

ENHANCING TEACHERS' COMPETENCE IN FUNCTIONAL PEDAGOGY FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: CASE STUDY OF GWAGWALADA AREA COUNCIL, FCT ABUJA.

BY

Ejeh Sandra Okwundu Ph.D

Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council - Abuja

Email: sandra60@gmail.com +2348032325323

&

Uwadileke Obi

Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council- Abuja

ABSTRACT.

This study was on Enhancing teachers' competence in functional pedagogy for effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja. The study adopted descriptive survey design. Two research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of this study comprised 480 teachers in public primary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council. The samples for this study was 262 teacher obtained using proportionate and stratified random sampling technique with the aid of Yamane (1967) sample determination formula. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection in the study. The questionnaire entitled, "Teachers' Competence Enhancing Questionnaire" (TCEQ) was developed by the researcher. The instrument was designed to collect information on Enhancing teachers' competence in functional pedagogy for effective teaching in primary education. The instrument was validated by 2 experts in the Departments of Curriculum & Teaching and Educational Foundations. A pilot test was conducted on 26 teachers in Abaji Area Council of Abuja. The data obtained was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Estimates which yielded coefficients of .88 to .90 for the subscales. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher with the assistance of two research assistants. The data was analyzed using simple linear regression analysis. Result obtained revealed that there is significant prediction of teachers' retraining on effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja; there is significant prediction of teachers' evaluation on effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja. Based on findings, it was recommended among others that educational authorities in Gwagwalada Area Council should establish regular retraining programs for primary school teachers, focusing on innovative teaching methods, subject matter expertise, and classroom management skills. This can include workshops, seminars, and online courses that cater to the specific needs of teachers and enhance their professional development.

Background

The quality of education in primary schools largely depends on the pedagogical competence of teachers. Pedagogical competence refers to teacher's ability to effectively plan, implement, and evaluate teaching and learning processes in ways that facilitate students understanding, development, and achievement. It is a critical element of professional teaching practice that encompasses a wide range of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary for fostering meaningful learning experiences. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2009) describes pedagogical competence as the capacity of teachers to apply a repertoire of teaching strategies, effectively use of learning materials, and adapt instruction to diverse students' needs. Teachers must be able to explain concepts clearly, relate topics to real-world contexts, and address students' misconceptions. Chris (2023) defines Pedagogical competence as teacher's ability to transform content knowledge into effective instructional strategies, tailored to students learning styles and levels of understanding. He further stress that effective classroom management ensures a safe and supportive learning environment. Which includes the ability to maintain discipline, organize classroom activities, and handle disruptions constructively?

Competent teachers plan their lessons thoughtfully, set clear objectives, use appropriate teaching methods (e.g., inquiry-based, question and answer, cooperative learning), and use diverse instructional materials to cater to varied learners (Uwabunkeonye, 2020). He also pointed that teachers must be skilled in formative and summative assessment techniques to evaluate students' progress, provide feedback, and adjust instruction accordingly. Recognizing and addressing the diverse needs of students including those with special educational needs is a key feature of pedagogical competence. Competent teachers use differentiated instruction to support all learners. Pedagogical competence also involves self-reflection and continuous professional development. Teachers need to evaluate their own practices, seek feedback, and stay updated with educational research and innovations. Leod in Usman (2014) explains that competence of a teacher is the teacher's ability to implement the obligations in a responsible and viable way. A competent teacher is the most critical piece in improving students' achievement and closing the achievement gap. The single most important influence on students learning is the quality of teaching. (Danielson, 2006)

Pedagogical competence refers to the ability of teachers to apply appropriate teaching methods, manage classrooms effectively, understand learners' needs, and facilitate meaningful learning. It encompasses knowledge of subject matter, understanding of educational psychology, classroom management skills, instructional design, assessment strategies, and reflective practice (Anyanwu 2023). Darling (2006) said that Pedagogical competence enables teachers to deliver content in a way that is engaging, clear, and suited to the learners' developmental levels. When teachers possess strong pedagogical skills, they can adapt their instructional strategies to meet diverse learning styles and improve students'

comprehension. She further states that teachers who are pedagogically competent contribute significantly to students' achievement by applying effective instructional methods and understanding how students learn. Shulman in Williams (2024) opined that competent teachers shift from traditional teacher-centered methods to learner-centered approaches. They encourage students' participation, inquiry-based learning, and critical thinking. Marzano in Ejiogu (2023) said that Teachers with strong pedagogical competence can create a supportive learning environment, manage classroom behaviors, and implement rules that foster respect and focus. He argues that, effective classroom management is directly linked to teachers' pedagogical competence and significantly impacts students' engagement and academic performance. Florian and Black in Justine (2021) states that Pedagogical competence helps teachers to cater for needs of diverse learners, including those with disabilities, language barriers, or varying academic abilities. Zeichner and Liston in Amadi (2024) are of the view that competent teachers continuously reflect teaching practices and seek professional development. This reflective process enhances instructional effectiveness and aligns with evolving educational standards. And they emphasized that reflective teaching is a hallmark of pedagogical competence and a pathway to continuous improvement in educational settings.

