

Teaching Competence of the Graduate Education Faculty in Southern Leyte State University, Philippines

MARVIN S. DAGUPLO

ORCID No. 0000-0002-0363-133X

daguplosdv@yahoo.com

Southern Leyte State University-Tomas Oppus
Southern Leyte, Philippines

Abstract - Teaching competence is a critical causal factor in the learning of graduate students. This cross-sectional survey design assessed the teaching competence of the graduate faculty of Southern Leyte State University. A total of 122 randomly selected graduate education students responded to the standardized questionnaire. The profile of the graduate studies faculty was asked from the Office of the Graduate Studies. Descriptive analysis revealed that women faculty outnumbered their male equals in pursuing higher academic degree for professional development and competence. Thus, female graduate studies faculty stood-out in the Assistant and Associate Professorships' ranks. Moreover, graduate students assessed their professors as very competent in two areas, namely, (i) Professional Ethics and (ii) Personal Qualities; and as competent in the areas of (i) Mastery of the Subject Matter, (ii) Teaching Skills), (iii) Classroom Management, (iv) Evaluation Skills, (v) Intrapersonal Qualities, and (vi) Aesthetic Qualities. Inferential analysis, however, revealed a "weak to moderate" correlation with the different areas of teaching skill. Only the educational degree of the SLSU Graduate Education Faculty is strongly correlated with personal qualities. With competent faculty, one can assure that quality education is properly guarded in the graduate studies of Southern Leyte State University.

Keywords - Graduate Education, Teaching Competence, Cross-sectional Survey, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of the citizens rests upon the quality of their education. The quality of their education depends upon the competence, dedication and quality of school teachers (Shukla, 2009).

Shukla (2009) emphasized in the statement above the demand of competent and committed teachers for today's revolutionary era. Teacher competence has been identified as one of the most crucial factors for the success of education and schools. Teacher's competence is closely associated with their work performance. Teacher's competence is necessary for nation-building.

Moreover, competent teachers are required in every educational institution so as to increase the effectiveness of the institution. No single factor can contribute more to an improved student achievement than the guarantee of a competent teacher in every classroom. No amount of classroom facilities and instructional materials can produce the desired learning outcome without a competent teacher at the center stage (Salandanan, 2001).

The demand for teaching competence among the many schools around the world exists in all levels of education even in Graduate Education. The term graduate education usually refers to those degree-granting programs that require the baccalaureate degree as the minimum condition defining eligibility for admission. It is an advanced, focused and scholarly education. It is advance in the sense that it is based on the assumption that graduate students have acquired fundamental knowledge, both general and specific, at the baccalaureate level prior to entering graduate school. It is scholarly in the sense that it is based on the premise of an evolving, generalizable knowledge base, arrived at and agreed to by those in the field and subject to challenge and validation by generally accepted procedures. It is scholarly because all graduate students must understand that they must contribute knowledge for national development (American Educational Research Association, 1991).

Along with this concept on Graduate Education, CHED Memorandum Order No. 36, series of 1998 stressed that Graduate Education shall be structured so as to enhance quality, efficiency and effectiveness in higher education. It added saying that Graduate education shall take the lead role in enhancing the quality of Philippine Higher Education towards global competitiveness and world-class scholarship.

In accordance thereto, CHED Memorandum No. 15, series of 2005 was implemented to monitor and evaluate quality assurance in the pursuit of quality education. Relatively, this study was conducted to assess the areas along with the teaching competence of the Faculty in the SLSU – Tomas Oppus Graduate Education to identify

interventions that will ensure the quality and standard of teaching.

FRAMEWORK

Teaching competence refers to “the right way of conveying units of knowledge, application and skills to students”. The right way here includes knowledge of content, processes, methods and means of conveying content (Bhat, 2001). On the perspective of Salandanan (2005), teaching competence as an effective teaching which connotes utmost commitment to enable the learner achieve the threefold goals, namely, gain knowledge, develop skills and imbibe value and attitudes.

