

Teaching Competencies of Elementary Teachers in Northern Samar: Basis for Action Plan Development

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ABSTRACT

In this research, the teaching competencies of elementary school teachers in the Northern Samar based on the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS). The competencies given by the NCBTS are social regard for learning, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum, planning, assessing, and reporting, community linkages, and personal growth and professional development. Findings showed that the school heads rated the teachers to have high competency in personal growth and professional development. They have reflected on the extent of the attainment of professional development goals. The competency of teachers on the curriculum aspect was evaluated by school heads to be satisfactory, different than the high competency evaluation of teachers themselves. The researcher proposed an action plan that may assist the teachers to sustain and enhance their strengths and make their weaknesses become their strengths.

KEYWORDS: *Teaching Competencies, Elementary Teachers, Northern Samar, Action Plan*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Keeping Teachers in the Teaching Profession concluded that the school management may continuously provide both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to the teachers in order for them to stay both in the profession and also in the school. If this is done, the school may be considered by the teachers as a haven of their professional life. They may continue to maintain the relationship that has been established with the teachers. This relationship would possibly ensure a bond that will last and rewards not only to the teacher but to the school as it will have a high retention of good teachers. And the school may continually support teachers by giving allocation for seminars, trainings and support for professional growth which will further hone them other skills and potentials (Gallardo, 2010).

With this, the Department of Education developed the NCBTS, this is a framework that establishes the competency standards for teacher performance in order for teachers, learners and stakeholders to appreciate the complex set of behaviors, attitudes and skills that teachers must possess in order to carry out a satisfactory performance of their roles and responsibilities. In order to respond to this framework and be able to make necessary ways to measure teachers' competencies, a developed and validated instrument was identified for the professional strengths and development needs of teachers and was named NCBTS – Teachers Strengths and Needs Assessment Instrument. This

Assessment kit will not measure/evaluate one's teaching performance; it will only give accurate information about teacher's competency status. It is likewise designed to help teachers determine their professional development and training needs as an effective school teacher (DepEd, 2006).

The NCBTS can then have a framework for revising current practices or for developing new teaching practices that would make teaching more effective. Filipino teachers will have a common vocabulary for discussing their teaching practices, for defining their ideals as teachers, for negotiating and creating strategies to improve their practices, and for addressing their various stakeholders regarding the improvement of the teaching profession (TEDP, 2009).

To improve education quality, Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA) was formulated. It is a package of policy actions collected under the five (5) key reform thrusts (KRT). One of the KRT of BESRA is KRT2- Better learning outcomes achieved to improve teacher standards. With this, good teaching is being defined in terms of those practices that help students learn better. So the NCBTS is concerned with whether teachers are competent in helping students learn or not (Lapuz, 2011).

Competency-Based Teacher Education means that as educators, the main focus should always be on the outcome of education, rather than the process of education. Process

should be planned and carried out with the outcome of competency-based education in mind. It is an approach to instruction and assessment that places primary emphasis on identifying and measuring specific learning outcomes or competencies. Unlike general goals, competencies are written as real-life abilities that are required for effective professional practice. It is also an institution process that moves education from focusing on what academics believe graduates need to know (teacher-focused) to what students need to know and be able to do in varying complex situations – student and/or workplace focused (De Torres, 2010).

Suryanarayana (2011) stated that the keystone in the educational edifice is doubtless the teacher. On him depends much more than any other the progress and prosperity of children. Nobody can effectively take his place or influence children in the manner and to the degree; it is possible, for him alone to do. It is strongly believed that to be a teacher is to be the member of a holy order.

Professional teachers are constantly interacting with people in the school and in the community and are actively involved with learners, fellow teachers, school officials and community leaders. With regard to the teacher’s professional strengths and needs, he found weak on planning, assessing, reporting and personal growth but they are strong on social regard for learning, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum and community linkages. Thus, in terms of the influence of teachers’ attributes to their professional strengths and needs; teachers’ educational attainment, academic rank and in- service trainings attended were significant. There are many potential variables affecting the teacher academic outcomes which are related to the study (Dancel, 2010).

This study determined the competencies of public elementary school teachers in the second district of Northern Samar; assessed the teachers’ needs and strengths and identified the kinds of training and seminars they need to attend. The Teachers’ Strengths and Needs Assessment (TSNA) would greatly help in determining the professional development and training needs of teacher. This study would determine strengths as well as needs along the national competencies required from the Filipino teachers.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study focused on faculty members of the central school of Catubig CS, Hibubullao CS, Gamay CS, Cagamutan CS, Laoang I CS, Lapinig CS, Las Navas I CS, Las Navas II CS, Mapanas CS, Palapag I CS, Palapag II CS (Pangpang CS),

Pambujan I CS, Pambujan II CS, San Roque CS, and Silvino CS. At present, each of these municipalities has schools or cluster school headed by school head/principal with at least 10 full time teachers.

