

Strengthening English Learning in Language Transition Classes by Spiraling English Teachers' Competences in Tanzania

Abstract

English is a very important language in Tanzania and world over. It is both the medium of instruction and subject in primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education in Tanzania. However, several studies have consistently reported on low levels of English competences among students in secondary schools in Tanzania. The situation is more evident at the language transition class (Form I). This study explored the challenges encountered in learning English in Form I classes in Tanzanian secondary schools. Then, the study established a School-Based Professional Development (SB-PD) program to ensure sound competence in English usage among the Form I students. Six English teachers teaching Form I classes from three nearby secondary schools in Dodoma Region were involved in this study. The referred teachers formed a learning team and participated in a series of discussions which were facilitated by researchers from the University of Dodoma (UDOM).

The teachers worked together in developing lesson materials, demonstrating the lessons, observing and receiving feedbacks from the colleagues. The teachers' competences developed during the program were assessed using interviews, students' learning and adoption of effective pedagogic skills. The main question which guided this study was "Which school-based professional development program is likely to enhance the teachers' competences in developing the exemplary short stories lessons for effective learning?" The findings indicate that English teachers gained knowledge and competences in English content and necessary pedagogy in teaching English. They were also able to develop and implement short stories lessons using the

competence-based syllabus. The learning team formed by the teachers was able to strengthen its teaching competences.

Key words: Language transition class, School-Based Professional Development, professional learning team, lesson materials

Introduction

This section introduces an action research study which designed, developed and assessed the *School-Based Professional Development (SB-PD)* program that aimed at strengthening English teachers' teaching competences. The aim was to facilitate effective learning of English among Form I students through the interpretation of *short stories topic* in secondary schools in Tanzania. Language is one of the most useful tools for communication in our societies and teaching in classes at large. Without it, we could not have thoughts expressible to others, nor could we engage in the activities that commonly take place in the society we build ourselves (Di Pietro, 1994; Barret, 2014). Moreover, Roy-Campbell and Qorro (1997) asserted that education is carried out largely through the medium of language, thus, language is very significant in the education process. Additionally, ADEA (2005) argues that language is not everything in education, but without language, everything is nothing in education. Language plays a crucial role in learning, and if the learner is handicapped in the language of instruction, then, learning may not take place at all as the teacher and learner will seldom communicate.

The fluency and proficiency in English language are recognized as the most important learning tools at any level in the Tanzanian education system. They are also important international tools to compete in the global economy for the increasingly mobile international community (Ball,

2011). Both international and national policies, with countless initiatives, emphasize the effective learning of English language to acquire English fluency and proficiency (Elisa, 2015). In this veil, the Government of Tanzania (GoT) has made countless efforts to improve English learning among its citizens since its independence. However, the baseline study conducted at the beginning of this study reveals the challenges ~~facing to~~ English learning in Form I classes in Tanzania. The challenges include ~~low~~ teachers' low competences in English and insufficient effective learning materials. This paper presents the teachers' attempt at teaching using a Form I textbook called *Hawa the Bus Driver* by Mabala (1988) as one of the short stories books. In Tanzanian context, such books are used for teaching English to secondary school entrants in early months to enhance their language skills which will in turn be used to learn both English and other subjects' content. The learning materials support teaching and learning but they do not work alone to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The materials which are accessible to students will have the largest impact when in the hands of teachers with the ability to implement teaching and learning strategies that support language skills. During the SB-PD program, the plan was centered on working with teachers to develop and try-out the designed material across in their schools in Dodoma municipality in Tanzania.

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Background to the Problem

English is the medium of instruction in secondary schools in Tanzanian education system. However, Kiswahili is the medium of instruction in primary schools whereas English is taught as a subject. The learners who complete the primary education are expected to have achieved adequate competence in English to be able to cope with it as the medium of instruction throughout secondary school education. For this to be attained effectively, the government of

Tanzania (GoT) through the Ministry of Education and Vocational training (MoEVT) decided to revise its secondary education curriculum. After the review, the Competence English Syllabus (CES) was introduced. The new syllabus requires teachers to teach English language using the communicative approach so as to build the competences and proficiency in English language (MoEVT, 2010). Contrary to [the](#) expectations, the English proficiency and competences in secondary schools in Tanzania have remained to be a big challenge for a number of decades. Such challenge is apparently more serious among Form I students as they move from primary school level where *Kiswahili is the medium of instruction* to Form I where *English is the medium of instruction*. Thus, ~~for~~ the majority of these students are not conversant with the new medium of instruction in this language transition class (Barret, 2014; Elisa, 2015).

