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INNOVATION IN PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF GHANAIAN TEACHERS

Synopsis

The School Partnerships component of the Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL) programme (DFID 2014-19) is working with 38 Colleges of Education and Districts to develop an innovative course structure giving student teachers practical experience in classroom environments.

Key innovations to improve the competency of graduate teachers:

- More interaction with children in classrooms for student teachers.
 - Consistency in teaching practice arrangements between all Colleges of Education.
 - Teaching practice handbooks for 67,000 student teachers, 2,000 tutors and 6,000 mentors.
 - Strengthened linkages between Colleges of Education, districts and schools.
 - Improved support and guidance for student teachers pre, during and post teaching practice.
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Introduction

The School Partnerships component of the Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL) programme (DFID 2014-19) is working with all 38 Colleges of Education (CoE) and partner Districts to develop an innovative course structure giving student teachers practical experience in classroom environments.

While teacher education courses in Ghana provide student teachers with some classroom practice, this is poorly structured, poorly supervised, comes too late and is of little help in developing the practical skills students will require when they become qualified teachers. There is a lack of coordination between Colleges of Education, and teaching practice districts and schools. The system has barely changed since independence in 1957.

T-TEL is helping to develop an innovative new structure for the Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) programme, to improve the competency of graduate teachers. This structure represents a significant departure from previous practice and will provide:

- More interaction with children in classrooms for student teachers.
- Consistency in teaching practice arrangements between all Colleges of Education.
- Teaching practice handbooks for 67,000 student teachers, 2,000 tutors and 6,000 mentors.
- Strengthened linkages between Colleges of Education, districts and schools.
- Improved support and guidance for student teachers pre, during and post teaching practice.

The Innovation of Teaching Practice

The quality of education in every society is largely determined by the quality of its teachers. Regular, phased, reflective practical experience is a crucial element of teacher education. Interaction with

pupils in their classroom is a foundational component to inform and prepare teachers well. However, the current arrangement for teaching practice in Ghana does not offer such opportunities.

Six key weaknesses in current practice have been identified that will be addressed through innovative approaches to teaching practice, being implemented through T-TEL.

1. Student teachers have insufficient interaction with school children.

Current practice: student teachers do not have any meaningful, substantive interaction with children or practical classroom teaching experience until Year 3 of the three year Diploma in Basic Education (DBE).

T-TEL innovation: Support Colleges of Education to provide student teachers with more classroom experience and interaction with children from the start of the DBE programme, including school observation in Year 1, practice teaching of lessons in schools during Year 2, and school-based teaching practice for one semester in Year 3.

2. No consistency in teaching practice arrangements between Colleges of Education

Current practice: There are differences between Colleges of Education in the timing and duration of teaching practice and in the level of support and guidance provided to student teachers prior to, during and after their teaching practice.

T-TEL innovation: Through stakeholder consultation, identify and support a teaching practice model that can be implemented across all Colleges of Education with greater emphasis on development and assessment of teaching competencies.

3. Lack of teaching practice materials for student teachers, tutors and mentors

Current practice: No materials are available to guide student teachers through their teaching practice and to provide a structured experience. The result is a lack of consistency in the activities undertaken and support provided by tutors and mentors.

T-TEL innovation: Develop structured activities to improve professional teaching competencies. Support the development and implementation of handbooks for student teachers, tutors and mentors, and guidelines for teaching practice coordinators, head teachers, Girls Education Officers and school inspectors.

4. Weak linkages between Colleges of Education, teaching practice districts and schools

Current practice: District officers are not always informed of teaching practice taking place in their schools. Some student teachers experience practical challenges during the Year 3 school-based teaching practice including finding suitable accommodation. There are no social protection strategies in place to safeguard female student teachers.

T-TEL innovation: Orientation workshops have been conducted jointly with College of Education principals and District Directors of Education. The teaching practice handbooks include guidance on protection strategies for student teachers on teaching practice. Guidelines have been developed specifically for Girls Education Officers.

