Gap Between Pre-service and In-service Teacher Training: Lesson for Teacher Professional Development

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Abstract

This study was conducted to analyze the extent to which the assumptions of TPD model have been practiced in 'teaching practice' program of faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University. How the 'collaborative and reflective learning', one among many skills of school teacher, has been cultivated in pre-service training, i.e. teaching practice of B.Ed program, that need to be advanced in TPD and practiced in teaching was studied with mixed method approach in a total of 18 students. The study found that there was no clear contribution of the use of peer-observation to developing teaching skills and flaws were there in the process of conducting peer-observation. It suggests that the role of internal examiner is to be redefined mentor teacher and theoretical base of 'teacher development' is to be based instead of traditional practice of 'teacher training'. Further, a collaborative work between TU/FoE and MoE/NCED in both pre-service and in-service teacher training program is respected.

Key words

Collaborative learning, internal examiner, mentoring, peer-observation, reflection, teaching practice, teacher professional development

Introduction

Nepal practiced lot of approaches, modes and packages of teacher training, and realized the poor efficiency of training in elevating educational quality. This voyage taught her to shift from traditional practice of 'teacher training' to a new paradigm 'teacher development' (NCED, 2070 BS, pp. 3-6). Teacher development model of National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) assumes that a professional teacher passes through four stages of learning- a) retroactive reflection of their own school learning and teaching- b) pre-service teacher preparation course,-c) service entry orientation, and- d) professional development (ibid, p. 4). Comparison of these four stages of learning in terms of their influence on a teacher's quality we find: the second stage, teacher preparation course, is the basic requirement for job application, and the fourth stage is associated with job performance whereas the first stage is not explicit, and the third stage is very short in duration and ritual in practice. Hence, the second and the fourth stages are the most prevalent in developing teachers' qualification. In addition, the pre-service teacher preparation course incorporates teaching practice program where a future teacher teaches in school and learns from teaching. In this sense, the fourth is continuation of 'teaching practice'. Therefore, success in second stage is sine qua non of the fourth stage.

Evidences on relationships among pre-service training, in-service training and teachers' quality in terms of promoting students' learning have been observed. Teachers' learning and quality in pre-service course has an impact on promoting students learning achievement (e.g. Harris & Sass, 2007). This fact, therefore, suggests that understanding quality of in pre-service teacher course is must to analyze the teaching quality and effectiveness of in-service training.

NCED has practiced a model "field-based teachers' professional development (TPD)" as in-service teacher development /training. TPD model has an impression of 'practice changes attitude', and stands such assumptions as professional accountability, learner's supremacy, whole school support, low cost high yield, sustainable, etc. (NCED, 2070 BS, p. 5). In this context, teaching practice done by university students as pre-service teacher can be an infrastructure for this TPD model, where its assumptions are expected to be implied and cultivated in trainees. Teachers who have got knowledge, skill and attitude of continuous professional development in their pre-service training will be able to enhance TPD training and practice professional development on their job. The 'teaching practice' program conducted by university can provide more opportunities like autonomous learning, reflection and feedback for 'teacher development rather than the in-service training under TPD model of NCED can. Therefore, the coherence between the models of teacher training (practiced by these two separate but interrelated organizations) makes TPD model more efficient and has reciprocal advantage for both organizations (e.g. Allen & Peach, 2007). Therefore, on the same basis , this study aims to analyze to what extent the assumptions of TPD model has been expected/ practiced/ achieved in 'teaching practice' program of university.

Data Collection Process

Tribhuvan University is almost a sole source of school teachers in Nepal, and Three-Year Bachelor'ss of Education (BEd) is the most relevant for this study. BEd is a professional as well as academic program designed for the preparation of competent teachers to teach different specialization subjects in secondary schools (FoE, TU, 2014). Teaching Practice (TP) in school, a part of pre-service teacher training, is a piece of professional training incorporated in BEd program that plays prevalent role in teacher development. During teaching practice, students get opportunities to be supervised under their university teachers. There are specified eight works that a supervisor (who is called Internal Examiner, henceforth IE) has to perform during training. Among these eight works, supervising the trainees to develop the quality of collaborative and reflective learning through 'peer-observation' or 'peer-teaching evaluation' (FOE, TU, 2013) is the most relevant to the assumption of TPD model. Therefore, only this one quality of teacher has been studied.