There are several research-based findings which show that the majority of secondary school students in Tanzania, especially those in Form I have low levels of English language proficiency and competencies required for effective learning of the concepts in various subjects. The related findings by Twaweza (2013) indicate that low levels of English Language proficiency are obstacles for students' learning in secondary school level. The findings in question support Vuzo (2010) and Barret (2014) who explain that the secondary school learners and teachers in Tanzania have difficulties in using the language with adequate proficiency. This problem is compounded further by lack of learning materials as well as ~~low~~ teachers' [low](#) competences in using the newly introduced communicative approach syllabus (Elisa, 2015).

The English teaching and learning process in Form I classes in Tanzania have been faced with a number of challenges. For instance, the students find it difficult to learn English as a subject and

use it to learn other subjects at this language transition class. The introduction of the competence-based English syllabus with its immediate implementation did not go hand in hand with the training of teachers. The lack of teachers' training has further compounded English learning challenges. The English teachers are portrayed to be less competent in both English language and pedagogy. Consequently, the students are observed learning just by copying and memorizing the contents and with little engagement in any endeavor. Eventually, the students complete secondary school education with both little English proficiency and competencies. In such situation, mounting the rigorous and continuous professional development programs that may support the teachers' competences in English lessons sounds crucial.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were as follows;

1. To explore the extent of the current challenges in English teaching in Form I classes.
2. To design and develop short stories lessons using the SB-PD program based on formative assessment strategies.
3. To assess the efficiency of the SB-PD program in addressing the challenges ~~facing to~~ English teaching for Form I students.

Theoretical Framework

The social constructivism theory of learning proposed by Vygotsky (1978) and Brunner (1960) form the theoretical stance of this study. The constructivism theory focuses on teaching in the students' own effort towards the understanding of the endeavor. The learners, either individually or socially construct meaning as they learn (Brunner, 1960; Vygotsky, 1978). For effective

learning to occur, the learning environment is supposed to be rich in opportunities that encourage students' engagement in the learning process. The teaching and learning materials such as short stories lessons are expected to have a variety of minds and hands-on learning activities such as talking, writing, presentation and discussion to mention a few. The constructivism theory was used as it considers the learner as an important key stakeholder in the learning process. The prior knowledge of the learners is very important to take on board (Brunner, 1960). The teachers' role is just to give students guidance to take initiative for their own learning experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). The theory helped the study to understand the significance of grouping the students and teachers into carefully arranged groups for better learning during the lesson or -SB-PD program, respectively. In the constructivist classroom, the students work primarily in groups as well as learn knowledge construction in an interactive and dynamic process (Gabrieli, 2013).

There is focus and emphasis on social and communication skills as well as collaboration and exchange of ideas. This is contrary to the traditional classroom in which students work primarily alone; learning is achieved through repetition, and the subjects are strictly adhered to and are guided by a textbook. Some activities encouraged in constructivist classrooms are classroom discussions, field trips, projects, experimentation and the like. In the constructivist classrooms, the teacher's role is to prompt and facilitate discussion. Thus, the teacher's main focus should be on guiding students by asking questions that will lead them to develop their own conclusions on the subject. Therefore, in the SB-PD program, the teachers were exposed to a variety of learning experiences as they would interact among themselves in designing and developing activity oriented short stories lessons for Form I students.

Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Dodoma Region in central Tanzania. The academic performance of the students in both primary and secondary schools in the region has not improved for quite some time now. Consequently, the region is ranked at the bottom level in terms of national performance ranks (MoEVT, 2014). Moreover, the baseline study conducted at the beginning of this study revealed that most teachers in this region had limited exposure to professional development programs since the introduction of the Competence Based Education (CBE) in Tanzania. Yet, in the region, there are a good number of curriculum developers and experts in developing the curriculum materials as well as teacher development programs. These are found at the University of Dodoma (UDOM). Hence, the choice of the region is due to its richness of education experts working in this outstanding university in Tanzania. The collaboration of these experts, researchers and teachers in the study would promote the initiatives in developing educational programs to strengthen both teachers' quality and students' English learning. The Dodoma Municipality was purposely selected for the study based on the fact that most of the experts expected to be consulted during the study work at the universities located in the municipality. The Dodoma Municipality has about 30 wards and each ward has about two secondary schools.

According to the baseline study, these wards have established secondary schools with at least two English teachers each. These teachers appeared to have remarkable experiences in teaching literary ~~work~~ topics to Form I students, who are the focus of the present study. Three (3) out of 30 wards were purposely selected to be involved in this study. The referred wards included Ngh'ongh'onha, Kilimani and Makole. The wards are very close to each other to facilitate the

communication between the researchers, experts and teachers during the designing, developing and assessing of the School-Based Professional Development (SB-PD) program. The closeness of the village saves time and costs of the participating teachers during the try-out of the proposed program. ~~Thus,~~ thus encourage-encouraging them to form strong and sustainable networking teams of English teachers.

Three secondary schools (School A, B and C) located in Ngh'ongh'onha, Kilimani, and Makole wards respectively were purposely selected. The schools are relatively close to each other and are near the universities. With this closeness, the communication among teachers in the schools and among the experts from the university was easy and less costly. This simplifies the attendance of teachers to the professional development sessions at school B which acted as a resource centre throughout the study. The closeness of the schools also allows the mobility of the participants in each of the schools during the follow up sessions and peer coaching after classroom observations of their colleagues. The teachers in these schools formed professional networks to visit one another to share their experiences relatively easily. In addition, the schools had at least one teacher with considerable experiences in teaching literary work topics to Form I classes. Also, the teachers in these schools agreed to participate actively in all stages ~~in-of~~ the proposed program.

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Population and Study Sample

The target populations ~~were-comprised~~ English teachers, who were teaching Form I classes, Form I students, curriculum experts and linguists. The English teachers were involved in

attending the developed SB-PD programs where they were oriented in designing and developing the short stories lessons' materials. The Form I students were also targeted during this study, since they were beneficiaries of the proposed professional development programs and lessons' materials to be developed in this study. They are in a transition state from Kiswahili (at primary school level) to English (at secondary school level) as the medium of instruction. The Form I students have been observed to face difficulties in acquiring English proficiency during the baseline study conducted prior to this study and hence, end up with poor performance even in other subjects. Thus, the teachers who attended the professional development programs designed and developed during the current study are expected to teach Form I students the skills, knowledge and competences acquired in the program. The curriculum experts and linguists reviewed and appraised the program and the materials developed during the prototyping stages. Eventually, their valuable appraisals assisted in refining and balancing the improvement of the program and materials designed during the study.

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A total of six (6) English teachers teaching Form I classes, two (2) from each of the three (3) selected schools were purposely sampled for the study. The teachers were consulted and agreed to participate in the study from the designing, prototyping and assessment stages of the study. Six (6) teachers were relatively enough in comparison to available resources during the professional development program. A total of thirty (30) Form I students, ten (10) from each school were purposely selected and participated fully in the study. The number of students was just enough to get the feedback of the lessons designed by the teachers during the try-out stage. Also, the number sufficed the need to assess the effectiveness of the program based on their

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reactions and learning experiences having been taught by the teachers who participated in the proposed professional development programs.