5. Lack of structured training and guidance for teaching practice school mentors

Current practice: Mentors receive little support and guidance from the College of Education or the head teacher / lead mentor due to lack of resources for training. Some student teachers

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find themselves left alone to teach the class during Year 3 teaching practice while the mentor / class teacher takes a break.

T-TEL innovation: School Partnership Advisers, contracted under T-TEL, will provide orientation for teaching practice coordinators to support the introduction of handbooks and guidelines. SPAs and teaching practice coordinators will run workshops for tutors and head teachers of teaching practice schools. Head teachers will run workshops for mentors in their schools.

6. Lack of support and guidance for student teachers pre, during and post teaching practice

Current situation: Lack of adequate preparation of student teachers before the start of teaching practice; lack of consistency in supervision and assessment of student teachers during each TP; and lack of follow-up by CoEs after student teachers complete each teaching practice.

T-TEL innovation: Tutors will provide pre-and post-teaching practice orientation for student teachers. The Student Teacher Handbook, Tutor Handbook and Mentor Handbook follow a common structure which includes pre-, during and post-teaching practice activities.

What is new in the Teaching Practice Handbooks?

The handbooks provide an important resource where none exists. It is expected that by the end of the T-TEL school partnerships initiative, all tutors, student teachers and mentors will be competent and beginning teachers will in future be capable of providing quality education in basic schools.

The Benefits of the T-TEL Teaching Practice Innovations

1. Structured materials to provide:
 - (a) consistency and uniformity across all Colleges of Education and teaching practice schools;
 - (b) progression in the development of student teacher competencies aligned to teacher professional standards.
2. Information and training to enable head teachers, mentors, tutors, school inspectors and Girls Education Officers to understand and undertake their distinct roles in teaching practice more effectively.
3. Strengthened partnerships between Colleges of Education, teaching practice districts and teaching practice schools.
4. Improved quality of teaching practice leading to more competent beginning teachers and ultimately to improved learning achievement of children in basic education.

Annex 1: INNOVATION IN PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF GHANAIAI TEACHERS



Three teaching practice handbooks have been developed and distributed to the 38 Colleges of Education in Ghana. Handbooks will be provided to 67,000 Student Teachers, 2,000 College of Education tutors and 6,000 mentors in teaching practice schools through the T-TEL Programme.



Innovation in supervision of Student Teachers: Student teachers need opportunities to practice writing on the whiteboard or blackboard with guidance and supervision from their tutor or mentor.

On the following pages are examples from the Student Teacher Handbook, Tutor Handbook and Mentor Handbook which illustrate the attractive design of the new resource materials that are an integral component of the innovative structure of teaching practice.

1 Year 1 - 3: Teaching Practice

TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR 1 OBSERVATION TEACHING PRACTICE

Y1 Pre-TP Topic: Pre-Observation Activities (college-based)
Purpose: This activity will prepare you for the two-week Observation Teaching Practice
Pre-TP Activity 1: Orientation for Student Teachers – School Observation Checklist
Pre-TP Activity 2: Using the TP Journal
Pre-TP Activity 3: Establishing good working relationships

Y1 Pre-TP - Summary of the Task

How to Prepare for the School Observation TP

When you have completed these three Y1 Pre-TP activities with your Tutor you will have:

- prepared a school observation checklist;
- understood how to use the TP Journal and have your TP Journal ready to take with you to your Observation TP;
- discussed how to establish good working relationships with the head teacher, classroom teachers and pupils in your host school. You will also have a good understanding of how to conduct yourself in a professional manner in the community where the school is located.

Y1 Pre-TP Activity 1: Orientation for Student Teachers – School Observation Checklist

PLAN TOGETHER
Before the end of Y1 Semester 1 your Tutor will help you to prepare for your two-week Observation Teaching Practice.

