



Competencies of Public Elementary School Teachers in the Second District of Northern Samar, Philippines

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Abstract. This study determined the competencies of the public elementary school teachers in the second district of Northern Samar based on the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS) along 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 teachers consider themselves to have high competency and they possess the strength to be successful educators. Most of them have completed the training and development needs. As regards social regard for learning, finding showed that teachers have competencies in demonstrating value for learning and that it is of different kinds and from different sources. The satisfactory rating of school heads on the competency of teachers implies that teachers are satisfying the basic competencies required in the NCBTS.

Keywords: Elementary Teachers, Northern Samar, Competencies, NCBTS

I. INTRODUCTION

The problem of whether or not teachers will be hired, retained, promoted, suspended, or fired existed for so long already. To solve this, the Department of Education introduced a framework for competency – based standards for teachers. This framework is known as the National Competency – Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS), one of the basic elements/thrust of the Basic Reform Agenda (BESRA) of the Department of Education. NCBTS 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. In other words, the NCBTS can cue the teacher about what he should be doing, in case he finds his current practices less ideal. This can help each Filipino teacher become a better teacher, and assist each teacher to continuously think about improving professionally to become better facilitators of student learning. And with the NCBTS, all 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. Among the relevant components of the reform agenda to teachers and professional educators is the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS). 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).

Catacutan (2011) conducted a study on “Competencies among Elementary School Teachers of Tarlac West Based on NCBTS.” This study revealed that indicators in the four (4) domains (1, 2, 3 and 5) assessed the teachers to be strong or expert. Other indicators in the four (4) domains (1, 2, 3 and 4) identified the teachers weak/developing. After identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers the researcher designed professional development program to assist the teachers in the said district. The current study is certainly similar to this study for finding teachers’ strengths and weaknesses then propose a plan to assist the teachers’ weaknesses.

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

Northern Samar is divided into two congressional districts, namely: First and Second Legislative Districts. The study was conducted in the second district of Northern Samar specifically in public elementary schools for a reason that the researcher wanted to find out how competent the teachers are in the Second District of Northern Samar. The municipalities of the Second District are the following: Catubig, Gamay, Lao-ang, Lapinig, Las Navas, Mapanas, Palapag, Pambujan, San Roque and Silvino. All of these municipalities maintain elementary schools within the town proper or outside in the barangays.

The study focused on the central school of every municipality namely: 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.

Social Regard for Learning

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 shows that the assessment results of all the teachers are on the high index level with respective means of 3.67 and 4.00. In summary for the social regard for learning domain, it shows that the grand mean is 3.84. This means that the elementary teachers as a whole have the competencies at high levels for effective teaching. Their strengths have to be sustained and can support other teacher's improvement.

In this domain, teachers should be role model in all aspects. They should focus on the ideal that teachers as positive and powerful role models of the values, and that the teachers' actions, statements, and different types of social interactions with students exemplify this ideal. They are the implementers of all existing guidelines and procedures in the school. In other words, they acted as a positive role model for students.

Table 1. Summary of Assessment Results of the Public Elementary School Teachers as to Social Regard for Learning Domain

Strands	Mean	Level of Teaching Competence
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

As regards learning environment, the respondents were asked on what level they were on the following strands: teacher creates an environment that promotes fairness; make the classroom environment safe and conducive to learning; communicates higher learning expectations to each learner; establishes and maintains consistent standards of learner's behavior; and creates a healthy psychological climate for learning.

Table 2 shows that the grand mean was 3.50 suggesting satisfactory level of competency of the teachers. This means that the respondents are competent and would benefit from further training and development. In the teaching-learning process, it is important for the teachers to provide social, psychological 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.

Table 2. Summary of Assessment Results of the Public Elementary School Teachers as to Learning Environment

Strands	Mean	Level of Teaching Competence
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

Teachers in this study also considered the diversity of learners. This domain was measured as to what level the teachers perform, these strand of: determines, understands and accepts the learners' diverse background knowledge and experience.