Two (2) curriculum experts from University of Dodoma, College of Education were purposely involved in this study. The experts ~~have had~~ an outstanding experience in the activities done in designing curriculum, teaching and learning materials, teaching and learning resources in schools and the new teaching approach as suggested in the Competence Based Education (CBE). Moreover, one expert in linguistics from the University of Dodoma, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, with more experience in designing short stories and analysis of various literary works, -was purposely involved in this study. ~~The linguist is more experienced in designing short stories and analysis of various literary works.~~

Study Approach

The study adopted qualitative ethnographic research approach. The qualitative approach was used to explore the classroom practices and interaction processes during the implementation of the lessons on short stories topics developed during the study. The approach enabled the study to describe how teachers feel about the procedures and interactive processes and what they believe about the professional development program during designing, prototyping and assessment stages of the study. However, the quantitative aspect such as numbers, frequencies, and descriptive tables were used in collecting, analyzing and reporting some of the findings by using tables and percentages to better understand and interpret the data on the effectiveness of the developed program. The approach provided the room for the curriculum experts to express their feelings and give their pieces of advice during the review of the proposed professional

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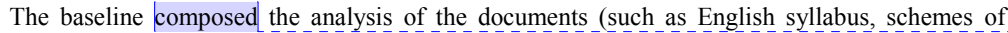
development program and developed materials. The ethnographic research approach was also used to describe and understand the processes. It was also used to describe the meanings and opinions teachers given as they interact with the components in the program as well as in the developed teaching and learning materials. This approach was the possible means of understanding the complexity of classroom context during the implementation of the new skills and competences embedded in the program as well as in the developed teaching and learning materials. The used approach also used—allowed ~~also~~—the assessment of the teachers’ interpretations of the acquired competence in their natural classroom settings during the development stages of the program.

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The SB-PD program was arranged in such a way that the involved six teachers met in a one-day workshop in one of the three schools. During the workshop, the teachers had ~~an~~ ample time to know the objective of the study, meet with experts, and review the newly introduced English syllabus. During this dayworkshop, the teachers also reflected on the various ways of designing and developing the teaching and learning materials. The teachers planned for the timetable for developing and prototyping the lessons’ materials they would develop on short stories topic. They also planned ~~for~~ a program of visiting each teacher in his/her school to observe and review the lessons developed by each of the teachers. The researchers and some experts also had the opportunity to join the teachers during the school visits. It was through this way that the teachers collaborated among themselves and with the experts including the researchers to come up with a professional link in designing the intervention to address the Form I students’ challenges in English learning.

The Study Design

The orientation is the first stage of this study design where the baseline study was conducted.



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2. The cycles shaded into blue indicate the interaction among the components.

The baseline composed the analysis of the documents (such as English syllabus, schemes of

work and lesson plans) and needs identification. The information gained from this stage assisted in the designing of preliminary guidelines of the short stories lessons' materials. It also led to the establishment of the School-Based Professional Development (SB-PD) program in the study area as an intervention to active and extensive support for the teachers during the learning and implementation of the competence-based English syllabus, through a maximized collaboration among the teachers.

The prototyping stage involved the try-out of the short stories lessons' materials in the actual environment. This stage included the appraisal by various experts such as linguists, curriculum developers and teachers and classroom trials in Form I classes. The SB-PD program exposed the teachers to development of materials which reflect the classroom context. As Seels and Richey (1994) reveal, the prototyping stage is suitable for the processes and development of the products that potentially meet the criteria of internal consistency and effectiveness. The foundation of this stage is the idea that allows a researcher to "learn by doing". This revolves around proposing the specific guidelines of the invention first, and then implements it in the small scale with modification of the versions based on the formative evaluation of the material (Seels & Richey, 1994). The versions based on the formative assessment results were tried out until the needed perfection was attained.

The assessment stage involved the process of determining the effectiveness of the developed School-Based Professional Development (SB-PD) program. The focus of this stage was to analyze the extent to which the developed SB-PD program was able to address the challenges which English teachers faced during the teaching and learning process as identified during the

baseline at the beginning of this study. Moreover, the effectiveness of the SB-PD program was expected to be assessed on the basis of the quality of the short stories lessons' materials.

