

Sisay Awgichew Wondemetegn

Haramaya University: Ethiopia
College of Education and Behavioral Sciences

Anwar Ahmed

Haramaya University: Ethiopia
College of Education and Behavioral Sciences

Tamrat Zelalem

Haramaya University: Ethiopia
College of Education and Behavioral Sciences

The Role of the 'Post Graduate Diploma in Secondary School Teaching' Program in Improving the Quality of Teaching in Eastern Ethiopian Secondary Schools

Abstract: This study dealt with the role of the Postgraduate Diploma in Secondary School Teaching (PGDT) program in improving the quality of teaching in Eastern Ethiopian secondary schools. The study used a mixed research design that integrated both qualitative and quantitative research methods concurrently. The data was collected from 140 respondents, comprised of 83 teachers and 57 school leaders (i.e., mentors, principals, and head teachers) of 14 secondary schools found in four zones of Eastern Ethiopia. The researchers used simple random sampling to select secondary schools, whereas teachers and school leaders were selected using purposive and expert sampling techniques respectively. Quantitative data was collected via a questionnaire and qualitative data through focus group discussion (FGD), interview, and observation. The data is analyzed both in a qualitative and a quantitative manner. The findings of the study showed that PGDT graduates seem to be contributing their part to enhancing quality education by raising high order thinking questions, implementing classroom activities such as: problem-solving, cooperative learning, discussion and brainstorming,

frequently managing the classroom for active learning implementation, using exercises to elicit students' ideas, knowledge and skills and encouraging students to become active participants in classrooms. This is considered to be an encouraging trend for the desired improvement in teaching quality. The result of this study also demonstrated that PGDT graduates have good subject matter knowledge and apply it effectively in their classrooms. The grand mean of teachers' and school leaders' responses related with their subject matter knowledge is 4.33 and 3.81, respectively. This seemed to exist because of their undergraduate program; they have had an opportunity to attain various major courses in the three-year bachelor program. After that, in order to become a high school teacher, they had to attend a one-year or a two-summer long PGDT program to equip them with fundamental pedagogical skills. This is understood as the benefit of the new teacher-education program. Despite all of these facts and in contrast with the teachers' response, the researchers observed that in most Eastern Ethiopia secondary schools teaching was dominated by traditional methods of teaching or lecturing. This approach makes students passive, less confident, unreflective and poorly motivated to enjoy learning. Furthermore, concerning students learning assessment, an inconsistency of application was observed. Therefore, the researchers suggested that the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, in collaboration with higher learning institutions and teacher-training colleges, would have to provide continuous training for secondary school teachers about student assessment, active and constructivist methods of teaching to enhance quality education and produce robust graduates fit for the 21st century world of work and consciousness.

Keywords: quality, teaching, PGDT

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

In a vast body of literature, education is acknowledged as an essential element in the process of national development. It unlocks human potential and helps individuals better understand the world in which

they live. Education can address the complexity and interconnectedness of problems such as poverty, wasteful consumption, environmental degradation, urban decay, population growth, gender inequality, health, conflict, violation of human rights and seeks to empower people to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future (UNESCO, 2005; TGE, 1994). The strength of any educational system, however, largely depends on the quality and commitment of its teachers. Oliveria and Farrell, as cited in Ayalew Shibesh (2009), pointed out that the teacher is the most important resource in an education system in any society. The teacher also plays a major role in the delivery of quality education. Educational quality has largely been a function of teacher quality (Avalos and Hadad, 1979; Fuller, 1986). Platt (1970) emphasizes a similar notion and points out that teachers are the heart of the educational process, main determinants of the quality and effectiveness of educational process, and players of decisive role in the fulfillment of educational goals. In relation to the aforementioned explanation, Miles (1975) states that school facilities, such as good curricula, creative instructional materials, efficient organization and management, modern facilities and equipment, all contribute to the effectiveness of education, but all depend for their full realization upon the skill, wisdom and commitment of teachers. Indeed, teachers are the most important elements in the realization of educational goals. Because of this, every educational system should strive to attract qualified people to the profession and provide them with the best possible working conditions and material incentives that will satisfy their needs.

Today, we are fully aware of the function that education plays in society and the country as a whole. Ethiopia is striving to expand education at all levels (primary, secondary, and tertiary). To this end, new goals of access, equity, quality and efficiency were articulated at the national level in the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy of 1994. In effect, this has helped the country to respond to the rapidly changing demand of education by enhancing teacher preparation in the last few decades. The educational sector in Ethiopia was given a powerful impetus after the overthrow of the military government in 1991. Since then, education has been a development priority on the national agenda. The Government of Ethiopia

has developed an Education Training Policy (ETP) and an Education Sector Strategy in 1994. In this policy, teacher education has a due attention. Based on this, a number of mechanisms have developed to address the problems of teacher training specially since 2003. Thus, teacher development programs have passed through different reforms and improvements. The purpose of teacher education is to produce effective practicing teachers (George et al., 2000) and address the question of how trainees can best be prepared to become effective classroom practitioners. In the case of Ethiopia, the new teacher education program was designed to strengthen the quality of teaching at secondary school level and fill gaps identified in the knowledge, practice and commitment of teachers (MoE, 2007, MoE, 2009b). This new program is intended to bring the preparation of secondary school teachers in line with international standards, which comprises a degree in a relevant subject followed by a professional qualification. In recent years, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has implemented PGDT (Post-graduate Diploma in Secondary School Teaching) program to equip secondary schools with pedagogically skilled and knowledgeable teachers. However, the impact and role of PGDT program in securing quality teaching has not yet been adequately investigated. Thus, the main objective of this study was to investigate the role of PGDT program in improving the quality of teaching in secondary schools found in Eastern Ethiopia.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The issues of quality education in general and teacher training and development program in particular have remained a huge challenge for the Ethiopian educational system since the introduction of modern education in the country, back in 1908. Following the introduction of the new Education and Training Policy and Education Sector Strategy in 1994 (TGE 1994), Ministry of Education has designed and implemented a series of Education Sector Development Programs (i.e., ESDP I, II, III, IV and V). Issues of quality were emphasized more in ESDP IV and V, which focuses on: improving student achievement, designing a new program to help disadvantaged children, developing the capacity of the system, and improving school management and administration (MoE 2010a). In 2010, the gov-