Table 3 shows that the respondents assessed to be on the high index level of competency. This means that majority of the competencies assessed the teachers to be on the high or experienced level with a grand mean of 3.75.

The high level of competency as to diversity of learners suggested that teachers know that students have different abilities and styles. They can adjust in order to facilitate learning among diversity of learners. There known that there are an approach or strategies which may be applicable to some learners but not suited to others, that is why they use different kinds of approaches to facilitate learning. They also respect the socio-economic background of the learners.

Table 3. Summary of Assessment Results of the Public Elementary School Teachers as to Diversity of Learners

Strands	Mean	Level of Teaching Competence
Determines, understands and accepts the learners' diverse background knowledge and experience	3.75	High
Grand Mean	3.75	High

Curriculum

As to curriculum, the strands that assessed the level of competency of the teachers are the following: demonstrates mastery of the subject; communicate clear learning goals for the lessons that are appropriate for learners; make good use of allotted instructional time; select teaching methods, learning activities and the instructional materials or resources appropriate to the learner and aligned to objectives of the lesson; recognize general learning processes as well as unique processes of individual learners; promotes purposive study; and demonstrate skills in the use of ICT in teaching and learning.

Table 4 shows that there is one strand that recognizes general learning process as well as unique process of individual learners with a mean of 3.00 that assesses the teachers to be on the satisfactory level. All the other strands assessed the teachers to be on the high index level. This reveals that the respondents had majority of the competencies at high level for effective teaching and these strands were enhanced. Likewise, their training and professional needs were addressed. In general, the respondents were assessed to be on the high index level with a grand mean of 3.63. This means that the teachers are competent in the KSA and can support other teacher's improvement.

Table 4. Summary of Assessment Results of the Public Elementary School Teachers as to Curriculum

Strands	Mean	Level of Teaching Competence
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

In terms of planning, assessing and reporting, the respondents were asked as to what level they develop and utilize creative and appropriate instructional plan; develop and use a variety of appropriate assessment strategies to monitor and evaluate learning; monitor regularly and provide feedback on learners' understanding of content; communicate promptly and clearly to learners, parents and superiors about progress of learners.

The table 5 shows that the teachers are on the high competency level with a grand mean of 3.75. This is an indication that the teachers develop and use variety of assessment strategies to monitor and evaluate the students. They have developed and utilized creative and appropriate instructional plan suited to their students.

Table 5.Summary of Assessment Results of the Public Elementary School Teachers as to Planning, Assessing and Reporting

Strands	Mean	Level of Teaching Competence
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

In terms of community linkages, the teachers are determined through what level do they establish learning environment that respond to the aspiration of the community.

It can be gleaned from the table 6 that all indicators assessed the teachers to be on the high level of competency with a grand mean of 4.00. This means that they established learning environment that responded to the aspiration of the parents, local government, and other stakeholders in the community. Yet, these indicators have to be sustained and enhanced.

Table 6.Summary of Assessment Results of the Public Elementary School Teachers as to Community Linkages

Strands	Mean	Level of Teaching Competence
Establishes learning environment that respond to the aspiration of the community	4.00	High
Grand Mean	4.00	High

Personal Growth and Professional Development

Lastly, personal growth and professional development of the teachers were asked on what level they take pride in the nobility of teachers as a profession; build professional links with colleagues to enrich teaching practice; and reflect on the extent of the attainment of professional development goals.

The table 7 reveals that teachers rated to be on high level of competency with a grand mean of 3.55. This means that majority of the competencies were at high levels for effective teaching. These strengths were enhanced; training and professional development needs to be addressed.

Table 7. Summary of Assessment Results of the Public Elementary School Teachers as to Personal Growth and Professional Development

Strands	Mean	Level of Teaching Competence
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.

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.

V. REFERENCES

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