

Competency-Based Secondary Teacher Education Program in Ethiopia: Potential Opportunities and Obstacles¹

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Abstract: Prompted by increased concern about the competence model for teacher-preparation in Ethiopia, this article discussed the then pre-service Secondary Teacher Education Program that makes visible four different components which are required for competence – to outline the level of achievement that the prospective secondary School teachers must reach to fit the Graduate Teacher profiles. The article explored that government’s influence through the auspices of the Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) may lead to a race for standards in which competence statements are employed as an important quality control for aspiring teachers who fit the Graduate Teacher Profiles. However, the article subsequently cautioned that those involved in producing effective teachers should take care in structuring secondary Teacher Education Program that is based on the premise that a competence approach to development and assessing is trouble free. The article further explored the assumption that effective teaching can be ensured simply by isolating particular skills for training, structuring them in a hierarchy that reflects the way that student teachers progress in their ability to teach, and then assessing them using the same schedule of competence statements, must be considered in light of the value-laden nature of teaching. The assumption that competence can be reduced to simple “ticking off” a list of competencies does not confirm that a student is an effective teacher for there are the many influences of contextual factors attending the task of teaching and interpreting its effectiveness. Finally, in drawing a conclusion, the article suggested that in aligning their program with the competence statements contained within the national curriculum, Teacher Education Institutions must not neglect the developmental aspect of the skills that enable student teachers to reach the Graduate Teacher Profiles. Every Teacher Education Institution has to make decisions about the best way to incorporate the statements into their program and assessment of practical teaching.

Keywords: *Competency-Based Education, Secondary Teacher Education Program, Ethiopia*

Introduction

Teacher Education has a vital role to play in Ethiopia’s development. As a nation we are working to achieve pivotal improvement in our education system, but are confronted with many challenges. In trying to address the serious problems present in the education system, the Ethiopian government has called for a complete Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO). In response to a study conducted into “The Quality and Effectiveness of the Teacher Education System in Ethiopia” (MoE, 2002 cited in MoE, 2003), the Ministry of Education has produced a framework detailing strategies for the overhaul. There are currently five Sub-committees engaged in ensuring that the implementation of change occurs successfully: pre-service, in-service, Teacher Education, Selection and the Education System. These

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Committees, through a shared vision, have worked in close collaboration to guarantee the successful transformation of the Ethiopian education system—a paradigm shift. Each guideline document examines one aspect of teacher education, addresses the problems and outlines strategies for the improvement. The documents were accepted by a national consultative conference held at the Ministry of Education in 2003. To dig the problem in depth, the critical analysis focused on the pre-service secondary teacher education program.

In this article, a glimpse at the competency-based secondary teacher education program and the controversies surrounding the issues of competence-based teacher education were explored. The article further explored the opportunities and obstacles in competency-based training and assessment of secondary Teacher Education in Ethiopia. The article then concluded by presenting the specific requirements demanded through competence statements.

A Glimpse at the Competency–Based Secondary Teacher Education Program

TESO is planned and established in 2003 as a nerve center for Teacher Education reform. TESO has worked tremendously to fit a critical gap in the education system. Since its establishment in 2003, the expression “improving quality of education” has appeared as the most frequently used word in the teacher education vernacular. For those in the paradigm shift, the pace of change is rapid. New entrants to the profession are aware of the basic ideas of knowledge and learning introduced in the Education and Training policy of Ethiopia (ETP, 1994) and the more recent policies on rural development and capacity building. The ETP has declared that the major purpose of the education system is the production of good caring citizens who are enterprising problem-solvers, endowed with a belief in democratic principles. To meet this long-term purpose, passive learning is replaced by a commitment to active, learner-focused education. This requires a Teacher Education System to develop higher order thinking skills of prospective graduates.

The Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) are in a central position to make changes and to spread new ideas or to change some of the harmful ones within communities thus, it is within TEIs that a “Paradigm shift” must begin. The need for a paradigm shift within pre-service Teacher Education was demonstrated by a series of research findings (MoE, 2003, p.33). The major findings of the MoE research include:

- The Professional Competence of teachers is deficient
- The content knowledge of teachers is unsatisfactory.
- The teaching skills and techniques are very basic.
- Teachers do not match up to the standards and expectations of their profession.
- There are failures in school management and administration including lack of knowledge of the ETP and proper implementation of the career structure.
- There is a mismatch between Teacher Education and School education.
- There is a lack of professionalism, and ethical values in the Teacher Education Programs.

- The quality of courses and methods of teaching are theoretical and teacher centered.
- The practicum receives inadequate emphasis and is inefficiently implemented at all levels of Teacher Education.
- Student assessment does not adequately identify difficulties and potential in order to enhance students' learning.
- Action research is given little or no attention at all levels of Teacher Education.
- TEIs, Schools and communities have insufficient links between them.

In light of these serious problems present in the education system, the present proposal for the overhaul of the education system has offered a direct challenge to TEIs to redefine their role and to become active agents for change within the classroom, within their communities and ultimately, within the Ethiopian Society. With respect to this objective of Teacher Education program, the graduate teachers will not only be adequately prepared for the classroom, but will also be prepared to contribute to the development of the society.

The Ministry of Education (MoE, 2003, p. 24) has set the following four areas of competencies that secondary school teachers must reach prior to earning the status of an effective teacher. They will guide the nature, organization and management of pre-service program. They will also provide a means of measuring progress towards the paradigm shift. These competencies will serve as a standardized base from which other more experienced teachers can measure their own practice. The four major areas of competence (each of them composed of 5-13 competence statements) are that teachers should be competent in:

- a. subject (s) and the content of teaching
- b. the classroom;
- c. areas relating to the school and the education system
- d. the values, attributes, ethics and abilities essential to professionalism in upholding the professional ethics and producing responsible citizens

In working towards implementing the competence model, the sub-committees have focused on major issues: the practicum (school experience); linking the school, TEI, and local community; professional course and research; academic area and teaching methods; organization of courses; assessment of subject area, professional studies, and the practicum; gender equity; life skills, and civics and ethical education.

The tasks of the pre-service Teacher Education subcommittee include reviewing, rewriting, and assisting in the implementation of the pre-service teaching curricula for secondary school teachers. The pre-service Teacher Education program for secondary school teachers in Ethiopia must address the education and social realities of Ethiopia, giving particular focus to developing the rural community, and creating equity for women. TEIs should use competence statements or standards as a guide to teacher preparation and should strive to be effective learning communities contributing to the social and economic development of society. This inevitably requires a review of the quality of courses, of teaching, and of assessments for

internal and national quality assurance. The subcommittee also agreed that the secondary teacher education program should not exceed three-year duration. This program encompassed the introduction of prospective teachers to the new curriculum in major and minor subject areas, professional courses, practicum, and teaching methods. It is recommended that entry requirements for student teachers should include grade point average, interest, and commitment. Selection criteria must also promote and encourage the admission of female participants and students from rural areas. Candidates would display a consistent performance average of 50 percent or above in a range of subjects over the last 2 years (grades 11 and 12). The average in English and Mathematics must be 50 percent and above.