ernment also launched the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) with the objective of improving the delivery of quality education in five key areas: curriculum, textbooks and assessment, teacher development, school improvement, management and administration, and coordination, monitoring and evaluation (World Bank 2008).

With all these efforts, the issue of teacher education in Ethiopia seemed to have remained unresolved. Numerous studies show that Ethiopian secondary schools face several challenges related with teacher high turnover because of the low salary, resulting in a shortage of qualified and pedagogically skilled teachers. In order to tackle this problem, the government of Ethiopia has initiated PGDT (Post-graduate Diploma in Secondary School Teaching) program. A Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) is awarded to candidates who satisfactorily complete a one-year long course in School of Education and pass stipulated university examinations at the end of the study period <<http://sis.ucci.edu.ky>>.

Since 2010, the PGDT programme has been available in ten universities in a summer school mode. The very initiative behind beginning the programme was the gap identified from the teacher-training programme of Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO), which was implemented from 2003 to 2010. The PGDT program has faced complicated problems since its commencement. The problems observed are related with admission procedures, selection procedures, placement strategies (to university), teaching/learning process, status determination, evaluation mechanism, lack of uniformity, provision of teaching materials and practicum courses work and so on. Similarly, the authors of this article also observed problems with regard to the implementation of PGDT program. Experiencing such problems in the program led the writers to come up with the research topic, so that it would be possible to recommend some intervention strategies to improve quality-teaching originally deemed to be seen through the implementation of PGDT program. This study answers the following basic research questions:

1. To what extent are PGDT graduates equipped with subject area knowledge?

2. How frequently do PGDT graduates apply Active Learning Methods in their classroom teaching?
3. How frequently do PGDT graduates assess their students' progress?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this research is to assess the contributions of PGDT graduates towards improving the quality of teaching in secondary schools found in Eastern Ethiopia. Specific objectives of the research are to:

- a) Explore the subject matter knowledge of PGDT graduates.
- b) Investigate the frequency of Active Learning Methods application by PGDT graduates.
- c) Assess the extent of continuous assessment implementation by PGDT graduates.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The result of this research is believed to make stakeholders of the PGDT program such as Teacher Education Universities, Ministry of Education, Regional Education Bureau, Zonal Education Department, Woreda Education Offices and Schools more aware of the current contribution(s) and gaps of PGDT program. The result discloses the role of PGDT Program towards quality of teaching so that they would be able to take interventions for effective implementation of the program.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Conceptualizing Teacher Education

Several writers in the field of teacher education have in the past drawn a distinction between 'teacher education' and 'teacher training' (Cruickshank and Metcalf, 1990), thinking these represent two poles of an ideological dimension concerning the ways in which teachers are most appropriately prepared for their profession. The former is deemed to be concerned with the intellectual development of teachers, whereas the latter is more specifi-

cally concerned with the development of particular areas of knowledge and skills that are instrumental to the task of teaching. It has been argued that teacher education is involved in all-round education and the development of teachers, emphasizing teaching as a profession involving well-informed judgment; whereas teacher training refers to a more mechanistic approach to teacher preparation, more akin to a craft apprenticeship involving the mastery of well-defined routines. Obviously, learning to teach does involve the acquisition of certain knowledge and skills that are essential to adequate classroom performance. It is also the case, however, that learning to teach involves being able to reason about one's own actions, being able to justify particular strategies, understanding the subject matter, children and their ways of learning, and having a conception of the purposes of education and the ways in which schools operate in order to promote education. The continued use of such distinctions may in fact prevent the recognition of the merits of each perspective, hindering the exploration of alternative perspectives, how each refers to different areas of teachers' work and highlights different aspects of learning to teach.

2.2. The Issue of Quality in Secondary School Education

Secondary school education in Ethiopia and in other sub-Saharan Africa countries has been considered both an important sub-sector in the education system, as well as imperative for the development of the country's economy. Inputs into higher education and in the labor force in Ethiopia depend on qualified outputs from secondary schools. For the past number of years, quality has continued to be a dominating and challenging notion in different fields of research. In education, quality continues growing as an interesting area of research. In the past decades, researchers have tried to address the concern of 'quality in education'. The term quality has been used in the commercial field and is also increasing and growing in the field of education. The notion has remained a discussion agenda and varying definitions are found. Quality has been defined as a high degree of goodness or excellence (Mosh, 2000), a degree of fitness to what the customer wants (Lomas, 2002), and the level of satisfaction with effectiveness in the service offered (Manyanga, 2007).

Different countries in the world acknowledge that the quality of secondary school education is a pillar for national development (Gropello, 2006; Bedi and Sharma, 2006; Shahzad, 2007 as cited in George Batano, 2012). Improved quality of secondary school education is considered a key element for the growth of economy in sub-Saharan Africa (George Batano, 2012). It is through secondary school education that nations build skills and competences among young individuals to serve in various sectors of the economy. In Ethiopia too, despite the challenges the country is facing in education, the quality of primary and secondary school education has been set as a priority. To ensure and offer quality education in primary and secondary education, different strategies were implemented in the past. Among varieties of strategies implemented, post-graduate diploma in secondary school teaching (PGDT) aimed to produce competent and effective teachers. That is why it was found important by the authors of this article to assess the role of PGDT program to serve quality education in Eastern Ethiopia.

