
5-3-2021

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Wolde, B. D. (2021). The Role of Continuous Professional Development in Improving Secondary School Teachers' Teaching and Learning Competencies to Deliver Quality Education in Ethiopia: A Case of Secondary School. *The Qualitative Report*, 26(5), 1345-1363. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.3650>

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to understand the role of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in improving secondary school teachers' teaching and learning competencies at Basso Preparatory and Secondary School (BPSS). In so doing, single case study design was employed, and the participants of the study were teachers, principals, supervisor and CPD coordinator of the school and experts at district and Zonal levels, and the data sources were CPD framework and toolkit, portfolio module, teachers' CPD plans and portfolios. The data collection methods were questionnaire, interview and document analysis, and the data collected were analysed. The result depicted that CPD has improved the teaching competencies of some teachers whereas there are some teachers who have problems in their teaching methods, assessment and evaluation, and subject area knowledge. Besides, the findings from the document analysis disclosed that there are also gaps in the framework and toolkit not to including all the expected teaching and learning competencies in line with the current literature. The portfolio module was not also well conceptualized. This implies that CPD is not playing its best role to developing teachers' teaching and learning competencies as a whole to deliver quality education at BPSS, and implications for the stakeholders at different levels were forwarded.

Keywords

continuous professional development, learning competencies, portfolio, quality education, teaching competencies

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the research participants for their time and giving me relevant data.

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The main purpose of this study was to understand the role of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in improving secondary school teachers' teaching and learning competencies at Basso Preparatory and Secondary School (BPSS). In so doing, single case study design was employed, and the participants of the study were teachers, principals, supervisor and CPD coordinator of the school and experts at district and Zonal levels, and the data sources were CPD framework and toolkit, portfolio module, teachers' CPD plans and portfolios. The data collection methods were questionnaire, interview and document analysis, and the data collected were analysed. The result depicted that CPD has improved the teaching competencies of some teachers whereas there are some teachers who have problems in their teaching methods, assessment and evaluation, and subject area knowledge. Besides, the findings from the document analysis disclosed that there are also gaps in the framework and toolkit not to including all the expected teaching and learning competencies in line with the current literature. The portfolio module was not also well conceptualized. This implies that CPD is not playing its best role to developing teachers' teaching and learning competencies as a whole to deliver quality education at BPSS, and implications for the stakeholders at different levels were forwarded.

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INTRODUCTION

Background and Context of the Study

The quality of education at any level is highly dependent on the quality of teachers. And quality teaching and students' quality learning are determined by the quality of teachers who are competent in their teaching and learning through continuous learning (Hord, 2009). However, as it might be difficult to develop the right teaching and learning competencies of teachers in their university studies and in one shot training, they must learn to improve their competencies continuously in their professional life although teachers believe that the main sources of knowledge and skills are teacher educators and education experts that provide them training and education. It is argued by different scholars that although the quality of initial teacher training is excellent, it cannot equip teachers with knowledge, skills, and values that

enable them act effectively and professionally throughout their career (European Commission Education and Training, 2013; Ingvarson, as cited in Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

During the formulation of the current education policy document, it was found that quality is one of the major problems of the Ethiopia education system (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia [FDRE], 1994). To address this problem, the policy document emphasized that teachers should be certified before starting teaching and should have the required qualification and be competent in the media of instruction through in both pre-service and in-service programs. The policy document also emphasized, “The criteria for the professional development of teachers will be continuous education and training, professional ethics and teaching performance” (FDRE, 1994, p. 21).

Understanding the paramount roles of CPD in improving teachers’ teaching competencies, Ministry of Education introduced teachers’ professional development program that focuses on proper CPD and induction for primary and secondary school teachers, supervisors and leaders for the first time in 2005. After implementing the program for three years, a study by Haramay University revealed that there were problems in relation to the structure of CPD in schools to run well organized and effective CPD in cluster resource centers (Ministry of Education[MoE], 2009). Consequently, to overcome such problems, based on the recommendations of the study and other international experience, MoE (2009a, 2009b) introduced a new CPD framework and toolkit “... to provide teachers throughout Ethiopia with a clear structure and rationale for Continuous Professional Development” (2009a, p. 14). Even though the first CPD prepared at national level for the teachers was prescriptive in contents, learning methods, assessment and evaluation mechanisms, the new CPD framework has given the opportunity at national, regional, zonal, district, school and for individual teachers to identify their needs and learn to improve their teaching competencies in their day-to-day practice. Besides, the main aim of CPD is “...to improve the performance of teachers in the classroom in order to raise student achievement and learning. It is a career-long process of improving knowledge, skills and attitudes, centered on the local context and particularly classroom practice” (MoE, 2009a, p. 15). However, when introduced, the emphasis of education leaders was for preparing teachers for licensing. Likewise, in South Africa, teachers’ professional development policy framework focuses on licencing that contradicts by the main intent of teachers’ competencies improvement (Steyn, 2008).

Even though the current literature emphasized on the significance of CPD to improve teachers’ teaching and learning competencies and their actual performance in the classrooms, there is no single way of practicing effective CPD in schools across the world to improve teachers’ teaching and learning competencies to deliver quality education. For instance, Kempton (2013) argued that,

... the best way to improve the quality of teaching is through teachers making a commitment to enhancing their pedagogical skills, understanding of learning and child development, and subject knowledge within a culture of continuous improvement. The most effective way to achieve this change is to give teachers more responsibility for their CPD. (p. 4)

Kempton (2013) also emphasized that:

One of the most important things a teacher can do to improve their teaching is to keep up to date, particularly, in fast moving subjects like science and technology. Current CPD arrangements do not do enough to support this, indeed the focus which the school accountability process places on school led priorities often does quit the reverses. (p. 7).

