

How teachers' competencies influence on the language teaching process of the students of eleventh grade at National Institute Francisco Luis Espinoza on Saturday shift 2019

Felix Elix Cardenas Ponce

cardenasfelixep@gmail.com

Noe Arnulfo Sevilla Rodriguez

noesevilla9022@gmail.com

Olman Jafeth Ramirez Avila

Jafethncis15@gmail.com

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua. Facultad Regional Multidisciplinaria-
Estelí

Abstract

This research focuses on understanding the influence of teaching competencies in language teaching, specifically on English language. The research was carried out at National Institute Francisco Luis Espinoza, located in Estelí Nicaragua, using the qualitative and descriptive approach, through the observation of the class and the application of interviews.

As results of this research, we have realized that English teachers at National Institute Francisco Luis Espinoza have a low level in ICT Technology competencies, Research competencies and Emotional competencies. Field competencies, lifelong learning competencies, social-cultural competencies and communication competencies are in process and the most evidenced competencies that English teachers have are Curriculum competencies and environmental competencies.

Key words: Competencies, language teaching, training, knowledge and skills, educational system, didactic resources.

Introduction

Nowadays with the globalization and all the economic advances, the language teaching is a relevant topic in our country. With all the job opportunities, and the need to improve their knowledge, many professionals decide to study a foreign language.

Talking specifically about teaching, getting knowledge on foreign language is very important for our teachers. In order to strengthen their teaching practices, teachers need to improve knowledge and skills. It is opportune to say that teachers have the primary responsibility to develop the educational system. For this reason, they need professional competencies.

Thinking about competencies, these not only concern to knowledge and experiences as they can include also attitudes, values, motivations, and beliefs. All these characteristics could help to be successful in a job. The previously written, shows the importance that the professional competencies have for English teachers, however, the current education system is focused more specifically on the role of teachers in the classroom. The term of competencies has been forgotten.

The purpose of this research is to know how teachers' competencies influence on the language teaching process. It emphasizes the teaching of the English language in the eleventh grades at National Institute Francisco Luis Espinoza. This school Center is located in the city of Estelí and the study will be developed on the Saturday shift. For the development of the research work, important tools will be put into practice. It will allow obtaining the desired results. Information will be supported by theoretical resources that are closely related to the subject of study.

Theoretical framework

Competencies

A competency is best described as 'a complex combination of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, attitudes, and desire which lead to effective, embodied human action in the world, in a particular domain' Deakin C, (Cited by Europeia, C. 2013).

Competency is therefore distinguished from *skill*, which is an ability to perform complex acts with ease, precision, and adaptability.

In this research, competencies are focused specifically for English teachers. The content shows clearly the reason why teachers need these competencies.

Following, kinds of professional competencies are presented below, which allow making differences between one to another for a better comprehension of their content.

Field competencies:

According to Selvi K. (2010) “Field competencies are related to the question of what should school teach? They refer to the content that, the teacher and students will study” (p.169). For example, the knowledge of English teachers is the main competency for teachers who will teach in the classroom. Field competencies are the main areas of teacher competencies that include academic studies about content.

Research Competencies:

Include the competencies of research methods and techniques, designing and carrying out research in teachers’ fields. They support collaboration with colleagues and other specialists or people who are interested in curriculum studies and education. (cited by Selvi K. 2010).

The curriculum competencies

Curriculum competencies can be divided into two sub-competencies as curriculum development competencies and curriculum implementation competencies. Curriculum competencies contain the knowledge about curriculum philosophies and skills in curriculum development, curriculum design, elements of the curriculum development, models of curriculum development, and approaches of designing curriculum development, curriculum development process, selecting and organizing the content, planning the teaching and testing conditions and preparing for curriculum development. Selvi K. (2010, p.170)

Lifelong learning competencies

Include the abilities to learn to learn, and teachers' responsibilities of their own professional development. Lifelong learning competencies are related to the ability of learning and skills of using the means or tools of learning to improve the learning throughout the human life. Lifelong learning competencies refer to the teachers’ responsibilities for their own learning

and development of lifelong learning skills for students. It means that lifelong learning includes two main abilities. The first one is related to teachers' lifelong learning ability and the second one is related to teachers' responsibility to develop students' lifelong abilities. Selvi K. (2010, p.171)