Current literatures have given the special value to 'peer-observation' in teacher training as a powerful tool of reflection. 'Peer-observation' provides different contexts to have reflection; collaborative planning, access to each other's classrooms, learning from classroom observation, peer-interaction, receiving constructive feedback, etc. and conversations on profession centered work (Friesen, 2009; UNESCO, 2005, p. 7).

Peer-observation is a platform of reflection that helps transforming naïve teacher into an experienced (Jay, 2003, p. 202). Trainees during TP maintain horizontal relationship in 'peer-observation' for their reciprocal benefits: learning from observing other's performance and

providing feedback to others. There are three phases in 'peer-observation'; pre-observation meeting for sharing information about course and lesson plan that helps both the observer and the one who is observed, observation, and post observation meeting for the discussion on classroom teaching. A mentor teacher in school guides trainees in conducting these three phases of peer-observation, where mentor, observers and those who are observed work together. 'Peer-observation', for the reflection, focuses especially on descriptive rather than evaluative; focuses on behavior rather than on the person; emphasizes sharing information rather than giving advice (Bergquist & Phillips, 1981). Hence, peer-observation is a part of peer-review. In peer-review, BEd students practice shared and collective activity; discuss issues, problems and their solutions. Peer support stimulates new ideas through collaborative learning and is a valuable means of confidence building, enabling to share differing perspectives of developing experiences (Tomkins, 2009, p. 10).

Discussion made in the above paragraphs shows that, on the one hand 'peer-observation' is a tool and process of reflection that is conducted under the guidance of mentor teacher on the other hand, teaching practice model of FoE, TU, uses it under the guidance of internal examiner. Discussion made in the above paragraphs indicates a literature-practice contradiction and the contradiction gives rise of some curious and practical questions: how the 'peer-observation' has been used in BEd students' teaching practice under FoE? What contribution has made with the use of 'peer-observation' in teacher development? How incorporation of 'peer-observation' in TU model can be more effective?, etc. Answering these genuine questions demanded a research, and knowledge derived from this work can contribute to the developer and practitioners of teaching practice model as well as to the developers of in-service teacher training models.

Gorkha Campus, Gorkha, a leading teachers college in Nepal, under Tribhuvan University that offer(ed) Intermediate, Bachelor's and Master programs in Education was selected for this study as convenient sampling, where I am one of the faculty members. I have got involved in three batches of BEd science as internal examiner and have close observation for six batches that run by this campus through informal conversation of internal and external examiners and examinees, participating in teaching practice preparation and review meeting.

I have developed myself as a source of information, from my experience discussed above, and I collected the peer-observation form filled by the examinee students of BEd science batch 2011(the most numbers of students were there in this batch and I was engaged relatively much with them). I selected BEd science students of Gorkha Campus batch 2011, as the source of information purposefully and for convenient where I was engaged with one of my co-workers as internal examiner. That made me possible to observe the students and collect their real peer-observation form. More detail process of data analysis has been mentioned in analysis section.

From my experience in primary and secondary data from selected students, I have tried to answer such implicit research questions as: 'how the 'peer-observation' has been used in BEd students' teaching practice under FoE'? On the basis of the answers of this research questions and knowledge from related literatures, I have tried to synthesize the answers for another research questions: 'what is the contribution of 'peer-observation' to teacher training'? Then, on the basis of these answers and knowledge from related literatures, I have tried to synthesize the answers to the next research questions: 'how incorporation of 'peer-observation' in TU

model can be made more effective'? Finally, 'how the 'peer-observation' skill developed in teachers during teaching practice can be used by TPD model'?