Sweeney (2005) supports Kempton's claim as, "...just as good teaching must meet diverse needs in a classroom, effective professional development must meet the individual needs of teachers" (p. 3). Walter and Briggs (2012) and Kempton (2013) also emphasized that effective CPD should engage experts from outside schools. Whereas Broad and Evans (2006) and Walter and Briggs (2012) share common element about effective CPD. They assert that it is the teachers who choose and plan their CPD based on their individual gaps and context. These clearly depicted that teachers have key responsibilities in identifying their gaps in their teaching competencies and improve them by learning in different forms. To do so, they have to assess the teaching competencies they have in line with a standard set by their employer or school or in line with the literature in their profession, and their genuine self-assessment and reflection plays a key role to identify their strengths and weaknesses. This is the first step to learn and improve their competencies. However, teachers believe that they cannot do anything without being trained (Helsby, 1999).

Generally, though improving the quality of general education is one of the focus areas of the present education and training policy, general education quality improvement program and Education Sector Development Program through continuous learning and training [ESDP] disclosed that "CPD is not given enough attention by a significant number of school leaders and teachers" (MoE, 2010, p. 20). Similarly, in South Africa, "One of the great challenges of CPDT [Continuous Professional Development of Teachers] is to motivate teachers to become committed to their own development and learning and to participate as active members in a community of practice" (Steyn, 2008, p. 28). Researchers like Daniel, Dessalegn, and Girma (2013) studied the practice, opportunities and challenges of school-based CPD in primary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. They found that teachers have got useful experiences though they face problems, they lack theoretical knowledge on how to engage in CPD. This implies that there are problems and challenges while implementing CPD at secondary schools in Ethiopia to improve teachers' teaching and learning competencies.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to understand the role of CPD in improving the teaching and learning competencies of a Preparatory and Secondary School teachers to deliver quality education. To achieve the purpose, these research questions were formulated: What are the teaching competencies that the teachers have developed after engaging in their CPD? What are the learning competencies that the teachers have developed after engaging in their CPD? Whose needs and priorities have been addressed in their CPD practice in the school? How do school leaders and CPD coordinators manage CPD in the school to improve the teachers' teaching and learning competencies? How suffice are the documents (CPD framework, toolkit and portfolio module) prepared to improving teachers' teaching and learning competencies?

Literature Review

The Concept of CPD

Different scholars and institutions explained the concept in different times differently. According to Nicholls (2001), CPD was formally known as in-service education and training. It was developed for the first time in 1960s in Great Britain in relation to the problems of quality of teaching and related issues. Day (1999) also defines CPD as:

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities, which are intended to be of direct or indirect

benefit to the individual, group or school, which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives. (p. 4)

These definitions clearly show that CPD has significance for teachers and schools to deliver quality education at large by making teachers key agents to improve their own teaching competencies in collaboration with their colleagues and students in their professional life. Megginson and Whitaker (2003) also defined CPD as "...a process by which individuals take control of their own learning and development by engaging in an on-going process of reflection and action" (p. 4). He explicitly states that individual teacher is responsible for their own professional learning, and improvement and change through reflecting on their action.

MoE (2009a) defined CPD as, "Anything that makes me a better teacher" (p. 15). And according to General Teaching Council (GTC) for Scotland,

CPD is what teachers do to keep their professional practice fresh, up to date and stimulating.... by undertaking a wide range of CPD experiences, teachers are more likely to inspire pupils and teach more effectively, enabling pupils to achieve their best. (GTC, as cited in Kempton, 2013, p. 16)

From MoE definition, we can understand that teachers should engage in any activity that makes them competent in their teaching, and from GTC's, CPD helps teachers to improve their teaching knowledge and skills in line with present changes, discoveries and innovations in their subject, pedagogical and professional areas to teach in quality to encourage their students to achieve the highest.

All in all, from the above definitions, one can understand that CPD is what we teachers should assess our gaps, learn in different ways, update our professional and subject matter knowledge and skills in particular and our teaching competencies in general to improve our students' learning and achievement by delivering quality education. This contributes further for our own personal and professional growth, and our school success and effectiveness. Nevertheless, not all these can be achieved without effective CPD in schools.

Effective CPD

Different scholars explained effective teachers' professional development, particularly CPD. For example, Villegas-Reimers (2003) identifies conceptual, contextual, and methodological factors that contribute to a successful professional development program. Conceptual factors relate to how change, teaching, and teacher development are perceived, while contextual factors refer to the role of the school leadership, organizational culture, external agencies, and the extent to which site-based initiatives are supported. Methodological factors relate to processes or procedures that have been designed to support the program. Nevertheless, key stakeholders at different levels might not have the theoretical and practical knowledge and skills on how to practice CPD, and their roles to support, follow-up and provide feedback to facilitate teachers' learning to improve their teaching competencies.

Guskey (as cited in Villgeas-Reimers, 2003) describes guidelines that help for successful planning and implementing professional development opportunities for teachers. They are to recognize change as being both an individual and an organizational process, to

think big, but start small, to work in teams to maintain support, to include procedures for feedback on results, to provide continuous follow-up, support, and pressure, and to integrate programs. Walter and Briggs (2012) also described professional development practice that makes the most difference to teachers is concrete and classroom-based, brings in expertise from outside the school, involves teachers in the choice of areas to develop and activities to undertake, enables teachers to work collaboratively with peers, provides opportunities for mentoring and coaching, sustained overtime and supported by effective school leadership. Broad and Evans (2006) found that effective professional development should strongly link teacher and student learning and guided by data; be personalized and responsive to the complex and unique needs and context of learner; be collaborative, shared inquiry and learning from and with peers, and be sustained, on-going, in-depth, requiring active engagement by the professional.