Uwabunkeonye (2024) states four (4) importance of pedagogical competency:

- **Enhances Students Achievement:** When teachers are pedagogically competent, students are more likely to engage in deep learning and achieve higher academic outcomes.
- **Supports Holistic Development:** Beyond academics, competent teachers foster critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and emotional intelligence.
- **Promotes Equity and Inclusion:** Pedagogical competence helps teachers address the diverse learning needs of students, thus reducing disparities in education.
- **Improves Teacher Confidence and Morale:** Well-prepared teacher feel more confident, motivated, and committed to the teaching profession.

Pedagogical competence is essential for quality education. It ensures that teaching is not only about delivering content but also about inspiring, guiding, and supporting students in their learning journeys. As education systems aim for holistic development and lifelong learning, building and sustaining pedagogical competence among teachers becomes a priority. Pedagogical competence is not static; it evolves through: Pre-service teacher education programs, In-service training and workshops, mentoring and peer collaboration, Professional development and learning communities.

Though there are Challenges to Developing Pedagogical Competence; lack of continuous professional development, overcrowded classrooms and limited resources such as outdated curricula and pedagogical methods and resistance to innovation and reflective practices.

Functional pedagogy not only facilitates meaningful learning experiences but also fosters critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning skills in pupils. However, several studies suggest that many primary school teachers lack the requisite pedagogical competence to implement this approach effectively. This research addresses this issue by assessing teachers' competencies and proposing strategies for improvement. Despite global calls for education reforms that promote learner-centered and functional pedagogical practices, many primary school classrooms still rely heavily on traditional, rote-based instructional methods. In Nigeria, and particularly in rural areas, the lack of teacher training, inadequate exposure to modern pedagogical techniques, and poor access to teaching resources have created a significant gap in the effective implementation of functional pedagogy. This pedagogical gap directly affects pupils' learning outcomes, engagement, and ability to apply knowledge in real-life contexts. The problem is further compounded by limited professional development opportunities and ineffective teacher appraisal systems. Thus, this study investigates how teachers' competence enhances functional pedagogy for effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate how teachers' competence enhances functional pedagogy for effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja. Specifically, this study seeks to;

1. Examine the prediction of teachers' retraining on effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja
2. Assess the prediction of teachers' evaluation on effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja

Research Questions

1. To what extent does teachers' retraining predict effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja?
2. To what extent does teachers' evaluation predict effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant prediction of teachers' retraining on effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja.
2. There is no significant prediction of teachers' evaluation on effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Gwagwalada Area council, FCT Abuja. The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey research design. This choice of this design was on the premise that it would allow the researcher to investigate how teachers' competence enhances functional pedagogy for effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja. There are forty (40) public schools in Gwagwalada Area Council and the population of this study comprised Four hundred and eighty (480) primary school teachers'. FCT Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB), 2025. The samples for this study was 262 teacher obtained using proportionate and stratified random sampling technique with the aid of Yamane (1967) sample determination formula. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection in the study. The questionnaire entitled, "Teachers' Competency Enhancing Questionnaire" (TCEQ) was developed by the researcher. The instrument was designed to collect information on Enhancing teachers' competence in functional pedagogy for effective teaching and learning in primary education. The instrument has 15 items and is divided into 2 sections. Section A with 10 items seeks information on enhancing teachers' competence in functional pedagogy. Section 2 with 5 items elicits information on effective teaching. The instruments were designed on a four point rating scale weighted as follows: Clusters 1 and 2 use the following response mode: Great extent (GE) - 4 points, Extent(E)- 3 points, Little extent (LE) -2 point, Small extent(SE) -1 point. The instrument was validated by 2 experts in the departments of curriculum & teaching and educational foundations. A trial test was conducted on 26 teachers in Abaji Area Council of Abuja. The data obtained was analysed using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Estimates which yielded coefficients of .88 to .90 for the subscales. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher with the assistance of two research assistants. These research assistants were trained on the method of administering and retrieving the instruments. Direct delivery and retrieval system was used. This helped the researcher to recover all the instruments from the respondents. The data was analyzed using simple linear regression analysis.