Analysis and Discussion

Analysis of information and discussion made on it has been organized below in different themes. Themes making has been oriented to answering the research questions. (a)**Practice of using peer-observation:** Discussion under this heading aims at answering the first research questions. Content under this heading has been organized into three sub-headings.

Knowledge and skill in classroom teaching rating: An 'orientation program' for practice teaching is run before sending trainees to schools. Peer observation form, developed by the campus is provided to the students during their in-campus training, generally known as micro-teaching program. Nearly 25% trainees participate in all 30 (2 hours*15 days) hours of training, otherwise trainees either become absent or bunk. In this micro-teaching, trainees practice to rate the teaching performance of peers, and writing suggestion.

First supervisory observation was carried out (it is generally) during the second week of trainees' on-school training. Total 18 peers-observers had rated their peers' classroom teaching in the presence of the first supervisory observation. Second supervisory observation was made in the fourth and third in fifth/sixth week of trainees' on-school training. There were 30 skills in each form, but 18 forms were filled in the first observation; there were altogether 18*30=540 options to rate, in the second observation only 12 forms and altogether 12*30=360, and in the third observation only 12 forms and altogether 12*30=360. But some of the options were not filled. Summary of the data has been presented in Table 1.

Theoretically and including policy and practice, it is considered that qualities of teaching skills gradually develop in a teacher. Generally, at initial stage of training, skills are developed rapidly. Data in Table 1 present development of quality in teaching skills in a weeks' interval.

Table 1

Frequencies of specific qualities of teaching skills

Observations	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Low	Poor	Total	N*	NF#
I	14	176	258	59	5	512	18	28
II	6	89	195	46	4	340	12	20
III	2	127	164	41	4	338	12	22
N* denotes numbers of peer-evaluation forms included in the study, and NF# denotes numbers of item not filled by the evaluators.								

Results and Discussion

The on-campus training program makes to assume that trainees can clearly understand: a) each phrase/statement in form means, and b) what performance of trainees should be rated in what quality in interval scale. Data in Table 1(rightmost column) indicates that trainees were either absent or did not actively participate in on-campus training because they either were confused about the meaning of the statement, or could not identify the level of quality of teaching skill

so they could not fill the item and also not filled in remark column.

In the second and third phases of peer-observations the trainees of science subject rated the trainees of other subjects, where the training program was not intended to develop those skills and also could not do it. Since, their forms were excluded from the study, some of the trainees of other subjects requested me to sign on the form rated by them in the students whose teaching I had observed. After getting these events, I talked to other IEs too and found both IE and trainees' had to some extent ignored the meaning of peer-rating.

Trend of classroom teaching rating skill development

In the duration of 45 days, the trainees were observed in three different snapshots. In these snaps they are found to have developed skills in classroom teaching and doing realistic evaluation of peers as well. Table 2 and Figure 1 present a trend of developing different qualities of teaching skills of the trainees in their own (their peers') eyes.

Table 2: Percentage of specific qualities of teaching skills

Observations	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Low	Poor	Total
I	2.7	34.4	50.4	11.5	1.0	100
II	1.8	26.2	57.4	13.5	1.2	100
III	0.6	37.6	48.5	12.1	1.2	100