According to Kempton (2013), effective professional development and learning must maintain a tight focus on pupil learning needs with on-going rigorous evaluation of outcomes; be applicable and relevant to teacher's current class and contribute toward whole-school development; and be sustained over a period of at least two terms and more and involve regular external expert input and build on the best existing practices and understanding. Besides, "Effective CPD provides new knowledge, ideas and skills relevant to the needs of the teacher. It is delivered in a manner appropriate to the content, by a skilled practitioner" (Lydon & King, 2009, p.67). Sweeney (2005) also described effective professional development, as it is cyclical, on-going, and can be divided into three phases: vision building, implementation, and sustainment; creates a learning environment in which teachers continue to improve their practice to meet the needs of their students; and produces a learning community. However, many professional development practices still focus on delivering content rather than enhancing learning (Webster-Wright, 2009, p. 702).

Even though all the scholars did not describe effective CPD in the same manner, they have common agenda that focuses on teachers' continuous learning to improve their teaching competencies to improve the quality of their students' learning in particular and the quality of education as a whole. They have also emphasized that school leadership and culture play key role for engaging teachers in their CPD effectively. The question is how do teachers engage in their CPD to improve their teaching and their students' learning?

Engaging in CPD

When engaging in their CPD, teachers have to follow a certain sequence or cycle, as it is a lifelong endeavour. According to Megginson and Whitaker (2003), the CPD cycle contains four elements: self-assessment, plan and priorities, do and review. Hence, teachers should reflect on their teaching competencies in line with a standard set by their employer and /or in the literature and assess their strengths and gaps. They can also use additional data from their students, peers and their immediate supervisor assessment and evaluation. After doing genuine self-assessment, they must identify their competency gaps and prioritize two or three of them that are very urgent to be learnt within a year, and prepare a plan that includes detailed activities, methods of learning, resources, and the required professional support, success criteria and deadline. Based on their plan, they have to learn using different methods that make them active participants, and record their evidence of learning as a diary, journals, and particularly using portfolio. Finally, teachers have to evaluate and consolidate their CPD at the end of a year (Megginson & Whitaker, 2003). However, the CPD cycle developed by these scholars miss very important elements - learn record, reflect, evaluate, and consolidate.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Education also developed CPD cycle – analyse, plan, do, evaluate and review (MoE, 2009a, 2009b). Like Megginson and Whitaker’s CPD cycle, it misses significant elements like learn, record, reflect, and consolidate.

However, both of them emphasize on the importance of portfolio for recording teachers’ evidence of learning from their CPD. Portfolio is very important means to record our evidence of learning and achievement (Reece & Walker, 2003). As it has different types based on its purpose, they have to choose the right type when they use it to record their learning for their professional development. Since teacher’s portfolio can be divided in to three: teaching portfolio, employment portfolio and showcase or professional development portfolio having their own different purpose (Doolittle, 1994). Above all, their portfolio should include evidence (s) of learning, and reflection on under each evidence - on how they learnt, to what degree they improved the gap they identified during their self-assessment, the learning process and what is not yet improved. In so doing, they should choose best evidence and organize them by theme, write the whole portfolio including their biography and some supporting documents as appendix, bind it and make it ready for assessment or to share with their colleagues. After recording their evidence of learning and in a portfolio, they should evaluate it in line with their CPD plan, whether they improve their gaps in line with their objectives and success criteria they set. Finally, they should consolidate their CPD achievement by celebrating their success, networking for the future and empowering career creativity (Megginson & Whitaker, 2003).

Roles of CPD to Improve Teachers’ Teaching and Learning Competencies

As initial teacher’s training is not enough to develop teachers’ teaching and learning competencies, teachers should engage in CPD. The European Commission Education and Training (2013) supported this as:

No course of initial teacher education, however excellent, can equip teachers with all the competences they will require during their careers. Demands on the teaching profession are evolving rapidly, imposing the need for new approaches.

To be fully effective in teaching, and capable of adjusting to the evolving needs of learners in a world of rapid social, cultural, economic and technological change, teachers themselves need to reflect on their own learning requirements in the context of their particular school environment, and to take greater responsibility for their own lifelong learning as a means of updating and developing their own knowledge and skills. (p. 9)

This depicts that CPD is not an option to fill the competency gaps of teachers.

Villgeas-Reimers (2003) also described the role of CPD. It has a “significant positive impact on teachers’ beliefs and practices, students’ learning, and on the implementation of educational reforms” (p. 19). That is why employers like schools, and key stakeholders have given emphasis on teachers’ CPD to improve their teaching and learning competencies as a teacher cannot be competent in on shot training. From this, one can infer that teachers’ teaching competencies should be learned and developed in an on-going manner to be a competent teacher and to deliver quality education at any level of education.

Recognizing that CPD has key role in improving teachers’ teaching competencies and their students’ learning and achievement, Reece and Walker (2003) described teachers’ key competencies in terms of their teaching roles in relation to *basic teaching; principles and practices of student learning; techniques of teaching; resources for teaching and learning;*

planning and designing for teaching and learning; communication, teaching and learning; assessment of learning and achievement; and evaluating and improving professional practice.

Since competence is the knowledge, skills and values teachers have to perform their teaching tasks effectively, Reece and Walker (2003) underlined, “All teachers learn to be increasingly competent throughout their teaching careers” (p. 396). To do so, they must have learning competencies, too. They have to diagnose their learning needs, plan a learning program, negotiate the further learning needed to provide evidence to show competency, build a portfolio of evidence of competency, record evidence in a logbook or diary, and reflect on the learning activities (Reece & Walker, 2003).

