TRAINING STRATEGIES USED IN STRAIGHTENING COMPETENCE-BASED CURRICULUM IN RWANDA

Ndihokubwayo Kizito, Mugabo Rugema Leon, Byusa Edwin, Habiyaremye Hashituky Telesphore
University of Rwanda, Republic of Rwanda

Abstract

This research intends to explore the training strategies used by competence-based curriculum trainers during the training of future primary school teachers, teacher training college (TTC) tutors, and TTC demonstration schools' teachers that took place from December 2018 to January 2019 in Rwanda. The researchers visited two training sites and observed different trainers' practices for two weeks. The analysis of results found out that the trainers have different training strategies and practices. Some of them such as role-playing, learning at the circle, interactive trainers were observed to be good training strategies as when trainers used them, trainees were motivated and provided good feedback. On the other hand, some of the training strategies such as lecture, group work and one to one trainer have shown a little interest in trainees. Therefore, this research recommends the training organisers to think of encouraging trainers to use effective training strategies as the present study revealed.
Keywords: *competence-based curriculum, training strategies, future primary school teachers, general observation protocol, Rwanda Education Board.*

Introduction

The competence-based curriculum was implemented from the academic year 2016, we are now at its third year of implementation. During these previous years, teachers have been given intensive training in the cascade model (Rwanda Education Board, 2017) where some selected teachers are invited to the national level training, these national trainers train sector-based trainers (SBTs), and in return these SBTs train the rest of their workmates at their respective sectors and schools (Ndihokubwayo, Habiyaremye, & Rukundo, 2019). Anyway, one may ask if the trainings delivered to in-service teachers are effective or not. However, the researchers would also like to carefully explore the training strategies the trainers use to maximise the training outcome. There are 16 teacher-training colleges (TTCs) in Rwanda aiming at developing and training nursery and primary school teachers. About 3100 TTC student teachers were expected to graduate in the academic year of 2018 and leave for work. Since Rwanda Education Board (REB) is responsible for general secondary schools and TTCs, with other developmental partners (DPs) have successfully organised training for these 3100 TTC leavers, their tutors, and teachers from their demonstration schools. The present research explored the training strategies used by teacher trainers in primary school future teachers' training during 13-17 December 2018 held in 16 sites, their tutors and their demonstration school-teachers' training during 2-7 January 2019 held in 4 sites in Rwanda. These pieces of training aimed at introducing to the participants the competence-based curriculum (CBC), equip them with mastery of the new CBC concepts and strategy topics, and as well as show them how to plan and implement it at school level (Rwanda Education Board, 2018).

Not only in Rwanda, but also in the training system has been an approval of strengthening the professional career of different in-service workers worldwide. Mostly in teacher training (Handicap International, 2014), there are two impact types of training which are pre and in-service teacher training. The pre-service is a training occurring in persons still at formal education. For instance, TTCs train their student teachers for future teaching in primary schools. Another example in colleges of education where future teachers are prepared to teach in secondary schools. In-service training on the other hand serves as strengthening the teachers that are already in school teaching. This is a form of continuous professional development (CPD) where teachers are continuously trained while they are in their service (Collin, Heijden, & Lewis, 2012; Knight, 2002; Snezana, 2010) in order for example to implement a new policy such as CBC, ICT and so on. Kinds of training are also of several forms. For instance, cascade model has been showing a success not only in Rwanda but also in other countries like Kenya (Bett, 2016)a large portion of teachers in Kenya enter the teaching profession when inadequately prepared, while those already in the field receive insufficient support in their professional lives. The cascade model has often been utilized in the country whenever need for teachers' continuing professional development (TCPD, South Africa (Dichaba & Mokhele, 2017), Nepal (Suzuki, 2008), and Greece (Karalis, 2016)that of the cascade or multiplier model. In the first section, we examine the literature related to the theoretical issues of the model and some of its applications in different contexts. The second section deals with the requirements for the implementation of the model, while in the third section we present in short four different applications of the model in the field of adult education in Greece. This evidence demonstrates that cascade model is among the best choices when we have to deal with a great number of participants, while also simultaneously facing deficiencies in time and budget.","author":[{"dropping-particle":"","family":"Karalis","given":"Thanassis","non-dropping-particle":"","parse-names":false,"suffix":""}],"container-title":"Journal of Education and Social Policy","id":"ITEM-1","issue":"2","issued":{"date-parts":[["2016"]]},"page":"104-108","title":"Cascade approach to training: theoretical issues and practical applications in non - formal education","type":"article-journal","volume":"3"},"uris":["http://www.mendeley.com/documents/?uuid=530c6165-b2d4-465d-99c9-b77091019520"]}],"mendeley":{"formattedCitation":"(Karalis, 2016. This model is top-down training from national to the school level. The other models are bottom-up such as from school to national level. This bottom-up occurs at the national level where all trainees are gathered and trained in one place. However, this has shown as uncomfortable and expensive on the part of trainees and government respectively (Ronald, 1994; Shezi, 2008). For instance, the rooms and hotel cater services are very expensive while the place is confined making trainees uncomfortable. Cascade model of training is not only used in education, but also in other sectors such as health (Ajeani et al., 2017; Hartmann, Sallard, & Spierer, 2015) to improve the professional development of workers.