Results and Discussions

The findings of this study indicate that teaching English to Form I class is challenging in three ways. Firstly, the students are in abrupt change of the medium of instruction and seem to be incompetent in English. Secondly, teaching using the newly introduced communicative approach is a challenge to most of the teachers since they had never attended any workshop concerning the new approach. Thirdly, the implementation of the new syllabus was not accompanied by the development of the guiding learning materials. Despite these situations, the teachers still use the conventional approaches to represent the English contents and the new strategies in the syllabus.

The results of this study have been presented on the basis of the teachers' general knowledge of the competence-based teaching approaches; ability to implement competence based teaching approaches in their classrooms, ability to practice competence-based assessments and classroom as well as the ability to prepare the competence-based lesson plan. The findings have clearly indicated that the teachers believe to have sufficient knowledge of the competence-based teaching approaches. However, during interview with teachers, the majority of them were able to define a word competence but not able to describe a competence-based curriculum and teaching approaches. As it was for the general knowledge of competence-based teaching approaches, the teachers perceived their practices with competence-based teaching approaches to be high. However, the majority of them were not able to prepare the competence-based lesson plan.

The teachers had their lesson plans which were prepared before English lessons. Basically, each lesson plan observed bore the information similar to the schemes of work. Moreover, further analysis of the lessons plan showed that one teacher from school B (TSB) gave a suggestion about using the library visit method in interpreting the literary work topic. The teacher also claimed to use audio-visual aids in that lesson. The use of audio-visual aids was also observed in the TSB scheme of work. Surprisingly, it was later observed that there was neither library nor electric connection in that school. This was observed as teacher (TSB) mentioned the library because it appeared in the syllabus and copied it blindly without seeing the actual school situation. This indicates that some teachers may design a learning activity knowing that it is impossible to implement the activity. It is therefore important to note that sometimes the teachers prepare the lesson plans just to indicate what they are required to do by the syllabus and not for the sake of the effectiveness and efficiency of the lesson. It may also be possible that they prepare lesson plans in order to trick the academic officers and inspectors who visit them some times to assess their commitment to their duties.

The interviewed teachers indicated that they lacked the skills for teaching using the competence-based syllabus. As the result, they continued teaching using the approach they had been using before. Some of the teachers complained about lack of teaching and learning materials as teaching aids as well as competence-based teaching and learning materials. Some of the teachers identified the use of demonstration and activities during teaching as a waste of time particularly in preparing the activities. Most of them demonstrated to have limited knowledge and skills in using role-play in studying and at the same time, they did not believe in learning through fellow experts. One teacher from school C (TSC) comments that:

The teachers need to be oriented on the newly introduced syllabus to receive formal training concerning the competence-based syllabus so as to maintain their profession (Field Data, 2015).

The baseline study conducted at the beginning of this study revealed that teachers are not using the newly introduced competence-based syllabus appropriately. The findings showed that the teachers lacked important skills and knowledge about lesson preparation and implementation. Most of the lesson plans observed lacked sufficient students' activities that are more engaging, particularly when it comes to interpreting short stories. Moreover, the shortage of guiding materials and other learning resources such as class readers was among the challenges observed. Worse still, the teachers lacked opportunities for professional development programs that are believed to be important to teachers [hence for](#) guiding them in the implementation of the lessons. The teachers were not that much competent in teaching about interpreting literary works as far as both content and pedagogy were concerned. The teachers were of the opinion that the interpretation of short stories topic was the most **difficult to teach** and for students to learn in comparison to other topics. Joyce and showers (2002) and Knight (2009) are of the opinion that teachers are the center of any school reform and improvement process that **sought** to bring about effective students' learning. For this reason, mounting effective professional development programmes is thought important at this juncture (Knight, 2009; Gabrieli, 2013).

However, not all professional development programmes are effective to bring about the desired objective (Knight, 2009). Thus, any effort to assist the teachers of this kind needs a careful planning of the model that would be potentially promising. Ward (2000) proposed the school based workshop as being useful in identifying the need and solutions within the school context

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and developing appropriate measures to bring about effective learning among students. Moreover, the school-based professional program for these teachers need to be continuous and sustainable (Joyce & Shower, 2002). Takahashi and Yoshida (2010) suggest a professional development programme that is geared in developing professional links among teachers as a more promising one.