Investigation on CPD

Daniel, Dessalegn, and Girma (2013) studied the practices, opportunities and challenges of school-based continuous teacher professional development in primary schools, Addis Ababa, and they found that CPD practice in the schools has useful experience, opportunities, and challenges. Some of the opportunities identified from the study were CPD is considered as an opportunity for self-enhancement, improvisation of quality of education and it empowered teachers. Moreover, some of the useful experiences gained from the practice were that CPD facilitated easy flow of information and feedback among teachers in a department, cluster schools, and the management at large. It also facilitated documentation of better experiences and success stories in portfolios and anecdotal records. Whereas lack of knowledge and experience on the theoretical foundations; lack of uniformity in the implementation; confusion; lack of budget to run the program at school level; lack of interest, initiative and commitment by some teachers especially by teachers with long years of teaching experience; lack of incentive procedures to recognize teachers who make utmost effort to change themselves and their colleagues; and CPD plans were developed and implemented in relation to minor issues that were indirectly related to students learning program were some of the challenges while practicing CPD in the schools. However, the study did not aim at examining whether it improve the teachers’ teaching and learning competencies.

Besides, Zwiers (2007) described the culture of learning and teaching for some of the teachers participated in professional development for active learning in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Ethiopia as,

On the first day many teachers arrived expecting to sit back and take notes for a week. To them, this was what education looked like. They had been taught for many years this way and this is the teaching that I observed in their classroom. (p. 12)

However, CPD was introduced to change such culture of learning and teaching, and recording evidences of learning that teachers did not develop in their pre-service training and education. In addition, scholars like McNiff (2002) emphasized on the role learning from our day-to-day practice and recording our evidence of learning as:

... I have learnt my job on the job. I have actively researched my own practice to help me learn about it and be effective; I have consistently evaluated and produced reports of how my developing understanding influences my work with others.... (p. 2)

A national study of teachers in England also indicates that “teachers’ orientations to learning impact what and how they learn... teachers’ learning is also influenced by organisational conditions” (Opfer et al., 2011, p. 451).

In specific context, a research project was conducted on what kind of CPD was appropriate for secondary school science teachers to develop competencies in teaching science by King’s College, London and the Weizmann Institute, Israel. The findings showed that;

The CPD programmes provided opportunities for teacher reflection and learning.... Constructing the portfolios provided further opportunity for reflection, discussion and learning for the teachers. An essential task within the programmes was to introduce the idea of the portfolio so that teachers’ understood the role and nature of the portfolio and its contribution to their professional learning, and had sufficient guidance about how to go about constructing a portfolio. (Harrison, Hofstein, Eylon, & Simon, 2008, pp. 18-21)

This implies that the role of teachers is not only teaching the knowledge, skills and values they acquired and developed from their teachers, books and other sources. They are also researching their own teaching and students’ learning to understand, improve, and change their day-to-day practice. This also implies that the teachers are key agents to improve their teaching competencies continuously rather than waiting their employers in particular and other key stakeholders of CPD in general. Even if it is described in the literature that CPD has key roles to improve teachers’ teaching and learning competencies, none of the studies aimed at examining such role. Hence, this paper tries to explain this in a secondary school context.

As an academic of Debre Berhan University who has been providing community service by providing different training like CPD, action research, active learning and continuous assessment to fill the knowledge and skill gaps of a secondary school teachers, I have found that there are both theoretical and practical gaps of the engagement of secondary school teachers to improve their teaching and learning competencies. In filling the gaps in the CPD practice in the school and in other secondary schools in the catchment areas of the University, first, I have started reading both theoretical and empirical studies available in the web easily. Based on my reading and understanding, I done research on CPD. Then, I started challenging Ethiopian CPD framework and the practical toolkit by organizing consultative workshop for CPD experts and coordinators at zone, district and school level, for some selected secondary school teachers and school leaders based on my research findings. Next, I provided practical training on CPD for four secondary school teachers based on the outcomes the consultation workshop. As there was no local material that teachers use as a guide or as supplementary reading text, I wrote a booklet in local language (Amharic language), and the booklet has sold in bookstores. I have the intention to write part two of my book that focus on transformational model of CPD, especially on action research.

Research Design and Methods

Research Design

As the purpose of the study was to understand the role of CPD in improving teachers’ teaching and learning competencies to deliver quality education at a Preparatory and S Secondary School, qualitative research approach and design was chosen as the main goal of this approach is to understand realities in specific context rather than to discover objective reality (Creswell, 2007). Among the qualitative research designs, case study designs, particularly single case design was employed in this study. The rationale for using single case

study was the secondary school was representative other secondary schools that had been practicing CPD so that the lesson learnt from the school could be an informative for other secondary schools (Yin, 2003).

Participants and Data Sources

The participants of the study were teachers, principals, supervisor, CPD coordinator, and experts. I chose this school because of its nearness to my workplace as there was no funding. Above all, I chose the school purposely to understand the role of CPD to improve the teachers' teaching and learning competence as I was informed that there are gaps in their teaching methods, continuous assessment, exam preparation, action research and classroom management during a need assessment I conducted for community service for College of Education, Debre Berhan University. Besides, the new CPD framework and toolkit, portfolio module, school CPD plan and teachers' portfolios were the main data sources.

As there was no institutional review board in the university, to protect the participants from any harm, the researcher informed the participants the purpose of the research and confirmed their agreement of participation. The researcher also told them that they could withdraw at any time, and the data collected were used confidentially and anonymously only for the intended purpose.

Method of Data Collection

The main data collection instruments were questionnaire, interview and document analysis. Questionnaire. I prepared a questionnaire that help teachers to report their improvement in their teaching and learning competencies due to their CPD engagement. It contained seven open ended questions, and I distributed and collected data from 20 teachers of the school who were available while I administered. Some of the questions were

- What are the teaching competences you have developed after engaging in CPD?
- What were the learning competences you have developed while engaging in CPD?
- Whose priorities have been addressed in your school-based CPD? Why?

