

## A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS OF STUDENT TEACHING EVALUATIVE SYSTEM IN THE KOTEBE COLLEGE OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Belay Tefera\*

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*A framework is set at the beginning containing the major principles of an effective student teaching program and evaluation on the one hand and a description of KCTE's evaluative system being currently in use on the other.*

*The analysis reveals that the effectiveness of the evaluative system is questionable as it is not integral to the program of student teaching. It suffers from problems of validity and reliability and fails to give proper feedback to student teachers. It rather results in the assignment of those teaching grades which hardly represent teaching competence. Finally, implications are discussed and general suggestions are given for improving the system.*

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### 1.1. BACKGROUND

Despite differences in emphasis, teacher education programs of all institutions involve the theoretical and practical teaching components. Of all practical experiences, the most important component is 'student teaching' (Brimfield & Leonard, 1983). In this connection, Bennie (1972) says, "while heated controversy has reared its head regarding all other aspects of teacher education programs, student teaching has remained ... as a necessary, valuable, and vital part of such programs (p. 2)." Individuals involved in student teaching also recognise the role student teaching plays in teacher preparation. Teachers, for example, remember student teaching as the most influential aspect of their program (Evertson, 1990) and University supervisors agree (Koehler, 1984). Indeed, many students themselves regard this as the single most important element in their training (Yates, 1972, pp. 61-62).

As a teacher training institution, Kotebe College of Teacher Education (Henceforth KCTE) also gives respect to "practice teaching" (as it is entitled in the College). It has been long time since practice teaching became part of the training program. Its role is felt so important that a student teacher with a failing grade on it can't graduate whatsoever GPA s/he has in theoretical courses. The Ministry of Education is also said to have enforced the secondary schools of Addis Ababa to allow and cooperate in the implementation of the program. KCTE has established a practice teaching office (now under the program office) to coordinate the program.

But, with all these efforts whether the program has prepared teachers as expected and reached the potential height which it possessed is really a question of interest. This is especially the case when attention is seriously paid to the developments occurring in the field of student teaching.

With the view to make student teaching more satisfying a business, both professionals

and concerned authorities have made a concerted effort to the extent that towards the middle of the twentieth century they managed to change the philosophy of practice teaching approach along with the terminology of the experience (i.e., student teaching replacing practice teaching). Student teaching, as distinct form practice teaching, is as such designed no more for mere practising of the already predefined and learned "good" teaching but is rather meant for the provision of another and yet new but practical experiences to student teachers so that, with the help of the supervisor, they can experiment on, discover, and develop their own "good" teaching in the real classroom situation (Bennie, 1972; Bhatnagar, 1980; Joint Committee on State Responsibility for Student Teaching, 1967; Stones & Morris, 1972).

The Joint Committee on State Responsibility for Student Teaching Specifically describes this changed point of view:

The new student teaching should be a creative, fulfilling experi-

ence and at the same time provide for critical analysis... It should not be confined to a block of time at the end of the senior college year. It should range from simple observation to brief exposures with learners, to the development of skills in discrete elements of the teaching act... to analysis of personal skills and insights, all the way to the teaching of regular classes under the analytical eye of a professional mentor (1967, p. 2).

If student teaching program is required to be a developmental and broadening process with the primary aim of enabling the prospective teacher grow in understanding and competence in the teaching role, it is imperative that progress towards this aim be constantly and properly evaluated.

Such a view of student teaching underscores the role evaluation plays as an integral component of the program. First and foremost, evaluation makes student teaching program complete, meaningful and sensible, for it is a means to monitor progress towards the achievement of an intended objective. If evaluation is required to be helpful, it is required not only to be an indispensable and continuous process of

providing information for making decisions, but furthermore such evaluative information needs to be accurate, relevant and comprehensive (Bennie, 1972, pp. 101-120).

In the light of the ongoing discussion, this paper has as its major purpose of analyzing critically the major problems characterizing the evaluative system of KCTE's student teaching program in relation to these two important qualities.

