



Practices, Challenges and Prospects of Competency Based Instruction in Some Selected Primary Schools in Case of Sidama Zone

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ABSTRACT

In this study phenomenological design, which is a qualitative research design, was used. Because, the purpose of this study was to investigate practices, challenges and prospects of competency based instruction in primary schools. The theoretical aspect of this study was based on constructivism view. Because, this study focused on the lived experiences of teachers about the instruction in primary schools. To achieve the goal of study, one primary school selected from the Sidama zone through criterion based sampling technique and ten teachers were selected through available sampling technique from sample selected school. Semi-structured interview was held with participants. Results revealed that, there is a gap to implement the competence based teaching instructions in primary schools. The main reason for this is there was knowledge gap between primary school teachers about competence based instruction. Thus, it was suggested that, attention need to be given in the professional development of teachers and integrating competency based teaching approaches in primary school curriculum.

KEYWORDS: Competency, Instruction, phenomenological, constructivism

INTRODUCTION

One of the general objective of education and training policy of Ethiopia was to develop the physical, mental, potential and the problem solving capacity of individuals by expanding education with the moto of basic universal primary education for all (MoE 2010). Referring to this Ethiopia education development roadmap (2018 unpublished material), planned to introduce competence based comprehensive approach focusing on practical teaching learning activities. In addition to this, practical life skills and aesthetics contents planned to incorporate into the curriculum that enhance the development of problem solving and creative minds.

According to David Njeng'ere Kabita, Lili Ji (2017), competency based instruction is emphasizing on what students are going to do rather than mainly focusing on what students are going to understand. In principle, competence based instruction is student centered and adaptive to the changing needs of students, teachers and society. It shows that students can gain and apply their knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to solve problems they face in their day-to-day activities.

As discussed by Le et al (2014), in a competence based approach, the level of expectation for student learning is

high for all students with each student has responsible for achieving established learning targets that is competencies.

In addition to this, the competency based education as defined by Le et al (2014), achieving learning targets means that a learner has master both academic knowledge and skills, as well as other cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. Therefore, the competence based approach make learning is meaningful and provide opportunities to apply the competencies into real life activities. In addition, it empowering learners with skills for lifelong learning.

To confirm that all learners effective in achieving competence, educators provide self-learning opportunities and supports and allow students to learn at varying, times and places, assess their learning when they are ready and progress at their own pace. Students in competency based approach can earn credit only when they have demonstrate and mastery of established learning targets.

Statement of the Problem

Today, our country faced serious social illness, political instability and economic challenges, including ethnic-related strife. Some of social problems are addiction and misbehave of youths, unemployment, underemployment, corruption



and negative ethnicity of adult population. Because of these, locking educational system is important to address the problems.

More of these, as discussed in Ethiopian education development roadmap (2018 unpublished material), the competence based approach is not given attention in the primary education curriculum. Due to this, primary school students inefficient to solve their problems and lack to achieve the goals mentioned in educational level.

For instance, in 2010 an EGRA of student literacy was conducted in grade two and grade three. As finding shows that, primary first cycle students were not achieving the basic skills required to learn effectively in later years. About 69% of grade two students were unable to read one word of grade level relevant story in sidama zone (MoE 2010).

As a practical seen the most of primary first and second cycle students have less motivation, lack of interest and low commitment in their education. In addition to these, they are weak for critical thinking, lack of problem solving skills, lack of creativity, cannot give logical analyses and reason for the idea.

As the national need assessment study recommended, enhancing the quality education is powerful tool to reverse the current dire social, political and economic challenges in Ethiopia (MOE 2018). Therefore, the researcher believed that to answering the following research questions help to address these problems.

Research Questions

1. What is the practise of competence based instruction among primary schools in Sidama zone?
2. What extent the current teaching learning approach is relevant to providing opportunity for students to be competent?
3. What are the challenges that hinder the effective implementation of competence based instruction?
4. How the identified challenges be harnessed to implement competence based instruction effectively?

General Objective

The general objective of this study was competency based instruction implementation.

Specific Objectives

To achieve the general objective of the study, the following specific objectives have been sated.

1. To analyse practice of competency based instruction among primary schools in Sidama zone.
2. To discuss the relevance of current teaching learning approach to providing opportunity for students to be competent.