Interview. I prepared semi structured interview questions (e.g., How do you manage the practice of CPD in your school? What knowledge, skills and values have you developed to improve your teaching after engaging in CPD? What are the learning skills and knowledge you have developed after engaging in CPD? What are the different learning methods you have employed in your CPD activities?) and interviewed the school principal, supervisor, CPD coordinator, four teachers, two CPD experts from Bassona Werena District Education Office and North Shoa Zone Education Department. I chose the teachers purposely based on their active participation in the school's CPD practice as a member of CPD committee, as a previous principal of the school and their active engagement in their group and at school level as I was informed by the school leaders.

Document analysis. I analyzed the new CPD framework and toolkit, and the portfolio module prepared to supplement CPD in Ethiopia based on guiding questions by taking notes that showed the strengths and limitations of the national CPD documents.

Validity and Reliability

To make the study valid, I used deferent sources of evidence, established chain of evidence, and invited key informants to review the draft report, and to make the data reliable, I used case study protocol (Yin, 2003).

Methods of Data Analysis

The analysis was guided by Yin's case study analysis strategies of theoretical proposition (Yin, 2009). The theoretical proposition is if secondary school teachers engage in CPD, they will improve their teaching and learning competencies to deliver quality education. In line with this proposition, I analyzed the data form self-reported teachers' questionnaire by coding, categorizing, describing, and analyzing into themes. The data from the semi-structured interview was analyzed by transcribing, coding and developing themes. The data from document analysis was categorized and described in line with the themes developed form self-reported questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Finally, the data analyzed from the three methods of data collection were synthesized by putting similar ides and themes together from planning, implementing, and evaluating and consolidating CPD.

Results

At a Preparatory and Secondary School, teachers have been engaging in CPD. In 2014/15 academic year, it was North Shoa Zone Education Department that gave them three needs for their CPD: active learning, continuous assessment and professional dialogue though the school need was classroom English language besides the first two. The teachers prepared CPD plan in group which was not in line with the framework and toolkit. The plan also did not include specific type, number and quality of continuous assessment techniques that the teachers are going to learn for assessing their students' knowledge, skills and attitudes, and how they will learn them. It also did not include the same quality for active learning and teaching methods. Rather in the plan, it was stated in general terms, "the three priority areas selected for this academic year are active learning, continuous assessment and professional dialogue." As indicated in the school annual CPD plan in 2014/15(BPSS, 2014), the reasons why the priority areas were chosen as:

Improving continuous assessment - the school teachers have gaps in assessing their students' knowledge, skills and attitude using continuous assessment techniques. As this might have negative impact on the students' result, it is found a burning issue in our school. Consequently, it is possible to improve the problems using the budget and capacity of the school.

Improving active learning and teaching methods- the school teachers are saying that it is very difficult to use active learning and teaching methods effectively due to teacher student ratio as a serious problem. However, they are using them using 1 to 5 organizations as observed Although teachers are not using the methods effectively, it is chosen to improve their active teaching methods skills to improve their students' results.

Professional dialogue- this is chosen to make teachers to identify their needs and to facilitate dialogue and experience sharing on their subject matter knowledge within each department so as to improve students' result.

As explained in the plan, professional dialogue is considered as a means to identify teacher's subject matter knowledge gaps and fill them. This shows that teachers still did not assess themselves and identifies their gaps so far. From this, we can infer that professional dialogue by itself is not a gap for the teachers and the school. The expected results stated in the plan did not also directly match with the contents of the priority areas: 'continuous assessment recording system improved in the school, during learning and teaching, students' participation increased, students' exam results improved in all grade levels, and students showed behavioral change, too. And the result disclosed that their learning was mainly through meetings. The document analysis from the framework and toolkit also indicated that the cycle begin from need analysis, and take review as a key element of each cycle, and the cycle prepared by MoE (2009a, 2009b) did not include important elements like self –assessment instead of need analysis, and reflection instead of review.

On the other hand, the document analysis made on the framework and toolkit indicated that there are very important elements missed and stated in ambitious ways in the planning formats provided. Both the school and individual CPD plan, module, session plan did not include learning methods and success criteria though it is recommended by scholars like Megginson and Whitaker (2003), and the way the expected result and outcome expressed is in a very ambitious manner, "*What changes do you want to see?*" and difficult to measure at the end of a year,

Even if recording evidence of each teacher's learning in line with their CPD annual plan using portfolio is acknowledged in the framework, toolkit and portfolio module prepared by MoE, teachers have a file that they put a brief biography, a copy of self-evaluation result, some active learning methods copied from a source, certificate of participation, continuous assessment form, lesson plan and peer classroom observation forms in a disintegrated way in line with a check list prepared by the school. It seems a file of each teacher, and as professional learning portfolio, it lacks evidence and reflection in line with their CPD annual plan. Above all, the portfolio module prepared to support CPD practice, especially teachers by MoE also have gaps though it introduced important concepts and elements. The title, contents and purposes of portfolio do not describe the development and assessment of teachers' portfolio for different purposes as the contents of a portfolio is determined by its type, and the type of portfolio is determined by its purpose. It did not clearly include the types of teachers' portfolios and their purpose; and the way they are developed and assessed. More surprisingly, it lists a lot of things to be included in a teacher's portfolio for their CPD engagement as a checklist, and that is why the school has directly copied the list and asked their teachers to document a lot of things in a file rather than focusing on how they collect different evidences, choose the best ones that demonstrate their learning in line with their CPD plan, and success criteria, and a reflection on each evidence that includes the learning process, their benchmark, achievement or improvement and the gaps to be further addressed.