### **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The field of student teaching has gone through a number of developments, and colleges of teacher education have made all the necessary adjustments to keep themselves updated. This is unlike KCTE which still seems to cling to old traditions and approaches that hardly capacitate shooting at present needs. It should not be hard to present evidence in support of this view. Of all things, the nomenclature of "practice teaching" itself, restriction of the duration of the program to only a month, exclusion from the program of the regular teachers who, according to Bennie (1972), are but the most important persons to influence the student teaching experience, the

objective of the program that it " will enable students to apply their psychological, pedagogical knowledge (KCTE catalogue, 1992, p. 163)" rather than helping them experiment on teaching using this knowledge, just to bring only a few points into the screen, can serve as cases in point.

Looking into the reports of practice teaching program in different years, one can also learn that the program has organizational and administrative problems and that student teachers misbehave in the schools, have teaching difficulties and lack a close working relation with regular teachers (Report of Cooperating Schools on Practice teaching, RCSPT, 1984, 1985 & 1986 E.C.; Report of the Department of Pedagogy on Practice Teaching, 1981 E.C.). Recent research on the effectiveness of the practice teaching program of the college (Belay & Gebre, 1993) still shows that the procedure currently followed in the college is far below the modern conception of student teaching.

Although there is hardly evidence on the shortcomings of the evaluative component (an issue left untreated with a remark for further research in Belay & Gebre's paper), it is beyond any level of doubt that the shortcomings of the practice teaching



program are reflected on the evaluative system, as the latter is part and parcel of the former. Hence, in recognition of the problems of KCTE's practice teaching program and the effect that it has on the evaluative system, this paper aims rather at analyzing critically the problems of the student teaching evaluative system keeping very closely in view requirements of an effective evaluative system.

More specifically, an attempt is made to assess the effectiveness by way of answering the following questions.

1. Is the evaluative system an integral component of the program?
2. Is the evaluative system effective enough to be valid?
3. Is the evaluative system effective enough to be reliable?
4. Can the evaluative system make proper provision of feedback to the student teachers?
5. Can the teaching grade indicate completion of the program?

Answers to the above questions are indeed expected to shed light on what is missing in the evaluative system (vis-a-vis the current educative rather than the traditional mere certifying role of student teaching evaluative system) on the one hand and on how proper is the existing evaluative system (vis-a-vis the desired qualities of evaluative techniques) on the other.

This paper is organized in such a way that a framework is established at the beginning. This framework involves a theoretical conception of an effective student teaching program with its evaluative system followed by a practical component dealing with the procedures of student teaching evaluative system currently in use in KCTE.

The remaining section is analysis and discussion of the shortcomings bringing into a kind of "battle-field" principles of evaluation with the practice of the college. The analysis and discussion is supplemented occasionally with some kind of empirical data obtained from files available at KCTE's Practice Teaching Office.

### **1.3. The Framework**

The concept of student teaching in this paper is based on the changed philosophy

described earlier. Certain specific tenets, emerging out of the changed philosophy, undergird the student teaching experience. These tenets are generally accepted in one form or another by many authorities in the student teaching field (Bennie, 1972; Joint Committee on....., 1967; Stones & Morris, 1972; Williams, 1987) and hence are adapted in this paper.

**Some of these tenets are:**

- (1) that student teachers differ in experiences,
- (2) that these experiences need to be prescribed diagnosed, and analyzed,
- (3) that the student teacher passes but along the invariable phases of the program at one's own rate taking increasing responsibilities,
- (4) that this program is complex enough to require acquisition of cognitive and affective skills, insights, and understandings, and
- (5) that competent supervision forthcoming

from the college supervisor, administrative officials in the school, most frequently of all, the regular teacher is required.

Effective student teaching evaluative system is assumed in this paper to be an integral component of the student teaching program which, being charted on the basis of the above tenets, is primarily meant to examine the activities of the student teacher (prescribe, diagnose, and analyze); provide feedback about them; in addition to the traditional and now secondary role of certifying the teaching performance of student teachers.

In the light of the definition and conception of student teaching given above, there are a few basic principles to be applied if student teaching evaluative system is effective:

- (1) that evaluation assumes student teachers to be unique,
- (2) that it is individualized and clinical in nature
- (3) that it occurs continuously throughout the various phases, and

- (4) that in each phase it is comprehensively and widely directed at every activity the student teacher participates requiring different types of data from different sources using different means at different situations,
- (5) and that it should be specific enough to make certain that all parties have accurate and complete understanding of the evaluative interpretation (See also Bennie, 1972, pp. 101-102; Gronlund, 1976, pp. 14 - 27, 483 -500).