The data of Table 2 has been presented in figure for perceptual ease

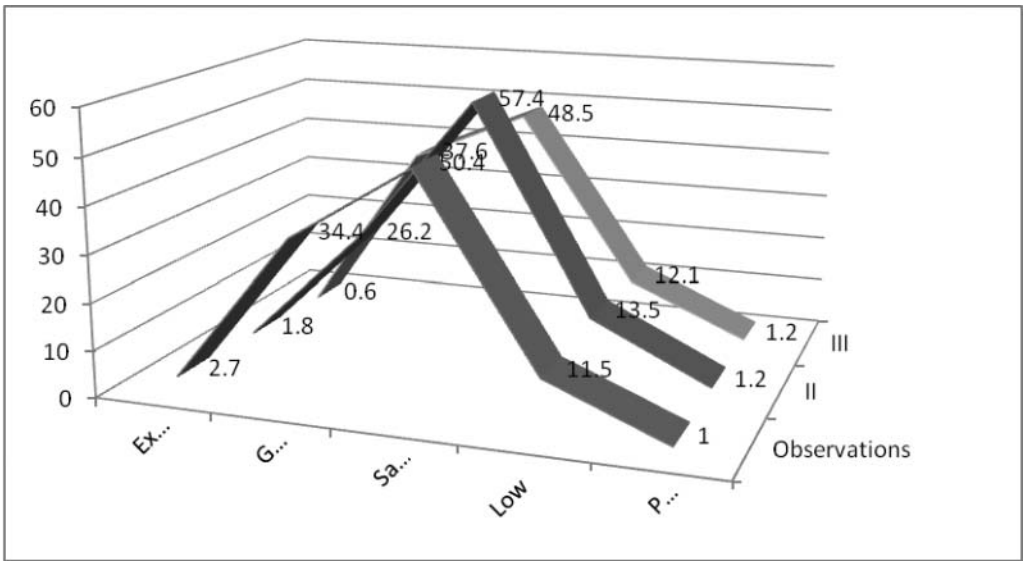

Figure 1: Comparing trend of teaching quality development

Table 2 and Figure1 give no idea on trend of skill development. Trainees acquire/develop teaching skills gradually during the training program. Among the many skills this study deals with 'classroom teaching' and 'rating classroom teaching'. Instead of gradual development the trainees skill development seems to develop in reverse direction or in up-down fashion (see Table 2). It suggests that, either a) trainees have not developed the skill of rating, b) or students' teaching performance was that indeed. The second hypothesis/statement is assessed on the basis of evaluators rating, and this assessment directs the argument in the first statement. This finding opens many hypotheses for rigorous study. Unless a researcher collects data in 'how the peer-rater indentifies that the certain skill is rated in certain point of rating scale' and why the trainee's performance is rated in this quality' for each rated-statement, understanding on trend of reflective learning through peer-evaluation is impossible.

Development of classroom teaching rating skills

Awarding the scores to each trainee as per their peers-rated gives their scores as Table 6 below where Full mark of classroom teaching skills is excellent carries 5 marks and there are 30 skills hence, 150 (this mark has been converted to 100 FM in Table 3). Final peer observation and summative evaluation of class-room teaching is done in the same classroom. Therefore comparison of the score to the same trainees from two persons is relevant.

Table 3: Comparing peers' evaluation with evaluator evaluation

Contents	Peer	Evaluators
Average %	61	70.62
SD of the obtained %	9	7.27
N	12	18

$$S_{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2} = \sqrt{\frac{S_1^{\,2}}{n_1} + \frac{S_2^{\,2}}{n_2}}$$

Calculating the t-value of this data by using the formula, mean difference (70.62- 61) divided by standard error of the difference, (see right) calculated by using this formula found t-value 3.03, and found null hypothesis is rejected, i.e. there is a difference in evaluation between trainees and examiners, or trainees have not developed as much fine skill as examiner in evaluating class-room teaching skills.

Table 3 suggests that trainees have not developed classroom teaching rating skill as much as their examiners. Here, or officially, examiners' rating is considered more valid and reliable than the trainees, despite some technical errors made by examiners. Though, evaluation form has demanded analytical scorning, but evaluators award first score holistically and then filled each column only for formality (my and co-workers experience and interview with other 20 teachers). Therefore, it is difficult to stand (as benchmark) on evaluators rating in classroom teaching to assess the peer-evaluators' evaluation skill. Nevertheless, I have ventured comparing peers' evaluation with evaluator evaluation.

Contribution of 'peer-observation' in teacher training

Discussion under this heading aims at answering the second research questions. Content under this heading has been organized into three sub-headings.