Actually, learning never ends. For instance, once you are in a service, you need to upgrade your information and working skills in your career not necessarily via the formal training but via informal education such as in-service teacher training. According to constructivism (Piaget, 1964) as a learning theory, the trainees should be considered as knowledgeable resources since they are already in their career, what they need is only to update their thoughts, services and model or the way they do things through interacting with policymakers, their fellow teachers and trainers. In many African countries, a big number

of teachers are not well prepared and monitored on what their countries expect from them to do. Therefore, a case of Kenya, Bett (2016)a large portion of teachers in Kenya enter the teaching profession when inadequately prepared, while those already in the field receive insufficient support in their professional lives. The cascade model has often been utilized in the country whenever need for teachers' continuing professional development (TCPD argued that the cascade model of training has shown an enormous potential to train a lot of teachers in a little period of time through CPD. Therefore, many theories such as the theory of transfer of learning and experiential learning theory, constructivism, and action theory surrounding the present research, the researchers have framed in social theory (Bandura, 1977; Razieh, 2016) in a way that trainees should learn from their trainers how they would also train their colleagues and workmates. This theory emphasises observation of the environment we are in and learning from each other in order to increase self-updates and needed skills. For instance, in order to enhance skills, learning should reflect observation and interaction. In one of its parts, social theory plays a role in the mental states during the learning process. This shows that training strategies should be selective in order to allow changing the negative mental status of the trainee into positive learning activity without forcing. This research also will prepare good trainers to fulfil expected trainees as CBC implementers in Rwanda.

In all viewed research about training, only two of them have tackled the training strategies. However, none of them has tackled specifically the issue in implementing the curriculum. For instance, in a study titled training strategies, theories and types of Milhem, Abushamsieh, and Aróstegui (2014), the analysis of strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) was done. The researcher used these business-based four SWOT solutions in order to make organisations aware of their situation and be able to plan effectively. However, this research did not care about the training strategies that trainers use to make workers cope with their work in their organisation. In the book of strategies for environmental education teacher training, its authors, Wilke, Peyton and Hungerford (1987) proposed the training strategies such as outdoor and affective learning, case study and simulation game, community resource, research group, evaluation as well as action planning. However, these strategies were recommendations and the researchers did not study their effectiveness. Therefore, in this regard, the researchers of the present study wish to explore these strategies and see their effectiveness in order to recommend the training organisers to evaluate the training outcomes based on training strategies used in their delivered training. Specifically, the research focuses on the training strategies on CBC training in Rwanda.

Research Methodology

General Background

The majority of the training having occurred in Rwanda on education, have a similar structure. For instance, when Rwanda Education Board (REB) and other developmental partners (DPs) want to organise training on some education policy implementation, they select and invite qualified participants in their subjects or those who have long experience in trainings and meet together in one place (Ndihokubwayo & Habiyaremye, 2018). In other words, here qualified participants mean, if for example they want to train teachers on

information communication technology (ICT) integration in education in Rwandan schools, they invite information technology (IT) staffs from some schools to join the preparation meeting. In this meeting, REB and these DPs have already prepared a training manual which will be distributed to the participants. These participants are briefed on what is expected from them and trained in the way they will train their fellow teachers using that manual. The same is applied to the present training in this study. The trainers were first trained by REB, USAID SOMA UMENYE, and Inspire Educate and Empower (IEE Rwanda) before departure to the centres to train TTC leavers, tutors, and primary school teachers on straightening CBC implementation.

