Training needs of primary school teachers in the field of teaching according to the competency approach

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Abstract: The elements and components of the educational system constitute an integrated, overlapping and interactive system, if any change occurred in one element of this system, it would necessarily cause a change at the level of the other components. The teacher is one of these components, but rather he is the corner stone of the educational process and a key component for a high quality education, consequently the success of the implementation of the competency-based depends on an effective teacher-training program that meets the requirements of this approach.
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I- Introduction :

The task of improving education and learning is a priority for many developed and developing countries alike. This decisive action can really contribute to the actualization of the expected goals set by these countries to shape their future. The teacher is one of the most important factors that help achieve the desired educational development, which leads to the prosperity of the whole society.

The role of the teacher in any educational system depends on a set of interrelated factors that constitute the frame of reference for the concept of the educational process. In spite of the diversification of the concepts, the role of the teacher remains undoubtedly a decisive factor in the success or failure of the educational process،

And this is due to the fact that the teacher's task is no longer a mechanical process limited to transferring knowledge to learners only, but rather it represents an effective tool in developing learners' cognitive, social, and physical abilities and shaping their personalities.

Because of the development of education and the increasing importance of the school and the permanent evolution of its role within the society. This society is required now more than ever to provide effective and highly qualified teachers, and it is required to give major importance to the teacher as a vital factor in the success of the educational process and its competencies in achieving the desired goals. Thus, more care should be taken when selecting, preparing, and training teachers.

Many countries have rushed to modernize their curricula to meet education-growing needs, and competency –based approach was one of the reforms that received great approval, as it complemented the objectives –based approach.

Algeria has sought to adopt the competency-based approach in its educational curricula, where the importance lies in providing our students with the appropriate competencies to be used for the benefit of the society and to adapt and face the different life situations successfully using higher level cognitive processes such as thinking critically , analyzing, interpreting, predicting, making decisions, organizing and finding multiple solutions to the same problem.

Therefore, the decision of adopting of any approach should be anticipated by careful planning, and the provision of all the elements and conditions required the success of this approach, such as the provision of educational aids and teaching methods and the adaptation of curricula and assessment aids. Moreover, more importance should be reserved to the teacher, who is considered as a corner stone of the educational process, in order to ensure the success of this approach through Providing the training opportunities that allow them to improve their teaching performance.

This training should be based on teachers training needs in the field of teaching with a competency-based approach

1) Research problem:

In order to create a coherent and successful educational system that get on with the current and future challenges and expectations to meet the scientific and technological requirements, the competency-based approach was one of the most effective pedagogies favored by the Ministry of National Education. Accordingly, new curricula were developed and then formally applied throughout the educational institutions in the school year 2004/2003.The new curricula go beyond the boundaries of informational aspect development of the learners' personality to higher-level skills in order to ensure their adaptation to the different social contexts. The realization of this objective is based on the development of learner's minimum competencies through the learning and teaching process.

It is natural that any reform process, especially in the educational field, is not a simple task, but rather it requires careful planning of the various components of the educational system. It also requires diagnostic studies of the components of the educational system and its various needs to create the favorable circumstances that ensure the success of adopting any educational project to the greatest extent.

The different components of the educational system constitute an interrelated and interactive system, so that any change in one of the elements would necessarily cause a change at the level of the other components. The teacher who is key factor of these components who ensures the success of the application of this approach (competency –based teaching). To boost teacher's roles they should receive an effective training regarding the application of this approach.

This paper came to shed some light on the most important training needs of the primary school teacher in the field of teaching according to the competency-based approach by answering the following research question:

What are the primary school teachers training needs regarding the competency-based approach? In the following domains:

-Lesson planning.

-Execution of the lesson.

-Evaluation.

2.Training needs:

The lack of an accurate identification and measurement of the teacher training needs in an objective way may threaten the reliability of the development of the training programs .And the training needs can be defined as follows:

2-1-The concept of training need:

A - Linguistic definition of need: Need is defined linguistically as: "A lack and deficiency, and need means failure to reach the desired goal, and need is what it requires, a thing to make up the deficiency." (Mohy Al-Din Al-Zubaidi, 1965, p. 25)

b - Conceptual Definition:

Training needs are the set of changes required to be made in the individuals' current level of competency, knowledge, experiences, performance, behavior and attitudes to fit the job requirements and perform at the highest level in his position. (Hassan Al-Taani, 2002, p. 29).

