

## **Teacher Competency: Effective way to improve Low Performing Schools**

Dr Rina Godara  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Education  
Central University of Rajasthan

### **ABSTRACT**

We do find that many government schools are not performing up to the mark. Many of them are not able to produce good results. Government is spending a lot on these schools as students are given either free education or subsidised education. The researcher found that in the city of Vadodara many schools were having lower than thirty percent results in their board examination. Researcher visited these schools and tried to understand the reasons for their low performance. After analysing the reasons it was felt that teacher competency is one of the important component which can help in improving the performance of these schools. In this paper the researcher has made an attempt to suggest how the teacher competency can help in improving the performance of these low performing schools.

### **Introduction:**

The European Commission (2001) say fight against school failure is “vital for a successful, sustainable, knowledge based society and a democracy to which all can contribute”. It is seen internationally that students fail in examinations in a large number. This indicates that all students are not learning as per the standards of passing. If the students fail it brings a discredit to the institution and also it is discredit to the student himself. Institutional success depends a lot on the performance of its students. The schools thus during the entry or admission ensure that they are admitting such students which do not bring disrepute to students but enhance the performance of the institution. Mediocre or poor students do not get admission in so called reputed institutions. This is the reason we find that most of the private schools are performing good as their intake is being checked, whereas the performance of government and government aided schools is not seen satisfactory. Government spends lots of money on

such institutions. In such schools the education is given at subsidised cost but it does not give proper returns. It is being observed that many of such institutions are not able to produce good results. Most of the schools in Vadodara city are having their results below thirty percent which is a great concern for government. The failure of these students carries stigma to the institution. Institution many a times do not take up the responsibility of their failure. They just think in terms of the institutions reputation but this failure is affecting the student also. We find so many cases of student's suicide attempt and depression problems in students. The schools cannot run away from their responsibilities. In this paper the authors have made an attempt to study the reasons of low performance of some of the schools in the Vadodara city. The schools which are taken are those who have got below thirty percent results in the Board examination. A case study was conducted in ten of these schools and an attempt was made to understand the reasons for their low performance. On the analysis of the data the following reasons were drawn for their low performance:

### **Reasons for Low Performance**

On analysis of the data of the selected ten schools the following reasons emerged which led to low performance.

- Lack of Co-operation from government.
- The students coming from corporation schools are very weak and do not have even the basic knowledge of reading and writing.
- Majority of the students in these schools are from lower socio economic strata.
- Almost all the students in these schools are first generation learners.
- The home environment is not appropriate for studies.
- Due to lower economic background the students have to work after school hours to support their family and many a times even during school timings.

- Parents do not understand the importance of education and hence are always non supportive and even do not visit schools when called. They are indifferent towards the education of their children. Students are not regular in paying the fees in most of the schools; they can't even afford the uniform and books.
- Students in most of the schools are irregular especially during marriage season and festivals as they go for work in marriage season. The schools are helpless to take any disciplinary action against them as this leads to absenteeism and drop out.
- Inspection by the government is very irregular.
- The students do not attend the extra classes which are organized during vacations and after school hours by schools.
- The school environment is also not attractive for the students. Most of the schools lack infrastructure facilities or have poor infrastructure facilities.
- Students' lack motivation as the need to earn is of higher priority than the need to learn.

These are some of the reasons which were found out for the low performance of the schools. Teacher now has a very important role in this situation. Most of the reasons lies in the socio-economic background of the children. The teacher cannot do much about these factors but the teacher should have certain competencies to deal with such students and situations. By understanding the problems of students something can be done. Here is an attempt to focus on the competencies which can be utilized by the teacher to enhance the performance of students and in turn the performance of school. Let us first try to understand the meaning of Competency in general and then teacher competency.

### **Competency:**

A Competency is defined as a fundamental characteristic of any person or individual which will enable him to give his superior performance in any given task, role or a situation.