The ministry of Education (MoE, 2003) further reported that traditionally, in the previous four-year education degree courses in Ethiopia, subject content has been treated as a separate entity, and the practice of teaching and teaching methods have been treated in a theoretical way. This has produced teachers who, although well enough grounded in their individual subject knowledge, are not necessarily good at teaching in schools using active learning methods. From this point of view, the practicum, teaching methods and professional studies (including Educational Psychology, Curriculum Studies, Educational Measurement and Evaluation, Educational Organization and Management, Action Research, Special Needs Education, Information and Communication Technology, and Civics and Ethical Education) have now been prioritized and given sufficient time to enable them to be taught in a way which is in line with current ideas on learning, and which will enable Teacher Education Institutions to fulfill their objectives by producing teachers who fit the Graduate Teacher Profiles. This has created changes in the number of credit hours of subjects within courses to provide students with practical experience, which will be directly useful to them in the classroom (see Appendix B). In a recent wave of changes, priority is given to continual assessment, practical experience, and actual school experience. The following scheme of assessment (Table 1) reflects these priorities.

Table 1

Scheme of Assessment of Subject Area, Professional Studies, and the Practicum

Assessment of subject area and professional studies	Assessment of the practicum
1. Continuous assessment-knowledge, understanding and higher abilities (25%)* -2 or 3 assessment of written activities -Must include 1 or 2 which are not written assignments -Must include some element of group work	1. Continuous assessment – in relation to the competencies (25%). - An aggregate of 2 or 3 assessments - Could include –Microteaching, presentations, written assignments, preparation of materials.
2. Continuous Assessment –practical (25%) -2 or 3 assessments -Must include some element of group work	2. Period of block teaching – In relation to the competencies (50%). - Classroom teaching skills in school situation - An aggregate of 2 or 3 assessments half by TEI educator half by school teachers.
3. Project (25%) -A substantial piece of practical work or action research	3. Portfolio–file all activities and experiences (25%) - An aggregate of 2 or 3 pieces - Must include one major piece of research and any other work (e.g. teaching materials, lesson plans, evaluations, reflection of own teaching, observation). - Must also include a substantial element of self- evaluation
4. Final Examination (25%) -Must include at least one essay or creative writing question.	

*Proportion of attainments expected of a student teacher at different stages during the school placement.

The national curriculum further indicated the various requirements to be performed by the student teacher during the practicum. Areas of assessment in the practicum include: (1) subject knowledge; knowledge of school curriculum, (2) use of resources including textbooks, (3) motivation of students; classroom interaction, (4) classroom management, (5) assessment of students' abilities and needs; feedback to students, (6) planning and record keeping, (7) professionalism, (8) modeling and promotion of good citizenship and behavior, (9) working with colleagues, parents, and the community, and (10) evaluation of own practice and setting targets for development. Student teachers who show extremely high level of ability throughout the practicum will score a grade of "A". Those who show a high level of ability at most times will get a grade "B" student teachers who show a satisfactory level of ability will score a grade of "C" and those who show some ability that might not be consistent will get a grade "D" Typically, student teachers that do not meet minimum requirement of attendance in the program or fail to achieve competencies of the profession will get a grade of "F". This criterion will also be used for the assessment of subject area and professional courses.

Issues in Competence Based Teacher Education

A close examination of standard statements (MoE, 2003) has shown the extent of the task facing Secondary Teacher Education Institutions in preparing student teachers for work in

school and, therefore, the need to be clear first about the underlying questions that guide the acquisition of competencies, and the important issue of whether competencies are discrete or not. Before one can properly evaluate the place of competence statements in student teacher development and assessment, one should first comprehend the underlying questions that guide the acquisition of competences. One could see the root of the argument from the basic tenets of teaching: teaching as a science and teaching as an art. At one extreme of this continuum are those who believe that good teaching is based on a science of instruction whereby teachers learn effective teaching behaviors (e.g. Schulman, 1987 cited in Dawit & Alemayehu, 2001). The behavioral objective model adherents have used this assumption for how teachers can best be educated. At the opposite end of the continuum are those who believe that teaching is a socially constructed activity (Stenhouse, 1977; Eisner 1985; Adelman 1988 all cited in Wood, 1997). These researchers further emphasized that the scientific view oversimplified the intricate situation and regards teaching as quantifiable and uniform in unpredictable and diverse circumstances. Evidence of this kind suggested that competence could be reduced to simple checklists of behavior. Currently, however, the view of teaching is that teaching deviates from any of the two single demarcations and good teaching involves both art and science (Wood, 1997; Dembo, 1994).

Another related issue in teacher education is the debate regarding the best way to educate teachers. Some experts believe that any attempts to quantify and sequence teaching as a predictable step-by-step process are doomed to failure (Costa, 1984; Eisner, 1983). The critics of this approach believe that focusing on the holistic, or total, aspect of teaching is a more effective method of educating teachers. Eisner (1983), for instance, stated that teachers are more like orchestra conductors than technicians. They need rules of thumb and educational imagination, not scientific prescriptions. Similarly, Holliday (1996 cited in Hayes, 1999) emphasized that the belief that the complex and dynamic act of teaching can be categorized into a number of discrete and separately identifiable parts in the form of competence statements is problematic suggesting that no series of statements can allow for the multitude of reaction, interactions, and behaviors typical of every teaching encounter. Hayes (1999) related Holliday's assertion when he considered the sensitivities required in every classroom situation, such as knowing when to insist and when to compromise or when to alter the course of a lesson and when to press on. These skills involve an amalgam of understanding students' needs, as well as the student teachers' personal confidence, subject-matter knowledge, managing and organizing classroom instructions, all of which need to be embedded in the student teacher's framework of educational values.