Another definition stated that training needs are the size of the gap between the individuals' current level of performance (in terms of quantity and quality) and the required performance standard,measures,objectives ,and plans established for their positions. (Hashem Al-Abadi et al., 2006, p. 297).

Accordingly, the concept of training needs corresponds to the identification of the skills that need to be developed to meet the desired training objectives. These objectives should reflect measurable goals individuals are expected to achieve at the end of a training program.

Most of the researchers agreed upon the following definition:

The training needs refer to the gap in terms of skills and training between trainees'current and desired knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Thus, comparison is made the level and characteristics

of the current performance and the expected or desired performance so that the real training needs are objectively determined. (Safa Abdel Aziz, Salama Abdel Azim, 2007, p. 238)

We conclude from the above-mentioned definitions that the training needs are the stepping-stone of the training process to provide the trainee with knowledge, skills and attitudes through a thorough diagnosis of training needs to identify the discrepancy between the current level of performance and the expected level to increase the efficiency of training programs.

Accordingly, training needs should be objectively measured to specify quantitatively and qualitatively the teacher's training needs, because neglecting training needs can spiral into low level performance.

2-2- Methods for identifying training needs:

There are several ways to identify training needs, perhaps the most important of them are: (Hassan Al-Tahani, 2002, p. 34)

A- Organisation Analysis:

Organization analysis is intended to study organizational conditions and administrative patterns to determine the need for training within the organization, and how to diagnose the type of training required, and this is done through:

-Description of business, procedures and administrative divisions.

-Diagnosing organizational conditions, and identifying strengths or weaknesses in the organization, or in some of its basic elements, which result in a high cost of performance or a decrease in its efficiency.

-Analyzing the objectives of the organization, as well as analyzing the organizational climate, and studying the expected changes in the organization.

b-Job Analysis:

Job analysis   is an important instrument to collect job-related information. at this level you compare two data sets including job description (skills required to perform a job) and job specification(existing employee skills and knowledge) If job specifications do not match job description that calls for training needs .

Job analysis also refers to the scientific study related to identifying the job requirements and the characteristics that should be met by the employee, and describing the duties specific to each job. Job analysis also refers to the process of identifying skills,abilities,and traits required to perform the task (Abdul Hafeez Mokaddem, 1998, p. 145).

The process of job analysis results in the elaboration of a list of duties called "job description" that identifies recommended qualities for a person to qualify for and succeed in a position, and to identify clearly and objectively the job specifications, the following three questions should be answered:

a- What are the processes and duties required to perform a task and what are their nature?

b- Why is every task performed, and what is ts relative importance?

c- How are these tasks performed and what are the general ways of performing each of them?

C-Individual Analysis:

Estimating training needs at the individual level is defining and estimating the gap between the level of knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that currently exist, and the expected level of the person concerned with his job tasks. Therefore, the study of the individual doing the work is represented in various aspects of knowledge, skill, behavior, intellectual and creative, personal characteristics, attitudes and others.

The methods relied upon in determining the training needs of individuals are considered the basis on which effective training is based, in order to achieve efficiency and good performance of individuals within the organization and to upgrade them, their information and skills. There are many methods for collecting information on training needs, including: tests and questionnaires, interviews, problem analysis,...etc.

3)-Competency-based teaching:

3-1- Concept of competency:

 "Competencies refer to a set of observable performance dimensions, including individual knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as collective team, process, and organizational capabilities, that are linked to high performance, and provide the organization with sustainable competitive advantage" (Athey & Orth, 1999, p. 216).

Competencies are skills, knowledge, and capabilities that individuals should have possessed when completing assigned tasks or achieving the goals chung & Lo,2007).

Boyatzis (1982) defines competency as "an underlying characteristic of a person". It could be "a motive, trait, skill, aspect of one's self-image or social role, or a body of knowledge which he or she uses". And according to brophy and kiely (2002) competencies are "skills, knowledge, behaviors and attitudes required to perform a role effectively" (P.167).