Nearly every student teaching program includes in its repertoire of materials an evaluation form of some kind which is utilized in various ways. What should, then, be the contents of student teaching evaluation instrument that can reflect as adequately as possible the principles outlined above?

After reviewing contents of evaluation forms in different institutions, researchers indicate that there are four basic areas generally covered by most evaluative forms, regardless of the particular kind of format into which they may be organized (e.g. Bennie, 1972 ; Bhatnagar, 1980; Stones, 1984; Stones and Morris, 1972):

- (1) that they describe student teachers personal characteristics (e.g. voice, emotional stability, grooming, and so on);
- (2) that they reflect the student teachers professional and academic background and proficiency (e.g. knowledge of subject matter, receptivity to suggestions and criticism etc.);
- (3) that they cover the competency of the student teacher in actual teaching efforts (e.g. the application of theory, adequacy of lesson planning, implementation of plans, rapport with pupils, classroom management, and evaluation competency), and
- (4) that they involve student teachers relationship with the school staff, administration, school concerns, peers etc.

Ogunniyi (1984), on the other, argues that in whatever format the contents of evaluation forms are arranged, it must be that their organization should minimize subjectivity and overlapping. According to Ogunniyi, a useful hint in this regard is to try as much as possible to concentrate on the pattern of teacher-student-material interactions rather than isolated bits of

activities. Some questions that can help in this area are:

- (1) What is the objective of this lesson?
- (2) Do the teacher and the student identify with the objective?
- (3) How does the teacher go about achieving this objective?
- (4) What learning materials and equipment is he using? How appropriate are these items?
- (5) Is there any identifiable sequence of instruction?
- (6) What type of questions are being asked? Are they relevant, and in what frequency and/or distribution?
- (7) Is the teacher domineering, or does he allow student participation in the lesson?
- (8) How does he handle the diverse interactions in the classroom? (p. 18).

### Keeping in view

- (1) the objectives and principles of students teaching program outlined earlier,
- (2) the general contents of evaluation forms summarized above, and

- (3) the format for arranging the various contents,

below is presented a summary of the specimen observation form which is believed to reflect these three issues and hence is used for the purpose of this paper. This observation form is the Stanford Student Teacher Competence Appraisal Guide (SSTCAG) developed by School of Education, Stanford University (1973) and revised at successive years (1978, 1983, 1989). This form consists of 22 specific items arranged systematically under 6 headings on the basis of which pupils, student teachers themselves, regular teachers, peers and supervisors can rate on a five point scale the student teachers teaching behaviour and performance. The contents relate to

- (1) aims: clarity, appropriateness,
- (2) planning: organization of the lesson, selection of content, selection of material,
- (3) performance: beginning the lesson, clarity of presentation, pacing of the lesson, pupil participation and attention, ending the lesson, teacher-pupil rapport,
- (4) Evaluation: variety of pro-



## Belay Tefera

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cedures, use of evaluation results to improve teaching and learning,

- (5) professional: enthusiasm, self-analysis, use of prior teaching experiences, receptivity to suggestions and criticisms, and
- (6) School community: effectiveness in school staff relationships and regular teachers, sensitivity to school norms, beliefs and regulations, interactions with peers and pupils outside the classroom, concern for the total school program and materials, constructive participation in the school affairs. The manual of SSTCAG clearly shows that the criterion, construct, and content validity are well established and the test-retest, internal consistency, and scorer reliabilities prove to be very high even for pupils and peers.

It is this observation form which is used as a guide for assessing the content validity of KCTE's observation form. But, before going into this and related analyses, it is

of paramount importance to summarize the procedures of KCTE's student teaching evaluation.

In KCTE, practice teaching is held with three credit hours in the degree program (four years) and with two credit hours in the diploma program (two years) at the final college years. Description of the course is given in the college catalogue (1992) as follows:

It is designed to enable the student teachers gain practical experiences of teaching in the actual classroom situations in the secondary schools of Addis Ababa. The practice teaching which lasts for four weeks will enable the students to apply their psychological, pedagogical and methodological knowledge and abilities under the guidance of their teachers (p. 163).