3. To find challenges of competency based instructional implementation in primary education.
4. To suggest important solution that used to implement the competence based instruction.

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by constructivists' theory. Because, this study focused on the lived experiences of teachers about the instruction in primary schools. As discussed by Desiree Solso (2009), the main concept of constructivism is that teaching with constructivism methods involves the learners being active participants in the classroom. He further mentioned that constructivism is grounding on the fact that for children to expand their learning, they need to explore their environment and learn from hands on experiences.

Ethical Considerations

Providing clue for the respondents about the purpose of study. It was for academic purpose only. The participants were informed consent to make the choice to participate or not and they were free to decline or withdraw. The respondents were guaranteed that their privacy was protected by strict standard of anonymity. High standard of professionalism was observed as the researcher avoided fabricating or altering the result.

Definition of Terms

Competency is an integrated set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that enables one to effectively perform the activities of a given expected standard (MoE K-12 curriculum framework 2009/10 E.C).

Instruction is a techniques which teachers were used in classroom to help students become independent and strategic learners.

Phenomenological research is qualitative design approach in which the describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants.

Constructivism is a theory which believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. In this theory, individuals develop subjective meaning of their experiences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this research, phenomenological approach of qualitative research design was employed. Because the major goal of this study is to investigate the practice, challenges and prospective of competency based instruction and to find the relevance of current teaching learning approach to providing opportunity for students to be competent. The phenomenological approach aims to answer questions about the what, how or why of a phenomenon rather than how many or how much, which are answered by quantitative

methods (Michael Quinn Patton and Michael Cochran 2002). Therefore, phenomenological approach of qualitative research design used to give interpretation and create better understanding of the complex reality of a given situation.

Source of Data

To answer the basic research questions of this study, the important data was collected through primary and secondary sources. The teachers those teaching in governmental primary school were primary sources of data in this study. Because they are directly concerned with the issue under the study.

The secondary sources of data were unpublished documents like annual and weekly teachers lesson plan.

Sampling Techniques

The population of this study was teachers who have been teaching in governmental primary schools in Sidama zone. The representatives of population were selected through mixed sampling technique. Criterion based Sampling technique was employed to select primary school. As a Michael Quinn Patton (2001, p. 238) discussed the criterion based sampling technique involves to selecting cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance. Based on this, criterion for sample selection of this study was model schools in 2011 E.C in Sidama zone. The information of selected model schools was found from Sidama zone department of education. Among the three model schools only taking "Midere Genet" primary school purposively. Which is the first ranked school among the model schools since 2011 E.C. As mentioned by different scholars, qualitative research is usually focus on a small number of sample. Available sampling technique was employed to select teachers from sample-selected school.

Sample Size

Many qualitative researchers state that sample size and

Table 1. The demographic information for key respondents (to protect krs' anonymity, identifying information has been removed).

Respondents (kr)	Sex	Age	Marital states	Experience	level of education	Grade level of current teach
kr 1	Male	33	Married	11 years	1 st degree student	Grade 7&8
kr 2	Male	41	Married	16 years	1 st degree	Grade 5&6
kr 3	Female	28	Single	6 years	College diploma	Grade 4
kr 4	Male	39	Married	14 years	1 st degree student	Grade 8A-C
kr 5	Male	30	Married	10 years	College diploma	Grade 3
kr 6	Male	40	Married	18 years	1 st degree student	Grade 7A&B
kr 7	Male	34	Married	12 years	1 st degree	Grade 6,7&8
kr 8	Female	30	Married	13 years	College diploma	Grade 2
kr 9	Male	31	Married	9 years	1 st degree	Grade 5A&B
kr 10	Female	28	Married	7 years	1 st degree student	Grade 6&7

sampling designs are not issues in qualitative research. Some researchers discussed that sample size may estimate based on the approach of the study or the data collection method used. For each approach, there are some related rules of thumb. As discussed by Dukes (1984), Smith et.al. (2009) and Creswell (1998) recommended interviews with up to ten people in phenomenological research.

More on as discussed by Hennink, Kaiser and Marconi (2017) the sample size of phenomenological research considers in relation to saturation or redundancy (where no additional issue were identified). Generally, the number of factors specific to the study and the level of study for student work determine the sample size in phenomenological research. Based on these facts in this study, ten primary school teachers were participated.