The emphasis on the structural character of competency is at the same time an affirmation of the characteristic of abstraction, for competency is an abstract mental component that is reflected through practice, without being a direct synonym for this practice. Madi Lahcen says: "Competency is just an abstract construct. It is a hypothesis about something that can exist. It appears only in the activities carried out by the individual, which are related to a specific context, so it appears in the field of action or the field of practice and work." (Madi Lahcen, 1996, p. 52)

3-2-Competency pattern:

 Competency is considered as a dynamic system that includes interrelated elements in the form of an open structure, if one of its elements changes, this requires a new adaptation this system. In this context, we talk about three levels:

A- Inputs: They are represented through the various situations related to the learning environment, which affect the educational and learning process in connection with the intended goals.

Situation: It is a set of circumstances in which the individual is present, where he is compelled to establish particular, controlled, abstract and tangible relationships with the environment.

- Learning situations: refer to every problem that represents a challenge for the learner and enables him to engage in an active learning process, develop and receive information and find organized and acceptable rules to solve problems to help the learner reach a better level of knowledge. (Abd al-Rahman al-Toumi, 2004, p. 51)

-Status issue: It generally refers to the various information and knowledge that must be linked to each new problem or situation, or to carry out a task in a specific framework, and it is

therefore characterized by the integration of knowledge and its ability to solve in different ways by the learner. It is not necessarily a learning situation, as it is based on the academic level, the context in which it is presented, the desired activities, the employee, the didactical aids, and the stated and implicit directions of work.

B-The process: In general, it is the various operations and activities carried out by the learner to consolidate his personal gains and potentials and correct his representations in order to cobine new knowledge with the previous knowledge, thus making the decision and determining the appropriate achievement.

C- Outputs: They appear through the various achievements of the learner and serve as observable and measurable indicators and thus allow the possibility of evaluating the competence.

D-Achievement: It is what the individual is able to achieve through a specific behavior, and what the external observer can record with the highest degree of accuracy and clarity. It is a different from ability, which refers to the individual's multiple capabilities, as opposed to achievement, which refers to what has been achieved. The main indicator of achievement is behavior, that is, a series of actions, activities, and processes... (Abdul Karim Gharib, 2004, p. 264)

Indicator: The indicator is the result of the analysis of competence or a stage of its acquisition, an observable behavior through which it can be identified and thus allows evaluating the its progress. It is a possible sign of the interaction between ability development and knowledge development, and thus constitutes the point of intersection between abilities and knowledge contents.

This detail of the competency system does not mean that each of its elements works seperately from the other, but rather it is an integrated, overlapping, interactive and comprehensive whole that responds to the activities to be learned.

4. Teaching Stages:

The different steps constituting the teaching process are called phases of teaching and they are as follows:

- Pre-active phase (the Planning Phase).

- Interactive phase (the Implementing Phase).

- Post-active phase (the Evaluating Phase).

These three stages are sequential and interrelated. In other words, when the teacher develops any teaching experience for his students, he must first plan, then implement this plan and finally.

4-1-Planning:

This phase includes all these activities which a teacher performs before entering the classroom and is defined as: a set of procedures and measures taken by the teacher to ensure the success of the teaching-learning process and the objectives set . This definition operationally involves a series of instructional processes determined by the following four instructional (planning) elements: the target competencies of the lesson,the content or subject matter to be taught, the method or strategy to be used in presenting the lesson, and finally the methods of measurement and evaluation to determine the extent to which the objectives are achieved or the extent to which students have acquired the targeted educational competencies. (Ayesh Zaitoun, 2008, p. 298)

Several educational studies, including the study of Sheikh Zahir (1981) have shown that during teacher training program, students-teachers pay big importance to the competency of lesson

planning and consider it as a fundamental competency in their professional preparation. Given that students teachers must develop this competency which is required during the practical training for teaching.This competency is expected to be developed through the teacher training program.