Whatever definition teaching competence could have, it all depends on teaching in a particular setting, the culture and values held in the community. It also depends on the innumerable teacher and student characteristics and the classroom context. Nevertheless, in order to know if we possess the necessary competencies in a given situation, we have to be judged on the basis of our ability to produce certain effects. But, there are as many ways of being effective as there are effects.

The research studies conducted so far indicate that there does not exist a single set of competencies which all the effective teachers possess or all the ineffective ones lack. It is apparent to those who attempt to categorize teachers’ work, attitudes and behaviors that the identification of competence is extremely complex (Cherednichenko, Hooley, Kruger and Mulrany, 1997). Just as teaching is complex by nature, assessing its competencies would also mean a complex activity.

Several attempts have been made to define essential teacher competencies. This application of a set of competencies for teaching to identify preferred qualities in beginning teachers is imperative, but I do believe that the need to develop these competencies to address the perspective of proficiency in teaching practice is also important.

Cherednichenko, et al. (1997) cited Mayer who stressed ‘that teaching performance is underpinned not only by skill but also by knowledge and understanding, and that competence involves both the ability to perform in a given context and the capacity to transfer knowledge and skills to new tasks and situations’.

Likewise, Randall (1993) believed that teaching competencies are closely related to learning outcomes, assessment and reporting. However, the role of competency statements is not only linked to the learning outcomes of students but also to the practices and appraisal of the teaching profession.

There seem to be different ways of classifying teacher competencies. One has to look at it in terms of teacher functions. Essentially, teachers have two major roles in the classroom: i) to create the conditions under which learning can take place i.e. the social side of teaching; and ii) to impart, by a variety of means, ‘knowledge’ to their

learners -the task oriented side of teaching.

Moreover, whichever way we would like to classify teacher competencies, the teacher's repertoire would seem to constitute the following: i) Knowledge of subject matter, ii) Planning for the course/lesson including teaching strategies, teaching materials, and classroom organization, iii) Motivating learner groups, iv) Presentation and communication skills including lecturing, explaining, eliciting response, questioning, discussing, dramatizing, reading, demonstrating, using audio-visual aids, etc., v) Evaluation includes informal observations of student progress, diagnosing learning difficulties, encouraging peer/self-evaluation, handling evaluative discussions, etc., vi) Classroom Management and discipline. (<http://www.davidson.edu/academic/education/competencies.htm>)

These same characteristics of a competent teacher have been enumerated by the American Educational Research Association as stated in the Encyclopedia of Educational Research (1992), namely, i) Appropriate Expectations and a Sense of Efficacy, ii) Classroom Management and Organization, iii) Opportunity to Learn, iv) Teaching to Mastery, v) Active Teaching, and vi) Creation of a Supportive Learning Environment.

From this point, therefore, we can say that teacher is the key player on the educational stage and we often expect him or her to make up for the deficiencies in the curriculum and in educational resources. The success of the educational enterprise is therefore believed to hinge on the quality of teaching that goes on in the classrooms" (Howie and Plomp, 2005,). This claim means that from a professional point of view the competence of a teacher is important, as successful teaching and learning depends on it.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study assessed the teaching and values orientation competence of the graduate education faculty of Southern Leyte State University. This aimed also to test relationship between Respondents' Profile and the Different Competencies of the Graduate Education Faculty.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a cross-sectional survey design in which the collection of data is conducted one point in time from the target population (Zulueta and Perez, 2010).

Data were collected through a survey among the randomly identified 122 graduate education students enrolled at Southern Leyte State University during the second

semester of School Year 2010-2011. Data were collected in the last part of the second semester of SY 2010-2011. This provides certainty on students' assessment since they were already working with their professors for at least 4 months. These students, however, answered the questionnaire based on their general evaluation and assessment towards their professors who handled them in one or two subjects in the graduate school. This makes the evaluation holistic rather than individualistic. On the other hand, profile of all the faculty members was asked from the Office of the Dean of the Graduate Education.