The practice teaching program usually begins with a two to three hours oral orientation given to student teachers by the Academic Dean and Practice Teaching Coordinator. The first week of the practice teaching is the observation period whereby the student teacher is assigned in the classroom to observe how the regular teacher teaches. In

the next two weeks, the student teacher involves in the actual teaching preparing one's daily lesson plan and unit plan. The weekly load of the student teachers varies from 6 - 10 periods depending on the subject to be taught. Regular teachers are not involved in supervision and evaluation as well. In the fourth week, student teachers prepare, administer and score tests.

The whole responsibility of supervision of practice teaching is given to college instructors. The supervision involves a three session classroom observation of student teachers teaching activities to give them comments and teaching marks. In each observation, the supervisor uses the college's observation form (KCTE Practice teaching evaluation form, 1985). Table 1 depicts the contents of this observation form.

As indicated on the table, the student teacher is to be evaluated three times on the above six items and only once on the last two items. All the three evaluations carry equal weight and hence the final mark of the student teacher is the average of these three evaluations being converted into a letter grade; grade "c" and below indicating failure.

**Table 1: Items or criteria used for observing/evaluating student teachers together with their weights.**

No.	Items/ criteria	Maximum	Weight			Average
			Given			
			I	II	III	
1.	Personality, Use of Voice, Command of Language	10				
2.	Class Manage- ment, Rela- tionship with pupils	10				
3.	Present- ation (clarity of exposition, factual accu- racy)	30				
4.	Preparation of lesson plan	15				
5.	Effective use of chalkboard and Effective use of teach- ing aid	10				

6.	Application of different teaching techniques, pupils participation, summary, feedback	20				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>				
7.	Unit plan (one at the beginning)	5				
8.	Test drawing (one at the end)	10				

## 2. Analysis

This section deals with analysis of the shortcomings of the evaluative system bringing into attention the specific questions asked under the statement of the problem and the framework stated under part 2.

### 2.1. Is the evaluative system an integral component of the student teaching program?

An effective student teaching evaluative system is required, of all things, to be part and parcel of the program. It should run the whole gamut of the program ranging from the pre student teaching phase through the preparation and actual teaching upto post student teaching phase. Looking at

KCTE's evaluative system, however, one can identify that the whole business of evaluation occurs only at the actual student teaching phase. It can be, therefore, fairly argued that the evaluative system suffers from lots of shortcomings.

To begin with, no evaluation is made at the pre student teaching phase to determine student teachers entry behaviour. Stated otherwise, the evaluative system does not make a pre assessment of the student teachers need at the beginning of the program. This means failure, as what Gronlund (1976, p. 483) says, in

- (1) determining the extent to which student teachers possess the prerequisite skills needed in the program (readiness);
- (2) determining the extent to which student teachers have already achieved the intended outcomes of the program (placement);
- (3) obtaining a base for determining the amount of learning gain during the program (pretest-posttest); and
- (4) providing information that will aid in selecting the most relevant learning activities of the student teachers

(instructional adaptation).

Such an approach makes an erroneous assumption that all student teachers at the senior class level are ready to enter into the student teaching program, and that this level of readiness is the same across all student teachers. But some student teachers may not reach the level of readiness required thus making careful "screening" mandatory at the beginning of the program. At the same time once the student teachers are selected, the determination of their teaching assignment becomes paramount thereby making data accessible not only for placement but also for pretest-posttest comparison and program adaptation.

An added problem is failure in designing the evaluative system in such away that it can occur at regular intervals throughout the program once student teachers are being involved in it. No evaluation exists, for example, at the preparation phase to see how well student teachers have benefited from the oral orientation, school visits, classroom observation etc.

In fact, evaluation occurs at the actual teaching phase. This evaluation is, however, based on observations limited to college

supervisors three session classroom visits rather on frequent observations occurring throughout the four weeks period at regular intervals. What is being assessed in these visits is very unlikely to be that of the progress of the student teacher. Assigning a teaching mark an equal weight of 95% for each of the three observation sessions also implies that the evaluative system is unlikely to give allowance for student teachers development.

## **2.2. Is the evaluative system effective enough to be valid?**

The first issue needing meticulous consideration in designing a valid evaluative system is that of determining and clarifying what is to be evaluated in the process. Specifying objectives has always priority because everything to be done to evaluate emerges out of it. What qualities to look for, what instruments to use, and how to use them, just to mention only a few, depend on statements of intended objectives to be attained at the end of the program.

