



"T-TEL HAS CREATED A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR IMPROVING TEACHING PRACTICE"

KENNEDY BOE DOE FOSO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



Creating better learning in schools through new teaching practices - Kennedy story



Kennedy tells us how the training he has received from T-TEL is helping him to improve his interactions with students and increase their levels of learning and participation during their studies at College:

I have 17 years of teaching experience, and work as a Teaching Practice Coordinator in the Foso College of Education, helping to improve student teachers' path to becoming qualified teachers. I am part of a cohort of 46 tutors, teaching 950 student teachers every week. I also work with 60 Lead Mentors and about 200 Mentors across Assin North and Assin South districts in the Central Region of Ghana.

Prior to T-TEL's involvement in our college, I did not have a very positive or productive relationship with my students. For example, tutors' general approach towards students' work was to point out their mistakes and intimidate them into working hard. Also my assessments of students' strength and weaknesses focused on their knowledge of subject matter rather than how they use their knowledge to guide and facilitate pupils' learning.

A key challenge to improving learning outcomes in Ghana is that teachers do not receive quality teaching practice before they graduate, leaving them ill-prepared for the demands of a full and busy school classroom.

Kennedy Boe-Doe, a Tutor and Teaching Practice Coordinator (TPC) at the Central Region Foso College of Education, is working to change that. Foso is one of Ghana's leading colleges offering predominantly Mathematics and Science Education.

Kennedy is part of Tutors who have received training under the **Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL)**, a Government of Ghana programme supported by the British government's UK aid, designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Ghana. The programme is committed to equipping the next generation of teachers with the skills they need to prepare Ghana's pupils to succeed at school and in the modern world.

The Government of Ghana realised this approach was not helping student teachers learn effectively or gain the knowledge or necessary teaching methodologies for today's students. That's why T-TEL offers professional development sessions, as well as discussions on teaching practice. These sessions are helping tutors like Kennedy inject a whole new set of approaches into their teaching, especially when supervising student teaching practice in demonstration schools.

For instance, student teachers now keep a Teaching Practice Journal, allowing better analysis of experiences and mentoring of progress, where tutor training on the effective use of questioning are helping tutors address student teachers' own learning needs when teaching lesson delivery. Kennedy is proud of what his student teachers are now able to achieve:

My student teachers can now distinguish between good and bad teaching skills. In practice sessions, they teach with confidence because they've established a good relationship with their pupils. They have also learnt to respect the view of pupils in class discussions. The teaching practice journal is helping them to review and reflect on their lessons, enabling them to improve in lesson delivery.

Kennedy stresses how much T-TEL's professional development sessions have helped him deepen his understanding of supervised practice as a tutor. Through the various workshops organised by T-TEL in all colleges, he has increased his skills and learnt modern methodologies, such as new approaches to questioning and group work to drastically increase student participation.

These techniques have also strengthened students' communication and information gathering skills, creating a more positive and inspiring learning environment in the college classroom. Indeed a recent T-TEL survey shows that tutors using more student-focused teaching methods in college classrooms has increased by 60% in male tutors and by 90% in female tutors. Kennedy has noted this significant change. He says:

I now talk much less in the classroom. I'd say my lecturing has reduced from by 30% allowing student teachers to participate much more, while I facilitate. The student teachers actively talk and work together for well over half of each lesson. They now share their learning and views about lesson topics freely in class while being respectful about the views of others.

Due to Kennedy changing his teaching approach to allow more discussion and student teacher participation, the students now confidently and productively give feedback on issues such as lesson planning, presentations and assessment of learning outcomes. T-TEL's interventions have also improved Kennedy's professional skills and those of his fellow tutors. Kennedy is very grateful for this:

When I look back to my teaching just a year ago, I can see how dramatically my skills and knowledge, including managerial and communication skills, have improved. The same is true for my colleagues. T-TEL has created a learning environment for improving teaching practice, and we meet every week to share concrete and useful ideas and skills across the college curriculum. To a large extent, T-TEL has also broadened my horizons, giving me the opportunity to interact with international education specialists for example. I'm excited by my progress, and more committed than ever to sharing my new teaching and learning knowledge and experiences with all teacher educators in Ghana.



Figure 1: Kennedy (standing) draws colleague tutors attention to critical issues in a discussion at PD session.



Figure 2: Kennedy (in the middle of group) sharing an idea with colleague female tutors at PD session,