THE IMPACT OF TRANSFORMING TEACHER EDUCATION AND LEARNING (T-TEL) IN ENHANCING TAMALE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION TUTORS’ COMPETENCIES

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Abstract
Training and retraining is an essential factor in building skills towards effective performance. In recent times, many programmes are initiated to facilitate teacher professional development. These include the tutor professional development programme funded by Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL). The aim of the study was to assess the impact of the programme on tutor competencies. The study sampled 43 tutors of Tamale College of Education. Questionnaire was employed in gathering data from the field for analysis using simple frequencies. The findings revealed that, the programme had a positive influence on developing tutors' competencies which resulted in influencing tutor positive perception about professional development.

Introduction
Professional development is, undoubtedly, an important activity every employee should embark on to improve on attitudes, skills, work behaviour and to become fully functional on the job presently or in the future. The purpose of professional development in relation to adult education is to further the gains of the adult learners. In considering oneself as an adult, there is the need for a lifelong learning expectation. Research indicates that an effective professional development is crucial and critical for teachers’ (tutors) growth and student achievement¹. Teacher innovations and developments are important areas to pay attention to in the field of education. As part of the development of the teachers, attitudes and motivation are the enabling factors which help in the acquisition of knowledge, skills and behaviors. This involves rapid change in the development of teachers’ professional development activities. Recent Literature search indicates that teachers’ professional development is seen as a major concern to governments, institutions and policy makers⁵.

According to the Bureau of ABLE Policy Guidance, professional development includes formal and informal means of assisting practitioners to acquire knowledge, skills, approaches, and dispositions; to explore new or advanced understandings of content, theory, and resources; and to develop new insights into theory and its application to improve the effectiveness of their current practice and lead to professional growth. To⁴, participation in professional development programmes is based on a positive attitude towards learning and towards improving one’s performance in the area of specialisation.

Moreover, a positive attitude, accompanied with a self-evaluation, lead to stimulating one’s motivation to engage in new learning activities or task. Therefore, acquiring new information calls for transformations and changes of old skills, behaviour and knowledge, requiring adults to be receptive to new ideas, to rethink or question certain beliefs, to try different ways of doing things. In such a situation, they could feel their autonomy and confidence threatened, and their attitudes could trigger resistance to change, and indirectly a decrease in their motivation to learn⁴.

According to⁵, governments and policymakers in developing countries have placed great gains in teacher professional development (PD) programmes. In this regard, Ghana as a nation has continuously strived to develop teachers both at pre-tertiary and tertiary levels by implementing so many professional development programmes. Among the programmes include Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL) which started in November, 2014 and funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL) in Ghana is a four-year government programme to support the implementation of the new policy framework for Pre-Tertiary Teacher Professional Development and Management. T-TEL seeks to transform the delivery of pre-service teacher education in Ghana by improving the quality of teaching and learning in relevant national bodies, institutions and all 40 Colleges of Education (CoEs). Seven core elements have been identified to achieve positive change in teacher training. These elements include:

1. TAMALE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
2. TAMALE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
3. TAMALE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
1. Training and coaching for CoE tutors in Mathematics, English and Science, and eventually generic materials for all tutors;
2. Support to the management of CoEs and training of its Principals;
3. Support to reform the pre-service curriculum;
4. Support to develop more effective student practicums;
5. Work with MoE and regulatory bodies on the implementation of existing policies for teacher education;
6. A Challenge Fund to which CoEs and their partner districts and schools will be able to apply to carry out innovative initiatives;
7. A set of incentives for each CoE to improve their management and training delivery.

The programme seeks to improve learning outcomes for tutors in Colleges of Education, student teachers, and above all for pupils in school. To that end, we are creating a set of professional development resources for use by tutors and student teachers, to enhance college-based and school based teacher education.

As part of the tutor professional development components of the programme, resources have been developed to facilitate competencies of the tutors and trainee teachers. The resources are organized into twelve themes focusing on pedagogy and effective college classroom practice, such as creative approaches, questioning, group work, Assessment for Learning, Leadership for Learning, enquiry-based learning, gender, inclusion, and many more. According to T-TEL, the themes have been chosen because of their relevance to improving learning outcomes through the use of active pedagogies. In each of the twelve themes there are a number of different teaching strategies (or teaching approaches). For instance, the teaching strategies in the present Theme 1 “creative approaches” deals with the use of songs, role-play, games and many other appropriate techniques to build tutors' competencies in effective lesson delivery.

The programme materials are designed so that they can be used with peer facilitation. For the college of education tutors, the tutor professional development programme is facilitated by professional development coordinators (PDCs) who are appointed by the college leadership. More interestingly, the Professional Development Guide for Tutors, a Handbook for Professional Development Coordinators were designed and made available to all college of education tutors. For student teachers, the programme can be facilitated by a tutor, while for teachers, the programme can be peer facilitated as well.