Poor performance in examinations and the falling quality of education can be associated with lack of teaching and learning resources (Bedi and Sharma, 2006), ill-trained teachers (Wedgwood, 2005), and overcrowded classrooms (Nilson, 2003; Wedgwood, 2005). Nevertheless, these alone may not be adequate measures of quality in education. According to Shahzad, (2007) quality of education is measured using different performance indicators. Competence and achievements are examples of performance indicators. The emphasis of measuring quality of education therefore has been associated with improving the performance of teachers and competences and achievements of the students (Campbell and Rozsnyai, 2002). Similarly, Vedder (1994) depicts that measuring the quality of education is related with raising students' achievements. Although, measuring of quality is important, it is not an easy task to judge the best strategies for measuring (Weir, 2009). In this sense, measuring quality becomes a complex and value-laden process (Mortmore and Stone, 1990). This means there is no simple one-dimensional measure of quality in education. In defining quality of education, many factors interact: students and their backgrounds, teachers

and their skills, schools and their structures and environment, curricula, and societal expectations (Nilson, 2003). In addition, the components of education that can be measured vary, depending on the objective of measurement and the interest of the judges. In either case, measuring the quality of education gives better pictures of what may be changed and how.

2.3. Role of Quality Teachers in Secondary School Teaching

Content-focused teacher professional development is thought to contribute to improvements in the quality of education (Harris and Sass, 2006). The presence of trained teachers is also considered to be one of the critical elements in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All Goals (Mpokosa and Ndaruhutse, 2008). So, proper schooling cannot be conceived without the presence of qualified teachers. This means that schools without trained teachers cannot do their job effectively. This is because teachers play a pivotal role in educational provision and thus significantly affect education quality. The number of teachers available, the pupil-teacher ratios, and the personal characteristics of teachers are considered as markers of quality. The personal characteristics include academic qualifications, pedagogical training, content knowledge, ability/aptitude and teaching experience (Workneh, 2013). Teacher motivation and incentives are also key factors in the success and /or failure of teaching and learning. Mpokosa and Ndaruhutse (2008), who carried out research on teacher training and school management in 13 developing countries, found that the level and structure of teacher incentives greatly contribute to teaching quality and student achievement. Teachers' motivation can be affected by the quality of their professional relationship with their supervisors and with each other. Good management and collaboration among teachers can balance the effect of poor pay on motivation. Teachers' motivation is also influenced by differences in standards and expectations. Better qualifications may cause teachers to have higher expectations and therefore, be more motivated to produce high-quality teaching (Urwick and Mapuru, 2005).

3. Research Design and Methodology

This part of the research focuses on research design and methodology, population, sample and sampling techniques. Moreover, it deals with sources of data, instruments of data collection and methods of data analysis. This study was conducted in four Zones located in Eastern part of Ethiopia. Among these, two of them are located in Oromia National Regional State, which are West Hararghe and East Hararghe Zones, while the remaining two are located in Somali National Regional State, which are Shinile, and Jig-Jiga Zones.

This study has a descriptive survey design, specifically a mixed research method that concurrently utilizes both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Descriptive survey design is preferred for this research because it helps the researchers to make their investigation with a narration of events and to draw conclusions based on the information obtained from relatively large and representative samples of the target population (Kothari, 2004). Additionally, descriptive survey research design aims at describing behaviors and people's perceptions, opinions, attitudes, and beliefs about a current issue in education (Kumar, 2006). Moreover, mixed research method is preferred since it uses the combination of qualitative and quantitative data so that the weakness of one can be strengthened by the strengths of the other (Creswell, 2009).

From the Somali National Regional state out of the nine Zones, two Zones, namely Shinile and Jig-Jiga, were selected using the convenient sampling technique. From these two Zones, six secondary schools were selected using simple random sampling techniques. From these six sample secondary schools, all PGDT graduate and mentor teachers were included as respondents of the survey and principals and Woreda supervisors interviewed and included in Focus Group Discussions. In East and West Hararghe Zones, eight secondary schools (four from each Zone) were selected using simple random sampling technique. From the selected eight schools all PGDT graduate and mentor teachers were included for the survey whereas the principals and supervisors included in interviews and FGDs. Finally, all Teacher Development Program (TDP) ex-

perts and supervisors in Somali National Regional State, East and West Hararghe Zone of Oromiya National Regional States Education Bureau were included using expert sampling techniques. The population of this research includes PGDT graduates of three batches: Mentors, Principals, and Supervisors. In total, 170 respondents were involved in filling in the questionnaires. Out of these, 90 respondents were secondary school teachers (sample graduates of three batches) and the remaining 80 respondents were secondary school leaders (Mentors, Principals, and Supervisors). Four data collection instruments (Questionnaire, Interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and Observation) were used to gather the necessary data.

The questionnaire contained both closed-ended and open-ended types used to collect data from PGDT graduates. The researchers designed scale questions to assess PGDT program graduates in terms of the subject matter knowledge, instructional planning skills, professional commitment, and application of different teaching techniques during classroom instruction and assessment of student progress included in this instrument. To do this, some items of the questionnaire were adapted from the research works of other researchers while some others developed by the members of the research team. The investigators preferred to use questionnaires as an instrument of data collection for this study, because it is the most flexible tool and possesses a unique advantage over others in collecting both qualitative and quantitative information (Kumar, 1999). In addition, according to (Kothari, 2004), the questionnaire is convenient to acquire the necessary information from a large number of study subjects within a short period.