Finally, in the efforts to be made to evaluate a student teacher's competence, the influence of educational values might easily be overlooked. If efforts to improve a student teacher's teaching skills are considered within a values framework, judgments about their achievements must take close account of the student teacher's lesson planning and delivery, as well as of the level of agreement and trust existing between the school teacher and student teacher, as points of disagreement about educational priorities between the student teacher and school teacher may influence the classroom instruction. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (1997) emphasized that student teacher's achievement of competence depends to some extent

upon the context and attitude of the school teacher or tutor. Reynolds and Salter (1995) invariably highlighted that valid interpretation of a situation requires accurate perception and understanding of relevant data, and therefore, the need to share a common conceptual framework. From this point of view, learning about teaching and how to teach requires a common understanding between the tutor and student teacher, which encompasses values. At this juncture, Hayes (1999) noted that an evaluation of the extent to which students conform to competence statements should take due regard of socio –cultural factors, in particular the degree of congruence existing between the student teacher’s and the school teacher’s values.

The underlying issues that guide the acquisition of competence also raise the question of whether all competencies are equally important or whether some are easier or harder to achieve than others (Department of Education, Northern Ireland, 1993 cited in Hayes, 1999). The Northern Ireland working group emphasized that constructing a developmental program required a fairly high level of descriptive generality and allocate specific statements to more than one phase of a course program. The working group farther emphasized that allocating competence statements based on order of difficulty does not avoid the need to produce lists of teaching attributes that require interpreting in much the same way as any other structure. Similarly, Black and Dockrell (1981) emphasized that in reality it is the exemplars (teaching attributes) rather than the domain specification that become definitive. Additionally there are inevitable differences in what individual student teachers find most challenging about teaching (Hayes, 1999). The variation in categories also raises the question of whether student teachers have to demonstrate a competence once, continually, or continuously to meet the requirements (Brown, 1994 cited in Hayes, 1999). For instance, effective class control is a continuous requirement, whereas participation in school activities is a continual need, and participation in medium term planning happens only once per term.

Any efforts to solve the issues of when and how to introduce to student teachers on a training course, and the construction of a hierarchy of competence acquisition, will need to pay particular close attention to the demands made by practical teaching. Hayes (1999) emphasized that some elements of teaching are so fundamental to effective learning that they have to permeate every fiber of practical teaching; others can be specifically identified and mastered as the need arise.

Although competence statements give us markers for course development and practical teaching, they do not themselves provide the predetermined means by which such goals are achieved or what constitutes appropriate evidence that an acceptable standard has been reached (Black & Dockrell, 1981; Hayes, 1999). They can only offer helpful guidance as ideal types of teaching behavior, but they abandon to clarify what is broadly acceptable and satisfactory (Hayes, 1999). Competence statements should be viewed as a whole to appreciate the creativity, commitment, energy, and enthusiasm which teaching demands and the intellectual and managerial skills of the effective professional rather than a mechanistic device within an inflexible assessment framework (Department or Educational and Employment, 1998 cited in Hayes, 1999).

In sum, one key characteristics of the competency-based teacher education approach is that the knowledge base and skills to be mastered by prospective teachers are specified in advance, usually in behavioral terms. Furthermore, the criteria by which successful mastery is to be measured are made explicit. Performance, rather than the completion of specified courses, is assumed to be the most valid measure of teaching competence. Another important element in this approach is the development of instructional management and evaluation systems to monitor students' mastery of individual competency.

Discussion

The purpose of this article was to explore some of the opportunities and obstacles surrounding the introduction of a competence model in Secondary Teacher Education. The discussion follows along two lines. First, potential opportunities in Competency based training and assessment is discussed. Then of potential obstacles in competency based training and assessment are discussed.

Potential opportunities in Competency-Based Training and Assessment

In trying to address the serious problems present in the education system, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education assumes teachers as critical agents in creating the reform in relation to several broad principles: access, equity, quality, and democracy. As Ebutt and Elliott (1998) pointed out, such principles can provide the opportunity for teachers, teacher educators, and administrators to give them meaning in particular context through practical reflection and deliberation. It is very important that teacher education is treated as the centerpiece of a national educational reform program. In Ethiopia teacher education is seen as the key site for breaking the cycle of inequities that existed in schooling. Much effort is now devoted to creating conditions in the TEIs, where future teachers experience in their education for teaching the same kind of teaching and learning that is envisioned for schools in the country. This situation is in sharp contrast to educational reforms in many other third world countries, where teacher education reform has been treated as an appendage that follows efforts to affect change in schools, not as the leading edge of reform (Samoff, 1998 cited in Zeichner & Lars, 1999). The preparation of teacher educators to be willing and able to prepare teachers in a manner that is consistent with national educational goals has long been a neglected element of educational reform in third world countries (Tatto, 1997; Taylor & Peacock, 1997 both cited in Zeichner & Lars, 1999). In many third world countries behaviorist training approaches have been adopted in teacher education programs to prepare teachers for very limited roles. The Ethiopian teacher education reform is unusual because of its democratic impulse, the intent to develop broad participation in defining and developing its meaning in specific contexts. There is also a situation to fundamentally transform teacher-centered teaching approaches that emphasized repetition and rote memory of received knowledge to one where learners are active participants in the learning process and where the curriculum is relevant to and respectful of different cultural traditions and communities. The learner-centered philosophy encourages teacher to begin instruction by gaining an understanding of

their students' existing knowledge, skills, and understanding and to actively involve them in the learning process toward the goal of preparing citizens for a democratic society.

The Secondary Teacher Education Program is now guided by a constructivist approach. A constructivist approach encompasses the notions that teaching and learning must aim to facilitate the optimal development of its members, that learning and teaching need to promote an active process of exploration and construction of knowledge, and that effective teaching and learning cannot be a one-way process (Donald et al., 1997 cited in Zeichner & Lars, 1999).

A constructivist view will also challenge the belief of many subject area instructors that teaching is transmitting information to student teachers, and by far questions what they are doing. Although it may sound paradoxical, it is common to find instructors who view themselves as chemists, physics, biologists, geographers, historians and the like rather than educator; however, they are there to train teachers how to teach (Dawit & Alemayehu, 2001). The Secondary Teacher Education program is concerned to foster understanding and respect for cultural values and beliefs, social responsibility, and gender awareness and equity. To ensure the competency of potential teachers, the selection criteria need to value both achievement and equity. Moreover, in support of the education reform TESO will advocate the progressive proposal for teacher education such as mentoring programs for beginning teachers and programs to attract more people to the teaching profession.

Another distinctive aspect of the present teacher education reform in Ethiopia is the importance of educating teachers for society, not just for the jobs in schools alone. Student teachers' engagement with action research will help them to better understand methods and practices of research. It is also hoped that this experience will help student teachers to develop methods in active learning and that inquiry and reflection will be for them a dynamic way of being in the classroom (Goodman, 1991 cited in Zeichner & Lars, 1999) and society. Teacher education reform is attempting to bring a core clarity and insight into the discourse of action research, teacher-as researcher, and professional ethics. The emerging teacher education culture should emphasize empowerment of learners, self-discipline and personal responsibility for one's own learning (Ebbutt & Elliott, 1998).