Similarly, the result also indicated that there is no evaluation and consolidation of CPD implementation and teachers' achievement at the end of a year in the school to celebrate their success, to establish network between and among teachers and schools, and to empower teachers in their teaching and learning endeavors, and to further encourage them to improve their teaching competencies, and their contribution for the quality of education and their professional at large.

The Role of CPD in Improving Teachers' Teaching Competencies

As the main aim of any CPD is to improve teachers' teaching competence in particular and teacher's professional competence in general, I have asked the teachers, the school leaders,

supervisor, CPD coordinator and experts what teaching competencies teachers have developed after engaging in CPD.

According to the school leader and supervisor, CPD coordinator and experts, there are teachers that CPD help them to improve their teaching competencies, and there are also teachers who have problems in their teaching methods and subject matter knowledge. On the contrary, there are some teachers who have the teaching competencies but they are hesitant to teach well. However, the respondents failed to clearly spell out the specific teaching competence teachers have developed as a result of engaging in CPD.

On the side of the teachers, some of them described that the competencies they have developed are

applying continuous assessment; managing large class; active learning and teaching methods; identifying problems and behavior of their students and supporting them according to their needs; assessing themselves; using theoretical knowledge practically; finding solutions to their problems; planning together, and learning one another on the subject matter knowledge; sharing ideas and experience with colleagues, especially at department level; and how to interact with partners.

Whereas, some of the other teachers described the competencies they developed in a general way as: *new methods of teaching; different teaching methods; build the ability of teaching methods; teaching methods in the classroom; and get new way of teaching learning methods, and effective teaching methods.*

Similar to the later teachers, the teachers I interviewed were unable to mention specific teaching competencies they have developed due to their CPD practice in their school. However, the CPD framework included the professional competencies teacher have to develop as of their CPD practice. According to MoE (2009a, p. 11), the competence that represent the role of Ethiopian teachers are "...facilitating student learning, assessing and reporting student learning outcomes, engaging in continuous professional development, mastery of education and training policy, curriculum and other program development initiatives, and forming partnerships with the school community."

The document analysis made on the framework showed that the competencies stated are not inclusive of all the competence in line with current literature and, even the national professional standard prepared for teachers by MoE in 2013. And one of the competencies, mastery of education and training policy, curriculum and other program development initiatives, is found very general, very difficult to measure, and inclusive of all others. This implies there is a gap in including all the necessary teaching competencies in line with teachers' roles in the CPD framework. Whereas Reece and Walker (2003, p. 395) described teachers' key competence in terms of their roles focusing on eight areas: basic teaching; principles and practices of student learning; techniques of teaching; resources for teaching and learning; planning and designing for teaching and learning; communication, teaching and learning; assessment of learning and achievement; and evaluating and improving professional practice (Look at the appendix A for the specific teaching competence in each area).

The Role of CPD in Improving Teachers' Learning Competencies

In order to develop teachers' teaching competencies which, make them effective in their teaching roles, duties and responsibilities, teachers should learn continuously in their own efforts, through short training that can be facilitated by a school or other key stakeholders. Regarding the teachers' learning competencies, the school leader, supervisor, CPD coordinator

and CPD experts at district and zonal levels were asked to explain the learning competence teachers have developed after engaging in their CPD. The result showed that:

The majority of the teachers want to learn from internet sources. They also exert a great effort in identifying their gaps and trying to improve themselves. They are also interested in participating in short term training and learning one another. However, they do not have the habit of assessing themselves in line with a standard or professional competencies set by their employer or in the current literature by identifying their gaps, planning their urgent gaps or needs, learning, recording evidences of learning, assessing and evaluating their improvement.

Besides, the result from teachers' interview depicts that they have developed cooperative learning and how to share information with their department teachers. And their main learning methods in their CPD are meetings, training, peer observation and feedback, and experience sharing. This depicted that the teachers did not use active learning methods like personal reading, action research and reflection in and on their own practice yet these are some of teachers' lifelong learning methods that transform, empower, emancipate and develop them as professional.

Moreover, the results showed that some teachers fear and lack the confidence to ask their colleagues about the problems and challenges they faced, and to learn from them. As commented by some of the teachers, *“there is no as such a culture of learning one another in an open way as they believe that there are no teachers who are superior or inferior to others.”*

Generally, the results of the study disclosed that CPD has contributed a little to improve the teachers' teaching and learning competencies in the school. Even if it has played its own role in increasing sharing of ideas, experience, problems and challenges they face between teachers, creating awareness about good teaching, developing the ability to work together, helping the school leaders to perform other tasks using CPD groups, it has not played its best role in improving the teachers' teaching and learning competencies in line with the framework let alone the professional literature and standard.

The main reason for such gaps, as revealed by the study, the CPD practice in the school is entangled with varieties of problems and challenges. They reported that there were lot of meetings and many organizations of teachers for different purposes, teachers are not practicing CPD based on their interest, and they perceived it as an obligatory task for them. At school level, there was no well-trained person on CPD, and there was no training given for teachers. There was no clear way of practicing CPD. It has been changed time and again, even its language of practicing, once in English language and the other time in Amharic language. There was no follow-up and feedback at school and other levels except an occasional supervision from the zone and district education department and office. The respondents further depicted that:

CPD did not have an owner, and it has not been practiced in our school based on teachers' competence problems and challenges. Rather, it is for formality. Nobody asks you if you practice it in a wrong way, and nobody praises you if you do well. We do not know the science of practicing CPD and nobody knows whether CPD is planned and implemented based on its science. It does not have its own center furnished and facilitated by resources. CPD experts lack the theoretical knowledge and practical skills while giving training and feedback once or twice in a year or so. And when we ask them the challenges we have faced while exercising it, no one has clearly answered our questions.