First, with your TP partner think about the school information you will need, and the things you want to observe in the school. For example you will need information about the school rules; the classroom timetable, the teachers in the school, and the pupils in your class and the local community. What do you need to know before you arrive at the school and what will you need to find out about as soon as you arrive at the school? For the classroom observation you will need a checklist of what to observe in the lessons (see Annex 3).

DO
Make a checklist of the most important information you will need (a) before you arrive at the school, and (b) when you first arrive at the school. Write down where you think you can find out this information.

In your TP Journal, make a checklist of what you want to observe during the two-week Observation TP.

REFLECT TOGETHER
Compare your checklist with the checklist your TP partner has made.

- Are there any ideas you thought of that your TP partner did not think of?
- Are there any ideas your TP partner thought of that you did not?

Listen to ideas from other members of your class and add any new ideas to your list.

Y1 Pre-TP Activity 2: Using the TP Journal

PLAN TOGETHER
You will keep a TP Journal covering all three TPs (Y1, Y2 and Y3) as a record of all the important information and activities. To start your TP Journal, discuss with your TP partner and choose the top ten points on your school information checklist and the top ten points on your classroom observation checklist.

DO
Write your school information checklist and classroom observation checklist in your TP Journal.

REFLECT TOGETHER
Share the TP Journal entries with others in your class and exchange ideas.

Y1 Pre-TP Activity 3: Establishing good working relationships

PLAN TOGETHER
Review the GES requirements for Teaching Practice, covering professional and personal behaviour of Student Teachers. Discuss each one with your TP partner. It is important to realise that in Ghanaian society the status of a teacher, including a Student Teacher, is highly respected and as such you will be a role model to the pupils in the school. Think about who you will be interacting with during the Observation TP.

DO
With your class, brainstorm all the positive ways of making and keeping good relationships with adults and children in the Observation TP school.

In your TP Journal, make a list of all the negative behaviours that must be avoided.

REFLECT TOGETHER
With your TP partner think of 2-3 difficult situations you might experience and how you can ensure that you behave in a positive way in order to maintain good relationships. Consider the three case study examples below and discuss with your TP partner how you should respond in these situations.

Case Studies for discussion - what would you do in each of these situations?

Case Study 1: When you arrive at the school the classroom is locked and you do not have a key.

Case Study 2: Three boys arrive late for the class and have forgotten to do their homework.

Case Study 3: During the lessons you notice that the teacher rarely asks any questions to the girls in the class and sometimes the teacher uses corporal punishment to discipline pupils who are not paying attention to the lesson.

Self-Assessment Questions – to guide your learning and to help prepare for the observation TP ask yourself these questions:
1. How well prepared do you feel for the School Observation TP?
2. What are the two most important ideas you have learned from doing these pre-TP tasks?

NOTE for the attention of Student Teachers: the activities included in the following Y1 TP Topics 1-10 will be conducted by you, as Student Teachers, in the absence of your Tutors during the 10 days of School Observation TP. Therefore your Tutor should familiarise you with the Topic 1-10 activities during Y1 Pre-TP. Your Tutor will explain how your Y1 TP observation will be assessed. You should remind yourself of the assessment procedures that are included in Annex 4 of this Student Teacher Handbook.

2 Year 1 - 3: Teaching Practice

Y2 TP Topic 3: "Stimulating and Sustaining Pupils' Interest" Peer Teaching: Junior High School (JHS)
Purpose: In this Topic the Student Teachers will peer-teach three JHS lessons, one for each activity.
Activity 3.1: Direct Instruction – Verbal Exposition and Enquiry-Based Learning in JHS classes
Activity 3.2: Think-Pair-Share (Group- and Pair-Work); group formation and differentiated/same task activities in JHS classes
Activity 3.3: Formative Assessment in JHS classes
Competencies: Student Teacher demonstrates: (i) Clear explanations: Competency 2(e) and 5(b); (ii) Organisation of group/pair work: Competency 7(d); (iii) Teach girls and boys equally: Competency 11(c); (iv) Assessment of pupil understanding: Competency 8(a and e); (v) Lesson closure: Competency 15(a-c); (vi) Lesson plan: Competency 16(a-e) (see Annex 1)

Y2 TP Week 3 - Summary of the Task

When Student Teachers have completed these three Y2 Week 3 activities with you they will have:

- gained an understanding and practised in Direct Instruction and Enquiry-Based learning in Junior High School (JHS) teaching;
- practised Think-Pair-Share;
- planned a JHS lesson using Formative assessment.

