

Competence Based Teaching in Higher Education for Academic Excellence a Conceptual Study



Management

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ABSTRACT

The competence based teaching in higher education in India is to be emphasized in the contemporary educational changes. Though number of educational institutions is in increasing trend but the quality of education is not to the expected level. It is the need of the hour that the focus on competence based education system is to be initiated. The teacher's competence in higher education is a key factor for academic excellence. The teacher plays a crucial role in supporting the learning experience of young students and adult learners. They are key players in how education systems evolve and in the implementation of the reforms which can support the knowledge-driven economy. They recognize that high quality education provides learners with personal fulfillment, better social skills and more diverse employment opportunities. Their profession, which is inspired by values of inclusiveness and the need to nurture the potential of all learners, has a strong influence on society and plays a vital role in advancing human potential and shaping future generations. Therefore, to achieve its ambitious objective of academic excellence, this paper focuses on competence of a teacher for academic excellence in higher education.

Introduction:

Competence-based teaching in higher education in India is to be focused more for academic excellence. The competence based education is not a tribute to fashion to introduce new words and concepts, but the objective phenomenon in higher education caused to life by social and economic, political and educational conditions. The teacher's competence depends upon what he teachers and what he believes in teaching and it has been the focus of several studies in recent years. The responsibility of the teacher towards students and the society is more significant, unless the teachers competence is not enhanced, the learning process of young students will have no value. In the globalised economy, the quality of education plays a key role in developing the knowledge based economy and the prospects of the nation depend upon it. The professional education to the changed social and economic trends demands the innovative process which has appeared together with the global market economy. Teachers' approaches to teaching and the conceptions they hold about teaching have been in the constant discussion in higher education system and the teachers should be equipped to respond to the evolving challenges of the knowledge society. The teacher's competence can be enhanced when they participate actively in learning process and prepare learners to be autonomous lifelong learners. They should, therefore, be able to reflect on the processes of learning and teaching through an ongoing engagement with subject knowledge, curriculum content, pedagogy, innovation, research, and the social and cultural dimensions of education.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the competencies that a teacher require
- To review the process of competence development
- To suggest the competencies for the academic excellence

Scope of the Study

The present higher education system is in need of changes as the quality of education is lacking in comparison with other nations. The quality of education can be possible only when the teacher's competencies are enhanced. In order to reach such objective, the universities, educational institutions, supporting agencies and organizations have to target in increasing the competencies of the teachers in higher education.

Literature Review:

In earlier studies the term 'Teaching competency' was used to designate the researches which were aimed to identify and define teacher efficiency. Later on specific dimensions of competencies were formulated and elaborated studies were conducted, which owe its roots to earlier studies. What seems the basis of the present practice and forms of studies on teaching competency are reviewed here.

Acquiring and developing an appropriate set of competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) can help one ensure that one undertakes tasks as effectively and as efficiently as possible. Teaching is, of course, much more than a 'task'. As Conway and Colleagues (2009) point out, discussions about the competences needed by teachers, how they develop over time, and how they are evidenced and recorded, are bound up with wider discussions about:

- The purposes of education,
- Assumptions about learning,
- Society's expectations of and demands on the teacher,
- Available resources, priorities and political will,
- The status of the profession,
- Perceived external or international pressures,
- Existing traditions and culture, and
- The broader societal context and environment in which teaching and Teacher Education occur

As regards the application of concepts of 'competence' to teaching, Biesta (2011a) notes 'a tension in the competence discourse' between, on the one hand, a 'behaviouristic' approach that emphasizes 'doing, performing, achieving, observing, measuring and, ultimately, control, and, on the other hand an 'integrative' approach that emphasizes 'knowledge, skills, understanding, values, purpose and, ultimately, teacher agency'. He emphasizes the need for educational judgment (Biesta 2009a), asserting that 'competence (being able to do things) is not enough; (teachers) need to exert professional judgment to decide what ought to be done; and scientific evidence about 'what works' is not enough; teachers need to exert professional judgment to decide what we want things to work for (if things can 'work' at all in education).

From the above discussed literature review it can be concluded that the concept of teaching competency and teacher effectiveness are complex and that there are many factors which contribute to these two variables.

Competency

Competency is a term used extensively by different people in different contexts. So it is defined in different ways. Teacher education and job performance of a teacher are the contexts in which this term is used. Competencies are the requirements of a competency based teacher education, which includes knowledge, skills and values. A few characteristics of a competency are (1) a competency consists of one or more skills whose mastery would influence the its attainment, (2) a competency has its linkage with all the three domains under which performance can be assessed, covering the domains of knowledge, skill and attitude, (3) competencies are observable and demonstrable, and (4) because the competencies are observable, they are also

measurable and assessable a competency from the performance of a teacher. It is not necessary that all competencies of a teacher have the same extent of knowledge, skill and attitude.