The new paradigm also includes the new practicum. Practicum is one of the most frequently used words in the teacher education reform. The practicum is a key mechanism in fostering and developing reflective practice. It seeks to represent essential features of teaching practice to be learned, while enabling student teachers to experiment at low risk, to vary the pace and focus of the work, and to go back and do things over when necessary (Zeichner & Lars, 1999). The role of teacher educator in this respect is a crucial element in the sureness of the practicum. The new practicum involves high interpersonal intensity. The learning situation, the student teachers' vulnerability, and the behavioral worlds created by teacher educators and student teachers can critically influence learning outcomes. The schoolteachers may also gain skills, knowledge, and understanding from working with the teacher educator. In

coherent professional development, a practicum is a bridge between the worlds of the academy (TEIs) and the classroom.

The priorities for student teachers during their school experience are identified through a number of phases during which the more significant characteristics of practical teaching are highlighted as developmental markers of satisfactory progress. A progressive structure for formative assessment employs the categories of being supported (needing some advice but gaining a degree of independence), semi-independent (maintaining a teaching function without the need for significant intervention from others), or independent (able to cope securely with the full range of teaching demands) as key determinants in monitoring and assessing an individual student teacher's progress. As specified elsewhere in this paper the emphasis on competency approach is applied to virtually many modes of assessment. Moreover continuous assessment is as susceptible to competency-based approach as these forms of examining. It will offer the opportunity to reach concerns of cognitive and affective achievement that other methods cannot easily reach if a wide range of approaches to gathering assessment data is used. Student teachers will be asked to contribute self-evaluation through written reflexive commentaries about their progress as teachers in the form of diaries. Quicke (1996 cited in Hayes, 1999) reminds us that the commentaries are essential to facilitate discussion between the schoolteacher and the student teacher and to focus their energies on clearly defined targets within the boundaries of the key statements for the phase across the whole experience.

In light of which individual competencies are deemed to be harder or easier to achieve, or require less or more ability and experience to master, appropriate aspects of the teaching role are identified for different phases. It is assumed that in the first phase (Practicum I) student teachers will be in the supported phase (see Appendix B). Then, student teachers are expected to spend a period of active observation and research in schools, including observation of students and student behavior. Moreover student teachers are expected to help the teacher by taking easy tasks such as preparation of teaching aids, lesson preparation, and evaluation in each observation. The emphasis for competence is therefore based on issues related to establishing relationship with the students, demonstrating a willingness to get involved with classroom routines as directed by the school teacher and establishing a working alliance with the school teacher. In the second phase (practicum II and III) emphasis is placed on the actual teaching of both minor and major subjects and action research. The second phase emphasizes student teachers' ability to act like teachers rather than students and their skill in taking account of students when planning lessons in conjunction with subject teaching and with teachers in schools. Thus, student teachers are assessed on their abilities to establish a classroom presence, differentiate for learning, and demonstrate awareness of abilities and needs. In the final phase (practicum IV and V) student teachers will develop the expertise and confidence to work independently in difficult issues such as assessing students' progress and providing appropriate feedback, record keeping, classroom management, and working with colleagues, parents, and the community at large. By the end of this phase student teachers will complete and write up their research project.

Since the competence approach in the developmental framework is consistent to what has to be done and achieved in terms of student teachers' learning, it can be used as a basis for course development and practical teaching for teacher development. By basing a developmental program on a hierarchy of competencies, those skills and attributes deemed easier are used as the basis for earlier school placements (when student teachers are less experienced) and the more demanding one when the student teachers have already gained a lot of experience in partner schools. Student teachers will be inducted about the concepts and principles associated with basic competence acquisition in the early stages of their training course. As a result, student teachers may get opportunity to link theory with practice and to develop beginning teaching competence (Ebbutt & Elliott, 1998). Through a combination of tutoring and school experience, student teachers' pedagogical skills will be gradually defined and shaped over the period of training in accordance with the incremental competence model. Student teachers will participate in a range of instructional activities to practice skills learned and to further develop knowledge and competency in teaching and building up of confidence in classroom teaching through continuous practice and interaction with students and fellow teachers. At this stage therefore student teachers are encouraged to look at practice and derive theory, as opposed to theory dictating practice (Ebbutt & Elliott, 1998).

Secondary Teacher Education in Ethiopia has been hampered in the past being taught within a culture where teacher education was not highly valued, but knowledge perceived as academic. Understandably, therefore, the secondary Teacher Education Program's stance to focus on the professional aspects of teacher education is very much appreciated. This may enable prospective teachers to articulate defensible justifications for their educational actions and to take into account the institutional and larger social context of schooling.

Unlike the previous teacher education program, the pedagogical and social aspects of teaching have a much larger portion in the school-based component of study. Secondary Teacher Education Program emphasizes learner-centered, reflective, analytical and productive methods and approaches. It integrates various types of exposure to classroom situations so that theory and practice can be integrated meaningfully for the benefit of the student teacher. It also provides a constructivist perspective on learning and student teachers are expected to experience the types of learning process that they have to facilitate and create for their learners. The courses delivered in the TEIs will become more relevant to the work for which the student teachers are being prepared. Supporting the advantage of competency-based model in teacher-preparation, Hayes (1999) highlighted that an exceptional student teacher could move through all stages during a single school placement; however, student teachers will more likely find that the stages have to be encountered and mastered in each fresh situation and be dealt with more assuredly in successive school placements.

The Ministry of Education emphasized that in education degree courses in Ethiopia subject content has been treated in a separate entity and the practice of teaching and teaching methods have been treated in a theoretical way. Therefore, the government's stance to embrace competency – based training and assessment for teacher training in Ethiopia is Very much in tune with the order of the day. From this point of view, the new paradigm may go far

enough to address the root causes of the problems of Teacher Education in the country. One can find it hard to quarrel with such paradigm shift, even though one can still be obliged to raise some potential obstacles.