Key Elements of the Professional Development Programme

The professional development programme is designed as a contemporary programme, heeding the insights of many decades of teacher professional development. The following table contrasts some of these approaches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: T-TEL (2017)- Professional Development Guide for Student Teachers</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The programme supports the contemporary professional development activities through the development of number of teaching strategies within different themes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objectives**

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess the influence of T-TEL funded tutor professional development programme on tutors’ competencies.
2. Ascertain tutors perceptions of the T-TEL funded tutor professional development programme.

**Participants**

The data was collected on tutors of Tamale College of Education. The total numbers of participants were 43 tutors made up of 6 females and 37 males. This group was selected by considering their status in the training and mentoring of teacher trainees for Ghana Education service.

**Instrument**

The instrument that was used in collecting the needed data for the research was questionnaire. This instrument was appropriate because of its special characteristics in gathering relevant data at the participants’ own convenience. The questionnaire was made of closed- ended question items seeking to collate tutors’ opinion on the items.

**Procedure**

The questionnaires were distributed to participants which were then collected for analysis. The data was processed using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS).

**Results and Discussions**

Data collected from the participants were analysed using simple frequency tables.

**Objective 1: Assess the influence of T-TEL funded tutor professional development programme on tutors’ competencies.**

Tutors were questioned on the influence of the professional development programme funded by T-TEL on their competencies and their responses were collated in the table below.

From the above table 1, 41 representing approximately 95% of the tutors agreed that the professional development programme funded by T-TEL has influenced their competencies as tutors of the college of education. This shows that the programme has made an impact on their professional activities. Also, tutors (97.64%) agreed that the professional development has developed their abilities in using creative approaches in delivering instructions in the lecture rooms.

Furthermore, tutors revealed that the programme has helped them to use gender sensitive strategies in their lecture room interactions. This is clearly shown in the table above with 95.34% of the 43 tutors agreeing to the statement.

Finally, out of the 43 tutors who responded to the questionnaire 41 representing approximately 95% believed that the professional development programme has made them to handle student teachers in a more professional manner. This shows that, professional development is very important in influencing teachers’ performance. This is supported by the idea that, participation in development programmes is based on a positive attitude towards learning and towards improving one’s performance.
Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous approaches</th>
<th>Contemporary approaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training focuses on content</td>
<td>Participants’ own sense-making of existing knowledge, as well as adapting knowledge to their own setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are “improved” through short-term training.</td>
<td>Teachers are seen as capable professionals, and are offered longer-term professional development opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are trained in subject groups.</td>
<td>Teachers undertake professional development together as a “community of practice”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training separates contents from teaching methods.</td>
<td>Professional development integrates contents and teaching methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training is delivered through lectures.</td>
<td>Professional development is participatory, with everybody playing an active role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training focuses on theoretical aspects of education, presented in generic ways.</td>
<td>Professional development values the practical exploration of new ideas in the classroom and within specific cultural contexts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The influence of the Tutor Professional Development Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T-Tel funded professional development has influence my competencies as a tutor.</td>
<td>23(53.49%)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The programme has developed my abilities in using creative approaches in teaching.</td>
<td>27(62.77%)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The programme helps me to use gender sensitive strategies in the interaction process.</td>
<td>36(83.72%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1(2.33%)</td>
<td>1(2.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The programme has, to a large extent, influenced my competencies in handling the student teachers more professionally.</td>
<td>17(39.54%)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objective 2: Ascertain tutors’ perceptions of the T-TEL funded professional development programme.

On the issues of ascertaining tutors’ perception of the professional development programme funded by T-TEL, the tables 2 below represent the results.

From table 2 above, out of the 43 tutors who responded to the first question, 40 representing 93% agreed to the accession that it is necessary to have a professional development. Whiles 2 respondents disagreed. The response here implies that professional development is necessary and should be adopted.

Quite apart from that, 39 representing 91% of the tutors disagreed that professional development is necessary but not valuable, hence professional development is necessary and also valuable.

Also, 34 tutors representing 79% testify that professional development should be made compulsory; meaning given an opportunity professional development should be made compulsory in all Colleges of Education. states that, teachers’ attitudes toward language learners can also affect teachers’ receptivity to professional development efforts to improve performance and other related capabilities.

Conclusion

Looking at the importance of professional development on the performance of both teachers and learners, it is essentially valuable to develop the habit of continuing professional development. Evidence from the findings shows that, tutors’ competencies are well developed due to professional development programme funded by T-TEL. Also, tutors have realized the need to adopt gender sensitive teaching approaches in their lecture rooms to embrace equity and inclusivity which is a key variable in the T-TEL funded professional development programme.

Finally, the result revealed that professional development programme is perceived positively by tutors of Tamale College of Education. This is evident in the table 2 above.

References
1. Lowden C. Evaluating the impact of professional development. The; 2005.
Table 3. Tutors’ opinion of professional development programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not certain</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is necessary to have professional development</td>
<td>40 (93%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development is necessary but not valuable</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39 (91%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given the opportunity, professional development should be made compulsory</td>
<td>34 (79%)</td>
<td>5 (12%)</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>