Competence

Competence is a work related concept that refers to the areas of work at which the person is competent. Competence is understood as excellent capability. The competence includes knowledge, skills, attitude and experiences, which has to be target category of profession of educator. Competence is the ability to perform or carryout defined tasks in a particular context at a high level of excellence. The definition of competence, as it is repeatedly suggested in relevant literature, should be viewed as a holistic concept – the dynamic combination of knowledge, understanding and skills, as shown by the following relevant examples: Competence is something that can be demonstrated to a certain level of achievement along a continuum (González & Wagenaar, 2005); Competence is the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilizing psychosocial resources in context – i.e. a complex action system encompassing knowledge (also tacit); cognitive and practical skills; attitudes such as motivation, value orientations, emotions (Rychen & Salganik, 2003); Competence is the combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and personal characteristics, empowering the teacher to act professionally and appropriately in a situation, deploying them in a coherent way (Koster & Dengerink, 2008). Teaching competences can be described as focused on the role of the teacher in action in the classroom, therefore directly linked with the craft of teaching (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006).

Competence can be understood as a dynamic, organizing the structure of activity characteristic allowing a person to adapt to various situations on the basis of gained experience and practice. Competence is formed and revealed through activities (acts of performance) as 'ability to make actions in various contexts in adequate, responsible for integrating a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes'.

Characteristics of Competencies

Knowledge	: Information accumulated in a particular area of expertise
Skills	: The determination of expertise application (or) implementation of knowledge to perform the task.
Motive	: Recurring thoughts driving behaviours. A thought which leads to particular action.
Attitude	: Self concept, Values and self-image
Trait	: A general disposition to behave in a certain way.

Competency profile: A Competency Profile is an impact teaching action in complex situations. This action must be definable, adequate, efficient and ethically justifiable and stimulates trainees in a differential manner. It is depending on the teaching and learning situation

Competence based Teaching in Higher Education

The quality in education has been the constant emphasis of Governments and the society. The education without quality has no value. A systematic approach in imparting the knowledge to the learners with constant student and teacher rapport would lead to the academic excellence. Competency based education has become hot topic in higher education these days. It is becoming increasingly popular as the country is searching for education affordability with competence. Competence based education focuses on learning. In the process of competence based teaching, various strategies are to be adopted to reach the academic excellence. There is a strong need to promote a paradigm shift from the less desirable teacher-centered approaches to teaching to student-centered in order to promote high quality teaching and learning in higher education institutions. An outcome of such a shift involves the adoption of 'student-focused academic practice' (Lindblom-Ylänne & Meyer, 1999). However, the teaching-learning relationship is complex and several factors have to be considered when promoting the student-centered teaching culture in universities. The academic excellence can be possible when conceptions of teaching are followed.

The role of Conceptions of Teaching in Higher Education

While teachers approach teaching in diverse ways, they also hold different conceptions of teaching. Interview-based studies have identified a number of different conceptions of teaching. There are various conceptions of teaching in higher education and the teacher can pick up the existing models or develop a new model to enhance academic excellence. Any teaching philosophy which is causing the academic excellence is to be appreciated. As far as the conceptions are concerned, Kember (1997) conducted a review of such studies and combined the conceptions suggested in them into five and Trigwell and Prosser (1996) identified six similar conceptions. Kember and Kwan (2000) identified two major categories of conceptions: "teaching as transmission of knowledge" and "teaching as learning facilitation". The former consists of sub-categories "teaching as passing information" and "teaching as making it easier for students to understand" and the latter includes sub-categories "teaching as meeting students' learning needs" and "teaching as facilitating students to become independent learners".

Conceptions of teaching held by higher education teachers Kember, 1977

- 1) Teaching as imparting information
- 2) Teaching as transmitting structured knowledge
- 3) Teaching as an interaction between the teacher and the student
- 4) Teaching as facilitating understanding on the part of the student
- 5) Teaching as bringing about conceptual change and intellectual development in the student

Trigwell & Prosser, 1996

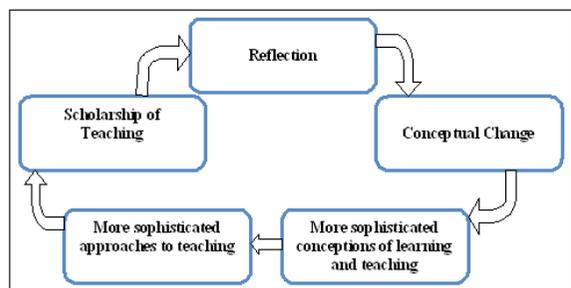
- 1) Teaching as transmitting concepts of the syllabus
- 2) Teaching as transmitting the teachers' knowledge
- 3) Teaching as helping students to acquire concepts of the syllabus
- 4) Teaching as helping students to acquire teachers' knowledge
- 5) Teaching as helping students to develop conceptions
- 6) Teaching as helping students to change conceptions

The previous studies on student learning showed the importance of focusing on conceptions of learning associated with particular approaches to learning already in the 1980s. The teachers who held a student-centered conception of teaching were more likely to adopt a student-centered approach to teaching while teachers holding a teacher-centered conception of teaching were more likely to adopt a teacher-centered approach to teaching.