An adapted standardized questionnaire assessed the teaching competencies (Teaching Practices and Values Orientation) of the faculty of the SLSU Graduate Education. Teaching Practices were subdivided into Mastery of the Subject Matter, Teaching Skills, Classroom Management and Evaluation Skills with 10-item measure for each area except teaching skills that have 15. Likewise, Values Orientation was subdivided into Professional Ethics, Personal Qualities, Intrapersonal Values and Aesthetic Values each with 10-item measure. This questionnaire, however, has no record of standardization. The researcher was convinced that the questionnaire measures what it intends to measure based on the literature which reflects teaching competence of graduate school professors.

Responses were descriptively organized through frequency counts, percentages and modal category. Inferential statistics like Gamma Contingency Coefficient and Cramer's-V was used to measure the association of the variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The SLSU Graduate School Faculty Profile

As usually observed in an academic teacher education institution, it was revealed in this study that female dominated the number of faculty members in the graduate school. This means that teaching is becoming an increasingly female-dominated profession with men making up fewer than one in four new recruits (Cassidy, 2008). The Independent Education News (2008) revealed that despite a multimillion-pound campaign to attract more men into teaching, the latest statistics reveal a widening gap between the sexes among those gaining teaching qualifications from universities and teacher training colleges.

Table 1. The SLSU Graduate School Faculty Profile

Variables	Category <i>f</i>	Male (<i>n</i> =25)		Female (<i>n</i> =30)		TOTAL
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
Highest Academic Degree	Masters Degree	16	(64)	15	(50)	31
	Doctors Degree	9	(36)	15	(50)	24
Academic Rank	Instructor	9	(36)	8	(27)	17
	Assistant Professor	12	(48)	11	(37)	23
	Associate Professor	4	(16)	10	(33)	14
	Professor	0	(0)	1	(3)	1
Years in Teaching	2 - 13	16	(64)	13	(43)	29
	14 - 25	6	(24)	9	(30)	15
	26 - 37	3	(12)	8	(27)	11

Moreover, this study shows that female faculty members surpassed their male colleagues in terms of academic achievement. More female faculty members are pursuing their advanced studies not only because it is a requirement but because it provides them satisfaction, respect, and protection in the field of education (Writer, 2010). In fact, in the article *Women in Teaching Profession*, Writer (2010) states that women took clear lead compared to men in terms of success ratio in the field of education. The *Independent Education News* (2008) also revealed that despite a multimillion-pound campaign to attract more men into teaching, the latest statistics reveal a widening gap between the sexes among those gaining teaching qualifications from universities and teacher training colleges. Worst of all, latest studies revealed that there is a growing shortage of male teachers in school (Akhtar, 2012).

Along with the achievement in academic degree, though male faculty members outnumbered the females in the rank of Assistant Professor, the latter, however, stand out the former in the Associate Professorship and Professorship Ranks. This can be attributed to the length of service made by the female faculty members. They were in the teaching profession for a quite number of years compared with their male colleagues. This shows that teaching is still a profession in which majority are women (Cassidy, 2008). According to Thomas (2002) teacher education is also gendered and it is perceived as female profession.

Teaching Competence Level of SLSU Graduate Education Faculty

Before teaching in a graduate school, a faculty member must have achieved a certain level of competence in his/her teaching career. In fact, one of the qualifications in teaching graduate school level is the faculty’s very satisfactory performance in instruction. This is necessary to make sure that quality, efficiency and effectiveness in higher education is preserved as mandated by the Commission on Higher Education.

A. Teaching Practices

This study reveals that the SLSU graduate education faculty performed at a competent level in the different area of competence particularly on teaching practices. This finding implies that the SLSU graduate education faculty members are proficient, capable and expert in their specific field of teaching. They have attained a level of competence, achieved through education, experience and hard work (Disimulacion, 2007), to convey knowledge, information and facts to their students. In fact, deeper view of the table reflects the cyclical idea of the teaching process which means that the SLSU graduate education faculties are competent and equipped with the necessary pedagogical expertise to communicate information effectively and with competence in the class of advanced learning.