Moreover, each member of the group prepared one lesson and presented it. After the presentation, the activity was followed by the appraisal sessions whereby the participants and the researcher gave their comments on the strength and areas for improvement. During this session, the teachers had the opportunity to observe the model and rehearse it using the exemplary lessons. After the rehearsal, during workshop session, the teachers had the opportunity to practice the model in their regular classrooms with the support from colleagues. This helped them to identify the areas that needed improvement. The findings indicated that the teachers had developed the knowledge, skills, and competence required to use the lessons material in the classroom. The teachers gained more knowledge when they visited one another for learning and assisting each other. This helped them to change their pedagogical skills by employing interactive learning strategies that encourage students' participation in the learning effort than before.

Teachers' Change

Most of the participants had acquired new behavior as the basic skills and knowledge during the workshop. The participants were eager to learn the Competence-Based Syllabus CBS and new approach, activities they attempted and those which were attempted by student. During the

interviews, the participants mentioned that most of them were well engaged in learning by doing as the Chinese proverb, “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand”. One of the participants added that in order to improve the acquisition of such knowledge and skills, they had to work together as a team by visiting each other in each other’s schools and establish interschool collaboration so as to improve their competences.

Teachers’ Knowledge Gained

Item	E	%	M	%	P	%
I am very comfortable with the workshop I attended.	5	100	0	0	0	0
My great concern is to use these new skills in classroom.	4	80	1	20	0	0
I learned a lot by observing my colleague when teaching.	4	80	1	20	0	0
Short stories motivate me in learning English language.	2	40	3	60	0	0
I can relate the content of text with the programs that I role play.	3	60	2	40	0	0

Key: E-excellent, M-moderate, P-poor.

Similarly, these teachers (TSA, TSB and TSC) were of the opinion that the schemes of work and lesson plans were not necessary. This suggests that there was a need for discussions, perhaps with educators, on the role of these two documents in planning to teach. For example, teacher TSB might have considered the scheme of work as a firm entity that was supposed to be followed; hence when she realized that she had to make adjustments, in her view, she considered the schemes of work unnecessary.

Students Experiences

The notable result of the study showed that most of the students involved in the study were in favor of the interactive teaching and learning environment during short stories lessons. They were also capable of extending their literature learning experience by relating what they had learnt in classroom to other types of reading materials like prose and poetry. This is in consonant with the constructivism theories of learning which predict the effective learning of students when they are actively engaged in constructing their own knowledge from their personal experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). English language knowledge is constructed by learners as they seek out meaning and make mental connections in an active manner (Brunner, 1960). It is, thus important for the educators to design and develop English language lessons' materials from the students' perspectives to help them improve classroom learning.

The Effectiveness of the Developed Program

This stage presents the findings from the assessment of the effectiveness of the intervention professional development program of the study in form of school-based training and good support during the workshop. This was conducted through the questionnaires and interviews by the researcher. The teachers were used to assess the effectiveness of the professional development program where they were supported to develop interactive materials and implement interactive lessons during teaching short stories in Form I classes in the sampled schools.

According to the social constructivism model, every individual has specific qualities and it is almost impossible to manage them by taking these qualities into account. The main point is to

make students trust themselves in solving problems and making decisions. Therefore, this model emphasizes on the relationship between the student and teacher. This relationship relies on intelligibility, directness, freedom and separateness. This model develops the relationship between good teacher and students; it deals with personal problems and emotions. Moreover, it helps the teachers and learners to evaluate themselves how their own behaviors affect others and recognize their needs. However, there were also significant patterns and differences established through the study. Such patterns are very important in helping to shape the suggested pedagogical framework or teaching model which should be adopted in the in-service teacher training program in the country. This is important since it would ensure the relevance and expansion of the role of literature in the English Language syllabus in the country.