Potential Obstacles in Competency-Based Training and Assessment

Some important issues with the implementation of competence model appeared to be:

1. Assessment of a student teacher's competence to gain graduate teacher profiles heavily relies on evidence from a continuous assessment in relation to the teaching experience. For such evidence-based assessments to be valid, they need to be matched against the standardized instrument presented by Teacher Education Institutions in the form of criteria. However, a challenge may emerge from this approach. That is the fragmentation of teaching into component parts (such as Practicum I, Practicum II and III, Practicum IV and V) will inevitably tend toward heavily skills-based course programs in which many of the parts have to be taught and assessed separately, requiring many discrete sets of criteria. This may complicate the issue of consistency between assessors, a concern that grows more urgent as teacher training is put upon school sites and schoolteachers become responsible for assessment. Assessment of the practicum is partly a role to be taken by school teachers, where many of whom are not comfortable with the main mode of the practicum (such as active learning and action research) to train pre-service teachers along the new practicum. Teachers in the existing schools are the ones with their fingers most closely on the pulse of the culture of teacher-centered teaching methods, so there will be a considerable risk that the old approach of teaching practice may come to dominate to the implementation of the new practicum and distort the goal of teaching practice the new practicum has aspired to foster. Thus, unless school teachers' competencies are upgraded to meet the rapid pace of change reflected in the National Curriculum Guideline for Pre-service Teacher Education program, there is no guarantee that the Pre-service Teacher Education Program will produce teachers who fit the Graduate Teacher Profiles. In fact, the process by which these teachers' skills are upgraded to meet the rapid pace of change is a challenge to the government. Analysis of the current picture of the Ethiopian education system, recognized that significantly large amounts of money and other resources have been invested in the education and training of teachers in both colleges and schools. Yet it is abundantly clear that this investment has been largely ineffective in that it has not been matched by any great changes in the classroom practice of most teachers throughout the country (MoE, 2003). Analysis of the current situation further revealed that the introduction of a wide range and variety of government initiatives has been introduced in to schools over the last few years. The practical implications for the teachers in their classrooms of the country have not been thought through and all operations have been chronically under resourced. This has been compounded by spasmodic delivery of irrelevant and hoc training programs from a range of providers with varying degrees of quality of expertise and offering no progression in teachers' professional development (MoE, 2003). The Achievement is far below of what has been expected. Therefore, appropriate measure should be made to bring about change in the education and training of teachers in both colleges and schools to implement the new practicum with minimal effort.

The focus of the program should be on key aspects of the effective educator. That is the teaching approaches should emphasize active, participative learning by means of assignment-based, problem solving, action research and teamwork.

Statistical evidence documented in MoE (2003) shows that at present many teachers working in secondary teachers of Ethiopia are not qualified for the level at which they are teaching. Therefore, special upgrading programs through summer and distance education should be in place. Moreover the courses should be reviewed and revised in correspondence to the revised pre-service curriculum.

2. As the secondary Teacher Education Program specifies, competence levels are achieved through different aggregation of two or three assessments that may include say microteaching, presentations, written assignments, preparation of materials which undermine any single construct of competence. The use of this approach may drive some problems. In many instructional settings the lists of teaching attributes may not be so easy to describe because its constituent elements are not easily identifiable. It should be apparent also that even when the teaching attributes are defined and communicated clearly misinterpretation will occur if the evaluating instruments do not reflect the intended domain well. Additionally, allocating competence statements under each category will be challenged by the problems of whether all competencies are equally important or whether some are easier or harder to achieve than others. Hence, evaluation devices should be constructed to ensure that they measure what they are supposed to measure. TEIs should work together with partner schools to produce lists of teaching attributes and devise assessment criteria for observation and assessment of student teachers based on the demands made by practical teaching.
3. The creation of large numbers of criteria for use by a wide range of individuals in partner schools also demands a recognition that achievement of a competence depends to some extent upon the attitude of the mentors. For example, mentors can give a number of possible interpretations of continuous assessment in relation to monitoring and assessing an individual student teacher's progress in lesson preparation. A schoolteacher who favored the student teacher to have drawn up a list of appropriate questions and interventions as a part of a lesson planning would have a different view from one who gauged effectiveness through the quality of the student teacher's unrehearsed, instinctive reactions to the learning situations. In the same way, a schoolteacher might favor close, collaborative problem solving with minimal schoolteacher presence as a classroom teaching strategy in school situation would have a different view from one who believed that an important element of a student teacher's role was regular intervention (Hayes, 1999). Although student teachers may adapt at modifying their classroom practice to suit a teacher's preferred approach, it is not sufficient to document a competence expectation and assume that it will be interpreted in the same way by everyone in every place as the statement can be made by different teachers and student teachers (Amos & Postlethwaite, 1996; Sparks & Mackay, 1996). Moreover, relations between student teachers and mentors appeared to be troublesome concerns for student teachers. Research evidence (Amos &

Postlethwaite, 1996) suggested that some of the mentors celebrated mistakes at the expense of demonstrated performance. This increased student teacher anxiety and fostered a less relaxed atmosphere not conducive to open reflection and self-assessment. Schoolteachers who are expected to work with student teachers may also often be unaware of what student teachers are exposed to in their university course work and of university expectations for the practicum. Therefore, to minimize this problem, there is a need to involve schoolteachers and mentors more closely in the discussion about formulating and interpreting documentation. Dissemination of information through conferences and Local Education Office, visits to partnership schools and informal discussions with groups of teachers will be necessary if a common value position and interpretation is to be established. However, resource constraints and the speed of change in TEIs can make such initiatives difficult to manage and maintain.

Moreover, the logistics of recruiting and inducting hundreds of teachers in dozens of scattered, distant (in terms of powers to make decisions) schools across a large area to establish consistent pattern of school experience provision for student teachers are daunting. In recent years the external policies and the overall climate have shifted somewhat toward the decentralization of school decision-making and toward fewer controls on how teachers teach. Schools may not be obliged to accept student teachers. School teachers who worked with student teachers assumed the role of teacher educator with minimal preparation and in addition to their full-time responsibilities for teaching students. In the Ethiopian context, very little or no provisions whatsoever have been made in the structures of teachers' jobs for their work as teacher educators. This is a situation that must change. TEIs and Regional Educational Bureaus should work together to develop and deliver the continuing professional development for teachers. Links between TEIs and school should be developed to understand more about the nature of schools and school teaching. In Ethiopia, Regional Bureaus administer and maintain both primary and secondary school. Therefore, the involvement of Regional Education Bureaus to facilitate and support the process may prove to be the realistic means of implementing the new practicum.

4. The National Curriculum Guideline for Pre-service Teacher Education Program showed the extensive range of duties and responsibilities facing Teacher Education Institutions, schoolteachers, and tutors in preparing student teachers who fit the Graduate Teacher Profiles (see Appendix A).