Coming to the situation of KCTE, evaluators are provided only with copies of the observation form containing a list of seven criteria on the basis of which they are to evaluate the student teachers during the



three observation sessions. This is but a specification of the instrument before clarifying the purpose. Nothing is specified about things to be done at the first, second, and third observations. The evaluator is not informed, for example, if the objective of the first observation is to see the stage that the student teachers are found and how they can develop (i.e., to understand what is going on in the classroom at this stage) vis-a-vis the seven criteria or determine the level of competence of the student teacher in relation to these criteria.

A related problem is absence of a clearly specified frame of reference for evaluating student teachers competence. Whether it is in terms of the relative position which the student teacher holds in some known group or in terms of the specific behaviours s/her should demonstrate is not known. Hence, it is with these problems that supervisors initiate the observation and also proceed to the second and third observations.

Basically, validity also requires the evaluative system to be comprehensive. Hence, evaluation requires data from varying sources by varying means and in different contexts. How does the evaluative system of

KCTE look like in this context? It must be established at the outset that an evaluative system which is not extended throughout the program is hardly to be comprehensive as it lacks information on different phases of the program.

A number of additional arguments can be presented questioning the comprehensiveness of the evaluative system. This is especially with reference to the number of assessors involved, the form of the assessment used, the criteria employed, and the evidence sought.

Firstly, classroom observation of student teachers does not involve, as an additional source of evaluative data, those individuals who have a close working relation with the student teacher. The only assessors involved are college supervisors. Researchers argue on the contrary that in order to get adequate information and ensure validity, the assessment of student teaching must be a cooperative exercise among members of the school and the college (e.g. Bhatnagar, 1980; Stones & Morris, 1972) because different data source provide different types of information (Skeff, 1983): Pupils, for example, consider such aspect of teaching behaviour as mannerism which even supervisors could not observe (Gebre & Belay, 1995), student teachers

self-assessment is essential because one can not improve one's teaching until personal deficiencies are recognized and the need for change internalized (Rippey, 1981) and, regular teachers also add relevant data to the assessment.

Secondly, the form of the assessment (or the observation form), the criteria (or items appearing on the observation form), and the evidence sought are entirely based on student teachers classroom activities neglecting activities outside the classroom. This is evident particularly from the observation form which is found to involve no item relating to student teachers relation with the school community ( see SSTCAG in the framework). In connection to this, one can learn that in almost all reports of practice teaching coordinators (RCSPT, 1984, 1985, & 1986 E.C.), disciplinary problems of student teachers are pointed out, of which 75% are those occurring outside the classroom. Surprisingly enough, it is recommended in one of the reports of the year 1984 E.C. (Ibid) that student teachers need to be graded on their teaching behaviours occurring outside the classroom in addition to that of the classroom evaluation. Such recommendation seems to be born out of the realization that the student teacher is

assigned not to one specific classroom but rather to the school as a whole. To concentrate only on classroom activities for evaluation makes teaching a solitary activity and this fails to prepare teachers for the full range of responsibilities they will have to assume (Goodlad, 1990).

Thirdly, the evaluative system in general and the observation form in particular is still narrow because it is based largely on classroom teaching activities of student teachers. It does not give respect to such factors as "pupils learning" and student notebook (see Table 1) which, on the contrary, are regarded as important and hence used, for example, by the majority of institutions surveyed by Stones and Morris (1972).

Fourthly, the observation form still seems to lack certain important contents when compared with the one specified under the framework. This has to do mainly with issues of involving evaluation during teaching. It does not also give respect to student teachers

- (1) level of sensitivity to individual student needs,
- (2) ability to learn from past experiences and

- (3) level of improvement as the program proceeds etc.

The ongoing argument converges generally to an idea that there are good reasons to doubt the content validity of the evaluative system. Even if it is accepted that evaluation of student teachers based only on actual classroom teaching is adequate, a fact which is hard to swallow, such evaluation can also be criticized on other grounds. Most of all, it consists only of three observations while the student teacher teaches on the average seven periods per day for two weeks (see, for example, Teaching load allotment of Student Teachers, 1985 & 1986 E.C). This observation accounts for only 2% of the teaching performance of the evaluative data.