Conclusion

The findings from the current study have indicated that teachers who participated in the proposed SB-PD program perceived their knowledge on competence-based approaches to be high and sufficient for them to apply the same in the teaching field. The findings further conclude that English teachers gained more knowledge and competences regarding the current English syllabus content as well as the pedagogic skills as a result of taking an active part in the SB-PD program. Interestingly, they were able to prepare and implement the lessons on the short stories topics quite easily than before. The findings revealed that the teachers were of the opinion that the SB-PD program assisted them in building and sharpening their skills more often. Besides, they acknowledged that through the program, they were able to establish a professional link that could continue to exist and help them to consult one another to solve some of the teaching challenges that could emerge for the time being and those likely to happen in future. Besides

that, the teachers claimed that the techniques used to design the short stories teaching materials during the SB-PD program paved the way for them to design and develop more materials even in other topics suggested in the English syllabus.

Based on the significance of the SB-PD program to both teachers and students who participated in the study, there is a necessity for collaboration between the teachers, students, researchers and other experts in the educational institutions around. Such collaborative teams of professionals will always meet, discuss the challenges they are facing and develop a number of school based interventions to address such challenges. The potentials of forming such network of professionals learning teams to strengthen the teachers' competence are evident from the current study and hence, the need to scale it up.

Implication

The students' performance requires them to be involved actively in the learning process through activities such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, discussions and reflections. Teaching and learning materials should strike this balance and come from the teachers' themselves. For this to be attained effectively, the effective professional development such as SB-PD is necessary in orienting the teachers to become more competent in developing and using the effective English language materials in different students' learning contexts. The findings have shown that the involvement of teachers in various professional development programs, which put them at the centre of learning, improves their exposure and hence strengthen their teaching competences. Therefore, this study recommends to the education stakeholders to make sure that teachers are properly updated in the manner that they would be equipped with new innovations in terms of

subject matter or pedagogy in the education field. Such practice will be likely to enhance the students' effective learning, not only in short stories, but also in other English topics in Tanzanian secondary schools.

Disclaimer

This manuscript was presented in the conference “Conference on English and Communication: Exploring Communication Competence in the Industry and Academy” available link is <http://www.englishinafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Conference-on-English-for-effective-communication-2016.pdf>” date May 19th 2016.

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APPENDIX

A SAMPLE OF THE LESSON DESIGNED AND DEVELOPED BY THE TEACHERS

LESSON ONE: INTRODUCTION TO SHORT STORIES

PRELIMINARIES

Lesson Objectives

Students should be able to:

1. Define the term short story.
2. Outline characteristics of short stories.
3. Mention the reasons for studying short stories.

INTRODUCTION: 05 Minutes

On your own, write down the meaning of short story then discuss and share with your fellow and your views then come up with a single definition.



I would like to introduce to you the “term short story” which is the part of our lesson.



A *short story* is a fictional work of prose which is shorter in length than a novel. The short story should be read in one sitting, anywhere from a half an hour to two hours. In contemporary fiction, the short story can range from 1,000 to 20,000 words. Because of the shorter length, the short story usually focuses on one plot, main character (with a few minor additional characters), and central theme. The short stories also lend themselves more to experimentation that is, using uncommon prose styles or literary devices to tell the story.

PRESENTATION: 30 Minutes

Why short stories?

The short stories are important for student’s learning. They help them in learning English easily. The short stories help students to develop positive attitude towards a foreign language and enrich their learning experiences. It is important to select a

In a group of five students, discuss why a short story is good then, each group should present what was discussed.

Discussion will be done during the presentation with the help of the teacher.

Teacher should write on the board the reasons for short stories being important.

story that is at the ‘instructional level’ for the majority of students in the class.

WHY SHORT STORIES

Historically, it has always been a popular mode of amusement. It provides a distraction that can be savored and enjoyed quickly. The short stories are important to student’s learning. They help them in learning English language smoothly. They also help students to develop positive attitude towards the foreign language and enrich their learning experiences. It is important to select a story which is at the ‘instructional level’ for the majority of students in the class. An instructional level text is the one in which the student is able to read at least 90% of the words accurately and understand no less than 75% of the overall content (Loukia, 2006). If the text is too difficult, the teacher is expected to spend some time explaining vocabulary and scaffolding student learning. The students are also expected to spend some time focusing on word recognition struggle to understand the meaning and therefore comprehend the story.

