermore, School of Education and Arts CQ University [SEACQU] (2020) categorized the role and responsibilities of PT while on placement for teaching practice into three, consisting of professional conduct; professional learning; and professional organization. Professional conduct revolved around PT to always comply with the code of conduct of any particular host school they find themselves. In particular, PT are expected to:

1. Treat individual learners with dignity and respect
2. Maintain standards of dress code and personal grooming appropriate to their position as temporary members of staff
3. Follow the policies and procedures of the site that apply to the use of resources and equipment, including personal use of mobile phones
4. Use behaviour management strategies that align with the schools’.
5. Use language appropriate to their position of trust at the school with all members of the community
6. Refrain from forming relationships of non-professional nature with learners
7. Maintain strict confidentiality of all information, performance or assessment data and personal family details relating to learners. (SEACQU, 2020).

As for professional learning, a pre-service teacher has the responsibility to be actively engaged in the authentic learning experiences available during placement in the host school. A pre-service teacher can achieve this goal through the following ways:

- a. Undertake all planning, teaching, observation and reflection tasks as enshrined in the host school guidelines.
- b. Keep an up-to-date and organized evidence of practice, by making it available for viewing by their supervisors throughout the placement
- c. Respond to feedback from supervisors by setting goals and identifying specific strategies for enhancing their professional learning and improving their practice. (SEACQU, 2020).

Professional organization has to do with some of responsibilities expected of PT during and after and after the exercise. In view of that, the pre-service teacher is required to:

- i. Collect contact details of the host mentor and submit same to both the university supervisor and the teaching practice desk office prior to the commencement of the exercise.
- ii. Always report any absence beforehand to both the supervisors and the teaching practice desk officer and as well, negotiate the timing for completing make-up days with their host mentor.
- iii. Create and maintain a signed record of attendance that shows movement, and always be sure that it is handy for supervision.
- iv. Be sure to sign all reporting documentation at the conclusion of exercise
- v. PT should ensure that copies of all final summative report are duly signed, and countersigned by all concerned. (SEACQU, 2020).

To sum it up, PT has been adjudged to bring to the host schools the knowledge of latest research and best practices, exposure to the use of new technology-based resources, ability to work with different groups of students, individual content expertise as well as enthusiasm and eagerness to learn.

Triad and Pedagogical Competence in Teacher Education

Learning at all levels of education depends solely on the competence of teachers in subject matter and the skills and abilities of passing the subject matter to learners, referred to as

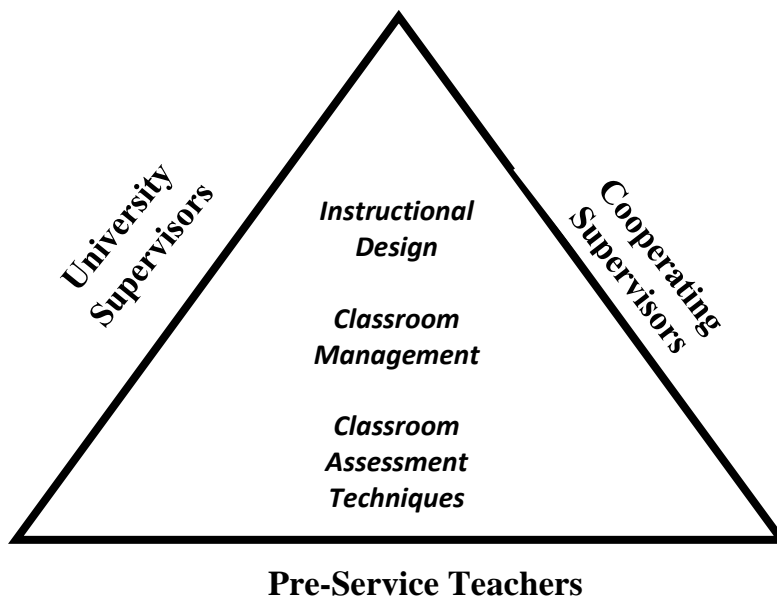


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pedagogical competence. Pedagogical competence has been described as the influence and skills a teacher has of causing change in the desired behavior of the learner through the use of professional knowledge acquired by the teacher in the course of training (Koster, Brekelmans, Korthagen & Wubbels, 2005; Liakopoulou, 2011; Celik, 2011). This assertion, therefore, makes it mandatory for all teachers to have a say on issues revolving round the competences, consisting of instructional design, classroom management, and classroom assessment techniques to be possessed for them to be called an effective teacher. Lending credence to this, Walshaw (2012); Windschitl (2004) are of the view, that for a teacher to be effective, he or she must be in tune with pedagogical competence to be in a better position to pass knowledge to the learners. Taking a cue from this, it leads credence to the triad collaboration by getting involved in

supervision and mentoring (Portelance, Caron, & Martineau, 2016) in order to ascertain the depth of skills in pedagogical competence by the would-be-teachers so as to improve teacher training as a whole.

Consequently, since triads are adjudged to be strong stakeholders in teacher training, especially during teaching practice exercise, any negligence or renegeing from assigned responsibility, will have a negative effect on the teacher training as a whole. These assertions in essence is pointing to the fact that, the triad is like a rectangle as depicted in the model below, where each section has direct contact with other two sections. So, renegeing in their roles and responsibilities will be tantamount to have effect on the whole school system. For instance, US imparts the theories, strategies and methods used by the PT, while CS mentors through ensuring what was imparted on to the PT are adequately put into used by the PT.



Conclusion

In conclusion, upon completion of the whole teaching practice exercise, reports are submitted by supervisors using a template provided by concerned Departments in Nigerian universities. These reports are further calculated, thereby, coming up with a grade for each of the PT, which is used as part of their academic performance. But of worry, do the grades provide any development or changes

towards upgrading the teacher training? No, the only solution is to further put into use a systematic approach by subjecting the reports to further analysis, thereby unveiling the strengths and weaknesses observed of pedagogical competences skills exhibited by the PT. In view of that, the universities concerned will be able to know where to consolidate on the achievements made or go



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back to drawing board to make amends in the teacher education in general.

Recommendations

Based on the forgone, it is recommended that:

- (1) Supervisors should focus more on the three frameworks that makes up the pedagogical competence (instructional design, classroom management, and classroom assessment techniques) while on teaching practice supervision as relationship(s) that do exists between and amongst the frameworks adequately indicates that none can functions effectively in the absence of any in delivery of lesson by teachers.
- (2) Each amongst the triads comes with different roles; as role models, mentors, supervisors, mentees, hence a need to encourage each of the supervisors to learned from each other, so leading to the upliftment of teaching practice exercise in particular and teacher education in general.
- (3) Collaboration should be intensified from onset by all the triad through making sure that all strengths and weaknesses observed, collated and analyzed are adequately channeled to the appropriate department, as well as making sure that all observation are either consolidated or remedied.

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