It is not only that the number of observations are restricted, but also that the three observations may not be evenly distributed across the two weeks period. The supervisor is "free" to make these observations any time s/he likes. It is possible for him/her to make all the three observations right at the beginning of the actual teaching, or all in the middle or even all at the end. In 1986 E.C., for example, the gap between the first and the second obser-

vation was only a day for 3% of student teachers, two days for 7% of them, and three days for 21%. In sum, for about 31% of student teachers, the gap between the first and the second observation is less than four days (Ibid). It means that for these particular student teachers, 75% of the evaluation data depended on observations occurring at the beginning of the program.

If a certain instrument does not adequately sample tasks which it is supposed to measure and as such suffers from content validity, then it is unlikely to have a criterion-related validity and /or construct validity. Moreover, as it is shown in the next discussion the reliability of the observation form is seriously questionable. It is a fundamental psychometric principle that if a test becomes unreliable because of failure to correlate with itself, then it is just like thinking about the unthinkable to expect it possess criterion and construct validity by correlating with another and yet different instrument. In connection to this, Belay (1995)\*\* found in a recent

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\*\* These findings are part of an intensive empirical research recently conducted on "psychometric properties of the student teaching evaluation form - the case of KCTE" for the second Multidisciplinary seminar to be held on Sept. 1995, KCTE.

research that practice teaching score correlates with cumulative GPA and SSTCAG at a magnitude of 0.13 and 0.21 respectively; both very low correlations.

### **2.3. Is the evaluative system reliable?**

Reliability being the consistency of different assessments of a behaviour can be unduly reduced in KCTE's evaluative system as can be extrapolated from the preceding analysis. In a situation where the evaluative system is overloaded with "lacks"-lack of clarity of the purpose of observations, lack of frame of reference for the evaluation, etc. - talking about reliability is to be far from the reality.

Not to oversimplify the matter, a few more critical arguments are in order focusing on the seven criteria appearing on the observation form. The crux of the problem is how far specific enough are these criteria to promote objectivity thus ensuring a reliable data? The present researcher would rather respond to this question negatively.

The seven criteria of concern are vary broad and subjective that they are interpreted differently by different evaluators and of course by the same evaluator across time and situations as well. Personality, class management, effective use of chalkboard etc. are always constructs whose meaning lies in the mind of the evaluator rather than in the objective reality. They are not operationalized so that the practitioner can observe their absence and presence in the student teachers repertoire of skills. This is confirmed by the recent findings of Belay (1995) which uncovered, among others, that the intra-rater reliability of the observation form is 0.17, 0.18, & 0.14 for an interval of 1-3, 4-6, and 7-9 days respectively. In the same study, the inter-rater reliability is reported to be 0.15. The implication is that both test-retest reliability and scorer reliability are far from adequate.

The most serious problem is that of blending together two or more items under the same criterion (see Table 1). The first criterion, for example, consists of three items. The sixth criterion is even more overloaded as it involves four items. It is only the fourth and the seventh criteria which are singleton. This is but an improper organization of contents which neglects the hints that Ogunniyi (1984)



gives for designing a well organized observation form relatively free from subjectivity (see the framework).

Due to problems of specificity and organization, there is a great deal of overlap among the criteria. Personality, for example, can overlap with class management and pupils participation. Command of language can also overlap with presentation which is surprisingly described in the form to mean clarity of exposition and factual accuracy. Under this condition, the student teacher is in effect evaluated on the same quality two or more times across the seven criteria while the idea is evaluating the individual along the seven "independent" criteria.

If the contents (or criteria) of the observation form tend to overlap, then there must be a strong correlation between and among these criteria. Paradoxically, however, Belay (1995) reports that the inter-item correlations of the observation form are so weak that they do not exceed a maximum of 0.25 . [ Note that this correlation is reported for command of language and presentation.] This finding should not be interpreted to mean that the criteria are independent but rather that the raters have

tried their best to perceive them differently to avoid repetition and this is possible because the criteria are broad enough to allow raters think freely in their own way ( Belay, 1995 ). This is still an evidence that puts considerable doubt on the reliability of the observation form.

#### **2.4. Can the evaluative system make proper provision for feedback to student teachers?**

Feedback or knowledge of results has the strongest and most important effect in controlling performance and learning. But certain basic shortcomings are observed in the evaluative system that cast considerable doubt on its appropriateness to provide feedback to student teachers. This is especially the case that one can find in the supervisors classroom observation and the observation form.