Sample Selection

About 3100 future primary school teachers, 317 tutors, and 509 teachers from demonstration schools were invited and trained. Among 16 sites (current TTCs) where future primary school teachers had training from, researchers chose one site—TTC Nyamata—in the first training during 13-17 December 2018, and they chose TTC Muramba in the second training during 2-7 January 2019 among four sites, where the training of tutors and teachers from demonstration schools took place. This site of future primary school teachers had about 197 participants where 190 were trainees while 7 were their trainers (Ndihokubwayo & Murasira, 2019). The researchers have chosen these two sites because of their convenience.

Instrument and Procedures

The study was a qualitative design and used a general observation protocol (GOP). The researchers designed and used this protocol to observe the training practice. Since the researchers went to the different training sites, they reviewed the training manual before the training and compromised on how they will observe the trainers and trainees' practices and behaviours respectively. The researchers of this study served as observers themselves in data collection. The observers (researchers) in their respective sites observed the trainers' training strategies and the trainees' behaviours. While observing, each observer recorded what the trainer did and what the trainee did in the training room or in outdoor place. The researchers named the protocol general observation because it does not have any limitation on what to observe. Thus, the observer would observe whatever happens and record it down as long as it relates to what the trainer and trainee do.

Data Analysis

After the training, the researchers gathered and put their finding records together. They analysed them according to their observation and thematically selected training strategies based on the most strategies recorded by many observers. However, observers also took into consideration the specific strategies observed by some of them. The researchers checked the occurrence and effectiveness of the training strategy. The occurrence of a training strategy is how much trainers used a certain training strategy, while the effectiveness of the training strategy is how much this strategy is good in training or appreciated by and motivating the trainees. For instance, when many trainers used the given training strategy, they ranked it

high while when they observed it within few trainers, they ranked it low. Similarly, when the observers observed that many trainees appreciate the given training strategy, its effectiveness was ranked high while when the trainees were bored, the effectiveness of the used training strategy was ranked low.

Research Results

Despite the training given to the trainers, the following were different and various training strategies used by the trainers. In table 1, the observers identified eight training strategies. They found that most of the trainers used lecture, discussion, group work, warm-up, and one-to-one trainer, while few of the trainers used role-playing, learning at the circle and interacting trainers.

Table 1. Training strategies with their respective occurrence and effectiveness.

Strategy	Lec-tur-ing	Role-playing	Discus-sion	Group work	Warm-ups	Learn-ing at circle	One to one trainer	Interacting trainers
Occurrence#	High	Low	High	High	High	Low	High	Low
Effectivenes s##	Low	High	High	High	High	High	Low	High

#: how much trainers use the above strategy

##: how much trainees appreciated this strategy

Consecutively, the observers rated the explored training strategies, role-playing, discussion, group work, warm-up, learning at the circle and interactive trainers high, while they rated lecture and one-to-one trainer low based on the conduct of the trainees such as low motivation, distraction, move out of the training room, shouting, and sleeping.

Lecturing

In this kind of delivering training, trainers used most of the time to describe the training content to the participants using manila papers hanged on the wall. They talked and described everything with little opportunity for participants to reflect or speak on what trainer described. This was characterized by the time spent by the trainer talking to participants, writing on manila papers and flip charts and position he/she holds in front of the participants. For instance, the trainers were in front of the participants talking while the participants were just sited and listening. This strategy was not effective to train teachers on two sides. On one side, lecturing is not motivating teachers to shift from teacher to learner-centred, and on another side, trainees were bored and sleeping whenever trainers used this strategy. In training like this, trainers of trainers (ToT) should advise the trainers to consider who the trainees are, what their basic knowledge is so that they should wisely select the training strategy. For instance, if a trainer is a teacher, he/she could not use lecture strategy to train a fellow teacher. On the one hand, a teacher is a knowledgeable person, and

on another hand, he/she needs a role model towards learner-centred and active strategy in teaching and learning practices as competence-based curriculum (CBC) postulates. It is not a good example for a teacher we recommend day by day to use active strategy and learner centred approach in his/her daily routine, and after, you train him/her using passive and teacher-centred approach.