As a method for collecting qualitative data, focus group discussions emphasized learning about understanding, the thoughts and experiences of others. When the participants take part in a group interview, they can demonstrate their interest in the discussion topic. When the participants are mutually interested in the discussion, their conversation often takes the form of sharing and comparing thoughts about the topic (Victor, 2006). Based on this assumption, FGD was used to collect data regarding the subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge,

lesson planning, professional commitment and assessment of students' progress from supervisors, and principals concerning quality PGDT program graduates. Similarly, in qualitative research, observation can help to study all observable social phenomena as long as they are accessible (Sarantakos, 2005). The main advantage of observation is being able to directly observe and describe the phenomena as they occur in their natural setting. Based on this understanding, direct classroom observation was conducted to witness the extent to which PGDT program graduates apply different methods of teaching during the time of classroom instruction, plan for their lessons in advance and undertake continuous assessment.

In qualitative research, interviewing is a major source of data needed for understanding the phenomenon under study (Merriam 1988). An interview is a kind of conversation with purpose. A researcher interview is an interpersonal situation, a conversation between two partners about an issue (Robson, 1993, p. 227 as cited Yamane Gama, 2007). Accordingly, the researcher conducted interviews with 4 TDP experts at the regional and zonal level. These people contributed a lot because of their important position (all are TDP expertise) they were the main people to select, assign and evaluate PGDT graduates. Both the quantitative and qualitative data necessary for this study were collected concurrently (side-by-side). This means that while distributing a questionnaire for PGDT program graduates, the investigators undertook focus group discussions with mentors, supervisors and principals until the respondents of the questionnaire filled it in and returned it to them. Simultaneously, classroom observation was conducted by some of the investigators while others conducted focus group discussions. The collected data for this study was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data collected through close-ended questionnaire from PGDT program graduates was analyzed by using descriptive statistics like the mean and percentage. Qualitative data collected through focus group discussions, interview and observation and it was analyzed via narration by categorizing and forming themes based on their major concepts.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter deals with the organization, analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from government secondary schools leaders, teachers, and education experts through questionnaires, FGD, observation and interviews. In total 170 respondents were involved in filling in the questionnaires. Out of these, 90 respondents were secondary school teachers and the remaining 80 respondents were secondary school leaders (head departments, mentors and principals). Accordingly, the questionnaires were distributed to the whole of the sample population, with 83 of the 90 teachers (92.22%) and 57 of 80 school leaders (71.25%) filling and returning successfully. On top of this, to substantiate the quantitative data, observations through checklist, focus group discussion and interviews were conducted with education experts.

Description of the questionnaire: the researchers developed a Likert type questionnaire to capture the level of agreement and frequency of respondents about the role of PGDT program in improving the quality of education in Ethiopian secondary schools. The scale given for closed ended question are stated as (5) SA= Strongly Agree, (4) A= Agree, (3) U= Undecided, (2) D= Disagree, (1) SD= strongly disagree), (5) AL= Always, (4) FR= frequently, (3) SM= sometimes, (2) R=rarely, (1) NA= not at all). The data collected through questionnaires, interviews, FGD and observation checklists were organized, analyzed and interpreted in line with the objectives of the study as described below:

Sex of respondents

Table 1. Sex

No	Sex	Teachers		Leaders	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	74	89.2	53	93.0
	Female	9	10.8	4	7.0
	Total	83	100.0	57	100.0

As indicated in the above table, 74 (89.2%) of teachers are male and the rest 9(10.8%) are female. This indicates that secondary school education in the study areas were still dominated by male teachers and the participation rates of female teachers in secondary school are low. Similarly, 53 (93%) of the school leaders participating in school leadership are male and the remaining 4 (7%) are female. This data shows that the participation of female in teaching and school leadership is low.

There are considerable factors for this disparity such as access to education, opportunities, cultural variables or perception and practice towards women performance and quality, lack of experience and participation in training and capacity building program in leadership. To reduce this gap and improve women’s competitiveness in leadership, continuous women empowerment training and capacity-building program may be necessary.

Issue related to Age of School Teacher and leaders

Table 2. Age of School Teacher and leaders

No	Age	Age of School Teachers		Age of School Leaders	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	25 and Below	47	56.6	5	8.8
	26–30	36	43.4	32	56.1
	31–35	0	0.0	13	22.8
	36 and above	0	0.0	7	12.3
	Total	83	100.0	57	100.0

As the above table 2 indicated that, 47 (56.6%) of school teachers are aged 25 and below with the rest 36 (43.4%) 26–30. Compared to school leaders, 5 (8.8%), 32 (56.1%), 13 (22.8%) and 7 (12.3%) of school leaders are aged 25 and below, between 26–30, 31–35 and 36 and above respectively. This data indicates that most school leaders and teachers in the study areas are young and energetic to handle their respective tasks.

However, absences of experienced teachers affect mentor-mentee relationships and in-belt supervision at the school level. The teaching profession is considered the mother of all other professions, however, in most sub-Saharan African countries the lack of well trained and qualified teachers are identifiable challenges in realizing education for all and sustainable development. During focus group discussion, most of the participants raised the issue that today the majority of secondary school teachers are looking for better jobs and are ready to leave the teaching profession. They also raised that teachers' high rotation, which is caused by the lack of incentives or low salary and respect. As a result, a significant numbers of teachers shifted their profession to business, economics, and engineering and other attractive professional areas. This requires urgent intervention to save teachers or the so-called "Nation Builders" and also the teaching profession.