One of the major steps involved in this phase is to formulate a goal or several goals. First of all the students -teachers determine their teaching objectives which are defined in the form of behavioural changes. that he has in mind - this goal may be very first in such as: gaining and maintaining students' attention throughout the lesson, and this goal may be as great as the development of high moral values for these students. In any case, whatever the quality of the goal, formulating or defining the goals to be achieved is the first priority in the teaching process. (Suhaila Al-Fatlawi, 2004, p. 58)

Lesson planning involves, in addition to identifying the goals - cognitive, skill and emotional - defining the content that covers these goals (i.e. the main elements of the lesson). Planning involves taking decision about the teaching aids that can be used in the classroom and how it can be used appropriately. Finally, sequencing the lesson in an engaging and reasonable way that must includes lesson summary, lesson evaluation, extra-curricular activities and homework assigned to students. (Ali Rashid, 2005, p. 62)

The first point that the teacher begins with in planning the lesson is to determine and assess the students' prior knowledge or prerequisites help the teacher make sure that they can adapt easily to new learning situations(i.e. the general conditions in which the learning process take place,and which will allow the student to cope with real problems and seek the right way to analyze and solve them. In this way, he can develop his logical reasoning and develop a methodology that enables him to approach problems, which qualifies him to acquire competence, which is the goal and purpose of both the learning and teaching processes. We can cite two types of situations:the didactic and problem situations.

A problem-target situation, and the reason for the teacher's needs may be due to their lack of awareness of the concepts of teaching based competencies, as the process of teaching and learning focused more on goal based methods in the past,it was teacher-centered ,whereas,the competency-based teaching is a learner centered. The teacher as a mentor uses his experience to help the learner to find out a solution to the given problem. Within this context, he is required to modify his methods and interventions to serve the learning goals, as well as using a variety of methods to fit to every new situation.

4-2-Implementing:

After the lesson planning process, and defining its objectives, elements, means and steps, the teacher implements this planning, and applies the teaching strategy that he identified in his planning. The actual performance of the teacher's chosen strategies for his lesson.

Unlike teachers who tend to use the traditional method(a method based on memorization and explanation),so that the students role is listening, memorizing and repeating, others go beyond that and to modern methods coupled with the strategies of investigation and discussion to achieve the objectives of the lesson. And implementation skills are numerous and they involve: preparing learners for the lesson,verbal and non-verbal communication, conversation, inquiry and reinforcement, class management, formulation and use of classroom questions and other skills. (Ali Rashid, 2005, p. 63)

4-3-Evaluating:

The third stage of teaching is evaluation,although the terms evaluation and measurement are used interchangeably, they are in fact distinctive and different.Measurement refers Measurement is the quantification of attributes of an object or event, which can be used to compare with other objects or events.

As for evaluation, it is not limited to assigning numbers to attributes of objects, it goes beyond that to mean the process of judging the score by an individual based on a set of standards. And plan to detect and correct weaknesses in the teaching and learning processes and it includes :Diagnostic evaluation - Formative evaluation - Summative evaluation. The evaluation in the curricula is based on the approach of competencies in which evaluation is an endeavor aimed at making a judgment on the extent to which the expected learning objectives have been achieved within the daily activity of the learners efficiently and proficiently. (i.e. it is the process of issuing judgment on the level of the learner's growing competency through assigned learning activities).

From this definition, the following can be concluded: (Muhammad Al-Saleh Hathroubi, 2002, p. 122)

1 - The evaluation of competencies is first and foremost an evaluation of the ability to accomplish activities and perform tasks instead of evaluating knowledge.

2 - The assessment of any competency requires assigning a set of activities and situations that allow the learner to use all his resources (knowledge, skills, and behaviors, abilities ...) to determine his performance level.

3 - The assessment of competencies stems from predetermined criteria and indicators. In it, the teacher tries to obtain information by which he decides to what extent the objectives of his lesson have been achieved - cognitive, skill, and emotional and whether his method of teaching has been successful or not, as well as whether the teaching aids and materials that were used have achieved their purpose or not.