Table 2. Level of Teaching Competence of SLSU Graduate Education Faculty in terms of teaching Competence

Teaching Competence	Area of Competence	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of Competence
Teaching Practices	Mastery of the Subject Matter	4.0	0.06	<i>Competent</i>
	Teaching Skills	4.1	0.05	<i>Competent</i>
	Classroom Management	3.9	0.60	<i>Competent</i>
	Evaluation Skills	4.1	0.59	<i>Competent</i>
OVERALL MEAN		4.0		<i>COMPETENT</i>

Value Range	Description
1.0 – 1.7	Not Competent
1.8 – 2.5	Less Competent
2.6 – 3.3	Moderately Competent
3.4 – 4.1	Competent
4.2 – 5.0	Highly Competent

Salandanan (2005), on her side, described these competent teachers as one who have gained mastery of content and possess knowledge on teaching methodologies that will help them facilitate planning and evaluating the entire learning activities. Grossman (1995) added that knowledge of the content they teach affects both what teachers teach and how they teach it. Subject matter then links with general pedagogy, which includes knowledge about classroom organization and management, general knowledge of lesson structure, and general methods of teaching.

The information revealed that the graduate education faculty members of SLSU are competently doing the fundamental role of an effective teacher in the teaching process. They plan what, and how to teach the lesson, master it, implement it, and evaluate outcomes of the implementation (Moore, 2007). This is an assurance that quality education is always the priority of SLSU graduate education.

B. Values Orientation

The mastery of relevant knowledge and skills alone is no guarantee of teacher's successful performance in complex environments. Teacher should be able to select from their available knowledge and skills in such a way that efficient and effective behavior occurs which requires a more intrapersonal view that take into account the characteristics of a specific context (Westera, 2001).

The concept of competence, therefore, as explained by Westera (2001), is strongly associated with going beyond the levels of knowledge and skills which includes an explanation of how knowledge and skills are applied in an effective way professionally, personally, and aesthetically.

This is supported by the findings of this study when the graduate faculty of SLSU is rated as highly competent in the areas of Intrapersonal qualities, aesthetic qualities, and also in professional and personal qualities.

A closer look at the information reveals the detail that graduate faculty of SLSU are imbued with values, attitudes and dispositions that foster a classroom atmosphere of mutual trust and respect for individual characteristics, especially students' needs, interests and abilities. Medley and Shannon (1994) define this professional competence as consisting of knowledge about the kinds of teacher behavior which is known to be effective in helping students progress toward important educational goals.

Table 3. Level of Teaching Competence of SLSU Graduate Education Faculty in terms of Values Orientation

Teaching Competence	Area of Competence	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of Competence
Values Orientation	Professional Ethics	4.4	0.60	<i>Highly Competent</i>
	Personal Qualities	4.4	0.61	<i>Highly Competent</i>
	Intrapersonal Qualities	4.3	0.57	<i>Highly Competent</i>
	Aesthetic Qualities	4.2	0.62	<i>Highly Competent</i>
OVERALL MEAN		4.3		<i>HIGHLY COMPETENT</i>

At this point, SLSU graduate students were not only ensured quality education but also a kind of environment which establishes good relationships and a sense of appreciation to every member of the class that possibly creates an atmosphere conducive for learning. With competent qualities in both intrapersonal and aesthetic qualities, it could be said that SLSU graduate faculty maintains wholesome relationship with students, peers and supervisors. Respect, likewise, by accepting others beliefs and point of view is observed in every classroom setting. It cannot be denied also that promoting camaraderie and teamwork by appreciating individual contribution describes and proves the aesthetic qualities of the faculty members. They were able to see good from each student and, congratulate them on a satisfactory performance.