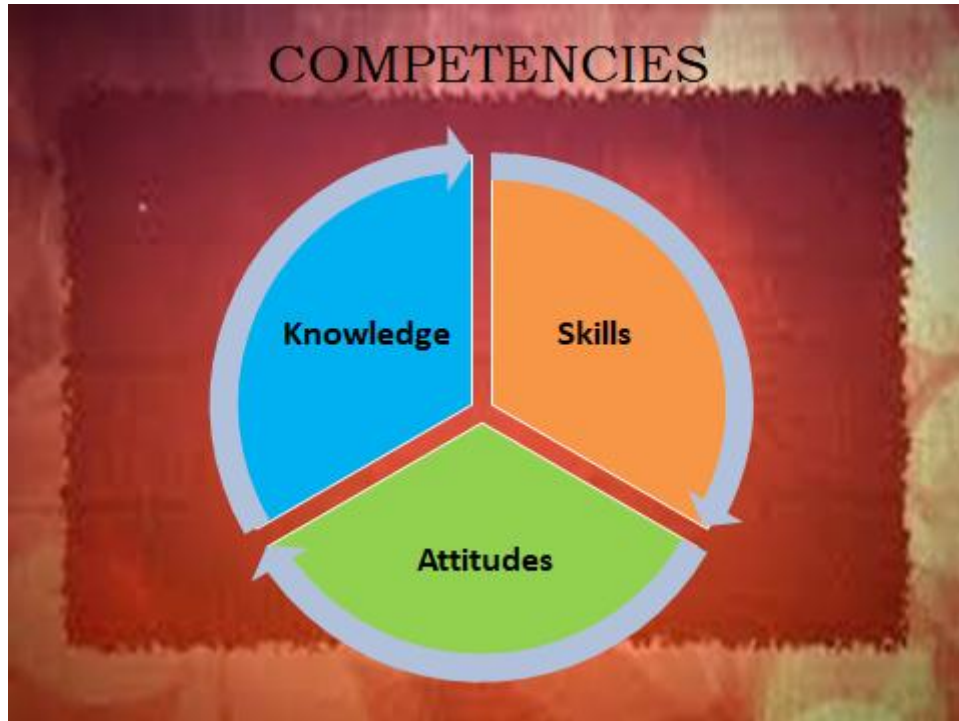
So we can say that competency is the combination of certain knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes that will contribute in enhancement of the performance of an individual which

ultimately leads to success of any organisation. Competencies are basically seen as inputs which consist of clusters of knowledge, attitudes and skills that affect an individual's ability to perform.

## **Teacher Competency**

A teacher needs to perform varied activities related to teaching and instructions in the classroom as well as outside classrooms. To perform these activities the teacher needs to possess certain Knowledge, competencies, attitudes and skills. These all together can be considered as teaching competency. In other words we can say that teaching competency is the appropriate way of imparting the knowledge, application and skills to the students. The appropriate way here means knowledge of the content, the different processes of education, various methods and approaches of imparting the content. The definition of teaching competence will depends on teaching in a particular context, the culture and values which are held in the community. It also depends on the characteristics of students present in the classrooms. The effectiveness or ineffectiveness of any teaching depends largely on the teaching competency. Any competent teacher would have the ability of creating the conducive classroom environment for learning. Teaching competency comprises of various important dimensions such as knowledge of the content, planning of instructions, motivation of students, communication and presentation skills, evaluation skills and also classroom management skills has various important. The teacher is required to have a reasonable amount of all these skills and is expected to manifest them in integrated manner which will lead to an effective classroom.

Basically we divide the teacher competency into three broader aspects: knowledge, Skills and Attitude.



### ❑ Knowledge:

Knowledge is one of the important components. The teacher should have content mastery i.e knowledge of the subject matter. This is very generic but when we talk for low performing schools the teacher apart from this should have the knowledge of different instructional methods and use of technologies. As the students are very weak in studies the teacher needs to design new ways of teaching learning. The teacher must have the knowledge of socio-economic background of the students as this will also be an important input for developing teaching learning material.

### ❑ SKILLS

There are certain skills which can be listed out which the teacher should possess. Some major skills are depicted in the figure below. These skills are also very general in nature and should be possessed by any teacher but when we talk about these low performing schools, the application of these skills will be slightly different. The way these skills are utilised makes the difference.



#### ❑ **Collaboration Skill:**

Strong collaboration skills result in successful problem solving, idea generation and performance improvement. For success of an institution the need for collaboration between different stake holders is felt. The teacher for improving the performance of students and in turn school should have following abilities which fall under collaboration skills

- ▶ Ability to mobilise community participation
- ▶ Ability to convince parents
- ▶ Ability to seek participation of peer group
- ▶ Ability to understand the student and seek their support

#### ❑ **Socio-Emotional Skill**

It is being observed that the students in these low performing schools come largely from the low socio-economic background. Many of them come from disturbed and broken families. These children lack confidence. Because of these characteristics it is needed on the part of the teacher to deal with them with care and be sensitive towards them. The following abilities are needed to be there in the teachers.