Role-playing

Some trainers used role-play as a training strategy. Trainers gave trainees tasks and instructions on what to do, they had time to discuss in their respective groups, and they had time to show and act what they formulated and discussed using a play. In groups, they shared roles themselves and in presentation they dramatized what the content aimed at telling. This strategy showed a great outcome because as researchers were observing, the whole room was interested and waiting to hear what each group was playing. This kind of training strategy is not only for teaching children but also it shows that it is effective for adults too. The participants could not get sleep even in the afternoon sessions. The content was also well internalised without many questions for clarification because this strategy was on the one side instructive and on another side entertaining.

Discussion

Most trainers in most rooms used discussion. Trainers did not use this strategy along with the entire training session; rather they used it during group work or plenary discussion when they gave the whole room the opportunity to throw free opinions. Though it may consume a lot of time, however, this strategy has shown its effectiveness in allowing participants to reveal and share what they know or think about the content raised from the training manual.

Group Work

As it was claimed on the effectiveness of using of the group when putting together students in teaching or participants in training, group work has shown the importance of showing off, share ideas, cooperating with others, knowing each other, and creating a great idea. Despite that group work can also be harder to individualism and discourages people who are shy and unable to cooperate with others, however, it creates an enormous and encouraging collaborative work. In this training, the researchers observed where many trainers used group work, but more interestingly, where they provided the groups with different task to cover, this strategy showed an effective performance. For instance, they assigned each group to a different topic. This time management strategy as in training, updated minds is expected but also time matters. For instance, if trainers would cover the whole session's content in 4 hours using group work with the same topic, they would cover the same session within 2 hours when using group work assigned to different topics. As the topics were different for all groups, trainees were also found active so that they were able to hear from each other.

Warm-ups

In most of the rooms where trainees gathered, amazing refreshment of songs, claps, and simple gymnastic activities have shown a big impact towards accumulating training skills. These 1 to 3 minutes refresher courses were given at the beginning of the session, after the session, and even in the middle of the session. They were needed as a matter of relaxing participants to give training happy mood, avoiding sleeping, encouraging to follow trainers, and avoiding disruption. However, everything in training should be done in two directions. One is the training participants on the training content so that they are updated on what the training organiser expected. Another direction is to make these trainees become trainers or these participants to become ambassadors. In other words, since the cascade model of training is used in Rwanda, whoever is trained, he has a responsibility to disseminate what he/she learnt where he/she is coming from, colleagues and community. It is in this regard, where facilitators (trainers) gave the opportunity to the participants to give warm-ups to other fellow colleagues. It showed a great performance and enabled them to think on the time when they will be training their fellow colleagues in their respective schools.

Learning at the Circle

Though few trainers used this strategy, it showed an impact on encouraging trainees to grasp and accumulate the training content. The trainers moved the trainees outside the room; they make a circle, hitting a warm-up and start to discuss the training content. Since no one is sited and everyone is facing all other members, none should sleep or disrupt. The environment also has made this strategy to be excellent as participants are in the open space.

One to One Trainer

Since most of the room had two facilitators, the interaction of these facilitators also varied. One to one trainer was done in most rooms where one trainer delivers a session as the main trainer while the second trainer acts as an assistant. In the next session, they exchange the role where one who was the main trainer becomes an assistant and vice versa. In this strategy, an assistant trainer helps and guides group discussion without interrupting the main trainer. Most trainers used this strategy however, it showed a low effect to grasp the content and raise the trainee motivation as the room was very well controlled.

Interacting Trainers

In this kind of strategy, trainers worked together and there was no main or assistant trainer as it was in one to one trainer. This showed an impact, though it sounded not usual to participants or to one of the trainers, however, the participants were happy with this strategy and it made them active and helpful in all angles. For instance, the time one trainer is saying something, another trainer brings an example. When one trainer wants to clarify something while another trainer was talking, he jumps to talk and the other one stops. This gave also the trainees an opportunity to raise their ideas without requesting time from trainers as whoever wants to ask or raise any issue would give it any time during the talk. The participants got a

big package of training content, experienced various views and enjoyed the interaction and none was found shy.