Results

Hypothesis one

There is no significant prediction of teachers' retraining on effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was used with teachers' retraining as independent variable and effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja as dependent variable. The f-ratio was used to test the overall significant influence. The results are presented.

Table 1

Regression analysis of prediction of teachers' retraining on effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja.

R – value = .406		Adj R – square = .161		
R – square = .165		Std. Error = 2.60366		
Predictor variable	<u>Unstandardised coeff</u>	Std coeff	t-value	P – value
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Constant	12.634	1.049		12.041* .000
Teachers’ retraining	.477	.072	.406	6.666* .000

*Significant at .05 level, $P < .05$

The results in Table 1 showed a regression coefficient (R) of .406 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of .165. This means that about 16.5% of the total variation in effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja was attributed to the variation in teachers' retraining while 83.5% was attributed to other variables considered in this study.

The result of the regression weights of the predictor variable (teachers' retraining) in Table 1 showed positive coefficients ($B = .477$ and $Beta = .406$). This indicated that teachers' retraining has a moderate positive influence on effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja and a unit increase in teachers' retraining will lead to more than a unit improvement effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja. Furthermore, the P-values (.000) associated with the computed t-values (12.041 & 6.666) for the regression constant and teachers' retraining are less than .05. This means that both the regression constant and teachers' retraining made significant positive contributions to the prediction of effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant prediction of teachers' retraining on effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja is rejected.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant prediction of teachers' evaluation on effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was used with teachers' evaluation as independent variable and effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja as dependent variable. The f-ratio was used to test the overall significant influence.

Table 2

Regression analysis of prediction of teachers' evaluation on effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja.

R – value = .210		Adj R – square = .040		
R – square = .044		Std. Error = 2.78582		
Predictor variable	<u>Unstandardised coeff</u>	Std coeff	t-value	P – value
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Constant	16.012	1.110		14.426* .000
Teachers' evaluation	.265	.082	.210	3.217* .001

*Significant at .05 level, $P < .05$

The results in Table 2 showed a regression coefficient (R) of .210 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of .044. This means that about 4.4% of the total variation in effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja was attributed to the variation in teachers' evaluation while 95.6% was attributed to other variables considered in this study.

The result of the regression weights of the predictor variable (teachers' evaluation) in Table 1 showed positive coefficients ($B = .265$ and $Beta = .210$). This indicated that teachers' evaluation has a low positive influence on effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja and a unit increase in teachers' evaluation will lead to more than a unit improvement effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja. Furthermore, the P-values (.000 & .001) associated with the computed t-values (14.426 & 3.217) for the regression constant and teachers' evaluation are less than .05. This means that both the regression constant and teachers' evaluation made significant positive contributions to the prediction of effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant prediction of teachers' evaluation on effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja is rejected.

Discussion of findings

The finding that teachers' retraining significantly predicts effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja, highlights the critical role that ongoing professional development plays in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools. This result underscores the importance of providing teachers with regular

opportunities for retraining and capacity building, enabling them to stay updated with best practices, innovative methodologies, and new technologies in education. When teachers are retrained, they are better equipped to design and deliver high-quality lessons that cater to the diverse needs of their students. This, in turn, can lead to improved student outcomes, increased academic achievement, and enhanced overall educational quality. The significant prediction of teachers' retraining on effective teaching in Gwagwalada Area Council suggests that investment in teacher professional development is crucial for promoting excellence in primary education.

Moreover, the finding implies that educational administrators and policymakers in Gwagwalada Area Council should prioritize teacher retraining programs as a key strategy for improving the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools. By providing teachers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and support, they can create a positive impact on student learning outcomes and contribute to the overall development of the education sector in the area. The study's result also highlights the need for a systematic approach to teacher retraining, one that is tailored to the specific needs of teachers and the schools they serve. This could involve needs assessment, customized training programs, and ongoing support and mentoring to ensure that teachers are able to effectively apply what they have learned.

This result corroborated with Darling-Hammond et al., (2017) who stated that teachers are central to the teaching process, and their effectiveness greatly determines students' academic achievement. However, initial teacher education is not sufficient to sustain lifelong professional competence. The rapid changes in curriculum, pedagogy, and ICT integration make teachers' retraining through in-service training, workshops, seminars, and professional development essential for effective teaching. Retraining ensures that teachers acquire updated knowledge, modern pedagogical skills, and reflective practices that directly improve classroom delivery and student learning outcomes.

