



"T-TEL'S INTERVENTIONS ARE HELPING TUTORS PREPARE STUDENT TEACHERS"

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### HOLY CHILD COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



## Preparing college tutors to nurture the next generation of teachers - Regina's story



To deliver quality education in Ghana's schools, we need teachers equipped with the skills, knowledge and experience to enter school classrooms with confidence. Today's schoolchildren have a range of needs and teachers must employ different approaches to ensure children learn well and are prepared for the modern-day world. Tutors at Colleges of Education are key to making this happen.

**Regina Evelyn Forson has been an English Language Tutor at the Holy Child College of Education, Takoradi since 2014.** She has been teaching for almost 32 years and is committed to strengthening the processes of preparing teachers to contribute to the improvement of learning in Ghana's primary schools.

Regina is a Professional Development Coordinator (PDC) at the Holy Child College located at Sekondi Takoradi in the Western Region of Ghana. This role allows her to facilitate weekly professional development sessions for Tutors in her College using Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL) materials. She has also received regular training from T-TEL in her role as a PDC. She loves her role in ensuring tutors make the most of professional development sessions, in order to improve their lessons with student teachers. She also understands why her role is so important:

*For some time, we have seen a very low performance or failure of pupils at the level of basic education. There are two reasons for this in Ghana; the inadequate teacher preparation and training and the ineffective delivery of lesson in school classrooms. College of Education tutors have historically had little control over this because colleges merely implemented Ministry of Education policy and curriculum, instead of playing a role in shaping them. As a result, colleges have considered it a government responsibility to produce high performing teachers with quality training in effective pedagogy for basic education.*

Another consequence of this is that many tutors have stuck to very traditional methods of lecturing, even though student teachers are not learning effectively. Many tutors believe that just completing the college syllabus and preparing students for exams is enough in teacher education, rather than concentrating on the teaching methodologies and approaches. This means students are not being challenged beyond traditional approaches to learn more modern methods of teaching. T-TEL's work directly addresses this issue. Regina explains:

*T-TEL's interventions are helping tutors prepare student teachers for improved classroom teaching and greater interaction and participation of pupils in lessons. With T-TEL, we have been better equipped on a number of teaching strategies such as games, role play, storytelling, pair work and small group activities to promote quality learning. These strategies create a lively environment, where student teachers learn better. They are helping to re-shape the attitudes of student teachers and deepening their experiences of teaching practice. Moreover, tutors and student teachers are learning the importance of being gender-aware in the classroom and ensuring male and female pupils are given equal chances to learn and succeed.*

T-TEL's work with tutors like Regina is having an impact beyond the classroom, transforming the way college principals, administrators, tutors and students approach teacher education and preparation. Knowledge and skills are being enhanced in tutors and student teachers are showing better learning outcomes. Regina explains:

*Thanks to the support of the Governments of Ghana and the UK through T-TEL, I have come to believe that you can educate all student teachers effectively. For instance, 'Talk for learning' teaching strategy has completely changed my understanding of the learner. Now, whenever I give student teachers the opportunity to talk, they show so much initiative. Student teachers are expressing themselves much better than before through this teaching and learning practices. I can see an attitude change amongst students in class as they willingly answer and ask questions without fear of being teased by their classmates. I equally use 'talking and activity balls' to ensure that every student teacher is given the opportunity to contribute to class discussions and the learning process.*

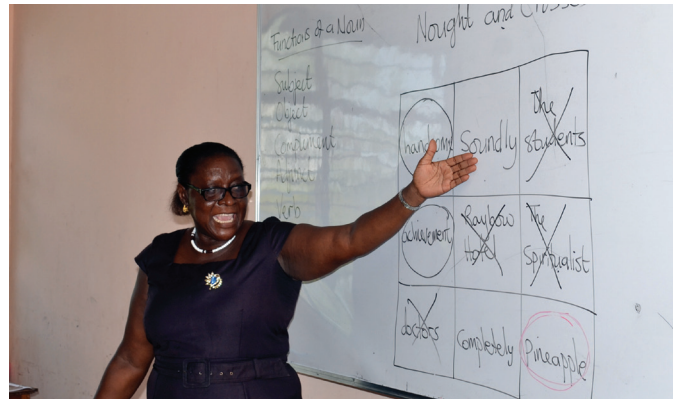
Regina is using group work and other activities to promote individual and small group discussions. For example, using the 'Think-Pair-Share' method has created a much better student teacher response. Regina now uses this approach 90% of the time, because it allows an individual student in a group to first think about an issue before pairing up with a colleague to discuss their answers and finally sharing it with the whole group. This increases student teachers' analytical skills. Student teachers are growing in confidence and speaking more readily about issues or their struggles in learning about teaching. This means not only are they learning better, but their communication skills are improving dramatically.

Regina can really see and feel the difference since T-TEL started its work. She notes:

*I have improved my professional knowledge and skills as a tutor especially in methodology, which my students desperately need. For instance, I spend about 10% more time on lesson preparation before each class that I teach. I'm also thrilled to see that my students have improved interaction and participation in class by 15% in the last year. I hope to sustain these professional gains through continuous practice with my students.*



**Figure 1:** Regina (Left) in paired activity work with colleague tutor at a PD session at Holy Child College.



**Figure 2:** Regina in class giving instructions to student teachers.



**Figure 3:** Regina (far right) using group work to promote learning in class.



**Figure 4:** Regina moves from group to group to provide support in class at Holy Child College, Takoradi.



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