Y2 TP Activity 3.1: Using Direct Instruction and Enquiry-Based learning

PLAN TOGETHER
In the Y2 Week 3 peer teaching tell the Student Teachers which subject they will teach from the Junior High School curriculum in English, maths or science lessons. Let the Student Teachers choose a topic and ask them to discuss and prepare two lesson plans with their TP partner, one lesson plan focusing on the use of Direct Instruction and the second lesson plan focusing on Enquiry-Based learning. Discuss with them the differences between Direct Instruction and Enquiry-Based learning (see Text Box in the Student Teacher Handbook).

They should discuss with their TP partner which part of the lesson each of them will teach and prepare everything they need for the lesson. Remind the Student Teachers that they need to demonstrate ways of stimulating and sustaining pupils' interest in direct instruction and enquiry-based learning activities.

DO
Supervise the Student Teachers teaching the two lessons with their TP partner. Check whether they are following the lesson plans. As you observe the lesson make some notes on the use of Direct Instruction and the use of Enquiry-Based Learning to provide constructive feedback.

REFLECT TOGETHER
After the TP lessons ask Student Teachers in the class to give some feedback on the lessons to encourage them to observe the TP lessons carefully and critically. Provide positive comments and constructive feedback on two or three of the key teaching points relating to Direct Instruction and Enquiry-Based Learning that the Student Teachers could work to improve in future. Ask the Student Teachers to work with their TP partner to discuss which parts of the lesson went well and which parts could be improved.

They should record their ideas in their TP Journal writing two points on what went well and two points reflecting on what could be improved.

Y2 TP Activity 3.2: Think-Pair-Share

PLAN TOGETHER
Student Teachers and their TP partner should prepare a Think-Pair-Share activity for a JHS lesson. Guide them in choosing a topic from the JHS English, maths or science curriculum and help them to think of a pair-work activity. Discuss with the Student Teachers the various ways of organising pupils for pair- and group-work and review some of the basic activities that can be used for pair- and group-work (see Text Box in the Student Teacher Handbook).

Remind the Student Teachers of the three steps in Think-Pair-Share that they should include in their lesson plan.

NOTE: The Student Teachers should include the Formative Assessment activity (Y2 TP Activity 3.3) in their lesson plan.

DO
Observe the Student Teachers when they teach the Think-Pair-Share lesson, including the formative assessment activity (Y2 TP Activity 3.3, below). Help them to think about how they will pair the pupils and whether the pupils are really working in pairs and not just sitting in pairs working individually.

NOTE: Whenever possible the Y2 peer-teaching activities should be conducted in schools with pupils so that the Student Teachers gain real teaching experience.

REFLECT TOGETHER
Give feedback and constructive comments to the Student Teachers reflecting especially on different ways that pair-work can be organised, e.g. ability grouping, interest grouping, gender grouping, etc. Ask the Student Teachers to discuss with their TP partner which parts of the lesson went well and which parts could be improved.

Y3 TP Topic 4: Practise questioning and close the lesson
Student Teacher observes the Mentor and they co-teach a lesson

Purpose: In this Topic you will practise questioning skills and lesson closure

Activity 4.1: Mentor and Student Teacher plan a lesson each day for the Student Teachers to practise questioning skills and lesson closure competencies

Activity 4.2: The Student Teacher and Mentor co-teach the lesson together each day

Activity 4.3: Mentor and Student Teacher reflect together on the co-taught lessons

Competencies: Student Teacher demonstrates: (i) Use of a range of questions during the lesson; Competency 5(a, b and d) (see Annex 1)