As pointed out earlier, the Preparation of student teachers should be directed towards the acquisition of practical teaching skills rather than the theory of teaching. The influence of TESO is reflected in the increased amount of time that student teachers now spend in partner schools and the closer partnerships between Teacher Education Institutions and partner schools. For the practicum to be effective, the TEIs need to establish partnerships with schools in both urban and rural areas, organize transport to and from partner schools, and ensure enough resource materials, textbooks, and teacher guides for the practicum. The closer partnership between schools and TEIs will also necessitate the institutions

divert resources to the task of providing accurate documentation to schools about the supervision of student teachers, and updating for the teachers responsible for student teachers in their schools to ensure that they are familiar with increasingly specific national requirements for the achievement of Graduate Teacher Profiles. Undoubtedly, the responsibilities of TEIs emerged to be more complex and cumbersome. They will face problems both with greater demands on their time for the teaching and the supervision of student teachers in schools having less time for scholarly pursuits, including research to their teacher education program. Under such conditions, it will be difficult to engage TEIs in teacher education program development efforts. These problems may be emerged as serious structural impediments to enhance the quality of teacher education program.

The problem may appear serious according to the university environments in which TEIs are located. It is no secret that teacher education program is low-prestige endeavor in most of the institutions of higher education that offer teacher education options to their students. In Ethiopia, except in some institutions having teacher education program, teachers spend the bulk of their time in preparation for teaching with social science and natural science faculty that may be affiliated primarily with their discipline and not with teacher education. In this regard, science faculty offers subject area courses whereas education faculty delivers professional courses, including teaching methods. This practice fragments the course program, and may pose serious problems to effective professional development of teachers.

As to the duties and responsibilities of schoolteachers assigned to the practicum, they are expected to monitor, evaluate and practically support student teachers throughout the year, and give oral and written feedback within a day of observation. However it is difficult for all those teachers involved in the practicum to provide support and guidance to allow student teachers develop and achieve the extensive range of areas of competencies contained within the National Curriculum Guideline for the Pre-service Teacher Education program. The problem may be emerged serious according to the alarmed shortage of school teachers in some subject areas, the larger number of student teachers assigned to the schoolteachers and institution tutors, the amount of time schoolteacher spend on giving support and guidance, and the amount of support student teachers need. Some other conditions in schools can also made it difficult to fulfill the requirements of the new practicum, and these include heavy teaching load (sometimes amounting to 30 periods a week) and limited facilities. However, such constraints should be considered together with other limiting factors, such as insufficient motivation and the scarcity of in-service training that could enable teachers develop greater competence and self confidence in teaching and action research that are directly relevant to the success of the teaching practice.

Another important factor related to the problem is the rise in the cost of living (see Befekadu & Birhanu, 2000 for the review). To reduce this problem some teachers try to supplement their income by teaching evening classes, or giving tutorials for fee-paying students on weekends. This may detract teachers from their duty to support the implementation of the teaching practice (Darge, 2002). Darge (2002) further emphasized

what is more about the cost of living is that when the personal and basic interests of teachers (such as salary) are markedly frustrated, their concerns for essential professional ingredients become marginalized. Thus the secondary teacher education course program contained within the national curriculum deemed heavy on expectations of the profiles of a newly qualified teacher but light on the means to achieve them. Hayes (1999, p.28) explained the iceberg of the problem in humanistic term: “just as it would be wrong to send the infantry into battle with weapons that they had not been taught to use, so it would be inappropriate to give undue weight to the competencies without spending and equivalent time, at least, on the skills necessary to achieve them.”

The important way forwarded to Teacher Education institutions in creating their own developmental program out of these extensive range of competence statements may be to learn more about students’ existing abilities and potential when they commence their teacher training course (Harrison, 1995). Selection for courses in teacher education program should be based on an assessment of students’ motivation and their potential for fulfilling the Graduate Teacher Profiles. So that the corresponding continual support and guidance offered to each student teacher by a tutor from the TEIs and from a teacher at the partner school may emerge to be technically less demanding to help a student teacher acquire the skills he or she needs to meet the standards of the Graduate Teacher profiles. Moreover, serious consideration needs to be given to teachers’ salary and their workload in order to enable the roles to be properly fulfilled. There should be more frequent short-term professional training coupled with promotion. For effective professional development of teachers, faculties of education within the universities should have their own teacher education program that offers all the required courses producing effective teachers for the job in schools. There must be a clear career structure both for school and TEI staff to ensure their retention once inducted and educated into their new roles.

5. The use of attainments to define competence also fragments the course program. Those outcomes that involve the integration of a variety of skills and understanding are likely to be undervalued and ignored in the assessment process. For instance, a competence, such as the first phase’s (Practicum I) goal of establishing comfortable relationship with students and staff may be tracked across the whole experience. Skills employed in development of satisfactory working rapport with students and staff may not readily fall into one phase. It is perhaps only toward the end of student teachers’ school placement that they are able to securely establish a satisfactory working rapport with students. This problem may bring a strong argument against over specification of competencies to more precise phases. Hayes (1999, pp.18-19) supported this anticipation:

In practice the interdependence of different teaching skills and aspects of professional life used to characterize the various phases did not allow for a simplistic separation of the component parts in the precise way.....The phases were principally a way of facilitating dialogue and encouraging student teachers to spend their time in close consideration of key elements of their teaching. Naturally, it was anticipated that those statements associated with the first phase would be more advanced by the end of the

school placement than those in the final phase, and generally this proved to be the case. However, the attempt to sharpen the focus proved easier to propose than to monitor.

It became apparent that staging of competence is difficult to construct, not only because the interdependence of different teaching skills and aspects of professional life used to characterize the various phases may not allow for a simplistic separation of the component parts in the precise way. It is also difficult to know how much should be expected of a student teacher at different stages during the school placement. For instance, at the end of the process, some student teachers will have excelled and others will have squeezed through. Some student teachers will move swiftly through the early stages and make relatively little further progress; still some others will start slowly, yet accelerate in the later stages to a higher point of proficiency than those who were formerly ahead (Hayes, 1999). Therefore, there is no guarantee that students will develop their expertise in a linear, problem-free manner, and variations are commonplace. The assumption about the empirical validity of “knowledge base” upon which this program rested is therefore in trouble. Even advocates of the approach were careful to admit that they had not yet attained the goal of empirically validated teaching competencies. They hoped, however, that increased commitment to the approach from the profession and from those who support the necessary research would eventually yield such knowledge. Therefore in making decisions about the use of competence statements, those involved in preparing students for the job in school should remind themselves that the competence statements set in the national curriculum are not the Ten Commandments. Further research work should be carried out to understand the developmental process involved in learning to teach.