Trainees are poor in using peer-observation: As per principle of teacher training trainees' skill and competency is gradually developed. In contrast, Table 2 suggests no idea to trend of skill development and but found haphazard i.e. even development has gone to reverse direction/ up-down fashion. Reflecting with self experience, observing the forms filled by the trainees, and talking with trainees, I found that they neither were serious, conscious, skillful, knowledgeable, learning-oriented in providing feedback to peers. Similarly, no trainees received feedback seriously and talked to raters what they found in his/her teaching and asked for more detail feedback.

Peer-observation is not reflective: Modern literatures expect that from peer-observation, a naïve teacher (or trainee) can learn reflectively and is a part of teacher development. But in practice, under the TU FoE model of teaching practice, this also is almost ineffective in teacher training. Instead of questioning about effectiveness/or appropriateness of each phrase/ statement listed in peer-observation form to rate teachers' skill of performance, the trainees were not clear to understand: a) each phrase/statement in the form means, and b) what performance of trainees should be rated in what quality in interval scale.

Feedback or remark in each phrase/statement of the form is expected. Neither the trainees asked nor IEs inquired for not-responding the certain items that had to be rated (Table 1, rightmost column). They received that filling the peer-observation form is just a ritual, because they did not ask themselves 'why I am going to observe and rate the peers' classroom teaching before observation and asking 'what I learn from observation and how I share my experience with peers'. Otherwise, they would not rate the classroom teaching of the trainees out of science subject.

No practice of pre and post observation meeting is found. My subjective judgment says that no role of subject teachers of partner school has been incorporated in this training. No practice of peer-interaction, conversations of a professional nature centered on the work, access to each other's classrooms (except obligatory filling three forms), and collaborative planning, receiving constructive feedback from one's peers was found.

Application of peer-observation form in TU model of teaching practice is just a ritual. Trainees softly tick in a room (of rating scale for each attribute of trainee teacher) and write very general and most common sentence in their comment (e.g. 'not used student centered method') and in suggestion (e.g. 'use student centered method'), similarly, IEs too, put their signature at the bottom of the form as it is his humble work because legally, students need to submit three forms with IEs (either of the same or another subject).

Peer-observation for 'teacher training' or 'teacher development': 'Teacher training' is a narrow and short-term concept which has been proved to be ineffective and a broad and holistic concept 'teacher development' has become a catchy phrase in the arena of teacher education. Overall impression of classroom observation of trained teacher is just moderate and there are

rooms for improvement in many criteria, anyway, trained teachers' performance is better than that of untrained teachers (FBCPL, 2006, p. 4). BEd program incorporated training that must be transferable, but recent literature has suggested that very low percent of transferability of training and therefore, modern world has turned to the nest paradigm; i.e. teacher development (DHT, 2012, p. 3) and larger aim of producing teachers not only equipped with basic skills but also with the capacity to continue developing as professionals (Lynd, 2005, p. 5). Teacher training is acquired for the 'know-how' of specialization, and limited to exercise, constant repetition, and a definite end and purpose. Contrast to it, teacher development aims at developing all the essential perspectives of effective teaching to teacher (Evans, 2002). In teacher development, s/he asks questions to him/herself: - how can I be a good teacher? How can I feel I am supporting my pupils learning? How my colleagues/ co-workers think about me and my teaching? How can I make them participate in this process of learning/ sharing? What can I contribute to other colleagues? How can I make more effective to my initiations?

TU model has not used the mentor and mentoring, moreover, there is no practice of reflective approach of teacher training. Therefore, it seems as 'teacher training' approach rather than 'teacher development'.

Redefining the Role of IE and Mentoring

Discussion under this heading aims to answering the second research questions. Content under this heading has been organized into two sub-headings.

Lightening the work load IE: FOE, TU (2013) has allocated almost all the roles for internal examiner in teacher training. Qualification of internal examiner IE, mentioned (ibid, p. 1) assumes that a university teacher is competent to guide a trainee to learn all the duties that secondary level teachers must perform. IE must supervise the trainee teachers' classroom teaching at least three times during the training period and evaluate the trainee's skills in peer-teaching evaluation. Moreover, IE helps the trainees to construct teaching materials, to conduct student's case study and prepare report and studying the all aspect of school and preparing report, to conduct ECA and writing a report, and to develop some items and answer key in student evaluation.