Emotional Competencies

Emotional competencies are composed of teachers' and students' values, morals, beliefs, attitudes, anxieties, motivation, empathy and so on. They are related to the implementation of psychological consultation and curriculum of guidance in school. Teachers' emotional competencies can help students to learn and students' willingness to learn can be increased if teachers know how to improve the emotional dimension of students' learning. Emotional competencies also help teachers become effective teachers while monitoring the students' learning. Learning requires emotional supports that create a positive feeling for the learning-teaching process. Teachers become a learning consultant and mentor about learning for their students. Selvi K. (2010, p.171)

Social-cultural competencies

According to Selvi K. (2010), those competencies include the knowledge about social-cultural background of students and teachers, local, national and international values, democracy and human rights issues, team and collaborative work with others, and social studies(p.171)

Communication competencies

Include communication models, interaction among teachers, students, social environment and learning topics. Teachers also have competencies in using oral, body and professional language in their fields. Communication competencies include voice, body language and words such as speaking, singing and sometimes the tone of voice, sign language, paralanguage, touch, eye contact, or the use of writing. They include communication skills in intrapersonal and interpersonal processing, listening, observing, speaking, questioning, analyzing, and evaluating. Selvi K. (2010, p.171)

Information and Communication Technologies-ICT competencies

Those competencies are based on using tools and technical equipment for the reaching, disturbing and transferring the knowledge. They include any technology that helps to produce, manipulate, store, communicate, and/or disseminate information. ICT competencies are concerned with the use of technology in managing and processing the information includes all technologies for the manipulation and communication of information. It means that the ICT competency is very important to improve the communication in the learning and teaching process. Selvi K. (2010, p.172)

Environmental Competencies

Environmental competencies can be defined as competencies for ecological and environmental safety. Salite and Piper (16) explained that ecological/environmental aspect is a dimension of the sustainable development of teachers. Knowledge, attitudes, and skills about the ecological system and environment such as keeping the clean and available environment, management of ecological resources, being aware of the ecosystem, feasible uses of natural resources, availability of natural resources can be defined as Environmental competencies. Selvi K. (2010, p.172)

Methodology

For this study the first activity, was the revision of literature related to the role of the teachers in English teaching and the concept of competencies, also the kind of competencies necessary for English teachers. Having the requested information it was continued to observe the English classes. Following, were interviewed 2 English teachers and an intentional sample of 10 students taken from a population of 190 students.

The data obtained in the interviews were recorded in a matrix of data output, also known as the matrix of information reduction. In terms of analysis, the logical technique used was "analysis-synthesis", which allowed deciphering what the collected data reveals. The information was compared with the theoretical aspects, in order to analyze what kind of competencies the teachers have and how those influence on the language teaching process.

It was not necessary the use of statistical analysis because the research followed a qualitative approach.

Findings

Professional competencies shown by the teachers

After knowing the results in the interviews and class observations, the professional competencies of the English teachers at National Institute Francisco Luis Espinoza were classified in three levels.

Low level: Are the competencies not evidenced when the interviews and class observations were applied.

Research competencies: It is considered a low level of research competencies in the English teachers. This is evidenced in the method used while teaching. The teachers use traditional methods. They do not look for designing and carrying out research in teachers' fields.

Technological competencies: The lack of technological devices and knowledge about the use of those, inhibit the development of technological competencies by the English teachers. Although Teachers have the knowledge in English subject, they cannot handle tools and technical equipment for the reaching, disturbing and transferring the knowledge.

Emotional competencies: Previously it was said that Learning requires emotional supports that create a positive feeling for the learning-teaching process. According the interviews and the observations the teachers in Francisco Luis Espinoza Institute, have noticeable difficulties to manage with the feelings of the students. Most of the students show poor interest in the class, and the teachers don't know how overcome this issue. The teachers don't have ideas how to improve the student's behavior; in addition the majority of the students don't feel motivated by the teachers.