During classroom visits, the approach in KCTE is that the supervisor sits at the corner of the classroom checking items on the observation form and making decisions as to which is "good" teaching and "bad" teaching thereby commenting and giving marks. The student teacher reads a "report" on his/her performance, and tries harder to get it right.

Implicit in the above approach is that we can actually define what is "good" and "bad" teaching in a classroom according to some prescribed checklist; and that telling teachers what they are doing is 'right' and 'wrong' will lead to better teaching.

Even if one believes that doing this will lead to better teaching, it must be asked whether this is in fact the best way of achieving better teaching and whether individual teachers can and should teach in different ways in different classroom situations. According to Williams (1989), this is a traditional type of observation which, after extensive experimentation, she found it to be unsatisfactory for reasons which equally apply for KCTE.

1. The student teachers do not like it, because it is threatening.
2. The student teacher has no responsibility for the assessment. It is trainer centered. The purposes of the visits are not also discussed with the student teachers so that they can involve in the rational behind the visits.

3. The checklist or the observation form focuses on too many tasks at once. Too many tasks are tackled in one visit rather than focusing on limited tasks which are more appropriate than others for the stage the student teachers are found. Human beings usually master one thing at a time and hence the training and assessment in each observation should be limited to a reasonable number and complexity of tasks
  
4. There is no continuity from the first to the third observation and the observations were therefore not linked to the course. Assigning equal weight for observations occurring at different but consecutive periods implies that the purpose of the three visits is the same, that teaching behaviour remains unaffected by the factor of experience and that observation is hardly developmental.
  
5. There is no provision for individual pace or wish implying mere adherence to rigid techniques and approaches at the expense of individuality as discussed earlier.

Some additional comments are still in order. During classroom observation the assessor

has a dual role of grading teaching performance and giving "feedback" to student teachers. Stones and Morris (1972) argue that such assessment is of doubtful value in the preparation of teachers as the assessment role of the supervisor very likely weakens his function as an adviser and a helper.

Furthermore, the feedback to be given to student teachers is also inadequate because it is entirely based on student teachers classroom teaching observation as discussed earlier and that feedback may not also be given on all observations. Of those which were visited for three sessions in 1986 E.C., for example, 85% were not given any comment on the third session (SEST, Assembled Evaluation Forms, 1986 E.C).

**2.5. Can the final teaching grade indicate completion of the program?**

It can be implied from the earlier analysis that teaching grades, being dependent on invalid & unreliable evaluative system and data, are very unlikely to be accurate and efficient representations of teaching per-

formance. What other additional limitations occur particularly during grading?

In KCTE grading of teaching performance suggests the determination of a final teaching mark which describes the student teacher according to the criteria which are surprisingly in the mind of the supervisor giving the grade. The criterion is so unspecified that it may mean different things to different supervisors. It may mean a description of the student teachers potential, it may indicate ability at the completion of the student teaching. It may reflect the student teachers growth during the period of student teaching; it may reflect the student teachers position in terms of a predefined absolute criteria, or it may reflect how the student teacher compares with other student teachers.

Another problem has to do with the meaning of grades particularly those leading student teachers repeat the program. While the difference between grade "B" and "C" is only a unit of one, the practical implication is unduly exaggerated to an extent of academic "death-and-life". This has a far reaching negative effect. The importance of the student teaching grade in the life of the student teacher puts great pressure on the person giving the grade as well as on the student teacher. Hence when any doubt exists

concerning the grade to be given, the student teacher is usually given the benefit of the doubt since the grade is vital to his/her future employment (Bennie, 1972, p. 109). Possibilities exist to round-off grades to the next levels so as to save the "life" of failures. This could, however, result in higher grades. To be more practical, one can, for example, look at the academic record of student teachers of the 1985 E.C. batch at KCTE. In this record, the proportion of grades A and B is so high in practice teaching that they rank first in this course than in any other course. On the contrary, grades D and C are practically nil in practice teaching while there are a total of 135 Ds and 12Fs in other courses (Academic Record of Student Teachers, 1985 E.C.).