Discussion

To facilitate effective CPD to improve teachers' teaching and learning competencies in a sustaining way, it should be introduced clearly the theoretical knowledge and skills for experts and coordinators at different levels. CPD should also be introduced to teachers that help them to build a vision as competent and effective teachers by focusing on their roles, duties and responsibilities as a professional. Sweeney (2005) advised that effective CPD should be introduced into three phases. The first is vision building where teachers model quality instruction and set their own vision what they are going to do, learn and improve to be one of the best teachers professional. The second phase is where teachers implement what they have developed from quality instructions of others and learn according to the vision they developed. Finally, they sustain their endeavor to engage in CPD to improve their teaching competencies, and professional ones as a whole, throughout their career. Whereas, although there is an improvement of CPD practice from its prescriptive to participatory nature, the result of the study indicated that it was not well introduced for both experts at different levels, and teachers in the school as they have a gap in theoretical knowledge and skills on how to practice CPD. And it also implies that the first phase of CPD, vision building, is missed in Ethiopian context. That is why the participants of the study disclosed that they do not have the awareness, the interest, and the knowledge and skills to engage in their own CPD.

Besides, introducing CPD to key stakeholders including teachers, there are some gaps in including the teaching and learning competencies of teachers in the CPD framework and the practical toolkit prepared by MoE. For instance, Reece and Walker (2003) clearly and specifically stated teachers teaching competencies in relation to eight main areas: basic teaching; principles and practices of student learning; techniques of teaching; resources for teaching and learning; planning and designing for teaching and learning; communication, teaching and learning; assessment of learning and achievement; and evaluating and improving professional practice. On the other hand, the CPD framework included teachers' professional competence of facilitating student learning; assessing and reporting student learning outcomes; engaging in continuous professional development; mastery of education and training policy, curriculum and other program development initiatives; and forming partnerships with the school community (MoE, 2009a, 2009b). This shows that the framework did not include some of the key teachers' teaching competencies at least in line with the national professional standard for teachers prepared by MoE in 2013. Specifically, the competency of communication skills of both teachers and students that are key in the teaching and learning process is totally missed in the framework where there are still key problems in both the students and teachers to use the right medium of instruction and students' poor communication skills both orally and in written in the teaching and learning process as the result of the study depicted the problem in the school though the policy document emphasized that teachers should be competent in the media of instruction (FDRE, 1994).

Moreover, there are gaps in following the CPD cycle while practicing it in the school. The cycle gives a chance for institutional and individual need analysis, planning, doing, evaluating and reviewing in each cycle whereas the actual practice did not give enough room for individual teacher's CPD need, planning, doing, and evaluating. And the cycle should begin with self-assessment rather than need analysis, prioritize and plan instead of plan, learn instead of do, and reflect instead of review as a key element of each cycle. In fact, the CPD cycle developed by Megginson and Whitaker (2003) also have its own defects as it did not include some of the key elements of the cycle like learn, evaluate and reflect explicitly. This implies that without teacher's individual self- assessment in line with the teaching competence set by their employer or in their professional literature, and / or teacher professional standard, without prioritizing and planning their individual gaps, without individual active learning to fill their

gaps, without evaluating their own improvement and consolidating their achievement, without reflecting in each cycle of their individual CPD, teachers and their schools might run CPD just for the sake of fulfilling requirements when requested by their employers at different levels. The literature also supports this idea that effective CPD should be related to teacher and student learning and guided by data, must be personalized and responsive to the complex and unique needs and context of teacher, and need to be sustained, ongoing, in-depth, requiring active engagement by the professional (Broad & Evans, 2006).

Besides, to develop teachers' teaching competencies throughout their career, they should have the competence to learn by themselves. Reece and Walker (2003) stated teachers' learning competence. They have to assess their needs (gaps), plan and learn, record their evidence of learning in line with criteria they set using portfolio by incorporating reflection in each evidence and as a whole. The scholars also described the learning competence of teachers by adopting Kolb learning model focusing on active experimentation, concrete experience, reflective observation and abstract conceptualization that requires teachers' advanced learning competence following the cycles to improve their teaching and teacher competencies. However, the result of the study indicated that the teachers were unable to list the learning competencies they have developed as of their CPD practice except cooperative learning and how to share information with teachers in their department. And the learning methods they usually employ are training, meeting, peer observation and feedback, and experience sharing rather than their own individual active learning using action research, reflection on and in practice that helps them to connect theory to practice, improve their teaching competencies, and their students' learning, and empower them as a professional.

Furthermore, as supported by scholars like Reece and Walker (2003) and Doolittle (1994), teachers' recording evidence of their learning plays a significant role in improving teachers' teaching competence. However, the teachers in the school have faced the challenge of preparing their portfolio as evidence of their learning in their CPD as they put different documents in a file without including reflection. They file many things that are not evidences in line with each gap identified and planned in their annual CPD plan following a checklist given by their school. The portfolio module developed by MoE to facilitate CPD also did not clearly include the different kind of portfolio particularly, how to prepare professional learning portfolio and present for assessment or to evidence improvement in teaching competencies. The difference between reflection on practice and reflection on evidence of learning while teaching and learning in their CPD is not well addressed in the portfolio module developed to support CPD by MoE (2010).

The study also revealed that teachers do not evaluate and consolidate their CPD achievement at individual, in their group as well as at school levels at the end of each year. However, according to Megginson and Whitaker (2003), evaluating and consolidating their achievement in CPD has also paramount role in identifying teachers' success and gaps that are not yet addressed in their CPD, celebrating their achievement, establishing network to share and learn one another and empowering teachers and motivating them further learning creativity in their profession, and to deliver quality education in schools at large as, "The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers and their work" (Schleicher as cited in Kempton, 2013, p. 4).