Discussion

Trainers need to move from out-dated and passive training to interactive and active-based strategies (Ajeani et al., 2017). Among the many strategies used in the training, warm-ups, group work, discussion, role-play, learning at the circle, and interacting trainers are effective training strategies. Training is needed to increase and update the in-service workers, however, "to be most effective, training should include theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and classroom application" (Joyce & Showers, 1980 pp.379). This advice to training organisers is very crucial if the trainers can keep this in mind. In order to implement the curriculum and assure that trainees have to acquire needed knowledge, cognitive skills, and attitude and values as CBC recommends, we need to care about styles and strategies used by trainers. For instance, these effective instructional strategies (Wilke et al., 1987) however, in order to achieve cognitive and affective outcomes, care should be taken about trainee characteristics, and available facilities such as time, money, and competent personnel.

In training, not only findings from the present study, but also, Wilke et al. (1987) have proposed several strategies such as outdoor, group investigation, case study, Bank's inquiry and moral dilemma model, community resource as well as simulation games such as role-playing. It is clear that learning at the circle, which took place outside in the focused training, is similar to outdoor education and it showed an improvement in training though few trainers in Rwanda use it. Role-play was also effective in the present study as well as group work, which is similar to group investigation. Similarly, among training strategies such as e-learning, mentoring, team training, seminars, simulation, and field tours or trips proposed by Abushamsieh (2014), some of them have been realised in the present study while others were not. For instance, team training where a group of trainers can help each other in training, a simulation where trainees get the opportunity to role-play a certain concept or figure has been visualised in the present study results. However, mentoring as a long process occurred occasionally, seminars bringing together trainees in regular meetings, field trips or tours, and e-learning have not been observed. This might take a root from the fact that these strategies are long learning, wide, general and do not necessarily take place at one site or base on any occasion or training plan.

Conclusion and Policy Implication

In these pieces of training, we observed that participants were not satisfied with some trainers because of the different strategies used in each training room. For instance, since the group of people assigned to work together would not remain in one room for the entire training period, when one group of trainers shifted from one room to another, you found trainees left claiming that they want to stay with that group. Researchers also found that one room was active while another was passive depending on the group of trainers. However, the system of shifting was effective as people have different personalities, skills, potentials, and ways of doing things. Training organisers should advise trainers to know the trainees before

training so that they can plan effective training strategies accordingly. For instance, there is no way to train teachers using the lecture strategy since they are motivated and encouraged to actively engage learners in their daily teaching and learning activities. Additionally, if you want the teachers to disseminate information trained in, you also have to train them as trainers not as trainees, giving them the opportunity to show how they will pass the material covered in training manual or expected information to reach to every teacher.

Recommendation and Future Research

The results have well outlined the training strategies used by trainers. It is good for training organisers to monitor the trainers in order to easily evaluate the training outcome because we may blame trainees of not implementing what they were trained while they did not catch well the intended point because of the poor training strategy. More studies would be also direct on the following areas: (a) investigate on trainees perceptions of training strategies; (b) cost-effectiveness of on-job training or school-based training and off-job training; (c) training delivery approaches such as simulation, mentoring, team, seminars, micro-training, field trip and tours, and e-learning; (d) training organisers expectations from trainers and their perceptions and measurement of achievement.

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Ndihokubwayo Kizito
PhD Student in Physics Education at the African Centre of Excellence for Innovative Teaching and Learning Mathematics and Science (ACEITLMS), University of Rwanda, College of Education (UR-CE), PO Box: 55 Rwamagana, Kayonza, Republic of Rwanda.
E-mail: ndihokubwayokizito@gmail.com

Mugabo Rugema Leon
Dr (PhD), Head of Teaching and Learning at the African Centre of Excellence for Innovative Teaching and Learning Mathematics and Science (ACEITLMS), Senior Lecturer of Science Education at the University of Rwanda, College of Education (UR-CE), PO Box: 55 Rwamagana, Kayonza, Republic of Rwanda.
E-mail: mugabol2000@yahoo.com

Byusa Edwin
PhD Student in Chemistry Education at the African Centre of Excellence for Innovative Teaching and Learning Mathematics and Science (ACEITLMS), University of Rwanda, College of Education (UR-CE), PO Box: 55 Rwamagana, Kayonza, Republic of Rwanda.
E-mail: byedwin@yahoo.fr

Habiyaremye Hashituky Telesphore
PhD Student in Mathematics Education at the African Centre of Excellence for Innovative Teaching and Learning Mathematics and Science (ACEITLMS), University of Rwanda, College of Education (UR-CE), P.O Box: 55 Rwamagana, Kayonza, Republic of Rwanda.
E-mail: hashituky@gmail.com