Random sampling technique was used. A sampling determination formula was used because of its big population. After determining the sample size, 30 percent was included to determine the teacher-respondents in each school. That is according to Roscoe (1975) in which he proposed the rules of thumb for determining sample size where sample size larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research, and the minimum size of sample should be 30 percent of the population. Schools with big number of population had bigger number of respondents while schools with small population had small number of respondents.

The research instrument used is the NCBTS-TSNA Toolkit. The NCBTS-TSNA Toolkit was answered by the teachers themselves and by the principals to rate the validity of responses of the teachers. This instrument was formulated by the DepEd (2006) to measure the Teacher Strengths and Needs Assessment of the teachers which is composed of 270 items of knowledge, skills, and attitude which capture the competency indicators, strands, and the domains of the national standard in which the teacher is required to respond to every item to determine the level of competency that one holds as an effective teacher in the classroom. It is a self-assessment instrument designed to help the teachers determine strengths as well as needs as an effective school teacher along the national competencies required of a Filipino teacher. It is the determination of the differences between the actual condition and the desired condition in teacher competencies against the national standards of the Department of Education.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With the use of the TSNA Toolkit, the researcher was able to gather the summary of the assessment result of the public elementary school teachers in term of the seven domains of the NCBTS. These domains are social regard for learning, the learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum, planning, assessing and reporting, community linkages and personal growth and professional development.

The social regard for learning domain was measured through the following strands: teacher’s actions demonstrate value for learning; and demonstrates that learning is of different and comes from different sources.

Table 1. Summary of Assessment Results of the Public Elementary in terms of Teaching Competencies

Strands	Mean	Level of Teaching Competence
Social Regard for Learning		
Teachers demonstrate that learning is of different kinds and comes from different sources	4.00	High
Teachers actions demonstrate value for learning	3.67	High
Grand Mean	3.84	High
The Learning Environment		
Communicates higher learning expectations to each learner	4.00	High
Creates an environment that promotes fairness	3.76	High
Makes the classroom environment safe and conducive to learning	3.75	High
Creates a healthy psychological climate for learning	3.10	Satisfactory
Establishes and maintains consistent standards of learners' behavior	2.90	Satisfactory

Grand Mean	3.50	Satisfactory
Diversity of Learners		
Determines, understands and accepts the learners' diverse background knowledge and experience	3.75	High
Grand Mean	3.75	High
Curriculum		
Demonstrates skills in the use of ICT in teaching and learning	3.83	High
Communicates clear learning goals for the lessons that are appropriate for learners	3.75	High
Make good use of allotted instructional time	3.75	High
Promotes purposive study	3.75	High
Selects teaching methods, learning activities and the instructional materials or resources appropriate to the learners and aligned to objectives of the lesson	3.70	High
Demonstrates mastery of the subject	3.62	High
Recognizes general learning processes as well as unique processes of individual learners	3.00	Satisfactory
Mean	3.63	High
Planning, Assessing and Reporting		
Develops and uses a variety of appropriate assessment strategies to monitor and evaluate learning	3.90	High
Develops and utilizes creative and appropriate instructional plan	3.83	High
Monitors regularly and provides feedback on learners' understanding of content	3.75	High
Communicates promptly and clearly to learners, parents and superiors about progress of learners	3.50	Satisfactory
Grand Mean	3.75	High
Planning, Assessing and Reporting		
Develops and uses a variety of appropriate assessment strategies to monitor and evaluate learning	3.90	High
Develops and utilizes creative and appropriate instructional plan	3.83	High
Monitors regularly and provides feedback on learners' understanding of content	3.75	High
Communicates promptly and clearly to learners, parents and superiors about progress of learners	3.50	Satisfactory
Grand Mean	3.75	High
Community Linkages		
Establishes learning environment that respond to the aspiration of the community	4.00	High
Grand Mean	4.00	High
Personal Growth and Professional Development		
Takes pride in the nobility of teachers as a profession	3.75	High
Builds professional links with colleagues to enrich teaching practice	3.50	Satisfactory
Reflects on the extent of the attainment of professional development goals	3.40	Satisfactory
Grand Mean	3.55	High

These findings show that most teachers plan and carry out competency-based education in mind and in practice. They approach instruction and assessment on the perspective that places primary emphasis on identifying and measuring specific learning outcomes or competencies. These findings are similar to the findings of De Torres (2010) that competencies are written as real-life abilities that are required for effective professional practice. Likewise, Catacutan (2011) also found out that school institutions process education from focusing on what academics believe graduates need to know (teacher-focused) to what students need to know and be able to do in varying complex situations – student and/or workplace focused.