6. As pointed out earlier, the Practicum, Teaching Methods, and Professional studies have now been prioritized and given sufficient time to enable them to be taught in a way, which will enable Teacher Education Institutions to fulfill their objectives by producing teachers who fit the Graduate Teacher profiles. This has created changes in the balance of the subjects within courses. According to the national curriculum this change is understood in terms of the need to provide students with practical experience, which will be directly useful to them in the classroom. However, this assumption was challenged by subject area instructors. The ministry of Education made an effort to hold meetings with higher education instructors in an attempt to develop the details of minor and major courses, professional courses, and Civic and Ethical Education courses. The writer of this paper recalled that higher education instructors challenged the prospect of Secondary Teacher Education program suggesting that the main emphasis of the program is on the practicum and Teaching Methods, that are useful to produce teachers who, although well-grounded in the practice of teaching and teaching methods, may not necessarily be good in their subject knowledge. The changes that made in the balance of subjects were nonnegotiable. Higher education teachers were also hampered not to exceed a certain number of credits for the three-year duration. Thus it will not be hard to imagine the impact and implications this would have towards the program. It is unwise to expect higher education subject area specialists to be committed to this program that they doubt to have merit in enhancing the teaching competence. The beliefs and training of these subject specialists do not only

affect their practice, but also student teachers understanding and conceptions of teaching a certain subject (Brickhouse, 1990). Instructors' practice in carrying out courses related to the development of competence is further mediated by teachers' values (Gudmundsdottir, 1990) and knows how to teach courses in line with intended purposes. Hence, the changes that made in the balance of subjects (in our case the number of total credit hours in major and minor courses) should be approved and accepted by subject area instructors as well as prospective teachers.

The process of formulating the National Curriculum Guideline for pre-service Teacher Education program is entrusted to a group of educators. They were organized into five sub-committees constitution about 25 members (6 of them were drawn from institute for curriculum Development and Research, 7 from Ministry Education, 9 from voluntary service overseas, 1 from United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the rest from Education Media Agency). Besides, there were representatives from regional Education Bureaus and teacher Education institutions, including Faculties of Education who participated in the consultation process.

Practitioners (higher education teachers) within a field are missing from the list of the five subcommittees. They are expected to act as a reminder that their most valuable role might be to act as an honest broker among standards, or competence statements emerged from TESO's sub-committees rather than as another vested interest. In our opinion, durable guideline for Teacher Education program may not come only from those charged with the technical task of generating working definitions. Attempts to introduce competence statements or standards should be compromised to the judgments of practitioners within a field. Those who directly practice a profession may be identified as the group most likely to be able to define the nature of competent behavior. Criteria for educating teachers could be derived from the opinions of the community of professional teachers. It may need of course careful attention to decide whether such practitioners (professionals) really are in a position to determine criteria appropriate for the majority of teacher education, who will not become professional scientists.

Finally, the competence statements contained within the national curriculum will provide an opportunity to enhance the partnership between TEIs and schools if the responsibility can be appropriately located and monitored. The quality of the partnership arrangements will form a major component of the criteria to be used by inspectors to judge the effectiveness of TEIs. Fiddler and McCullough (cited in Hayes, 1999, p. 26) suggested that it would be folly to anticipate "a simplistic mode of training where it is easy to determine who does what and where. "The establishment of a national curriculum and the imperative for partner schools to play a central role in training student teachers may raise the prospect that consistency of practice involving the ability to demonstrate something, rather than the ability to maintain progress on one occasion to satisfy national scrutiny must be considered as one of the key qualities looked for in every teaching situations. Huberman (cited in Hayes, 1999, p. 26) invariably highlighted that the competence statements governing teacher education may tempt us to put effort into "creating platonic forms and structures

which satisfy external scrutiny and inspection, and less into a realistic evaluation of the way in which teaching abilities are gained and implemented.” Therefore, the future security of TEIs that are judged to be noncompliant is in jeopardy. Hayes (1999) emphasized that from an epistemological perspective, such temptations should be resisted. From a pragmatic perspective, however, external scrutiny and quality assurance inspection are endemic and irresistible. Hence for the pragmatic application of competency-based teacher preparation, a functional analysis of the behavior or the way in which teaching abilities are gained and implemented seems sufficient. Therefore, a system of internal and national quality assurance that will ensure parity between teacher education institutions should offer a disclaimer to the charge that standards are intended to be viewed as a mechanistic device since the specified controversies of the process of learning to teach remain. Like many other forms of learning progress, learning to be a teacher does not follow a predictable and seamless course. Thus quality assurance mechanisms involving the capability evidence to meet the national and internal requirements should be considered as an integral part of criteria for the assessment of the education system. Capability is a term used to cover evidence of professional competence, which is not assumed to be properly described as performance evidence. Professional training is concerned to create a person who is, at least, safe to practice. They may not yet be a competent practitioner, but capability evidence can offer the evidence that they become so (Eraut, 1993 cited in Rolls, 1997). Hayes (1999) supported this explanation. Referring to the progress in learning to be a teacher, Hayes (1999, p. 24) stated:

It is more akin to the incoming waves that break on the shore, sometimes moving forward relentlessly, sometimes finishing so far back that a casual onlooker it appears that the tide has turned. The competence that seems to be within reach one moment proves to be elusive the next and the required standard remain unachieved. It raises the prospect that consistency of practices involving the ability to maintain progress, rather than the ability to demonstrate something on one occasion to satisfy external scrutiny ought to be considered as one of the key qualities looked for in every teaching situations.

The idea behind Haye’s assumption is that teacher education institutions have to take account of the problems that accompany the process of learning to teach and the need to allow for some flexibility of interpretation. The competence statements governing TEIs should be consistent to what has to be done and achieved in terms of successful student learning. A great emphasis on competency-based approach can improve the quality of teaching and learning, the quality of diagnostic information available, and the standards of attainment if introduced flexibly without over specification of attainment levels.

Concluding remarks

The most important points emerged from this analysis revealed that the Ethiopian government influences through the auspices of TESO may lead to a race for standards in which competence statements are employed as an important quality control for aspiring

newly qualified teachers who fit the Graduate Teacher Profiles. TESO reflects the government's intention that the preparation of student teachers should be directed towards the acquisition of practical teaching skills rather than the theory of teaching. The influence of TESO is reflected in the increased amount of time that student teachers now spend in partner schools and the closer partnerships between TEIs and partner schools. The increased length of time in partner schools reflects the government's belief that student teachers benefit from greater exposure to the partner school environment where they can experience the full range of responsibilities and learn classroom-teaching skills from school teachers. Closer partnerships between partner schools and TEIs will allow schoolteachers to be engaged in the training of student teachers. This may necessitate Teacher Education Institutions diverting resources to the task of providing accurate documentation to partner schools about the evaluation of student teachers, and updating for the teachers responsible for student teachers in their schools. TEIs must also cope with the probable differing interpretations of terms by schoolteachers and student teachers, as well as the variations in teaching priorities due to placement. It is also essential that the competency approach to teacher preparation must be effectively assessed and monitored, well focused, systematic, and well supported to address the serious problems identified in the teacher education. Teacher education institutions' responses in dealing with these problems have to be considered alongside the need for compliance with the demands made in the national curriculum. Taken together, the innovations presented in the national curriculum may provide the foundation for high quality in Secondary Teacher Education in Ethiopia.