Issue related to experience of teacher and leaders

Table 3. Experience of Teacher and Leaders

No	Experience	Teachers		Leaders	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	0–2 years	52	62.7	1	1.8
	3–5 years	25	30.1	13	22.8
	6–8 years	4	4.8	19	33.3
	9 and above years	2	2.4	24	42.1
	Total	83	100.0	57	100.0

As the above table indicates, 52 (62.7%) teachers in the research area put down their experience between 0–2, the rest 25 (30.1%) have 3–5, 4 (4.8%) have 6–8, 2 (2.4%) have 9 and above years experience, respectively. The experience of school leaders, in comparison, stands at 24 (42.1%) having 9 and above years experience while the rest 19 (33.3%) have 6–8 years, 13 (22.8%) have 3–5 years and 1 (1.8%) has 0–2 years experience,

respectively. This data implies that most teachers in the study areas have low experience but, in contrast, most school leaders have experience in leadership.

Issue related to Teacher Training

Table 4. Teacher Training

No	Item	Alternatives	Teachers		Leaders	
			N	%	N	%
1	Do you think that the overall duration of the PGDT training is adequate to be effective in high school teaching	Yes	67	80.7	45	78.9
		No	16	19.3	12	21.1
		Total	83	100.0	57	100.0
2	In the last three years did you participate in any kind of short term training(s) that might have added value to enhance your quality of teaching	Yes	21	25.3		
		No	62	74.7		
		Total	83	100.0		

From the above table, we can understand that 67 (80.7%) teachers and 45 (78.9%) leaders agreed that the overall duration of the PGDT training is adequate to produce effective teachers in high school teaching. The rest 16(19.3%) of PGDT graduates and 12 (21.1%) of leaders did not agree that the one year of regular or two summer training program in teacher education was enough. A “zero” incentive one year PGDT training program discourages newly recruited teachers, because some university graduates who have a degree in applied sciences have the opportunity to be employed in different high schools to fill the shortage of teachers without any pedagogical training with an equal salary to that of PGDT graduates. This shows the inconsistency of the Ethiopian teacher education program and, therefore, the Ministry of Education should revise the program to alleviate the inconsistency.

Regarding participation in short term training which helps to improve the quality of teaching, 62 (74.7%) of teachers responded that there was no kind of training in the last three years to enhance their capacity in teaching, the remaining 21(25.3%) had an opportunity to participate

in short term training. This data implies that nearly 75% of teachers in eastern Ethiopia have not had the opportunity to update his/ her profession through short-term training that helps to enhance quality teaching. However, the quality of teachers as well as of their influence on the quality of the educational process and its outcomes are undisputed. Numerous studies have shown that teachers are the key factor in determining the quality of the educational process, as well students' motivation and academic achievement (Graham Donaldson, et.al. 2013). Therefore, the Ministry of Education may introduce a continuous on job training, which is necessary to update the capacity of Ethiopian teachers in collaboration with NGOs.

Issue related to Quality of Teaching

Table 5. Quality of Teaching

No	Item	Alternatives	Teachers		Leaders	
			N	%	N	%
1	How would you rate the status of quality teaching in your school	Very High Status of quality of teaching	13	15.7	7	12.3
		High Status of quality of teaching	38	45.8	37	64.9
		Low Status of quality of teaching	25	30.1	13	22.8
		Very Low Status of quality of teaching	7	8.4	0	0
		Total	83	100.0	57	100.0

As the above table indicates, 13 (15.7%), 38 (45.8%) teachers and 7 (12.3%), 37(64.9%) leaders confirm that the status of quality of teaching in his/her school is very high and high, respectively. This is an encouraging trend, the remaining 25 (30.1%) and 7 (8.4%) teachers say, low and very low, respectively. Similarly, 13 (22.8%) leaders responded that the quality of teaching in their school was low. This data implies that a significant number of respondents affirm that the quality of teaching in eastern Ethiopian secondary schools is questionable. Concerning the status of the quality of teaching in eastern Ethiopian secondary schools, one expert from the Somali National Regional State reported that:

Quality of teaching is directly related to the positive interaction of teacher and students, students with their friends, practice of student-centered teaching methods, appropriateness of classroom, library, laboratory, pedagogical centers organization, and authenticity of learning, usage of teaching aids, appropriateness of assessment techniques, and application of reinforcement strategies.

However:

Frankly speaking, teaching in Ethiopian secondary schools is still dominated by teacher-centered methods of teaching approach, poor student-student, student-teacher and student-instructional material interaction, poor library, laboratory and pedagogical center organization, students' high dependency on others in doing homework and assignment, limited application of teaching aids and poor classroom management. Therefore, all stakeholders should work strongly to address all these issues to secure quality education for the coming generation.

Issues related to knowledgeability of PGDT graduates on the subject matter they teach

The ability to connect theories, experience and occupational requirements through the study of your own practice demands knowledge on two levels. The first level concerns educational knowledge about course content, teaching strategy, the students, etc. To construct this educational knowledge, professionals also have to develop methodological knowledge; in concrete terms this means knowledge about how to study their own practice. Ponte (2007) calls this knowledge at the second level.