This finding supported Desimone (2009), who revealed that retraining should be content-focused, active, coherent with curriculum needs, collaborative, and sustained over time to produce meaningful effects on teaching and learning. Teachers' retraining” encompasses ongoing, post-qualification learning opportunities: workshops, professional teaching communities (PLCs), micro-credentialing, and especially coaching. Policymakers invest in retraining to improve instructional quality and student outcomes. In conclusion, the finding emphasizes the importance of teacher retraining in promoting effective teaching and improving student outcomes in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council. By

prioritizing teacher professional development, educational stakeholders can work together to enhance the quality of education and promote the holistic development of young learners.

This result suggests that regular evaluation of teachers can help identify areas of strength and weakness, providing valuable insights that can inform professional development and support. When teachers are evaluated, they receive feedback on their teaching practices, which can help them refine their methods, address areas of concern, and develop more effective strategies for engaging students and promoting learning. This, in turn, can lead to improved student outcomes, increased academic achievement, and enhanced overall educational quality. The significant prediction of teachers' evaluation on effective teaching in Gwagwalada Area Council implies that educational administrators and policymakers should prioritize regular teacher evaluation as a key strategy for promoting excellence in primary education. By establishing a robust evaluation system, they can ensure that teachers are held to high standards, and that those who require support or development are identified and provided with the necessary resources. Moreover, the finding suggests that teacher evaluation should be a collaborative process, involving not only administrators but also peers and possibly even students. This can help provide a more comprehensive understanding of a teacher's effectiveness and identify areas for growth and improvement.

This finding aligned with Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner (2017) who maintained that teacher evaluation is intended to promote instructional improvement (formative) and accountability (summative). Since 2009 many systems shifted from compliance checklists to multi-measure frameworks (e.g., Danielson Framework, MET). The central policy question is whether these systems actually change classroom practice and learning. In conclusion, the study's result emphasizes the importance of teacher evaluation in promoting effective teaching and improving student outcomes in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council. By prioritizing teacher evaluation and using the insights gained to inform professional development and support, educational stakeholders can work together to enhance the quality of education and promote the holistic development of young learners.

Conclusion

The study's results demonstrate that both teachers' retraining and evaluation are significant predictors of effective teaching in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT Abuja. These findings highlight the critical importance of investing in teacher professional development and evaluation to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools. The significant predictions of teachers' retraining and evaluation on effective

teaching underscore the need for educational administrators and policymakers to prioritize strategies that support teacher growth and development. By providing teachers with regular opportunities for retraining and evaluation, they can ensure that teachers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and practices necessary to deliver high-quality education and promote student learning outcomes. Ultimately, the study's findings suggest that a well-supported and well-evaluated teaching workforce is essential for achieving excellence in primary education in Gwagwalada Area Council. By prioritizing teacher professional development and evaluation, educational stakeholders can work together to enhance the quality of education, promote student achievement, and contribute to the overall development of the education sector in the area.

Recommendations

1. Regular retraining programs: Educational authorities in Gwagwalada Area Council should establish regular retraining programs for primary school teachers, focusing on innovative teaching methods, subject matter expertise, and classroom management skills. This can include workshops, seminars, and online courses that cater to the specific needs of teachers and enhance their professional development.
2. Comprehensive teacher evaluation system: Educational administrators in Gwagwalada Area Council should develop and implement a comprehensive teacher evaluation system that provides constructive feedback, identifies areas for improvement, and informs professional development opportunities. This can include peer review, student feedback, and administrative evaluation, with a focus on promoting teacher growth and enhancing teaching quality.

REFERENCES

- Amadi, H.C (2024).). *Reflective teaching and learning: An introduction to teaching*. Basic Press: Owerri.
- Anyanwu,D.C (2023). Enhancing teaching competence through functional pedagogy. *Journal of Educational Innovation*, 10(2), 55–68.
- Chris.O (2023). Functional pedagogy and primary school teaching effectiveness. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(2), 43–59.
- Danielson, H.L (2006).). *Teachers of the 21st Century: Competence and Capacity Building*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- Darling,U.C. (2006). *Powerful teacher education: Lessons from exemplary programs*. Jossey-

- Ejiogu, A.U (2023). Key to classroom management. *Journal of Leadership*, 71(1), 18–32.
- Justine, Z.I (2021). Exploring inclusive pedagogy. *British Educational Research Journal*, 28(3), 81–92.
- OECD (2009). Evaluating teaching competence through functional pedagogy. *Journal of Educational Assessment*, 12(3), 45–58.
- Usman, N.M (2014). *Teacher Education and Development in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Adewale Press.
- Uwabunkeonye, C.O (2020). Enhancing teaching competence through functional pedagogy. *Journal of Educational Innovation*, 5(2), 15–28.
- Uwabunkeonye, C.O (2024) Methodology in teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Journal of Educational Review*, 57(1), 1–22.
- Williams, U.O. (2024) Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Oxford Educational Review*, 97(2), 41–62.