Medium level (in process): are the competencies that teachers have, but it is necessary to improve on them, in order to achieve a better teaching process.

Field competencies: The fact that all the teachers are graduated and one of them has courses and training in English, means that the teachers have field competencies, however

it is considered as a competence in process, because the knowledge about the English subject is a continuous process. Teachers enrich their Knowledge through the experience.

Lifelong learning competencies: The teachers interviewed are conscious about the concept learning to learn. They understand that they are learning while teaching. It helps to claim that the teacher have lifelong learning competencies.

Communication competencies: All the teachers have their own communication models, interaction among teachers, students, social environment and learning topics. However it could be improved the use of oral, body and professional language in their fields. Currently there are some mispronunciations when the teacher is explaining the class.

Social-cultural competencies: The teachers promote team and collaborative works, as a demonstration of social-cultural competencies and the textbook used in the English class, has an interesting approach about the Nicaraguan culture, however it is not enough. Teachers need to know the social-cultural background of the students, and take up reasonable conversations about democracy and human rights, although those are controversial topics.

High level: Are the strongest competencies shown by the teachers

Curriculum competencies: The interviewed teachers say to teach according the curriculum provided by the MINED, however they do some adaptations when it is necessary. In this way are evidenced the curriculum competencies, designing, selecting and organizing the content, planning the teaching and testing conditions and preparing for curriculum development.

Environmental competencies: through the class observation it was observed that the teachers emphasize on Knowledge, attitudes, and skills about the ecological system and environment such as keeping the clean and available environment, management of ecological resources, being aware of the ecosystem, feasible uses of natural resources. Those acts show the environmental competencies that teachers have.

Influence of the competencies

All of the competencies mentioned before, have an important influence on the language teaching process. Those which are in low level, influence in a negative way, making difficult the process of teaching and restricting the learning of the students.

The competencies which are in medium level help to develop the process of teaching, however a better development on these competencies could produce the most positive effect.

The competencies which are in high level allow to the teachers more effectiveness, however the nature of the competencies found in the highest level, are not the most important competencies for the language teaching process, that's mean the teachers need to improve in the other competencies.

Conclusions

This research was developed having the persuasion about the importance of studying English, and the role that this language plays in different context, mainly in the job opportunities. After analyzing the information gathered through the instruments: class observations and interviews, applied to the sample of 10 students in the eleventh grade and English teachers in National Institute Francisco Luis Espinoza in Estelí, it is concluded that: there is a slow development in the English teaching competencies achieved by the teachers.

Talking about the competencies presented in the theoretical framework, it can be concluded that English teachers in Francisco Luis Espinoza Institute, have a low level in Technology ICT competencies, emotional competencies and research competencies. They have competencies in process. Those are: field competencies, lifelong learning competencies, social- cultural competencies and communication competencies. The strongest competencies evidenced in the English teachers are: Curriculum competencies and environmental competencies. It will be necessary to implement programs of training for the teachers to strength the competencies in the English teaching.

References

Brown H. (2008) *Principles of language learning and teaching*, United States of America 678 9 10-rrd-io 09 08

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1, 1-47,

Chávez E., Marín E., Cereza F., Mora I., Megías M., Gómez M L.,... Albertazzi S. (2012). *Hacia la mejora de la enseñanza del inglés en Centroamérica*

Europeia, C. (2013). *Supporting teacher competence development for better learning outcomes*.

Fillmore, L. W., & Snow, C. E. (2000). *What teachers need to know about language*.

Hammersley, M. (2003). *Dilemma Qualitative Method*. Routledge.

Luxon, M., & Luxon, T. (1995). *Oda EIT Project in Nicaragua. A Case Study in Project Design*.

Richards, J. C. (2005). *Communicative language teaching today*. SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Savignon, S. (1982). Dictation as a measure of communicative competence in French as a second language. *Language Learning*, 32, 33-51 Savignon, S (1983). *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice*

Selvi, K. (2010). Teachers' competencies. *Culture International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology*, 7(1), 167-175.