- ▶ Ability to understand the social background
- ▶ Ability to relate with the problems of students
- ▶ Ability to empathise with students
- ▶ Ability to deal with the personal problems of the students

#### ❑ **Persuasive Skills**

Persuasive skills is the ability of one being able to convince others to take appropriate action. This convincing skill is must for all the teachers but in this case of low performing schools the persuasion skill needs to be used differently. Here the teacher needs to persuade the students to come to school and parents also to send their children to school which may not be the case in other schools. The teacher should be able to negotiate and influence. The following abilities are needed for persuasion:

- Ability to persuade the parents to send their child to school
- Ability to conduct discussion and arrive at a mutual agreement.
- Ability to influence people
- Ability to convince students for coming to school
- Ability to persuade students to take actively participate in all the school activities

#### ❑ **Counselling Skill**

All teachers', at some point in their lives, find themselves in the role of a counselor without having a true understanding of the concept of counseling or what the role of the professional counselor entails. Teacher has to play role of counselor not only to their immediate students but also to their parents in case of low performing schools. The below mentioned abilities helps in performing the role of counselor.

- ▶ Ability to relate with students
- ▶ Ability to listen to all the stakeholders including students
- ▶ Ability to understand their personal problems
- ▶ Ability to empathize with students
- ▶ Ability to suggest measures to students

#### **☐ Motivation Skills**

The students of these low performing schools lack motivation. Their priorities in life are totally different. Earning two times meal many a times becomes more important than going to school. In such a situation it becomes imperative for a teacher to motivate them for coming to school. We all know that motivation differs from individual to individual .What motivates one person may not motivate other. Hence the teacher should have the knowledge of each of their students and should be able to motivate each individual knowing their interest and problems. The following abilities should be there in a teacher to motivate these students.

- ▶ Ability to understand the reasons of lack of motivation
- ▶ Ability to apply various motivational strategies
- ▶ Ability to apply appropriate reward system for students
- ▶ Ability to continuously maintain interest of students in studies.

#### **☐ Mentoring Skills**



Mentoring is a highly valuable development activity. At the core of the activity is the relationship between the mentor, where the development of the mentee is the key focus. In this case that student is the mentee and the teacher plays the role of mentor. All teachers do play a role of mentor, but in these schools of low performance the mentor has to go beyond the school and do more than what the other teachers do. The scope is not only limited to teaching learning and school premises. The following abilities are needed for performing a role of a good mentor:

- ▶ Ability to guide students in different aspects
- ▶ Ability to build a relation of mutual trust with students
- ▶ Ability to show right path
- ▶ Ability to take best out of mentee
- ▶ Ability to make mentee realize his/her potentials
- ▶ Ability to provide non-judgmental support
- ▶ Ability to clarify goals of mentee
- ▶ Ability to create open and supportive climate

#### **□ Innovation Skills**

Innovation is nothing new in teaching. Teachers have to be innovative in their teaching so that they can develop and sustain interest of students. In these low performing schools also the teacher should be innovative enough to bring the solutions to the problems of the students apart from being innovative in. The teacher needs to have the following abilities:

- Ability to use different creative ways to make teaching learning effective
- Ability to look for new ways to create interest of students in teaching learning
- Ability to design and use various approaches which leads to problem solving
- Ability to design different instructional materials

- Ability to Rethink the way things are done—break the mold
- Ability to Suggest alternative ways to achieve goals

#### ❑ **Monitoring Skills**

Developing monitoring skills is very crucial for the success of any classroom plan. The ability to effectively monitor students' behaviors is one of the most powerful tools available to a teacher. Monitoring skills will enable teacher to communicate to students that he/she is aware of what they are doing. Also, the appropriate use of monitoring skills promotes positive changes in students' behaviors. The following abilities are needed for Monitoring:

- ▶ Ability to keep continuous track of students work
- ▶ Ability to review progress at regular intervals
- ▶ Ability to keep the interest of students sustained.
- ▶ Ability to assess each and every work of student

#### ❑ **ATTITUDE**

Apart from the Knowledge and Skills the attitude of the teacher is also very important for Teacher competency. The teacher should have positive attitude towards students and should accept all students equally without any discrimination. Teacher should believe in their students and always should think that they can make a difference. One should accept that each one has his/her limitations and strengths. It's the role of teacher to accept them with their limitations and help them to minimize their weaknesses and enhance their strengths.

### **Conclusion**

When Government is spending a huge amount of money on the institutions then there is an urgent need to look into the performance of these schools. The performance of these schools can be improved to a certain extent if the teacher plays a dedicated role. The teacher if has the above mentioned competencies and applies them diligently then to a certain extent change can be seen.

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