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Teacher Competencies For Effective Teaching-Learning: A Review

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents an exhaustive review on the teacher competencies that demand for the students of the present generation. Understanding the enormous potential of education, all progressive countries have committed themselves to provide “quality education for all”. Rapid and quality expansion of school education is need of the hour for advancement in the socio-economic sector. The school education is a major building block for development of higher education. The teacher competencies play a major role in achieving these goals. The present work mainly concentrates on review of teacher competencies for the effective teaching-learning.

KEYWORDS: Teacher competencies; school education; teaching –learning

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Teaching is an important profession that makes other professions in our society. The progress of the society is based on the quality school education for all. The school education is a primary step and is very important for carry forward in the other steps of education. The retention of the students and their achievements are depending on the effective teaching –learning process. Hence the teacher competencies play major role in effective teacher-learning process¹.

In the existing literature many educational researchers proposed the teaching-competencies required. Newman (1994) presented that teacher competence could be recognized as in terms of attendance of the students, class control and successful completion of assigned clerical duties which are measured objectively². Moreover, ability of motivating the students and teacher behavioral aspects cannot be objectively measured. Other factors that were pointed are the influence of parents and professional unions. Fai & Tommy (1996) evaluated the relationship between teacher competence and teachers' inferences of students' self-concept and knowledge.

Robin K. Henson et al.(2000) examined a new model of teacher efficacy and examines sources of measurement error variance in the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES), historically the most frequently used instrument in the area³. Discussed that Bandura's social cognitive theory concepts to teachers, among the first of which were Ashton and Webb (1982). They argued that studying teacher efficacy actually corresponded to Bandura's self-efficacy and outcome expectancy dimensions of social cognitive theory. These dimensions have been Reliability Generalization subsequently labeled personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy, respectively³.

Jeannie Oakes et al.(2002) presented the urban teacher competencies and discussed the importance of understanding local urban cultures, the urban political economy, the bureaucratic structure of urban schools, and the community and social service support networks serving urban centers. Also discussed that teacher competence cannot be parsed into teaching skills and social action. Moreover it requires a deep sense of caring and democratic commitment and accompanied by strong subject matter and pedagogical skills⁴.

Maria Luiza Dantas (2007) presented that increased diversity and complexity in classrooms is happening in schools around the world. Many countries face the challenge of addressing the needs of a growing diverse student population; in particular, supporting achievement and engagement across language and cultural boundaries, and taking into account different perspectives. Teachers need to develop knowledge and skills to succeed in teaching diverse children otherwise “they do not continue to believe that ‘all children can learn’⁵

Hoi Yan Cheung and Sammy King Fai Hui (2011) examined the competencies and characteristics of in-service teachers who teach gifted students. A total of 511 in-service teachers

participated in the study, 334 of whom were from Beijing and 177 were from Hong Kong⁶. The scale developed by D. W. Chan was used as the instrument to examine the competencies and characteristics of the teachers. In the present paper reviewed the major teacher competencies required for effective –teaching learning process in school education deals with primary and secondary education.

2. ASPECTS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING-LEARNING

According to the Kentucky Department of Education report in the year 2018 effective teaching-Learning has following major factors⁷

- Subject knowledge
- Learning Climate
- Classroom Assessment /feedback and Reflection
- Instructional Rigor and Student Engagement
- Instructional Relevance

They are all interdependent as shown in Figure.1

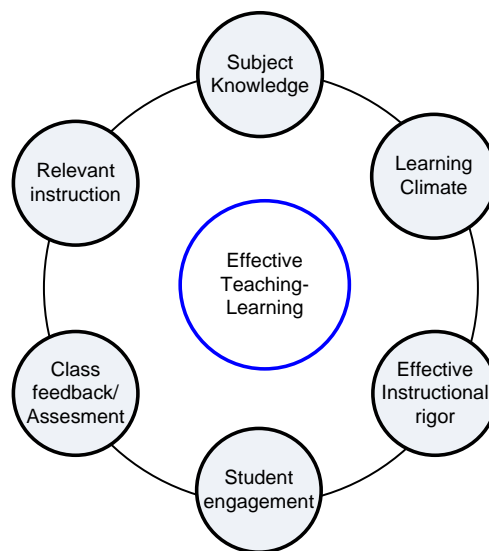


Figure.1 Major Components involved in Effective teaching-learning

2.1 Subject knowledge

It is an important aspect of an effective teacher and command on the content of their respective field is a must. Further, one should update his knowledge with the present trends. In addition to the subject knowledge, effective teaching plan and delivery of the content only will obtain the planned learning outcomes. The following are the characteristics for effective teaching – learning in view of content knowledge.