Instrument of Data Collection

In this study two types of data gathering instruments were used, namely documents analysis and face-to-face interview. The documents were teachers' lesson plans. Semi-structured interview was employed. Every respondent were asked the same questions. As discussed by Kvale and Brinkman (2009) and Marshall and Rossman (2010) the phenomenological research interview should be open or semi-structured.

Methods of Data Analysis

After collecting the necessary data carefully, the data was analysed through Narration (formulating stories based on the respondents presentation), textual analysis (describing what explained by participants), structural analysis (giving interpretation on the idea explained by participants) and essence description. As discussed by Moustakas (1994), phenomenological research data analysis by identifying common meanings and essences, horizontalization of data, textual and structural analysis.

Most of participants have more than 6 years' experience in primary schools. Some of them had the responsibility in different positions. This makes them an important resource for this study. One of the participants expressed that:

I am experienced as I have taught for 12 years in different primary schools, and you see me now working at a primary school. The experience that I have helps me a lot when I come across challenges in my work (kr 7).

From the above story it is clear that the participants find their working experiences was helpful for them, because they noted that in most cases they refer to the manner in which they had once overcome the challenges that came their way, especially if the situations are more or less similar. This makes them a reliable source for this study because they have much experience of teaching in primary schools.

The participants were qualified teachers with primary education qualifications level. Out of ten teachers participated in this study three of them completed their first degree; four are working toward completing their first degree while the remaining three are just completed their higher diploma in mathematics. Therefore, the students have advantage by learning the qualified teachers. When asked about their qualifications, one of them indicated as follows:

I think that my qualifications are fine because I don't struggle to teach the learners. I have the first degrees in mathematics from the University of Hawaasa. In addition to this, I have participated the number of short time training in different time. This makes me work with easy as I have the necessary professional knowledge (kr 2).

It is clear from the above responses that teachers were very proud of their educational qualifications. More importantly, their qualifications placed them in a good position to teach effectively. They have also ability to translate the subject content into classroom teaching learning activities that is suitable for the learners.

During the discussion, the participants asked specifically about how they use competence based instruction in lesson. Among the many reasons that they discussed most of the participants highlighted that, they were teaching to cover their lesson as well as the contents of textbook. Some of them explained as:

I do not understand the meaning of competence based instruction and how to implement it in class room teaching learning activities. In a class room I was use lecture method. After presenting my lesson I was evaluate my students through giving class work or homework to check either they achieve objects or not (kr 3, 5, 8).

Some of them also consider that, main practice of implementation of competence based instruction by simply relating with the active learning approach.

In my class room there are slow learners, middle learners

and fast learners. I facilitate them to form group of five members one student from the high achiever of the class, one student from the low achiever of the class and three students from the middle achiever of the class. A student who understands the concept of lesson share his or her ideas with other students. Finally, I motivate them to learn best from one another (kr 6).

In their response when asked about them, from what base they were constructing questions, most of them use student's textbooks. Some of them use other supplemental books and references.

After the end of the content I was evaluate my students through giving quiz, tests, mid exam and final exam. Sometimes, I was used oral questions during the lesson. The questions contain different items like, true and false, multiple choice, matching and short answers. I was used text books and other references to construct the questions (kr 2, 4, 9, 10).

From the above response, the methods of deliver of questions were written and oral. No one prepare the questions that invite students to practical activities. Similar they were asked how to measure the level of difficult and quality of questions. As they responded that, the level of difficult and quality of questions approving by department head and other teachers.

When I preparing questions for the exam, our department head check the relevance of questions and he put his sign before duplicating the exam. However, I give quizzes and class activities without approving the department head (kr 1, 3, 6, 10).

Participants were asked the relevance of current teaching and learning approach based on students' effectiveness. Their response was the primary school students tend to have little motivation, interest and commitment in their education. In addition to this, they are week for critical thinking, problem solving skill, creativity, analysing the idea and reasoning skills.

Usually in Mathematics lesson, I give them classwork to do every day but they cannot perform better in class. I give them the homework tasks every day. Similarly, they came to school without doing their homework. I feel that they require a lot of practice (kr 3).

