



Teachers' Training College Learners' Expectations for their future Teaching Career

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Abstract

Rwanda embarked on a new curriculum based-competences in 2015. It is in this regards the Rwanda Education Board has continuously trained its counterparts in all areas of education. The present study intends to describe how teachers' training college leavers' support and are ready to implement this curriculum towards their students' career teaching. The study used qualitative and group discussion research approach and method respectively to design and gather its data. The study found a relationship between mastering the new curriculum and preparation of lesson plan and teaching activities as input towards achieving a career teaching path skilful teachers needed by the Rwandan society. The study shows that this framework is expected to be reflected by teachers. It also shows how Rwandan student-teachers are likely to be motivated to change toward producing competent students at all levels in the global market.

Keywords: TTC leavers, Expectations to master CBC, career teaching

Introduction

According to education statistical yearbook of 2017, among 78 202 school staffs in Rwanda (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2017), about 5 859, 43 558, and 28 785 are in pre-primary, primary and secondary school teaching profession. Among primary teachers, 93.90% of teachers are only qualified, so there is a need to fill this gap. The education system in Rwanda is of 3 years of pre-primary, 6 years of primary, 3 years of lower secondary, and 3 years of upper secondary schools. The subject combinations in upper secondary schools are as distributed in the following learning field: sciences, humanities, languages, teacher education, and technical secondary education. According to the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (2017), students' enrolment in teachers' education field from 2015 to 2016 was 8,771 and 9,461. This shows how many teachers are needed and deployed in primary education. Thus, a good degree of competences is required to keep and fit these new primary teachers in the teaching career.

In his thesis, Ndagijimana has described the trends of Rwandan teacher training colleges (TTCs) from the 1960s. The training of primary school teachers has started with the religious congregations that created the D3 School of Instructors and the D4 Normal Schools in 1960. With the 1979-1980 reform, we experienced the creation of ENP (Ecoles Normale Primaire or Normal Primary Schools) and ENT (Ecoles Normale Technique or Technical Normal Schools) in 1981. The Normal Primary Schools (D6) had to train teachers of general education and the Technical Normal Schools (D5) had to train teachers of vocational education. Currently, the Primary Teachers' College (PTC) also called Teachers' Training College (TTC) is an initial training education of primary school teachers. Initial training begins with the second cycle of secondary, technical and vocational education. It lasts three years (Ndagijimana, 2005). In Rwanda, before 2007 the teaching career was catered in normal schools where

graduates were expected to teach all subjects in primary schools after graduating at a high school and get an Advanced level certificate. After 2007, a system of teacher training colleges (TTC) was introduced where four options namely teaching science and mathematics (TSM), modern languages (TML), social studies (TSS), and early childhood education (ECE) were accommodated. From 2015, there are 16 TTCs (Uworwabayeho & Muhire, 2016), their leavers are expected to perform and implement the new competence-based curriculum (CBC). That is why; the present study is evaluating the gained skills got from CBC training and outcome envisioned by TTC leavers for their future teaching career.

At the end of 2018, Ministry of Education through Rwanda education board (REB) has planned to train TTC tutors, TTC student-teacher leavers and teachers from demonstration schools (these are schools near TTCs where student-teachers mostly practice teaching internships) in order to strengthen CBC implementation (REB, 2018). It is in this regards, these TTC student-teacher leavers have been trained from 13 to 17 December. These 16 TTCs served as training sites of TTC student-teacher leavers (these are the graduates from TTCs) where 3100 graduates were expected to be trained on CBC implementation. The training was expected to cover: various types of competences and cross-cutting issues, inclusive classroom, ICT integration, integration situation, competence-based assessment, unit planning, and developing teaching and learning materials.

Research Design

The TTC student-teacher leavers from TTC Muramba site—one of 16 training centres accommodating about 190 trainees and 7 trainers or facilitators—were taken as a sample of the study. In this study, observation and group interview (Creswell, 2012) was used to collect data. A participatory observation (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012) was done full since the researcher was among the training facilitators. A group of 4 student-teachers was selected purposively from all options. In a group interview, TTC student-teacher leavers were asked

several questions including (a) what is your vision after graduating from TTC? (What do you want to change in primary teaching and learning?), (b) what is the most difficult concept in new curriculum you feel is not easy to put in action?, (c) what does motivate you to teach and continue your career?, (d) what does it take most of the time among preparation and lesson delivering, why?, (e) what do you need to be a good future Rwandan teacher?, (f) do you know what government expects from you when shifting from KBC to CBC?

