

A Glimpse of the Need for Pedagogical Training of Instructors in Dilla College of Teacher Education and Health Sciences

Worku Getachew*

Introduction

Development goals seem to be achieved when the people involved are educated and trained. The role of education especially at higher levels is to supply trained manpower to satisfy the demands of modern sectors of the economy. The provision of such qualified manpower thus seems to be determined by the number and quality of teachers in higher institutions. That is, success stories have been recorded in countries where the highest qualified professionals have been engaged in teaching.

Debut University is one of the newly established institutions of higher learning which come under federal jurisdiction comprising of three colleges: Dilla College of Teacher Education and Health Sciences, Awassa College of Agriculture and Wondo Genet College of Forestry. The training programs are multi-level in education, health, agriculture and forestry, and in applied social and natural sciences and business. A considerable effort has been exerted to open-up new programs in the university in the coming years. As such, a number of young staff members from different fields of studies are being recruited as instructors in the University.

On the other hand, equality in the right to receive free higher education on the basis of competitive entrance examinations has long been a declared principle in our country. As such, despite very limited intake capacity, the number of candidates for higher education institutions is increasing and the competition to enter these institutions has become competitive more than ever before. This is because young people and their parents seem to believe that higher education

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leads to the full self-realization and it guarantees success in obtaining prestigious, well paid employment.

The training delivered by the higher education institution, therefore, should be connected with labor market needs. Because it seems impossible to randomly find and use the potential of talented young people in different sectors of the economy without the necessary education and training, appropriate conditions must be created for appropriate training.

The Problem

A teacher should create an environment that contributes to the free development of the student, that encourages critical thinking, learning to work with others, and that enables the student to assume professional responsibility and to make decisions independently.

In order to meet these missions of educational institutions successfully (i.e. to impart knowledge, skill and values to students as desired with care and understanding of self and others), teachers should get the utmost support to update and upgrade themselves based on need assessment.

However, according to Fisher and Swindells (1998), it was indicated that most teachers in institutions of higher learning in Ethiopia were not given training on teaching methodologies. A survey made by Worku and Workineh (2001) in Dilla College of Teacher Education and Health Sciences also revealed that the majority of the teachers were subject area specialists and they had no training on teaching methodologies.

Similarly, students are not exposed to the practical aspects of what is taught. Teaching is rather formal and theoretical. There is a gap in what they learn and what they are going to exercise. Conflicts arise between the students and their teachers who have no training in teaching methodology (Fisher and Swindells, 1998).

educational institutions should acquire appropriate professional training prior to their employment.

In the later aspect, the training and re-training shall be given through in-service training programs. That is, those who are currently in the teaching profession, with or without appropriate pedagogical knowledge, should be given appropriate methodological training and re-training through workshops, seminars, professional meetings, summer vacation refresher courses, distance education, etc.

Lastly, the trainees should be certified in the profession after they have fulfilled some standards of refresher courses of methodological training set by experts. For instance, the effort made by the Institute of Educational Research (IER), AAU, to provide higher institution instructors with pedagogical training to update themselves by appropriate professionals in the area is found to be a vital step in this regard.

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attainment in each specialization. The standards are assumed to establish the quality of higher education. Quality issues thus seem to be put at the forefront when instructors are professionally qualified to teach effectively.

In this regard, to ensure quality training, teachers at that level should be given the utmost support through training in methodology and providing the basic requirements of teaching. But especially in teaching, knowing the subject matter alone is worthless. One must know how to teach it effectively (Azeb, 1986). In line with this, Leask (1995) argued that subject area teachers should be required subject matter knowledge, professional knowledge, skills and practices.

A survey made by Worku and Workineh in Dilla College of Teacher Education and Health Sciences (2001) further revealed that even those who had taken some kind of pedagogical training needed essential skills of teaching methods and techniques particularly in areas such as varying teaching methods, preparation and use of instructional materials and teaching aids, communication skills, classroom management, and measurement and evaluation in teaching.

For Morrison (1995), too, subject area specialists should possess several areas of expertise such as academic subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, effective interpersonal behavior, motivating skills, skills for developing curricula, understanding of how students learn, management skills (leadership, communication and monitoring) and skills in assessment, evaluation and record keeping.

To this end, instructors should get the utmost support in updating themselves with such basic skills of how to teach in order to develop their professional competence and handle the learning-teaching process effectively.

The kind of support could be two-way: initial training and follow-up training. In the former, those who are now being trained in

educational institutions should acquire appropriate professional training prior to their employment.

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