Limitations of the Study

One of the main limitations of this study was that it did not include data from classroom observation, and the view students' have on their teachers' teaching competencies and their continuous improvement and change. The other limitation was the study did not include the views of experts at Ministry of Education on the qualities and limitations of the CPD

framework and practical toolkit, and portfolio module; and their monitoring mechanisms of the implementation of CPD in order to improve teachers' teaching and learning competencies to deliver quality education. Although data saturation was checked getting no additional new information obtained, the findings of the study would be also comprehensive if students and other key stakeholders like parent/s would be participants of the study.

Implications of the Study

Even though the results of the study disclosed that CPD has not played its best role in improving the teachers' teaching and learning competencies at a Preparatory and Secondary School, its purpose was not to generalize the results to other schools though it has implications for key stakeholders at different levels including schools and teachers, and for the current literature on CPD cycles to improve teachers' teaching and learning competencies to deliver quality education.

1. The study revealed that all the figures point towards blaming leaders in the schools and at different level for the inadequacy of CPD practice to improve teachers' teaching and learning competence to deliver quality education. However, individual teacher should play his/her best roles in assessing himself or herself, identifying and prioritizing their gaps, planning and learning, recording, evaluating and consolidating their CPD to improve their own teaching and learning competence to fulfill the needs of their students rather than waiting for the school and their employers at different levels.
2. The school should work together and establish network within colleges and universities to address knowledge and skills gaps on how teachers can practice CPD and prepare portfolio that evidence teachers' learning and improving their teaching competence. And other schools, too, as the data from district and zonal CPD experts suggest that there are problems and challenges in implementing CPD.
3. District education office, zonal education department, and regional education bureau should own CPD by having trained, knowledgeable and skilled experts and CPD coordinators that can practically support and provide constructive feedback for the schools and teachers in their CPD engagement rather than supervise the schools once or twice a year to fulfill a formality and to collect report.
4. As teachers are using traditional methods of learning in their CPD activities, higher education institutions, particularly, college of education should train teachers on self-learning and participatory active learning methods like reflection in or on practice, and action research.
5. MoE should revisit the framework and the practical toolkit to include all teachers' teaching and learning competence in particular, and teachers' professional competence in general in line with current literature in the field and introduce the knowledge and skills and train CPD experts and coordinators at different levels, and teachers on how to practically exercise CPD, particularly at individual teacher's and at school levels.
6. MoE should maintain a system that clearly depicts the duties and responsibilities of each stakeholders to provide practical training on CPD, support, follow-up and feedback on the teacher's and school's CPD activities rather than a system that focuses on collecting data for report purpose for different requirements. Above all, CPD should be the heart of School Improvement Program by including other quality improvement packages, and should be

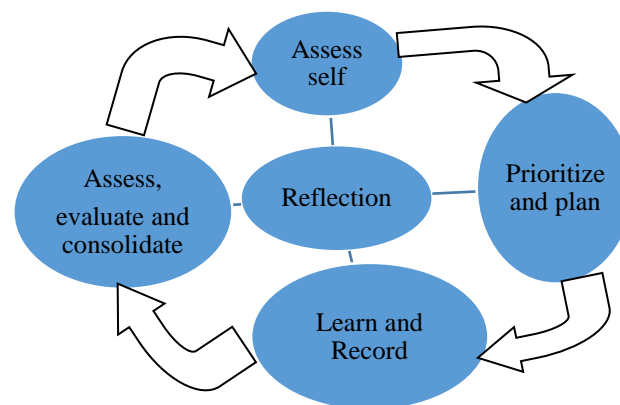
practiced by school principals, supervisors and teachers individually with collaborative learning.

7. MoE also should reexamine the portfolio module prepared to include the different types of portfolio and train all stakeholders including teachers, particularly professional learning portfolio that teachers can develop and submit for assessment in line with their annual CPD plan by including different evidences of learning and their reflection on each evidence that shows how they learnt and how much they improved in accordance with the success criteria they set for a year.

8. From my reading in the literature, and the CPD cycles developed by Megginson and Whitaker (2003) and MoE (2009a, 2009b), I have asserted that there are gaps in both of them. And to make a CPD cycle complete, it should include self-assessment, learning and recording, assessing and consolidating, and reflecting on each cycle of CPD explicitly, and it should be presented as follows.

Figure 1

Proposed Teacher Assessment Model



As indicated in Figure 1, I propose that teachers should assess themselves in line with teaching and learning competencies set by their employer in particular and teacher education and training literature in general so that they can understand their strengths and weaknesses. Among their weaknesses, they have to priorities two to three areas that they must improve first and prepare individual annual CPD plan. And I also propose that their annual CPD plan must include learning methods and their learning success criteria. While learning in line with their CPD plan, I propose that teachers should record their evidences of learning using a diary, narratives, and especially portfolio to be assessed about their improvement in teaching and learning competencies. I also propose that besides their ongoing assessment about their learning progress, teachers must assess and evaluate their CPD plan as of their accomplishment at the end of each academic year and should consolidate so that they can identify their successes, challenges and opportunities for their continuous learning efforts. Finally, I propose that reflection should be an element of every cycle of CPD.

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Acknowledgements: I would like to thank all the research participants for their time and giving me relevant data.

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Article Citation

Wolde, B. K. (2021). The role of continuous professional development in improving secondary school teachers' teaching and learning competencies to deliver quality education in Ethiopia: A case of secondary school. *The Qualitative Report*, 26(5), 1345-1363. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.3650>