And the teacher, with his various evaluation methods: oral questions, choices, simple exams, using note cards, or applying a questionnaire, he can obtain the students' reactions, from which he can determine the extent to which the desired goals of the lesson have been achieved and the extent to which real learning took place for the students ,and the specific traditional assessment focuses on the information obtained by the student from his lesson, while the correct comprehensive assessment is the one that ensures that the student learns the aspects: cognitive, skill, and emotional. (Ali Rashid, 2005, p. 63)

Evaluation in the competency approach model provides several forms that help the teacher to evaluate students and discover their abilities, and to employ what he has learned in an integrative situation. It is also noted on these evaluation methods their interactive dimension, through which the student's role as an active positive element can be noticed.

Evaluation within the framework of the competency-based approach consists of three dimensions around which the teaching/learning act revolves, namely:

1. Acquisition of knowledge.

2. Using it and investing it in situations.

3. Developing self autonomy, initiative, creativity and criticism.

In every situation that is addressed, the teacher must realize what competence he wants to evaluate, so he takes into account the student's strategies, attempts, and explanations, even if they are wrong or inappropriate.

5-Challenges facing competency-based teacher preparation:

The in-service teacher training program can not be underestimated ,it is one of the critical factors in improving the teaching quality. The National Commission on teaching &America's Future reported that "Even given the shortcomings of some teacher education programs, studies over the last 30 years consistently show that fully prepared teachers are more highly rated and more

effective with students than those whose background lacks one or more of the elements of formal teacher education"(NCTAF,P.52,1996). In-service training and funds to address these practices. We also find that the International Conference on Education has recommended that preparation and training during the practice of the profession is a right. Rather, it is an obligation on all workers in the field of education, especially teachers, so that they can play their desired role in light of globalization and the rapid successive developments, and this can only be achieved through the renewal of their knowledge. And their skills are constantly prospects.

These programs are increasingly important to develop the competencies of teachers in developing societies that spare no effort to benefit from their human resources in order to achieve progress. The process of preparing and training the teacher entails providing him with many of the competencies he needs in his work, which are determined by the sound scientific method, as the teaching process is one of the most complex operations, it includes three main competencies: planning, implementation, and evaluation, and the completion of each competency requires that The teacher excels in doing many sub-competencies that achieve effective teaching.

Specialists in education assert that evaluation is the key point for teaching reform in any country. Evaluation is considered as the bridge to cross the distance between our reality in which we live and the goals we aspire to, and in this way, it is considered as a tool for educators to improve their pedagogical practices, and thus develop and improve the process of teaching and learning. It also derives its importance from the seriousness of making decisions in the field education that will have impact on on thousands, even millions of young people, and thus on society as a whole.

One of the most important roles of the teacher is to carry out the evaluation process, and to be familiar with its concepts, foundations, and competencies.

Some studies indicate that the inadequacy in teachers'competency is due to the fact that they give it less importance and it is the least practiced task.Moreover, they have difficulty distinguishing the cognitive levels measured by the test items which make it inevitable for the teacher to receive more training courses in formulating questions at higher cognitive levels in their classroom tests (Aman Ramadan, Maamari Hamza, 2011, p. 281)

Conclusion:

Despite the fact that there are many factors that affect the quality of teaching , the teacher remains,however, the main axis of the teaching process. The teaching objectives can be attained,unless the teacher is well prepared and highly motivated to teaching through different types of teacher professional development programs. According, research has revealed that the teacher's role covers around 60% of the teaching process tasks,while the rest of the other components represent 40%, and thus the quality of life of the nation and the future of its generations are to him.

Accordingly, the researchers suggest the following:

-The necessity of raising the teacher's teaching competencies, his sense of self-efficay, and ensuring his professional development.

-To motivate teachers to structure daily activities in their classrooms.

- To engage teacher in training courses to acquire planning competencies.

-Holding educational seminars highlighting the role of planning in the success of the educational process.

Evaluating teachers' work, guiding them in comparison with other teachers in other schools, and supporting them with training courses.

-Setting standards that help the teacher to raise the level of his teaching compared to the changes that occur in society, and the need for the school to keep pace with the needs of students, society.

- The ability to evaluate other teacher's practices to judge his qualification for promotion to higher a level in education. In fact there are many criteria for evaluating the teacher's adequacy, including: assessment of competence based on educational outcomes, and assessment of competence on the basis of the behavior of the learner.

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