Assessing Competencies of The English Faculty: A Response to Educational Reform for Internationalization and Global Competitiveness

Bernadette D. Bagalay

Isabela State University, San Mateo, Isabela, 3318 Philippines

Abstract

Performance evaluation is an integral part of the educational transformation, and a number of linguists have discovered a variety of areas to be evaluated for the purpose of measuring the extent of projected goals and determining the correctness of a developmental structure. In the same vein, this report provides an investigation on the dimensions of competence that will contribute to the transition to and achievement of quality English instruction. These areas shall serve as a guide in designing educational trainings and programs and in evaluating prospective and practicing English teachers in order to promote excellent language teaching. Concurrently, education students, teachers, and administrators should realize the multi-faceted and critical role of teachers; hence, they should always consider these dimensions in making decisions for the optimum attainment of the country's educational thrust.

Keywords: dimensions of competence, teacher's role, performance evaluation, language teaching, assessment, global competitiveness,

Introduction

Teachers are the most important factor in the educational process. Communities train and employ them to carry out the objectives of the curriculum and to aid towards the academic, personal, and social growth of learners (Cooper, 1994). They are also the focal point of the classroom and serve as role models for the students.

Korthagen (2004) asserted that the level of competency that pre-service teacher education aids in developing in them is a measure of a country's teachers. The Australian Competency Standard (Casey, 1999) defined competency as a way of gathering, organizing, and communicating information; planning and coordinating activities; cooperating with others and in groups; employing mathematical concepts and methods; problem-solving; and utilizing technologies.

Moreover, Koster et al. (2005, in Jon, Jeou, Chan, & Lih, 2008) proposed five categories of competence. These include pedagogy, communication, domain-specific knowledge, organization, and attitude. Having a solid command of domain-specific information and being up to date on advances in the field are two components that fall under the category of domain-specific knowledge. Three components are included in the communication category such as conversing with students from different backgrounds, organizing teams to complete assignments, and deciphering and analyzing students' thoughts. Two components are included in the organization category: developing an operating system in managing students and managing time and scheduling activities based on organizational objectives. Four components make up the pedagogy category: assisting learners in identifying and

validating their learning needs; adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of various students; creating activities to promote student learning and development; and utilizing information technology in the classroom. A democratic approach, a pro-active attitude, curiosity towards new things, and honesty and integrity are the final four components of the attitude category.

Likewise, in the study conducted by Cruz (2007) and with several other studies, results showed that competencies such as student assessment, facilitation and presentation skills, student-centered learning, cross-cultural sensitivity, gender sensitivity, and time management make up the components of teaching effectiveness for higher education students. Of the six components identified in his study, the college students placed more value on facilitation and presentation skills and time management as indicators of teaching effectiveness. On the other hand, graduate students placed more importance on cross-cultural sensitivity, facilitation and presentation skills, student-centered learning, and gender sensitivity as indicators of teaching effectiveness.

Murcia (2006) quoted Canale and Swain (1980) who highlighted four elements that make up communicative competence. Grammatical proficiency, discourse proficiency, sociocultural proficiency, and strategic proficiency are among these four elements. Grammatical competence is the ability to detect lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological elements of a language and to use these qualities to understand and produce words and sentences.

It also refers to sentence-level grammatical forms. Discourse competency focuses on how a collection of spoken words, written words, and/or phrases interact to create a text, a meaningful whole. Socio-cultural competence is an interdisciplinary field of study concerned with the social rules of language use that goes well beyond linguistic forms. Lastly, the term "strategic coping" refers to coping mechanisms utilized in an unknown situation.

It was claimed that the processes of making decision relevant to teaching and teacher competence are related, based on the ideas of Smith (1970) and Cooper (1994). This implies that knowledge of the subject matter to be taught, expertise in learning theory, attitudes that promote learning and positive interpersonal interactions, and a variety of teaching techniques give instructors the resources they need to make and carry out professional judgements and decisions. Without being proficient in every aspect of teaching, teachers cannot master instructional decision making. Hence, complete command of the four general areas of competence and the capacity to masterfully apply the knowledge, attitudes, and abilities acquired in each instructional decision are necessary for mastery.