Teacher major characteristics

- Present effectively the content and demonstrate the depth of the content with the students

- Awareness on present trends in the area of subject and content developments
- Need to follow the standards set in state and national level for the particular course/subject
- Appropriately use the instructional resources
- Effective instructional strategies and implementations
- Demonstrate proper use of content vocabulary

The subject knowledge consists of following as shown in Figure.2 as per the teachers' perspective

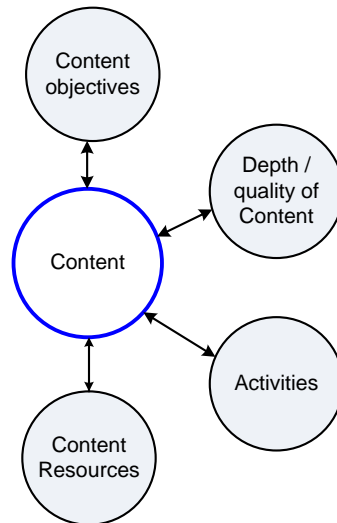


Figure.2 subject knowledge aspects as per the teachers' perspective⁷

2.2 Learning Climate

Learning environment is a broader term and according to Bates ⁸ and the Glossary of Educational Reform, 2014, 'Learning environment refers to the diverse physical locations, contexts, and cultures in which students learn. Since students may learn in a wide variety of settings, such as outside-of-school locations and outdoor environments, the term is often used as a more accurate or preferred alternative to classroom, which has more limited and traditional connotations—a room with rows of desks and a chalkboard, for example.

The term also encompasses the culture of a school or class—its presiding ethos and characteristics, including how individuals interact with and treat one another—as well as the ways in which teachers may organize an educational setting to facilitate learning ⁸.

Learning environment is a broader term that is more than the physical facilities such as class room, labs and seminar halls etc and they also include learner characteristics, assessment methods that drive the learning, content goals for teaching and learning, Culture that supports learning and skills as illustrated in Figure.3.

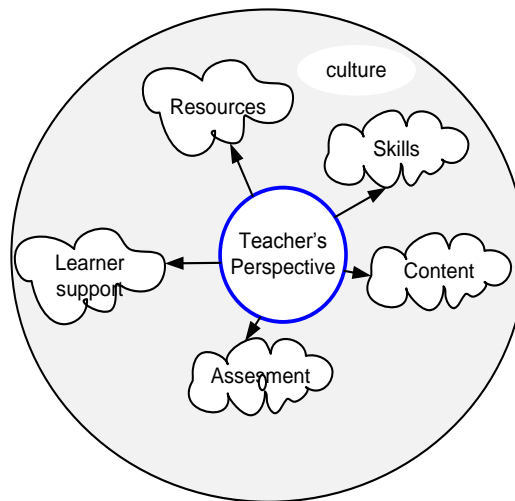


Figure.3 Components involved in effective learning environment ⁸

2.3 Classroom Assessment /feedback and Reflection

Classroom Assessment is a continuous and systematic method used by the teachers to determine how much and/or how well the students are learned the content. The formative and informal tools are used to obtain the information of ongoing teaching –learning so that necessary action can be made. The major characteristics of teacher are as below

Teacher major characteristics⁷

- Systematically obtain the data of understanding level of the students and develop and use multiple approaches
- Use the feedback from the students, own observations from the achievement data and interaction with colleagues to reflect on and improve the teaching methodologies.
- Clear the doubts rose by the students and revise the basics
- Provide scope for self-assessment or peer assessment with appropriate assessment rubrics
- Instructional Rigor and Student Engagement

2.4 Instructional Rigor and Student Engagement

Instructional Rigor refers to how meticulously the instruction is planned and executed with rigor. Moreover, student engagement known as the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught⁷.

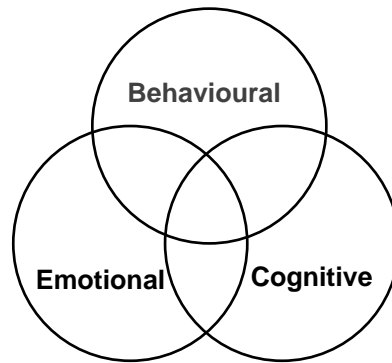


Figure.4 Various dimensions of student engagement in school

Student engagement is not easy to define as it is influenced by multiple factors. Fredericks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004)⁹ identify three dimensions of engagement as shown in Figure.4.

1. Behavioral engagement: participation in education, including the academic, social and extracurricular activities of the school.
2. Emotional engagement: A sense of belongingness to the school
3. Cognitive engagement: involvement in their learning (motivation and self-regulation).