Relationship between Profile and the Competence of SLSU Graduate Education Faculty

This study further investigates the relationship between the respondent’s profile and their competence. It was found out that although sex is positively correlated to the different areas of teaching competence, its correlation ranges only from weak to moderate correlation. This would mean that sex is not really a major factor to consider in selecting faculty qualified to teach in a graduate education.

Moreover, information revealed that academic rank and years in teaching, likewise, shows a “weak to moderate correlation” in relation to the different areas of teaching competence. This would imply that whether young or old in the profession, or even just an instructor and not a professor, as long as qualified to teach in a graduate education, a faculty can be selected or appointed to teach. Academic rank and seniority in the service should not be the only basis in making a faculty qualified to teach in a graduate education.

Table 4. Relationship between the Profile and the different Competence of SLSU Graduate Education Faculty

VARIABLES	Sex	Educational Degree	Academic Rank	Years in Teaching
	<i>V – value</i>	<i>λ – value</i>	<i>λ – value</i>	<i>λ – value</i>
Mastery of the Subject Matter	0.19	-0.05	0.21	0.25
	(weak)	(weak)	(weak)	(moderate)
Teaching Skills	0.09	-0.37	0.20	0.31
	(weak)	(moderate)	(weak)	(moderate)
Classroom Management	0.04	-0.42	0.24	0.30
	(weak)	(moderate)	(weak)	(moderate)
Evaluation Skills	0.27	-0.38	0.07	0.02
	(moderate)	(moderate)	(weak)	(weak)
Professional Ethics	0.32	-0.36	0.02	-0.09
	(moderate)	(moderate)	(weak)	(weak)
Personal Qualities	0.20	-0.52	-0.02	-0.02
	(weak)	(strong)	(weak)	(weak)
Intrapersonal Qualities	0.25	-0.18	-0.05	0.03
	(moderate)	(weak)	(weak)	(weak)
Aesthetic Qualities	0.40	-0.25	-0.07	0.03
	(moderate)	(moderate)	(weak)	(weak)

Note: r-value interpretation is based on Pett (1997)

r-value__	Description
0.81 – 1.00	Very Strong
0.49 – 0.80	Strong
0.25 – 0.48	Moderate
0.00 – 0.24	Weak

It is, however, noticed that educational degree are negatively correlated to all the areas of teaching competence which implies that faculty members who are higher in degree are likely to be less competent in the different areas of teaching competence. Nonetheless, this does not mean that they are incompetent. An article on “How

Important is a Doctoral Degree” states that doctorate holders have broader horizons which enable them to set their own academic standards. They set a higher learning competence for students allowing the latter to freely move in the academic arena independently. A doctorate holder, then, provides every student a new way of getting into an in-depth knowledge of a discipline. Such attitude is manifested in the strong correlation manifested between educational degree and personal qualities. Faculty members with higher academic degree are more personal in their approach to teaching compared to those that are still in their beginning years. They possess command on the content, presented in a more challenging way while maintaining good personal and emotional relationship with students.

The findings, however, of this study is limited only to the graduate faculty members of Southern Leyte State University. Since evaluation is conducted in one setting particularly during the second semester of School Year 2010-2011, responses of questions were based on their general evaluation and assessment towards their professors who handled them in one or two subjects in the graduate school on that semester. It is, therefore, necessary that this study be replicated or be expanded so that generalization will be made stronger and will be applicable to a larger population.

CONCLUSIONS

Generally, the findings of the study revealed that female faculty members dominate the SLSU Graduate Education Faculty in terms of academic achievement. With high scholastic records, SLSU Graduate Education Faculty performed at “Competent Level” in the two major areas of teaching competence – the teaching practices and the values orientation. Lastly, the SLSU Graduate Education Faculty Profile reveals a “weak to moderate” correlation with the different areas of teaching skills of teaching competence. Only the educational degree of the SLSU Graduate Education Faculty is strongly correlated with personal qualities.

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