Table 6. Knowledgeability of PGDT graduates

No	Items	Teachers								Leaders							
		SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Total	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Total		
1	Teachers have good subject matter knowledge and apply it effectively in the classroom	N	49	29	3	2	0	4.5	83	15	33	5	3	1	3.75	57	
		%	59	34.9	3.6	2.4	0		100	26.3	57.9	8.8	5.3	1.8		100	
2	Teachers know what to teach, how to teach, when to teach and where to teach	N	58	21	3	1	0	4.6	83	22	25	5	3	2	4.08	57	
		%	69.9	25.3	3.6	1.2	0		100	38.6	43.9	8.6	5.3	3.5		100	
3	Teachers have the required skills, understanding and creativity	N	45	30	6	1	1	4.4	83	17	24	10	3	3	3.85	57	
		%	54.2	36.1	7.2	1.2	1.2		100	29.8	42.1	17.5	5.3	5.3		100	
4	Teachers engage in a variety of in-service activities	N	32	38	6	1	6	4.08	83	13	26	11	4	3	3.73	57	
		%	38.6	45.8	7.2	1.2	7.2		100	22.8	45.6	19.3	7.0	5.3		100	
5	Teachers have opportunities for advancement, specialization and independence	N	34	32	11	2	4	4.08	83	14	24	9	6	4	3.66	57	
		%	41.0	38.6	13.3	2.4	4.8		100	24.6	42.1	15.8	10.5	7.0		100	
Grand Mean								4.33						3.81			

Note: (5) SA= Strongly Agree, (4) A= Agree, (3) U= Undecided, (2) D= Disagree, (1) SD= Strongly Disagree

As the above table indicates, both teachers and school leaders agreed that teachers have good subject matter knowledge and apply this effectively in the classroom. Teachers are acquainted with their major tasks of what to teach, how to teach, when to teach and where to teach. They also affirmed that teachers have the required skills, understanding, and creativity and they engaged in varieties of in-service activities. Furthermore, with slight difference to school leaders, teachers agreed that they have an opportunity for professional advancement, specialization and independence with a mean score 4.08. Generally, the above table demonstrates that PGDT graduates have good subject matter knowledge and apply it effectively in their classroom. The grand mean of teachers and school leaders is 4.33 and 3.81, respectively. This is because in their undergraduate program they have an opportunity to attain various

courses within three years. After graduation, to be a high school teacher, taking the one year or two-summer PGDT program is mandatory to equip them with fundamental pedagogical skills. The program has 40 credit hour courses such as: Secondary School Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology, Assessment and Evaluation of Learning, Teaching in Multicultural Context, Psychological Foundations of Learning & Development, Teachers as Reflective Practitioners, School and Society, Special Need and Inclusive education, Practicum, English for Secondary School, subject Area (I&II). It is indisputable these courses are important and we can say that this is the benefit of the new teacher-training program in Ethiopia.

Despite their good subject matter knowledge, most of the interviewees affirmed that the majority of newly deployed teachers have an instructional language (English language) deficit and low communication skills. Similarly, during classroom observation the researcher observed that most teachers could not speak English properly and, simultaneously, used the local language in the classroom. This is the result of an inconsistent language policy in Ethiopia, because in most Ethiopian elementary schools (up to grade seven and eight) the instructional language is the local language. Consequently, an immediate shift from local language to foreign language (to English) is a serious challenge for both teachers and students in Ethiopian high schools. Therefore, the researchers recommended that groundbreaking research at national level was needed to generalize the dilemma and make intervention possible to avoid the language crisis in Ethiopian education.

Issue related to Effectiveness in Active Learning Implementation

**Table 7. Issue Related to Teacher Effectiveness
in Active Learning Implementation**

No	Items	Teachers								Leaders							
		AL	FR	SM	R	NA	Mean	Total	AL	FR	SM	R	NA	Mean	Total		
1	I raise high order thinking question for students	N	26	21	31	4	1	3.8	83	7	17	27	4	2	3.4	57	
		%	31.3	25.3	37.3	4.8	1.2		100	12.3	29.8	47.4	7.0	3.53		100	
2	I implement problem solving, cooperative learning group discussion and brainstorming	N	32	24	25	1	1	4.0	83	10	27	14	4	2	3.68	57	
		%	38.6	28.9	30.1	1.2	1.2		100	17.5	47.4	24.6	7.0	3.5		100	
3	I manage the class for active learning implementation	N	44	23	14	2	0	4.3	83	15	22	15	3	2	3.78	57	
		%	53.0	27.7	16.9	2.4	0		100	26.3	38.6	26.3	5.3	3.5		100	
4	I use exercise to elicit students ideas, knowledge and skill	N	44	25	10	3	1	4.3	83	12	25	14	4	2	3.73	57	
		%	53.0	30.1	12.0	3.6	1.2		100	21.1	43.9	24.6	7.0	3.5		100	
5	I encourage students to become active participant	N	61	13	6	3	0	4.59	83	13	20	17	6	1	3.66	57	
		%	73.5	15.7	7.2	3.6	0		100	22.8	35.1	29.8	10.5	1.8		100	
6	I arrange students for different classroom activities	N	41	15	21	3	3	4.06	83	12	20	18	6	1	3.63	57	
		%	49.4	18.1	25.3	3.6	3.6		100	21.1	35.1	31.6	10.5	1.8		100	
7	I am interested in implementing active learning in my classroom	N	57	14	9	2	1	4.49	83	16	15	16	8	9	3.73	57	
		%	68.7	16.9	10.8	2.4	1.2		100	28.1	26.3	28.1	14.0	15.8		100	
8	I support students to increase their problem solving capacity	N	51	18	8	5	1	4.36	83	9	22	17	8	1	3.52	57	
		%	61.4	21.7	9.6	6.0	1.2		100	15.8	38.6	29.8	14.0	1.8		100	
Grand Mean									4.23	Grand Mean						3.64	

Note: (5) AL= always, (4) FR=frequently, (3) SM=sometimes, (2) R=rarely, (1) NA= not at all

Scale for interpretation: <1.49= not at all, 1.5–2.49=rarely, 2.5–3.49=sometimes, 3.5–4.49=frequently and >4.5= always

Teacher classroom practice and interaction at the classroom level seems to have a vital importance in learning improvement. The following idea confirms this point. "In all education systems, the performance of teachers is one of the handful of factors determining school effectiveness and learning outcomes for teachers. Interaction with learners is the axis on which educational quality turns" (VSO, 2002). With the changing educational reforms, new ways of practice, new ways of working and above all, different ways of instructional practice, it is necessary for the teachers to continuously improve and update their skills. With this understanding, assessing teacher classroom practice is indispensable to identify the gaps for future intervention.