The Process of Competence Development

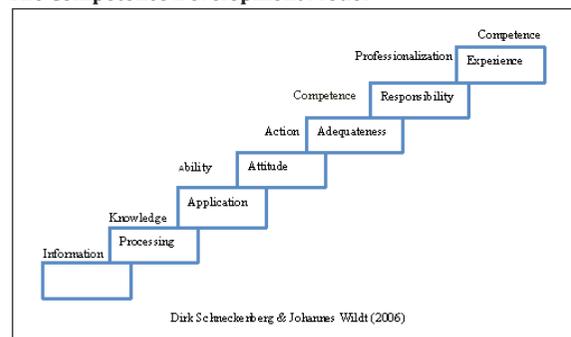
The competence development of a teacher in higher education is a continuous process. The teacher's thirst for learning and imparting the knowledge can be fulfilled when a teacher is able to develop the competence. Scholarly approaches to teaching and learning engage faculty members and the faculty as a whole in reflecting upon and initiating positive changes to curricula and pedagogical practices. Such approaches are central for understanding learning, developing responsive curricula, enhancing the quality of student learning experiences, and assessing which practices are effective in specific circumstances. Advances in the scholarship of teaching will occur more readily if they are closely aligned to the conceptual structure and epistemology of the discipline (Lueddeke, 2003). As it is being stated in the below diagram reflection has a central role in promoting conceptual change. Reflection can be fostered in pedagogical courses or by encouraging teachers to discuss teaching with their peers. Through conceptual change, teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning might develop towards being more student-centered. A change in conceptions of teaching is a prerequisite to a change in approaches to teaching. A student-centered approach to teaching is a central component of the scholarship of teaching. The development of teaching is, at best, a continuous process, and thus, teachings should be encouraged to reflect on their own teaching on a continuous basis.

The Development of Teaching of Higher Education Teachers



The characteristics represent a set of corresponding influential factors in competence for the process of activity performance. A cyclic process in which these factors are interrelated in the process of competence development and where each stage is dependent upon the previous one, can be best of all illustrated in the form of a 'ladder', i.e. ascending steps.

The Competence Development Model



The above model describes the stages in competence development. The teacher has to gather the relevant information and process it for gaining knowledge. When such knowledge is implemented in the class room, the learning process becomes effective. The teacher's attitude, adequateness, responsibility and experience are the key factors in competence development.

The Competences of the Teacher in Higher Education

Tracking the Content and Context : The ability of a teacher in the learning process depends upon constant efforts in developing the competencies. The ability to teach content with context without deviating would help the learners to understand and learn with concentration. The content with relevant examples will benefit the learners and the adequateness of the teacher delivers more contents. In order to achieve academic excellence, the competence based teaching in higher education adds to the economic and cultural aspects of the knowledge society and should therefore be seen in their societal context.

Work with others: The academic excellence depends on the tendency of working work with peers or others. The teaching

involvement in the societal activities leads to creating impact. The teaching profession should be based on the values of social inclusion and nurturing the potential of every learner. They need to have knowledge of human growth and development and demonstrate self-confidence when engaging with others. They need to be able to work with learners as individuals and support them to develop into fully participating and active members of society. They should also be able to work in ways which increase the collective intelligence of learners and co-operate and collaborate with colleagues to enhance their own learning and teaching.

Use of ICT: The efficiency of the teaching in the classroom depends on the use of information and communication technologies. The teachers in the higher education need to focus on updating and upgrading the teaching modules by using knowledge, technology and information. The teachers in higher education need to work with a variety of types of knowledge. Their education and professional development should equip them to access, analyze, validate, reflect on and transmit knowledge, making effective use of technology where this is appropriate. Their pedagogic skills should allow them to build and manage learning environments and retain the intellectual freedom to make choices over the delivery of education. Their confidence in the use of ICT should allow them to integrate it effectively into learning and teaching.

Society Focus : The competence based teaching in higher education for academic excellence needs to work with society and for the society. Teachers need to understand the factors that create social cohesion and exclusion in society and be aware of the ethical dimensions of the knowledge society. They should be able to work effectively with the local community, and with partners and stakeholders in education parents, teacher education institutions, and representative groups. Their experience and expertise should also enable them to contribute to systems of quality assurance. Teachers' work in all these areas should be embedded in a professional continuum of lifelong learning which includes initial teacher education, induction and continuing professional development , as they cannot be expected to possess all the necessary competences on completing their initial teacher education.

Conclusion:

Competency-based teaching in higher education has become a hot topic in higher education circles these days and it is becoming increasingly popular as the country searches for ways to improve college affordability and more accurately measure student learning. The most important characteristic of competency-based education is that it measures learning rather than time. Quality teaching has become an issue of importance as the landscape of higher education has been facing continuous changes. The society is expecting the teacher's as the key factors as they mould the mindset of young students and makes them intellectuals. The new teaching methods and philosophies would lead to academic excellence in higher education and by using ICT and developing teacher-student interaction effective.

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