In a recent wave of changes, a competency approach to monitoring standards of achievement is applied to teacher training institutions. The national curriculum introduced four different components, which are required for competence to be reached by student teachers prior to earning effective teacher status. However, TEIs should take care in structuring programs that are based on the assumption that a competence approach to development and assessment is trouble free. The belief that the complex and dynamic act of teaching can be deconstructed into a number of discrete and separately identifiable parts in the form of competence statements is problematic. Since student teachers' observable teaching behavior cannot easily be articulated or translated into a single statement, then the assumption that effective teaching can be ensured, simply by isolating particular skills for training purposes, structuring them in a systematic way, and then assessing them using the same schedule of competence statements or standards must be considered within a value framework of teaching. The assumption that competence can be reduced to simple "checklists" of behavior, as everything is mutually dependent, does not necessarily confirm that a student teacher is an effective teacher for there are the many influences and constraints attending the task of teaching and interpreting its effectiveness. The use of competence statements on its own is not sufficient to service the needs for information to aid decision-making on student teachers' attainment of competence due to the influence of educational values, in particular the degree of congruence existing between the student teacher's and the schoolteacher's values.

The critical analysis suggested that the use of competence statements does not offer a panacea for secondary school teacher training and development, but neither should it be dismissed as

irrelevant. The use of competence statement has the special value that it forces systematic consideration or purpose in a more focused way on the developmental aspect of skills that enable student teachers to reach the competencies. For this reason alone, the use of competence statements for teacher training and development is worth encouraging. If competence statements are used as a basis for informed discussion and reflection upon classroom practice between student teachers, tutors, and schoolteachers, they will fulfill an important function in the preparation of teachers who fit the Graduate Teacher Profiles. Perhaps steps like this, which other countries seem to use successfully, can also be effective in Ethiopia. Competence statements will act as obstacles if they are systematized and structured to such an extent that they begin to resemble a marine assault course instead of a purposeful journey in the preparation of teachers for the job in Ethiopian secondary schools. As a result, unlike the assumptions proposed in the National Curriculum Guideline for pre-service Teacher Education, the preparation of secondary school teachers will become miserably rigid towards the realities of classroom life, and an impediment to creative teaching.

Finally, it is worth noting that given the specified potential opportunities and obstacles in the competency-based training and assessment of secondary teacher education in Ethiopia TEIs will be caught in a dilemma of professional practice. On the one hand they need to shape and direct student teachers as they gain appropriate teaching expertise by specifying developmental markers; on the other hand they have to take account of the potential obstacles that accompany the process of learning to teach. Competency approach for teacher preparation requires considerable time and effort expenditures for successful adoption, and unless it is given adequate support and attention and is well integrated into the teacher education system, it may fail or not live up to expectations. The results of such practices will have severe repercussions on the schools on learning and teaching methods, and on the teachers' role in the local communities and within the Ethiopian society.

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Appendix A

Teacher education institutions, teacher educators, and schoolteachers' duties and responsibilities in the practicum

1. Teacher Education Institutions' duties and responsibilities

- Set up links with as many partner schools as possible.
- Organize a timetable with partner schools that ensures every student has the correct amount of actual school experience and has experience of all grade levels and subjects.
- Organize transport (where necessary) to and from partner schools.
- Create assessment criteria for observation and assessment of student teachers.
- Monitor and evaluate the commitment of partner schools.
- Support partner schools throughout the course
- Ensure that every student is assigned to a teacher educator who will give support partner schools throughout the course
- Monitor and evaluate the commitment of teacher educators
- Ensure enough resource materials, textbooks, and teacher guides for the practicum and that student teachers have access to them.
- Allocate sufficient funds from the budget to cover all the necessary expenses of the practicum.
- Wherever possible establish partnerships with schools in rural areas.

2. Teacher Educators' duties and responsibilities

- Prepare student teachers for actual school experience
- Monitor, evaluate and practically support student teachers throughout the course.
- Assess students' performance
- Give oral feedback and written feedback within a day of observation.

3. Schoolteachers' duties and responsibilities

- Monitor, evaluate, and practically support student teachers throughout the year.
- Assess students' performance
- Give oral feedback and written feedback within a day of observation
- Encourage student teachers to become actively involved in their lessons (helping to plan lessons, working with small groups etc.).

Appendix B

Summary of graduation requirements for the three-year duration*

Course categories	Credit Hours	Comments
Major subject	30	at least 30% of course must cover the school syllabus and/or textbook
Minor subject	18	at least 30% of course must cover the school syllabus and/or textbook
Practicum I (observation)	2	After preparation and with support, students will be required to spend a period of active observation and research in schools, including the following: observation of students and student behavior; observation of school environment including libraries, facilities, school compound etc, observation of classroom activities while major and minor subjects are taught; observation of extracurricular activities. In addition to the actual observation trainees are expected to help the teacher by taking easy tasks such as preparation of teaching aids, lesson preparation, evaluation etc. in each observation. A reflection on the observations is also necessary once in a month. The trainees should keep an observation diary, which will be a basis for their report and action research.
Practicum II and III	10	Focuses on the actual teaching of both major and minor subjects and major research work on an individual basis. The focus of the course is as follows: Practicum II (2 cr. hrs): It focuses on weekly school visits to practice basic teaching skills and teaching with real students either supporting the teacher in the classroom and team-teaching or withdrawing small groups from the classroom. They begin their research projects during this time to be completed during Practicum V. Practicum III (8 cr. hrs): a block of 6 weeks teaching in real schools setting. Planning and preparation will be undertaken in conjunction with subject teaching, and with teachers in schools, before students begin a gradually increasing workload. These courses must be placed early enough for time to be spent afterwards on reflection and evaluation with peers and with teachers
Practicum IV and V	13	Practicum IV (9 cr. hrs): a block of 8 weeks teaching in a school setting which gives the students to put into practice all they have learnt and to explore their own teaching methods and develop teaching skills. By the end of this time the students should be confident to teach a full-time table and undertake all the administrative and pastoral responsibilities of a permanent teacher. Practicum V (4 cr. hrs): student will complete and write up their research project.

*Professional courses have 35 credit hours. Then the total credit hour for graduation is 108.