The above table shows that teachers raise high order thinking question, implement (problem-solving, cooperative leaning, discussion and brainstorming) activities in their classroom, they manage the classroom for active learning implementation frequently, they use exercises to elicit students' ideas, knowledge and skills and encourage students to become active participants in the classroom. Furthermore, they affirmed that they arrange students for different classroom activities and interested to implement active learning in their classroom, they support students to increase their problem solving capacity frequently. The grand mean of teachers' response is 4.23. Teachers and school leaders (mentors, department heads and principals) confirm frequently that in their response with regard to the frequency of teachers support to increase students problem solving capacity, raise high order thinking question and organizing various classroom activities. The grand mean of school leaders' response is 3.64. This shows that effectiveness in active learning implementation is recurrent.

With regard to active learning implementation, most of the interviewees affirmed that: recently, several schools had commenced the implementation of cooperative learning practice. Despite this fact and in contrast with the teachers' response, the researcher observed that most of eastern Ethiopia secondary school teaching was dominated by traditional or teacher-centered methods of teaching or lecturing in the classroom. This makes students more passive, less confident, un-

reflective and poorly motivated to enjoy learning. Therefore, the researchers suggested that providing continuous training to secondary school teachers about active and constructivist methods of teaching is indisputably vital.

Issue related to Student Assessment

Table 8. Student Assessment

No	Items	Teachers								Leaders							
		AL	FR	SM	R	NA	Mean	Total	AL	FR	SM	R	NA	Mean	Total		
1	How often PGDT teachers check student work and give constructive feedback	N	30	33	16	4	0	4.07	83	9	19	23	5	1	3.52	57	
		%	36.1	39.8	19.3	4.8	0		100	15.8	33.3	40.4	5.5	1.8		100	
2	How often PGDT graduates collect data for making decision to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning	N	17	25	30	6	5	3.5	83	6	21	23	4	3	3.4	57	
		%	20.5	30.1	36.1	7.2	6.0		100	10.5	36.8	40.4	7.0	5.3		100	
Grand Mean								3.78	Grand Mean								3.46

Note: (5) AL= always, (4) FR= frequently, (3) SM= sometimes, (2) R=rarely, (1) NA= not at all

Scale for interpretation: <1.49= not at all, 1.5–2.49=rarely, 2.5–3.49=sometimes, 3.5–4.49=frequently and >4.5= always

As shown in the above table, most of the teacher respondents confirmed, with a mean score of 4.07, that teachers check student work and frequently give constructive feedback. Similarly, the response of school leaders for the same question put down frequently with 3.52 mean score. The researchers observed teachers' portfolio or commonly called "mark list. It shows students the results of "assignment work, class participation, mid exam, and final exam" and the teachers call it continuous assessment. However, this is a collection of students' marks and it does not demonstrate the continuous progress of students, it is not used for possible intervention, remedial action or followed through to maximize students' learning.

Regarding the extent to which PGDT graduates collect data for making decisions to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching – learning processes in item 2 of table 8, both the response of teachers and school leaders lay between frequently and sometimes with 3.5 and 3.4 mean score respectively. The researchers observed that there is inconsistency in the application of continuous assessment in Eastern Ethiopian Secondary Schools. To establish a firm foundation for improved student outcomes, teachers must integrate their knowledge about the curriculum, and about how to teach it effectively and how to assess whether students have learned it. Teachers need knowledge and skills in assessment to maintain a student focus: the ability to identify exactly what students know and can do is a prerequisite for teaching that is responsive to each student's needs. Therefore, the researcher recommended that providing continuous short term on job training is vital to develop the capacity of teachers about effective assessment.

Issue related to Students Assessment

As table, 8.1 item one indicated, both teacher and school leaders respondents, with 4.31 and 4.05 mean score, respectively, showed teachers' skills in eastern Ethiopian high schools in administering, scoring and interpreting the results of student assessment. In item 2 of table 8.1 respondents confirm that teachers are skilled in communicating assessment results to students, parents, other audiences and educators. They also agreed that teachers are skilled in developing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions. Furthermore, both teachers and leaders agreed, with a 4.32 and 4.1 mean score respectively, that the focus of assessment in their school is to establish where students are in their learning and teachers' assessment provides information about students' knowledge, skills and understandings of the learning outcomes. The mean score of the respondents of teachers and leaders is 4.49 and 4.07 correspondingly. This is an encouraging trend to achieve quality education.