On the one hand, teachers' performance is evaluated to determine whether they achieve their teaching objectives or not. It is undertaken to identify the efficacy of the teachers in delivering the service intended for the students' education. It is a procedure through which instructors are reminded of their responsibility to the public, which is

paying their wages for the type of teaching they are providing to the students (Rapacon, 1999). It is a means of giving admonitions to the teachers on the aspects they have to prioritize, improve, maintain, and develop, particularly in terms of personal and professional characteristics and traits. It is a helpful way of upgrading the skills and abilities of teachers to raise educational standards and to adapt to the rapid changes in technology, communication, employment, socio-cultural, and economic factors.

Methodology

This study used comparative analysis in determining the skills required of a teacher and the standard or criteria in evaluating the competencies of English teachers, whereas the descriptive method was used in defining the level of competency of the English faculty from the campuses of Isabela State University, which offer a BSE major in English and an AB in English. The Checklist of Competencies, which was purposely designed for the study, has undergone validation, pilot testing, and evaluation to ensure its reliability.

Statistical Analysis

The skills of the English faculty were assessed across six key categories using descriptive statistics including frequency, mean, and standard deviation. The degree of correlations between the six competencies of the English faculty's six dimensions was determined using the Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Results

Table 1 shows that the English faculty were evaluated based on the six dimensions of instructional competence, knowledge of theories, approaches, principles, methods, and techniques of TESL/TEFL, assessment, classroom management, guidance skills, and personality and professionalism. In comparison, Cho (2007) categorized foreign teachers' professional competencies into three categories: knowledge, skills, and attitudes; Personal, professional, and academic experiences were mentioned by D'Avolio (2006), and working with groups, classroom management, time management, questioning strategies, teacher relations, behavior issues, teaching techniques, and working with individual students were mentioned by Medley (1977) as dynamics of a teacher's effectiveness.

The English faculty were rated very satisfactory by the three groups of respondents: English faculty, department head/program chair, and students, with a mean score of 3.4809 and a standard deviation of.39310. They were perceived as very satisfactory, particularly in the first (= 3.4578, s.d. =.37022), second (= 3.4179, s.d. =.37960), third (= 3.4438, s.d. =.38184), and fourth (= 3.4869, s.d. =.38916) dimensions. They were perceived as outstanding in the fifth (= 3.5520, s.d. =.41133) and sixth (= 3.5596, s.d. =.39256) dimensions. This confirms the findings of Viernes (2005) and Viernes (1990) in terms of values competencies but not in the indicators of knowledge competencies because teachers were rated moderately satisfactory.

TABLE 1. COMPETENCIES OF THE ENGLISH FACULTY IN SIX DIMENSIONS

Dimensions of Competency	Compared Groups	N	Mean	Description	Standard Deviation
I. Instruction	Faculty	36	3.4660	VS	.37001
	DH/PC	14	3.3730	VS	.41427
	Students	200	3.4622	VS	.36834
	Total	**250**	**3.4578**	**VS**	**.37022**
II. Knowledge of theories, approaches, principles, methods, and techniques of TESL/TEFL	Faculty	36	3.3660	VS	.42467
	DH/PC	14	3.3571	VS	.41816
	Students	200	3.4315	VS	.36909
	Total	**250**	**3.4179**	**VS**	**.37960**
III. Assessment	Faculty	36	3.4630	VS	.39885
	DH/PC	14	3.3333	VS	.34454
	Students	200	3.4481	VS	.38179
	Total	**250**	**3.4438**	**VS**	**.38184**
IV. Classroom Management	Faculty	36	3.5389	O	.40704
	DH/PC	14	3.3857	VS	.46570
	Students	200	3.4847	VS	.38076
	Total	**250**	**3.4869**	**VS**	**.38916**
V. Guidance Skills	Faculty	36	3.6500	O	.36292
	DH/PC	14	3.4429	VS	.43095
	Students	200	3.5045	O	.41556
	Total	**250**	**3.5220**	**O**	**.41133**
VI. Personality and Professional	Faculty	36	3.6338	O	.34667
	DH/PC	14	3.6299	O	.38315
	Students	200	3.5414	O	.40052
	Total	**250**	**3.5596**	**O**	**.39256**
Grand Mean		**250**	**3.4809**	**VS**	**0.39310**

Moreover, they garnered the highest mean rating in the sixth dimension (= 3.5596, s.d. =.39256). It is evident that they were most competent in their personal and professional qualities. On the contrary, they obtained the lowest mean rating in the second dimension,