The students in group should listen to the guide from the teacher and write down characteristics of short stories.



Discuss with students about the common features of short stories



Teacher should guide students to write the characteristics of short stories.



STUDENT’S ACTIVITIES

Expected characteristics of short stories to be mentioned

Short stories make the students' reading task easier because they are simple and short in comparison with other literary genres.

They enhance the level of the readers' worldviews about different cultures and groups of the people.

They provide more creative, encrypt, challenging texts that require personal exploration supported with prior knowledge for advanced level of the readers.

They motivate the learners to read because such short stories are authentic materials.

They offer the world of wonders and mystery.

Lastly, they give the students the chance to use their creativity.

Teacher with student should discuss and write at least five characteristics of short stories from each group.



CHARACTERISTICS OF SHORT STORIES

Short stories tend to be less complex than novels. A short story will usually focus on only one incident, has a single plot and setting, limited number of characters, and covers a short period of time. In longer forms of fiction, the stories tend to contain certain core elements of dramatic structure: exposition (the introduction of setting, situation and main characters); complication (the event of the story that introduces the conflict); rising action, crisis (the decisive moment for the protagonists and their commitment to a course of action); climax (the point of highest interest in terms of the conflict and the point of the story with the most action); resolution (the point of the story when the conflict is resolved); and moral. Because of their shortness, short stories may or may not follow this pattern. Some do not follow the patterns at all. For example, modern short stories occasionally have an exposition. More typical, although it is an abrupt beginning, the story starts at the middle of the action. As with longer stories, the plots of short stories also have the climax, crisis, or turning-point. However, the endings of many short stories are abrupt and open and may or may not have moral or practical lesson.

REINFORCEMENT: 30 Minutes

Student's Activity

To read the sample of story given by the teacher in a pair.

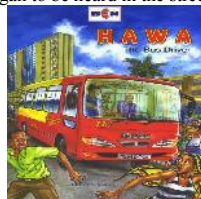


Teacher Activity

Present a sample of short story for students to read in groups. Guide students to read it aloud for everyone to hear.

A SAMPLE OF STORY

One day, Hawa was in Ubungo, she saw a bus standing by the side of the road. The driver was standing outside smoking a cigarette. Suddenly, the bus started to move. The brakes were not working. Hawa shouted to the driver but he did nothing. He was too afraid because the bus was already moving fast. Quickly, Hawa ran across the road and jumped into the bus, she blew the horn to warn people. Then, she tried the foot brake; it didn't work. She tried the hand brake; it didn't work. The bus was now going very fast Hawa took the gear stick and using all her weight, all her 82 kilos, she forced the gear to work. The bus shook and slowed down and finally stopped. Hawa was sweating and everyone came to congratulate her but she just got out of the bus and walked away. From that day, all the drivers accepted and respected Hawa. She was one of them. Soon, the first song about Hawa began to be heard in the streets.



LESSON CONSOLIDATION and CLOSURE: 15 Minutes

Student Activities

To write the summary of the story

Ask and answer the questions given by fellow students.



The teacher summarizes the lesson. The teacher should give a brief summary of the entire lesson by reminding students on the discussed issues (lesson objectives), clarify some misconceptions from the definition of short stories to its discussed characteristics. Also, he/she should ask students if there is any question(s) or suggestion(s) on the lesson presented.

He/she should direct students to find the references for further reading and tell them about the next lesson.

The teacher finishes the lesson by telling the students that they have learnt the meaning of short story in that lesson, the reasons for short stories and major characteristics of short stories. He/she has to inform the students that the students have practiced several activities to enhance their reading skills which are very important in learning stories. The students are informed that they shall meet their teacher in the next lesson to learn about Hawa the bus driver. They are reminded to keep their book and read the first chapter before they start reading it next period.

Also, the teacher assigns some reading task to students so that they can engage themselves in more reading.

The students should be asked if there is any new thing that they have learned from that lesson.

Lastly, the students should be reminded to ask their parents or elderly people about short stories and their uses when at home.