Table 8.1: Students Assessment

No	Items		Teachers							Leaders						
			SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Total	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Total
1	Teachers are skilled in administering, scoring and interpreting the result of assessment	N	38	39	3	1	2	4.31	83	14	34	7	2	0	4.05	57
		%	45.8	47.0	3.6	1.2	2.4		100	24.6	59.6	12.3	3.5	0		100
2	Teachers are skilled in communicating assessment result to students, parents, other audiences and educators	N	19	49	12	1	2	3.98	83	9	35	9	4	0	3.85	57
		%	22.9	59.0	14.5	1.2	2.4		100	15.8	61.4	15.8	7.0	0		100
3	Teachers are skilled in developing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decision	N	37	33	9	3	2	4.24	83	8	33	14	1	1	3.80	57
		%	44.6	39.8	10.8	3.6	2.4		100	14.0	57.9	24.6	1.8	1.8		100
4	The focus of assessment is to establish where students are in their learning	N	38	37	6	1	1	4.32	83	17	31	7	2	0	4.1	57
		%	45.8	44.6	7.2	1.2	1.2		100	29.8	54.5	12.3	3.5	0		100
5	Teachers assessment provides information about students knowledge, skills and understandings of the learning outcomes	N	45	31	5	2	0	4.49	83	18	28	8	3	0	4.07	57
		%	54.2	37.3	6.0	2.4	0		100	31.6	49.1	14.0	5.3	0		100
Grand Mean							4.26	Grand Mean							3.97	

Note: (5) SA= Strongly Agree, (4) A= Agree, (3) U= Undecided, (2) D= Disagree, (1) SD= Strongly Disagree

Most of the interviewees confirm that PGDT graduates are skilled in administering, scoring and interpreting students' assessment results. They also validate that teachers' skills in communicating student results to students and parents are being gradually developed. Similarly, they agreed with teachers and leaders responses about the ability of teacher assessment in providing information about students' knowledge, skills and understanding of the learning outcomes. This may be the role of the PGDT

program in securing quality education and considered as an opportunity in Ethiopian teacher education program. Nevertheless, in contrast and based on the researchers' observation and document analysis, in most of the observed high schools, student's assessment strategies lack standardization and the necessary consistency to measure student's knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Conclusions and Implications

Based on the above findings and discussion, the following conclusions and implications are drawn:

1. Most PGDT graduates confirmed that they are contributing to enhancing the quality of teaching by putting into practice active learning techniques and continuous assessment. In contrast with the PGDT graduates response, the researchers observed that in most Eastern Ethiopian secondary school classrooms activities are dominated by teacher-centered or lecturing methods. Therefore, the researchers suggested that the MoE, in collaboration with higher learning institutions and particularly with teacher training colleges or institutes, provide continuous training to secondary school teachers about active and constructivist methods of teaching. This can make students confident, reflective, motivated, creative, innovative, and independent and problem solvers in their future lives.
2. This study shows that there is inconsistency in the application of continuous assessment in Eastern Ethiopian secondary schools. To establish a firm foundation for improved student assessment, teachers should incorporate diverse assessment strategies to check whether the desired objectives or learning outcomes such as required skills, knowledge and attitudes were achieved or not. Therefore, researchers suggested that the collaborative work of NGOs,

teacher education colleges or institutes, and MoE are demanding to provide in-service and pre-service training via continuous professional development programs to develop the capacity and skills of teachers about effective continuous assessment techniques, which is crucial for identifying the gaps in student learning, making corrective action, and the enrichment of student learning.

3. The outcome of this study also demonstrates that PGDT graduates have good subject matter knowledge and apply it effectively in their classroom. The grand mean of teachers and school leaders' responses is 4.33 and 3.81, respectively. This is because in their undergraduate program, they have an opportunity to attend various major courses within three years. After commencement, taking the one year or two-summer PGDT program is mandatory to become a high school teacher and this is a necessary minimum to equip them with fundamental pedagogical skills. This is the benefit of the new postgraduate program in secondary school teaching or teacher-education program. However, at a standstill institutionalization capacity, inattention, materialization and ownership of courses MoE should take all the necessary steps to ensure the best is made of the program.

For the successful implementation of this teacher education program, a consistent modality, materialization of the program, creation of a common understanding among stakeholders, incentivizing the profession, standardization of the curriculum (contents, learning experiences and leadership), developing the citizenship behavior of teachers, the application of modern methods of teaching, assessment and learning theories, accountability and educational management practice might be required in the future.

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Information about authors:

Sisay Awgichew

Lecturer at Haramaya University (Ethiopia). He has a research interests in the area of Child and Adult Education, Teacher Education, Instructional Technology, Multicultural Issue and Higher Education Curriculum in comparative perspectives. He has been provided training for the last ten years in various areas of education such as Teaching Methods/ Active Learning, Cooperative Learning, Instructional Planning, Balanced Score Card (BSC), Action Research, School Improvement Program (SIP) and Integrated Functional Adult Literacy.

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences,

Department of Adult Education and Community Development.

College of Education and Behavioral Science

Haramaya University

P.O.Box 138

Dire Dawa, Ethiopia

e-mail: sisay0171@gmail.com

Anwar Ahmed

Mr. Anwar is a Lecturer at Haramaya University (Ethiopia). His first degree is Chemistry (major) and Mathematics (minor) from Arbaminch University and second degree is Curriculum & Instruction from Jimma University. Currently, Mr. Anwar is a lecturer and active participant in conducting rigorous researches and community services. Furthermore, he is a Program Design and Review Support Team

Leader at Haramaya University. His research interest areas include Teacher Education, Teaching and Learning in Higher Institution, Teachers Professional Development, Teaching Strategies in Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary Education.

Department of Adult Education and Community Development.

College of Education And Behavioral Science

Haramaya University

P.O.Box 138

Dire Dawa, Ethiopia

e-mail: anwarahmed005@gmail.com

Tamrat Zelalem

Mr. Tamrat is a Lecturer at Haramaya University, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, Department of Psychology. He obtained two separate Master's Degrees from Addis Ababa University: Counseling Psychology and Clinical Psychology. Mr. Tamrat is a Clinical Psychologist and lecturer. His research interest lies with Mental Health and Early Childhood Practices or Parenting.

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences,

Department of Adult Education and Community Development.

College of Education And Behavioral Science

Haramaya University

P.O.Box 138

Dire Dawa, Ethiopia

e-mail: tamratzeshome@gmail.com