In addition, the findings of the study on high teaching competency of the teacher-respondents show that the entire process of teaching learning transaction depend on the efficiency of a teacher, who is in turn able to manifest potentialities of a child into actuality, be accepted with no hesitation. Indeed, teaching and learning process cannot be undertaken in vacuum but it should be a positively directed action. It should be taken as an approach to instruction and assessment that places primary emphasis on identifying and measuring specific learning outcomes or competencies. Unlike general goals, NCBTS competencies are written as real-life abilities that are required for effective professional practice. It moves education from focusing on what educators believe graduates need to know to what students need to know and be able to do in varying situations.

Proposed Action Plan to Address the Needs of the Teachers for Professional Development

As an output of the study, the researcher designed a proposed action plan for public elementary school teachers in the second district of Northern Samar that may assist them to enhance/sustain their competency level. The proposed action plan is focused on the seven (7) domains: 1) Social Regard for Learning; 2) Learning Environment; 3) Diversity of Learners; 4) Curriculum; 5) Planning, Assessing and Reporting; 6) Community Linkages; 7) Personal Growth and Professional Development. The study revealed that the teachers highly need trainings particularly in the social regard for learning, curriculum, planning, assessing and reporting, community linkages, and personal growth and professional development.

Name of Teacher:		Position:	
School:	District:	District:	Region:
Objectives of the Action Plan:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To enhance teaching competencies in social regard for learning that teachers serve as positive and powerful role models of the value in the pursuit of different efforts to learn and teacher’s action, statements, and different types of social interactions with students exemplify this ideal. To enhance teaching competencies in learning environment that focuses on the importance of providing for a social and physical environment within which all students, regardless of their individual differences in learning, can engage the different learning activities and work towards attaining high standards of learning. To enhance teaching competencies in diversity of learners which emphasizes the ideal that teachers can facilitate the learning process in diverse types of learners, by first recognizing and respecting individual differences, then using knowledge about students’ differences to design diverse sets of learning activities to ensure that all students can attain appropriate learning goals. To enhance teaching competencies in planning, assessing and reporting activities to develop and utilize creative and appropriate instructional plan and to develop a variety of appropriate assessment strategy to monitor and evaluate learning. To enhance teaching competencies in personal growth and professional development that emphasizes the ideal that teachers value having a high personal regard, concern for professional development, and continuous improvement as teachers. 			

OBJECTIVES	METHODS/ STRATEGIES	RESOURCES	PERSONS INVOLVED	TIME FRAME	SUCCESS INDICATORS
<i>(What competencies will I enhance?)</i>	<i>(What professional activities will I undertake to achieve my objective?)</i>	<i>(What will I do to access resources?)</i>		<i>(When do I expect to have accomplished the activities?)</i>	<i>(What NCBS competencies would I have enhanced?)</i>
Domain 1: Social Regard for Learning					
A. To demonstrate knowledge that learning is of different kinds and from different sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online study about current classroom management Mentoring / coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet /educational websites Hand-outs 	Teacher, Master Teachers, and School Heads	Quarterly/ Year round (as long as they need it)	Conducted forums and groups discussion to improve classroom management
Domain 2: Learning Environment					
A. To establish and maintain consistent standards of learners’ behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study the rights and responsibilities of the child as embodied in different laws, e.g. RA 7610, PD 603? Counseling 	Printed copy /handouts funded by MOOE/personal expenses	Pupils, parents, teachers, guidance counselor, and school heads	Quarterly/Year round (as needs arises)	Handled behavior problems quickly due respect to children rig
Domain 3: Diversity of Learners					
A. To familiarize one’s self with learners’ background knowledge and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home Visitation Interview the parents Have anecdotal record of the pupils Writing composition Conduct observation, action researches/ case studies on learning styles, multiple intelligence and needs of learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOOE fund Hand-outs/form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers, guidance counselor parents, pupils, and school heads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First quarter – June to September Quarterly within the working school year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enriched knowledge on diversity of learners Acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes in providing learning activities that responds to varied types of learners