Y3 TP Week 4 - Summary of the Task

As a Mentor you will support the Student Teachers to complete these three activities for Y3 Week 4:

- planning a lesson together with your Student Teacher, to practise questioning skills and lesson closure competencies;
- co-teaching the lesson;
- reflection on the co-taught lessons together

Y3 TP Activity 4.1: Plan a lesson to co-teach each day to practise questioning skills and lesson closure competencies

PLAN TOGETHER

In Y3 TP Week 2, the Student Teachers co-taught the lesson introduction and observed the lesson sequence with you. In Week 3, they co-taught the lesson delivery and practised classroom management skills. This week, they will prepare lessons to practise questioning skills and lesson closure competencies. Once again, the Student Teachers will assemble all relevant materials (syllabus, pupils' textbooks and teachers' handbook, others) for the lesson planning stage.

The table below shows ways of framing questions for effective learning. The Student Teachers should use these as examples for their lesson preparation.

Framing Questions

- Ask 'remembering' and recall questions e.g. What do you remember about...? How do you define...? What is...?
- Ask questions that require analysis and evaluation e.g. How can you classify...? Why do you think...? Can you compare with...? What are the advantages/disadvantages of...? What is the most important...? Is there a better solution than...? Can you suggest an alternative? Can you predict the outcome if...?

The Student Teachers may use these teacher questioning skills:

- Handle pupils' responses well e.g. give sufficient wait time, do not immediately correct wrong answers, ask follow-up questions
- Ask follow-up questions to build on pupils' responses e.g. How did you come to this answer? Why do you think this? Does everybody agree or disagree? Is there an alternative answer?
- Use strategies to increase pupils' participation during questioning e.g. call on pupils randomly, do not require pupils to raise their hands, give praise for effort.

The Student Teachers should pay attention to these gender issues:

- Give equal chance to girls and boys to ask/answer questions
- Assign leadership roles equally to girls and boys in lesson activities
- Make sure girls and boys participate equally in activities
- Allow sufficient time for girls and boys who may be shy or afraid to speak out
- Check if both girls and boys equally understand the lesson
- Provide constructive feedback to both girls and boys in class

Hints on effective lesson closure:

- assign homework;
- administer short/flash tests;
- summarise the lesson by way of reviewing;
- sometimes ask pupils to summarise;
- leave core points on the blackboard;
- in practical lessons like fine art/natural science, tidy up the classroom;
- you may close the lesson with a song or rhyme.

With your Student Teachers, go through the planned lesson and, if possible, micro-teach for practice.

DO

Preparation of Co-teaching lesson plans on questioning skills and lesson closure
 The Student Teachers should incorporate some of the ideas given above into their lesson plans for each day to practise one or two questioning skills and to practise the key steps in lesson closure. They should ensure that they have planned how much time they will have for the lesson closure. They should familiarise themselves with the Mentor's lesson plan for each day so that they can make a smooth link between the main delivery part of the lesson and its closure, which will summarise what the pupils have been learning. Guide them on the timing of the lesson and the link between your delivery part of the lesson and the lesson closure that they will teach. Check that their lesson plans are realistic and achievable.

REFLECT TOGETHER

The Student Teachers will reflect on their lesson preparation with you and their TP partners using the following questions as prompts:

- Do your planned lesson closure activities link well with the Mentor's lesson delivery plan?
- Have you prepared questions that will require pupils to recall, analyse and evaluate?
- How will you ensure your questioning skills are gender responsive?

Ensure that your Student Teachers record in their TP Journal two new ideas they have gained from the Reflect Together activity.



Innovation in lesson observation and interaction with children in the classroom: Lesson observation is an important activity for teaching practice. Student teachers can learn from observing their tutors and mentors teaching. At other times the tutors and mentors can provide guidance after they observe the student teacher teaching a lesson. The new innovative course structure for teaching practice provides student teachers with invaluable practical experience in classroom environments throughout the three years of their teacher education programme.