= 3.4179, s.d. =.37960, which is interpreted as very satisfactory in terms of updating and equipping themselves with the theories, approaches, principles, methods, and techniques in TESL/TEFL. Likewise, Bernal (1997, as cited by Jimeno, 2001) noted that the weaknesses of the faculty members were in the areas of receptivity to students, use of a variety of instructional approaches and methodologies, and lack of or non-availability of instructional equipment and facilities. On the contrary, Cuevas (2006) claimed that the teachers' lowest ratings were on diagnosing learners' needs, assessing lessons to determine desired outcomes within allotted time, addressing individual differences, conveying ideas clearly, utilizing the art of questioning, showing mastery of the subject matter, and measuring pupils' participation.

In addition, the findings of Rafael (2007) revealed that the faculty members surveyed were perceived as average in their instructional skills, classroom management skills, guidance and counseling skills, personality and social traits, and punctuality.

The correlation matrix for the six dimensions of competencies of the English faculty is reflected in Table 2. The asterisked three-digit numbers represent the computed level of significance when correlated with the dimension of competencies numbered as 1.000. The Pearson's correlation coefficient revealed that there exists a correlation in the six dimensions of competencies that is significant beyond the 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant relationships in the six dimensions of competencies of the English faculty is rejected. It could be further concluded that the dimensions of instruction, knowledge of theories, approaches, principles, methods, and strategies in TESL/TEFL, assessment, classroom management, guidance, and personality and professionalism contribute to the overall competencies of the English faculty and that each dimension influences all the other dimensions.

TABLE 2. CORRELATION MATRIX FOR THE SIX DIMENSIONS OF COMPETENCIES OF THE ENGLISH FACULTY

Variables		D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	Decision
I. Instruction	Pearson's r	1.000	.763**	.715**	.694**	.682**	.649**	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	-	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	Reject Null Hypothesis
	N	250	250	250	250	250	250	
II. Knowledge of theories…	Pearson's r	.763**	1.000	.769**	.730**	.679**	.659**	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	-	.000	.000	.000	.000	Reject Null
	N	250	250		250	250	250	250

		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	Hypothesis
III. Assessment	Pearson's r	.715**	.769**	1.000	.788**	.771**	.727**	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	-	.000	.000	.000	Reject Null Hypothesis
	N	250	250	250	250	250	250	
IV. Classroom Management	Pearson's r	.694**	.730**	.788**	1.000	.844**	.780**	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	-	.000	.000	Reject Null Hypothesis
	N	250	250	250	250	250	250	
V. Guidance Skills	Pearson's r	.682**	.679**	.771**	.844**	1.000	.799**	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	-	.000	Reject Null Hypothesis
	N	250	250	250	250	250	250	
VI. Personality and Professional	Pearson's r	.649**	.659**	.727**	.780**	.799**	1.000	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	-	Reject Null Hypothesis
	N	250	250	250	250	250	250	

This finding validated the study of Cruz (2007) which revealed that the perceived competencies have significant and positive relationships. In the same way, Cabus (1999) showed evidence of the significant association between teaching competencies and personal qualities like emotional stability, enthusiasm, sober conscientiousness, venturesomeness, and self-control, but no significant association was found between teaching competencies and mental ability or between teaching competencies and personality traits.

These findings negate the findings of Viernes (2005) that the performance competencies of the teachers are not related to the management constraints, and also the values competencies are not related to the physical, emotional, social, and other personal constraints of the teacher.

Conclusion

1. Of the six indicators used to measure the competencies of the English faculty, the knowledge of theories, approaches, principles, methods, and techniques of

TESL/TEFL received the lowest rating, followed by the assessment skills. This would mean that it is a necessity for the English teachers to update themselves with the new trends in their field of expertise.

2. The outstanding performance of the English teachers in terms of guidance skills, personality, and professionalism indicates that they were very capable of providing guidance, giving advice, and building good relationships with their students and colleagues.

3. The qualification of the teachers encompasses all elements of the teaching and learning process.

Recommendations

1. English teachers should possess and should continue improving and developing all necessary competencies in language instruction and should focus their professional growth in all facets of learning.

2. The dimensions of competencies identified in this study can be used by the recruitment and hiring committee in screening and selecting potential and competent language teachers. Likewise, these competencies may be used to evaluate the qualities of the English teachers and eventually provide for their needs and master their competencies.

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