Results and discussion

The results of the study are presented as quotes from respondents and after a conceptual model are constructed to build the connection of responses towards the future teaching outcome of the student-teachers.

In the TTC leavers' talks, we found the main three themes: Competence-based curriculum (CBC), preparation of lesson plan and teaching activity (PLP-TA), and career path (CP).

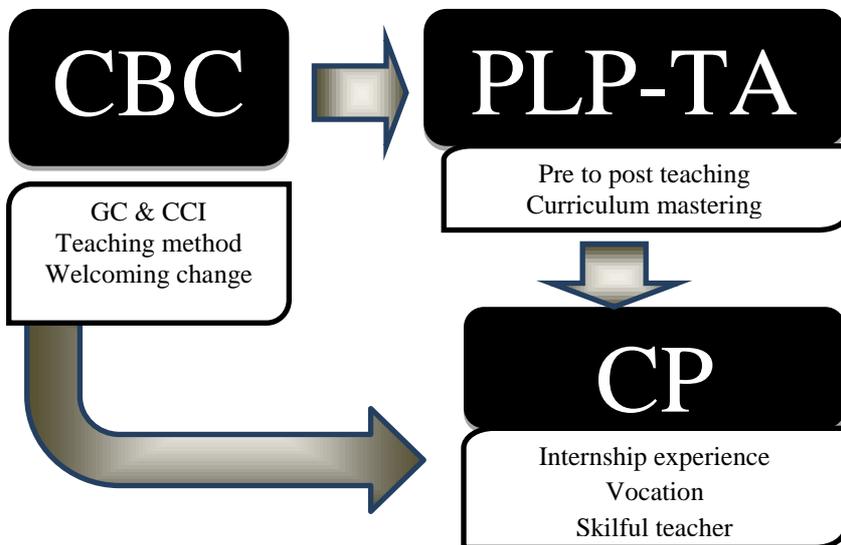


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

About Curriculum, when we asked student; *what is the most difficult concept in the new curriculum you think it is not easy to put in action?* They responded that it is no longer difficult because of this training. For instance, "it was not easy to understand and put the cross-cutting issues and generic competences in the lesson or in the classroom but as we have been trained in this week of training". "We are able to address these cross-cutting and competences".

What advice can you give to other teachers who teach badly? "The school I may get a job, I can train teachers who are facing a problem about CBC implementation". This shows that teachers who are still using lecture or expository method can now adopt group discussion; dialogue in order to increase speaking and listening as lecture belongs to knowledge without skills.

About preparation of lesson plan and teaching activity, we asked them to *think about an average of time they may spend of each activity and their responses comprise the following:* the preparation should take longer than teaching practice. We have the first mental preparation and then written preparation and finally practical preparation. We need mental preparation because we need to think about what we are going to teach as you cannot teach what you do not know. This will help you to identify what you do not know among what you want to teach so that you can ask your fellow or read books. In written preparation, you provide what you will do and teaching aids to be used so that you will implement the lesson in classroom easily as you are well prepared.

Then, *what is the percentage of preparation and what percentage of teaching?* "Maybe preparation should take 90% and teaching 10%". For instance, in the classroom you will be teaching there is one child with the disability, so if you did not prepare on how to take care of that case, you will spend a lot of time during lesson delivering thinking how to address this issue. We know that in introduction we use 5 minutes where you make learners remember what they studied (atmosphere of study), the development is supposed to have 25

minutes where we expect teacher to develop new content, while conclusion is 10 minutes where you summarise the content and give an evaluation to see if your instructional objective has been achieved and the content have been understood.

What if we spend little time in preparation and longer in delivering lesson? "You can forget something or prepare many things. "In our teaching practices, many teachers wondered when they saw us prepared a lot of teaching aids which are even needed for one single lesson because of the scarcity of time. If you use little time for preparation you may forget taking care of learners with the disability". *What if you remember them during teaching delivery?* "You may prepare teaching aids which are not sufficient to learners with the disability as they need special help than other students".