As participants explained, some challenges that hinder the implementation of competence based instructions was lack of awareness of teachers how to implement competency based approach and how to align the activities and question with competency.

I not know the concept of competence and how to construct the competence based activities and questions (kr 1).

The teachers were asked how to enhance competence based

instruction implementations in class room. Their responses were giving practical activities, evaluating learners based on objective, follow the student centred teaching learning approach and making conducive teaching learning environments.

It is difficult to creating responsible, confidential, creative and potential citizens for the future. To shape the students futurity the teachers are not only responsible body. Stakeholder expected to play their role. We are teaching our students for long years. But we cannot bring change on our students' achievement. Therefore, it is important to check our methodology (kr 9).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to assess the extent to how competency based instruction was implemented in primary schools in Sidama zone. The study particularly focused on the relevance of current teaching learning approach and how to practical apply the competence based approaches. Findings of the study clearly show that competency based teaching approaches are not well implemented in primary schools in Sidama zone. But theoretically, there is evidence that in Ethiopia the educational approach for primary schools gives emphasis to implement competency based instruction, active learning and continuous classroom assessment.

As the discussion of respondents, the major factor that hinder the implementation of competence based approach was the knowledge and skill gape between primary schools' teachers about it. It was notable that participants reported

being unaware of competence based instruction, alignment of the questions with competency, how to evaluate the level of difficulty and fairness of the questions.

Majority of them were unable to incorporate competence based activities during in lesson plan preparation and implementation. In generally teachers were not well oriented to the practices of competency based teaching approaches and from where the competence is select. They follow usual approaches.

To create competent citizens giving more effort on the implementation of competence based instruction and devoted time on the teachers' profession development. Because competence based approach, used to modernizing teaching learning approach. As Lorenz Lassningg (29015) discussed constructing competency based questions do not necessarily need to be graded, but may be used assess student progress, keep track of how students are mastering content over time and adjust/modify instructional approaches.

As explained by teachers the classroom continuous assessment was not competence based. As discussed by Lorenz Lassnigg (2015), the assessments were made on the bases of a proper statement of competence, proper statement of teachers' activities, proper statement of the students' activities and the students' assessment plans. In line with this, the MoE (2018) out lined that the competency selects from subject syllabus/teacher's guide and the relevant and appropriate question construct using the template given below.

Table 2. Question constructing sample template

Subject _____ Grade: _____ Unit or Week _____ Sem. _____					
Skill/Content /Titel:					
Sub-Skill/Sub-content:					
Competency:					
Method of Delivery: Oral <input type="checkbox"/> , Written <input type="checkbox"/> , Practical <input type="checkbox"/> Method of Response: Oral <input type="checkbox"/> , Written <input type="checkbox"/> , Practical <input type="checkbox"/> Question: Answer: Rubric:	Type of Question	Multiple Choice <input type="checkbox"/>	Constructed Response <input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Task <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Domain	Knowledge	Recall <input type="checkbox"/>	Understanding <input type="checkbox"/>	Application <input type="checkbox"/>
		Attitude	Receiving <input type="checkbox"/>	Responding <input type="checkbox"/>	Valuing <input type="checkbox"/>
		Skill	Imitation <input type="checkbox"/>	Manipulation <input type="checkbox"/>	Precision <input type="checkbox"/>
	Difficulty Level	Easy <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate <input type="checkbox"/>	Difficult <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Question Quality Criteria	Valid <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Efficient <input type="checkbox"/>	
Reliable <input type="checkbox"/>		Objective <input type="checkbox"/>	Acceptable <input type="checkbox"/>		

Source: MoE 2018, Continuous Classroom Assessment for Learning (CCAfL) Workbook.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions for Participants

1. Questions that seek to examine the background of the interviewee
 1. Tell me about your experience: what grade(s) are you teaching and your highest qualification.
2. Practice and Trend
 1. How do you use competence based activities in lesson?
 2. What is your base to constructing competence based questions?
 3. How do you measure difficult level and quality criteria of questions?
 4. How do you rate the current teaching and learning approach based on students' effectiveness?
 5. What are the challenges to implement competence based instructions in class room?
 6. How to enhance competence based instruction implementations in class room?

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