2.5 Instructional Relevance

The term **Instructional relevance** refers to learning experiences that are either directly applicable to the personal aspirations, interests, or cultural experiences of students (*personal relevance*) or that are connected in some way to real-world issues, problems, and contexts (*life relevance*). It means that it is effectiveness of a teacher to facilitate learning experiences that are relevant to students and useful for their future.

Teacher major characteristics⁷

1. Teacher link the prior knowledge with the content with multiple examples and illustrations
2. Plan instruction to deliver the content with real time issues, interests and experiences of the students
3. Teacher collaborates with other teachers for better understanding of recent changes in the subject content.

2.6 Teacher competencies

Teacher competency means teacher strength, expertise or potential to perform his job properly and constant quality that does not change from one situation to another situation whenever teaches. It includes qualities such as subject knowledge, skills, understanding, attitude etc ¹⁰. NCTE report on, "Competency based and commitment oriented Teacher Education for quality school education: Pre-Service Education", identified the ten competency areas as shown in Fig.5¹¹.

a) Contextual Competencies

It is related to wider dimension of teacher role in educational development in the society. The major contextual competencies are highlighted as below

- It is very important obligation of school teachers is to get acceptability of their efforts by the parents and community as a whole. Hence teachers have to understand socio-economic, cultural, linguistic and religious contexts of the students' family background and community profile.
- Further, teachers should understand the policy provisions for equality, social justice, educational opportunity etc. both in the form of written statements as also in pragmatic terms of their appreciation by the concerned community.
- Teachers should be fully familiar with educational systems both at National and State as well as with their global and local ramifications.
- Teachers should be able to identify and analyze the factors responsible for obstructing the growth of literacy in the country and the concerned State, besides reasons for poor enrolment, retention and the problems of wastage and stagnation in the schools.
- Understand the heterogeneities and diversities of the society, work for national integration with dignity and equality.
- Understand various other issues like developmental activities, urbanization, unemployment, value inculcation, political dynamics, and the growing impact of scientific and technological development etc. against the backdrop of the specific community.
- Teachers must ensure credibility of their actions and initiatives, their preparation for meet the aforementioned qualities.
- The existing curriculum could be explored for building relevant competencies. The gaps, if any, could also be identified and filled by working out suitable measures and developing workable strategies.