Teaching practice model of FOE, TU (2013) has not expected the campus -school partnership in practice; no role is stipulated to the school/subject teacher. IE has to perform these eight works for one trainee, and generally more than 20 trainees are under one IE in different geographical locations, sometime 6-days distance. It is impossible to expect effective role from IE. Moreover, general observation to the IEs does not assure that IEs are competent and qualified to perform these eight works.

From the discussion in above paragraphs, I indicate that lightening the work load, developing the quality and enhancing the motivation of IEs may improve the effectiveness of TU model of teacher training.

Mentoring: Craving to the tradition model of 'teacher training' that has been practiced by TU does not liberate FoE and school education of Nepal. Therefore, I strongly recommend shifting towards the model of 'teacher development'. Campus has to select certain schools as partner,

where are veteran teachers of related subjects so that they can work as mentor. Subject teachers from campus and school can design an environment where a trainee can get opportunities of reflection. At least three trainees of the same subject must go to each school for peer-interaction, co-planning, working and reflecting. Such collaborative working/learning is the most essential qualification for school teacher.

Suggestions

Role of TU (FoE): To make this peer-observation practice effective for teacher training redefining the role of IE is must. For teacher development, role of IE (works under university) and school subject teacher (works under MoE) must be restructured; an environment of mentoring and reflection for trainees must be designed. For that, a strong collaboration of campus-school and campus teacher- school teacher must be developed.

Role of MoE (NCED and DEO): MOE should intervene 'teaching practice' program of FoE, TU because TU is the main supplier of school teacher. If the students/future teachers pass pre-service course learning almost nothing for the qualification of a teacher, it is difficult to expect they will learn in in-service TPD and practice in school. Since, MoE should show its concern in effectiveness of second stage of teachers learning. For that, MoE, through, DEO must collaborate with certain education campuses (e. g. Dhankuta, Gorkha, Surkhet, Tahachal) in teaching practice, by providing partner schools, mentor teachers, apprenticeship money for trainees.

A legal provision of formulating 'Campus Teaching Practice Board' has been realized for effective implementation of teaching practice where MoE can involve by sending its representative as board members, e.g. DEO and ETC/NCED head of this district/ area as ex-officio and certain veteran teachers as nominee. Similarly, representation of university teachers in training board under DEO and ETC/NCED is strongly recommended to implement TPD model so that gap between pre-service and in service can be filled from both sides.

Dean of TU/FoE has been included in the council for educational employees development, but implementation is as much crucial as policy making and planning. Since, teachers/experts from TU must be included in the process of implementation, supervision and evaluation of such field base training.

Conclusion

The eight skills that are expected to develop during teaching practice as stipulated by TU FoE are the infrastructures for teachers' professional development and performance. This study was, among the eight skilsl, focused on only one skill, 'learning from peer and reflection', and finding in this skill suggests that assumptions of TPD model has not satisfactorily been implied/ practiced in 'teaching practice' program of university. Current model of TU that has been practiced in pre-service training is unable to develop qualities of reflective and autonomous learning, as well as practicing supervision and peer-learning to future teachers. Teaching practice put trainees in such environment for 45 days where they are used as scaffold by the university teacher (internal evaluator) and school subject teacher (mentor). The person who has not incubated the above mentioned qualities in this environment; s/he cannot get such or

better environment in in-service. As a result, it remains always not incubated. And TPD model has been designed to work only for those teachers (chicken) who are developed (incubated) by putting in appropriate environment (temperature) for 45 days (22 days), but not to work for not incubated chick (i.e. egg). Though, it is the work of university (FoE) to hatch the qualities of teachers through 'teaching practice', but victim becomes MoE, if sent unhatched. Since, MoE has to interfere FoE to make aware for its accountability. And both University and MoE must be careful because the state cannot allocate the same work (of incubation) for two institutions by earmarking budget.

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