The implication is that awarding of letter grades is hardly to differentiate between those student teachers who are competent and those who are less than completely satisfactory. According to Bennie (1972), there is a slow but decided trend in changing the grading system from granting of letter grades to awarding pass-fail marks stemming not only from fear of the round-off effect but also from the fact that so many variables are involved in the complexities of

student teaching that the process of narrowing them down to a single valid letter grade is impossible to defend (pp. 109 - 110).

### 3.1. Summary

Student teaching evaluation is found to occur only in the middle of the program when actual student teaching commences neglecting the importance of placement and follow-up evaluation. This is an indication that the evaluative system is not an integral component of the program and that attention is not given to the needs of each individual student teacher. Even then, this classroom observation is carried out for a limited sessions by a college supervisor. It is shown that in such approach it is very unlikely for student teachers to get development oriented feedback as the classroom observations are basically designed for certification.

The evaluative system particularly the observation form is narrowly designed to shoot only at one side of the coin probably because the whole student teaching program of KCTE is charted, as once criticized by Belay and Gebre (1993), on the basis of the



student teaching assignment progresses, but surprisingly it makes use of inaccurate and inefficient techniques in due course of the assessment. This is born out of the analysis depicting arguments against the validity and reliability of the evaluative system in general and the observation form in particular.

As to validity, it is indicated that the evaluative system begins with purposes unspecified and pursues narrowly excluding the importance of comprehensive assessment and instrument for a related purpose.

As to reliability, it is also shown that lack of clarity of purpose and frame of reference for the observations added to the subjectivity of the observation form could result in an impressionistic assessment. The impressionistic approach seriously affects the reliability of assessment in KCTE mainly because the number of observations are shown to be inadequate.

At last, the analysis indicates that the grade assigned as an ultimate index of teaching performance can't be trustworthy in the face of problems of validity and reliability occurring before, during and at the time of grading.

### 3.2. Conclusion and Recommendation

In the light of the definition of effective student teaching evaluative system presented under the framework and the non empirical analysis carried out so far, the effectiveness of KCTE's evaluative system is generally questionable because:

1. It is not an integral part of the student teaching program
2. It reflects lots of shortcomings possibly affecting the validity of the assessment
3. There are lots of potential threat to the reliability of the assessment
4. It is very unlikely to give allowance for proper feedback to student teachers, and
5. The final teaching grade could hardly be a valid and reliable index of student teaching performance

Three general recommendations can be given from the above conclusion: that the student teaching evaluative system of KCTE has a felt need for improvement, that ways and means of introducing recent developments in

student teaching must be created and that more extended empirical survey be conducted in the area to find out the problems manifested when the evaluative system is put into action.

The first recommendation is rather a point of interest for further specification. If improvement is to be brought about in the existing evaluative system, then on what basis should it be carried out? Amongst the many considerations, What is needed to be at the top of the agenda is that such modification will turn out to be effective if it is to occur within the framework of an overall restructuring of the philosophical basis of the program. A mere focus on the evaluative aspect does not take anywhere as this is a reflection of the philosophical and organizational makeup of the whole program. In addition, the improvement is expected to go along the conception of student teaching and evaluation given in this paper, keeping very recent developments, if any, as well. Information from surveys on the problems and practices of the existing system can also be utilized.

Given the above general considerations, what are then some of the aspects in the evaluative system that need modification?

1. The purpose of the evaluative system must be more of informative and educational rather than mere certification of teaching competence.
2. The evaluative activities should occur at the pre student teaching phase and extend throughout the program upto the post student teaching phase.
3. The classroom observation should be designed so as to provide opportunity for teachers to develop their own judgment of what goes on in their own classrooms, should sharpen their awareness of what their pupils are doing and the interaction that takes place in their classes, heighten their ability to evaluate onr's own teaching practices (Williams, 1989).
4. The evaluative system should constitute data from different sources with the help of varied techniques.
5. It must be recognized that changing the letter grading into a pass/fail system may offset the major limitations indicated in the analysis. It must be clear, however, that changing to a pass/fail approach does not mean, as some individuals say, abdicating the responsibility for evaluating the

student teacher in so far as this is to be made with a carefully developed comprehensive evaluation form which indicates strengths and weaknesses of the student teacher and the potential that s/he possesses (Bennie, 1972, p. 110). If letter grades are given, an effort should be made to make them reflect some degree of differentiation.

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