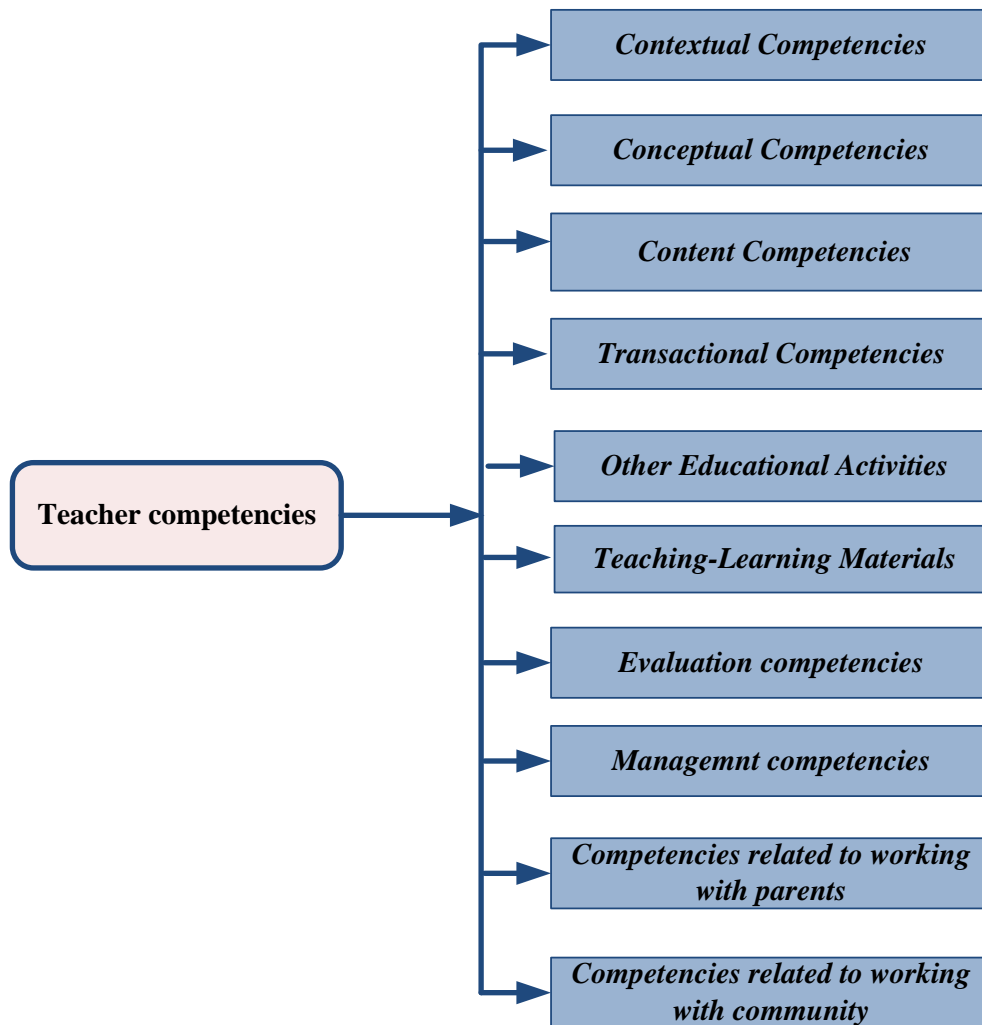


Fig.5 Teacher competencies specified by NCTE report (1998) ¹¹

b) Conceptual Competencies

It includes various concepts of education and learning and psychological, sociological and neuro-Physiological aspects of education, etc.. The significant conceptual competencies are listed below

- Teachers should understand educational implications with reference to the physical, mental, social and cultural needs of the child at different stages of child development.
- Teachers could make the curriculum transactions including practical work based on significant characteristics of the child development process.
- Organize curricular and co- curricular activities quite effectively in the classroom and outside.
- Conceptual areas must be constantly refreshed and reoriented for meaningful learning experiences.

c) Content Competencies

- The teachers should achieve full mastery over the content competencies identified in given stage of education such as primary or secondary education.
- Teachers must develop ability to analyze the existing curriculum content and co-relate it with relevant competencies
- Identify hard spots in curriculum and also any scope for joyful activities, individual learning and group learning.

d) Transactional Competencies

- It deals with subject and stage wise competencies. As teaching involves three stages such as planning, teaching –learning and evaluation, in every transaction teaches should plan and evaluate competencies.
- Variety of activities and cultural events should be organized in view of making teaching-learning process participatory and joyful.
- Strengthen the teaching-learning process by proper teaching aids and material
- Continuous evaluation with integration of various approaches while transacting the subject content to strengthen the teaching- learning strategy.
- The teacher should acquire competency to handle the children of different grades

e) Competencies related to other educational activities

The curricular activities are supposed to take care of the cognitive development of the children. However the non-cognitive areas are also equally important for the holistic development of students.

- Teachers should imbibe the human values through educational activities such as morning prayer/assembly; celebration of national events and encourage participation in community life activities.
- The teachers should acquire skills and competencies in planning and executing all such educational activities

f) Competencies to develop teaching-learning material

Teachers should possess the competencies to

- Develop self-learning material for the students such as books, charts, diagrams etc.
- Prepare audio-video material using new technologies
- Use locally available resources for teaching –learning.

g) Evaluation competencies

- Teachers should have positivistic evaluation competencies rather the negativistic which evolves fear, contempt, creating the reverse influence on the child development.
- The teachers should develop the concept of illuminative evaluation for self-analysis
- The ideal concept of continuous evaluation in the classroom should be adopted. Observation of student's workbooks, note books etc will come under continuous evaluation.
- Teacher should also be able to carry out periodical evaluation, in a systematic and formal manner, for diagnostic purposes.
- Able to perform comprehensive evaluation or the annual evaluation according to the rules and regulations

h) Management competencies

To manage a class or group of students and the teacher should require skills of classroom management including total teaching as well as subject teaching in the class, and several other tasks expected of them in and outside the school.

i) Competencies related to working with parents

Competencies related to working with parents are essential for student's achievement. Hence the teachers should acquire these competencies.

j) Competencies related to working with community and other agencies

No school is kept isolated and hence working with community and other agencies is essential for a Teacher. Therefore, the teachers

- Should understand the role of the community in the development of the school
- Analyze how best the local agencies can contribute to various school purposes.

The list of core competencies for educator as below and are presented by are useful for teachers of 21st century¹².

- a. Interacting with students,
- b. Creating the learning environment
- c. Maintain professional appearance
- d. Able to collaborate
- e. Good at communication
- f. Identity student needs
- g. Good lesson plan design
- h. Able to use varied teaching methods

- i. Able to evaluate properly

3. CONCLUSION

The paper presents the effective teaching –learning aspects and exhaustive review on the teacher competencies needed for meaningful teaching-learning. There are many factors such as social, economical and political aspects that effect the development of school education. However, the issues related to effective teaching-learning and development of teacher competencies are in the hands of the teachers at large. Hence the review of this work and more studies in this area are essential for policy making and strengthen the teaching-learning process.

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