Domain 4: Curriculum					
A. To acquire skills in the use of ICT in the teaching learning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend training/ seminars in the proper use of ICT and learn to apply the skills like (power point presentation /film viewing) Ask the guidance and Expertise of ICT teachers/coordinators in the school Regular use of the computer / laptop in school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School funds if available, e.g. MOOE, SEF Laptop Hand-outs 	Teachers, ICT expert and ICT leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on the available time or during class hours three times (3x) a week Daily use of the computer and other gadgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enriched teachers' knowledge on curriculum development Increased competencies in demonstrating skills in the use of ICT in teaching learning Increased learners knowledge about the ICT (Modern Technology)
B. To select teaching methods, learning activities and instructional materials or resources appropriate to the learners and aligned to the objectives of the lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring laptop in the class to view the real features of the topic Be familiar and regular use of computer and other gadgets as part of the teaching learning process 	Computer / laptop	Teachers , ICT expert and ICT leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on the available time or during class hours three times (3x) a week Daily use of the computer and other gadgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected, prepared and utilized instructional materials appropriate to the learners and to the learning goals Used a variety of teaching approaches and techniques appropriate to the subject matter and the learners
Domain 5: Planning, Assessing and Reporting					
A. To develop and utilize creative and appropriate instructional plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend training on instructional planning, assessing, and reporting Continue formal Education (graduate studies) Have face to face training on Division or Cluster level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education al Expert Schools offering graduate program 	Teachers , professor administrators, and division officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer/ Semestral break Saturdays/ Summer Once per Quarter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified the elements and processed of developing an instructional plan Determined appropriate learning objectives, strategies and accompanying materials in the plan Adjusted the instructional plan to ensure attainment of objectives Listed the different teaching learning situations that could affect the Implementation of the instructional plan
B. Develop and use a variety of appropriate assessment strategies to monitor and evaluate learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional reading Make an online study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a research on education al theories Surf the internet on various education al theories 	Teachers, pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During weekends/ vacant time During weekends/ vacant time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constructed valid and reliable formative and summative tests Applied the concepts, principles and strategies of non- traditional assessment Manifested fairness in the interpretation of test results Constructed valid and reliable evaluation tools used appropriate non-traditional assessment techniques
C. Monitor regularly and provide feedback on learners' understanding of content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group studies or learning circles Portfolio Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners' records Hand-outs 	School heads, teachers, parents and pupils	Quarterly (as needs arises)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided timely and accurate feedback Maintained accurate and updated learners' records Provided feedback from learners Showed clear and updated records

D. Communicate promptly and clearly to learners, parents and superiors about progress of learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School level learning communities Portfolio Day 	Learners' records	School heads, teachers, parents and pupils	Quarterly (as needs arises)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented a comprehensive program to report learners' progress to students and parents Established rapport and a cooperative working Reported learners' progress to parents
Domain 6: Community Linkages					
A. To acquire knowledge and skills in providing learning activities that respond to demands of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in community projects Professional Readings on connecting classroom activities to community development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for available NGO project Research in Library LGU center 	Government official, teachers, parents, stakeholders, pupils	Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced competencies in establishing learning environment conducive to Community aspirations Participated in community activities that promote learning Used community resources to support learning
Domain 7: Personal Growth and Professional Development					
A. To take pride in the nobility of teachers as a profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue formal education (graduate studies) Practice the code of ethics for professional teachers Prepare and implement an IPDP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal fund Forms of IPDP 	Teachers, school heads, professional expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saturday/Sunday Semestral break Quarterly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintained stature and behavior that upholds the dignity of teaching Allocated time for personal and professional development through participation in educational seminars and workshops, reading educational materials regularly and engaging educational research in
B. To build professional links with colleagues to enrich teaching practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online and Face-to-face discussion on recent development in education Get involve in professional organizations and other agencies that can improve teaching practice 	Internet	Teachers, professional expert, school heads	During the available time (as needs arises)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kept abreast on recent developments in education Linked with other institutions, organizations for sharing best practices.
Commitment: I am a Professional Teacher; I am responsible for my personal and professional growth. I commit my best to attain the goal and objectives I have set hereunto for my professional development, not only for my benefit but also for my school's improvement and most of all, for my learner's progress.					
Signature:			Date:		
Attested to: _____ Teacher			Date:		
Attested By: _____ School Head			Date:		

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that teachers have high competency in social regard for learning, diversity of learners, curriculum, planning, assessing and reporting, community linkages, and personal growth and professional development. Teachers consider themselves to possess the strength to be successful educators. Most of them have completed already the training and development needs. It can be concluded that most teachers plan and carry out competency-based education in mind and in practice. They

approach instruction and assessment on the perspective that places primary emphasis on identifying and measuring specific learning outcomes or competencies. Finally, after gathering the assessment result of the public elementary teachers rated by them and rated by the school heads'/principals, their strengths and weaknesses were identified. The researcher proposed an action plan that may assist the teachers to sustain and enhance their strengths and make their weaknesses become their strengths.

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