About career, we asked them; *what is their vision after graduating from TTC?* And they said: "You see in this country it is difficult to get a job, so I can be a self-employed in order to get something to help me in my life, for instance, even from one thousand Rwandan francs you can start with little" so, his vision is if he does not get a teaching job, to create his own job. I like teaching job. Why do you like it? "Because it is my choice". *Did you choose for yourself or REB has chosen for you?* "Yes, I chose myself. I will gather children and teach them at home so that I get business and help learners to get to their future". "There are some teachers who treat their learners bad, so I have to take care of my learners, not beating them and make them cry"

What does motivates you to teach and continue your teaching career? "It is not the salary or money paid to us. During my internship, I got a visitor who told me that we are not teachers because we will be paid much money but it is a career or gift from God, which is why what motivate us is that we change the understanding of Rwandan children". She said she can be a teacher because she is gifted from God, *how can you explain that? How can you know that someone is talented or gifted from God while another one is not gifted to teach?*

"It is a vocation; we cannot rely on the payment, we are happy to see our learners developed. As a professional teacher is identified, someone may have mastered content with knowledge, skills, and attitude, but fails to deliver what he knows, to care about learners, treat them. He has everything but he is not able to transfer what he knows". "My love of being teacher took the source from the fact that I want to develop my country, our learners are future leaders". Teachers have to be patriotic towards the country. If teachers are not patriotic, they are doing not mind to produce incompetent learners. Teachers are just interested to finish the program. Learners have to teach each other. *What do you need to be a teacher? What makes you a good teacher?* "We need training, teaching materials and so on". "I need a salary in order to be comfortable with my family, parents, and something to eat". "I need skills and content knowledge, without knowledge you cannot be a competent teacher because you cannot teach what you do not know". *Do you know what government expects from you?* "Yes! To train and teach learners of the country clearly in order to train future Rwandans which are good and have competences and are able to create jobs instead of waiting jobs from the government. We need to develop our society, so learners have to be job creator and not a job seeker".

We talked about your teaching career, curriculum, teaching time allocation, something to add? "We have to be careful in teaching career as what we teach is what our learners get". So TTC teachers need to be role model. "There is a statement which says that the teacher does not teach what he knows but who is, so we should change our personality and be flexible and receive all learners. One student had a question: you said that a good and professional teacher is gifted from God, *are the teachers born or made?* "Yes, are born! For instance, we are so many in TTCs but we are not all able to teach. There are some teachers who just teach to finish the program, and there are others who want to give skills to learners".

Not only leavers but also after in-service teachers' training, the teachers' confidence about teaching had improved meaningfully and the majority of them had developed satisfactory levels of understanding and more positive attitudes (Jarvis & Pell, 2004). According to Ndagijimana (2005), the primary school teacher must have acquired knowledge, know-how and be able to: give students a valid human formation adapted to national realities; to improve constantly and to feel up to his task; to enable the pupil to acquire a sufficient baggage which enables him to integrate into the life of the country and consequently to be useful there; perform certain administrative functions, including that of head or principal of a primary school, while respecting their requirements; and access to higher education in certain faculties—education and other disciplines applied to teaching. Initial teacher training must take into account Rwandan society. Thus "teacher training requires a dual approach. On the one hand, the student must consider the basics of teaching by thinking about the relationship between knowledge, child development, learning, and society with its multiple goals and values. On the other hand, he must be trained to learn how to practice the essential skills of learning and teaching" (Ndagijimana, 2005).

Conclusion

In the present study, it was clearly found that TTC student-teacher leavers clearly understand the government expectation towards the CBC implementation in their future teaching career. Three themes which are competence-based curriculum (CBC), preparation of lesson plan and teaching activity (PLP-TA), and career path (CP) have been identified from TTC leavers' responses. These components were formulated to model framework expectations and a way to master CBC for TTC leavers' future career teaching. In CBC component, it has been identified that these TTC leavers have digested the training intention as they know the value and implementation of generic competences (GC) and cross-cutting issues (CCI), usability of various teaching methods, and kin to change their future workmates who may resist welcoming new curriculum. In PLP-TA component, it has been

identified two sessions of planning a lesson should be done prior to teaching implementation or lesson delivery. These are pre-preparation and preparation itself. Teachers should think about what they are going to plan and teach, then after they take time to prepare a lesson plan. Not only pre, preparation, and lesson delivery but also these TTC leavers think that teachers should master curriculum or syllabus in order to minimise time when planning or delivering the lesson, therefore making a great and a competent teacher. Finally, from CBC through PLP-TA as input components, a final outcome component rises. CP was identified by the TTC leavers as not motivated by money but the motivation towards career path is originated from their internship experience, vocation and professionalism, as well as the training, got making them skilful teachers. However, it has also been shown that competence-based curriculum can direct to a career path in an indirect way.

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