

# School Teacher Quality Improvement Model

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## Abstract

Most governments worldwide always face budgetary constraints to provide quality services to the people. From the budgetary constraint governments have been scaling up educational innovations without orientation to teachers. This poses problems during implementation of educational innovations. As service providers, one of services governments have to offer to their people is quality education. To offer quality education, the government has to employ adequate and qualified teachers. Being a qualified teacher, it is not ultimate. Teachers require professional development after they commence working to achieve the best performance in their teaching profession. It is from this understanding this paper has come to life. The paper provides a concise summary on how schools can use human resources at their disposal to develop teachers professionally. The school management uses human resources within the school, and then the nearest ones from the school. Finally, when necessary, it uses the ones who are far from school. Indeed, this happens after a teacher has taken personal initiatives to support herself in futile. The paper is a useful tool to schools desires to improve student academic performance.

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The adage goes the quality of education system does not rise beyond the quality of its teachers. This is the reason we have teacher training Colleges (TTCs) and Teacher Colleges (TCs). The teacher training college main role is to produce quality teachers, and the role of a teacher college is to improve the quality of a teacher. Though teachers graduating from colleges are considered as qualified teachers, the teachers do not know everything they are supposed to teach in schools or colleges. The degree of how much a graduating teacher does not know in studied subjects varies from one teacher to another. A teacher does not know everything he/she has to teach though the ideal is that he/she has to know all the contents planned to master. However, because of the reversed norm principle this does not happen (Kinyaduka, 2020). The principle states that all adequate resources and conditions may be in place for a task be performed; however, despite the presence of all resources and conditions necessary for hundred percent success, it may not be the case (Kinyaduka, 2020). In some situations, tutors and professors do not teach some of topics in colleges because of the circumstances (Kinyaduka, 2017). The assumption is that the variation in knowledgeability among student teachers depends upon a diversity of factors. Some of the factors include time committed studying, teacher energy to study, availability of resources in studying, balanced effectiveness of tutors, and family background of a teacher. Thus, the academic achievement of student teachers and students in schools is dependent upon the mentioned factors among others. Of the mentioned factors, the paper focuses on the continued improvement of quality of a teacher since this is one of the most important ingredients in any education system (Sheehan, Childs, n.d). As has been noted, a teacher does not know everything she/he is supposed to teach. Therefore, programmes to improve the quality of a teacher are mandatory in any country or school, rich or poor. However, any teacher training programme requires financial resources. Money is required to improve the quality of teachers despite the poverty of some governments, or the low-income of some countries.

With the understanding of the need for continued teacher quality improvement, and despite the scarce financial resources in low-income countries, this paper proposes the best practices to be applied to improve the quality of teachers. For students to receive quality education, teacher development is not a matter of choice, but rather of necessity (Rojhe & Syal, 2013). Interestingly, in Tanzania experience has shown that teachers less often receive in-service training the government organises. In-service teacher training is a recent phenomenon as it resumed in 2019. Thus it remains a rare, but for 3<sup>rs</sup> teachers (NAOT, 2020) the rest of the grades remain untrained. In some instances, some teachers can even work for over thirty years without attending a seminar organised by the government. Thus, in-service training among teachers is rare (NAOT, 2020). One explanation for this tendency is scarce financial resources. This is partly because of inadequate funds disbursed in the ministry responsible for educational matters (Kinyaduka, 2012). This means that the ministry may request adequate funds through fiscal budget in parliament, and it passes, but the money disbursed is usually less than the actual amount requested (Kinyaduka, 2012). What the ministry does is to prioritise its activities as a result tasks relating to teacher professional development and others might be compromised; consequently, teacher quality improvement and/or curriculum innovations implementation suffer. Since there is scarce financial resources in low-income countries, and since we need quality teachers and educational outcomes, it is important

to think on how we can improve the quality of teachers amidst scarce financial resources in low-income countries.

As highlighted in earlier in this paper, it happens tutors do not teach all topics in a particular course, or it may happen a student-teacher misses a topic for some reason. Moreover, a teacher may not have energy to study effectively all courses and topics. From this, one may not be a good master of all topics in a subject or course as he/she commences his/her career. Additionally, there are new developments (innovations) in education requiring teacher's mastery. Similar to this view, exposing teachers to new technological developments and teaching methods/strategies is critical (Kakoma, 2022). This situation calls for continued teacher professional development. Nevertheless, from financial constraints indicated earlier, the begging question remains; how can we improve the quality of teachers given the financial situation in a low-income countries and/or schools? The answer for this question is appropriate for low-income countries whose people are groomed as lifelong learners. In a country where her people are not lifelong learners; the provided solution for the question may help less. Assuming that all countries their people are qualified as lifelong learners, the solutions for the posed question is explained under:

Before we offer a solution, we have to know that teachers are lifetime students because changes in an education system are continuous. In the same way, scholars (Tyagi & Misra, 2021) seem to look at teachers as lifelong learners. To cope with the changes taking place in various domains of life including in the teaching profession, teachers need to learn all the time. This argument takes us to the first step of a solution to a posed problem. The first is what we call encountering stage 1a). Encountering stage is a stage whereby a teacher sees a topic or an innovation he/she is not familiar with.

From the encounter, we have a muddling stage. This is when a teacher struggles to understand the topic on his or her own efforts. At this stage reflects on the sources of information on the topic. A teacher collects the sources of information to read them independently without the help from peers. A teacher works hard to understand a topic or an innovation so that he/she can teach it or apply it in an educational setting. At this stage, if a teacher does not understand the contents of an innovation, theory or topic. He/she may lose confidence to teach, apply an innovation or theory. This takes us to another stage which is confidence and motivation crisis.

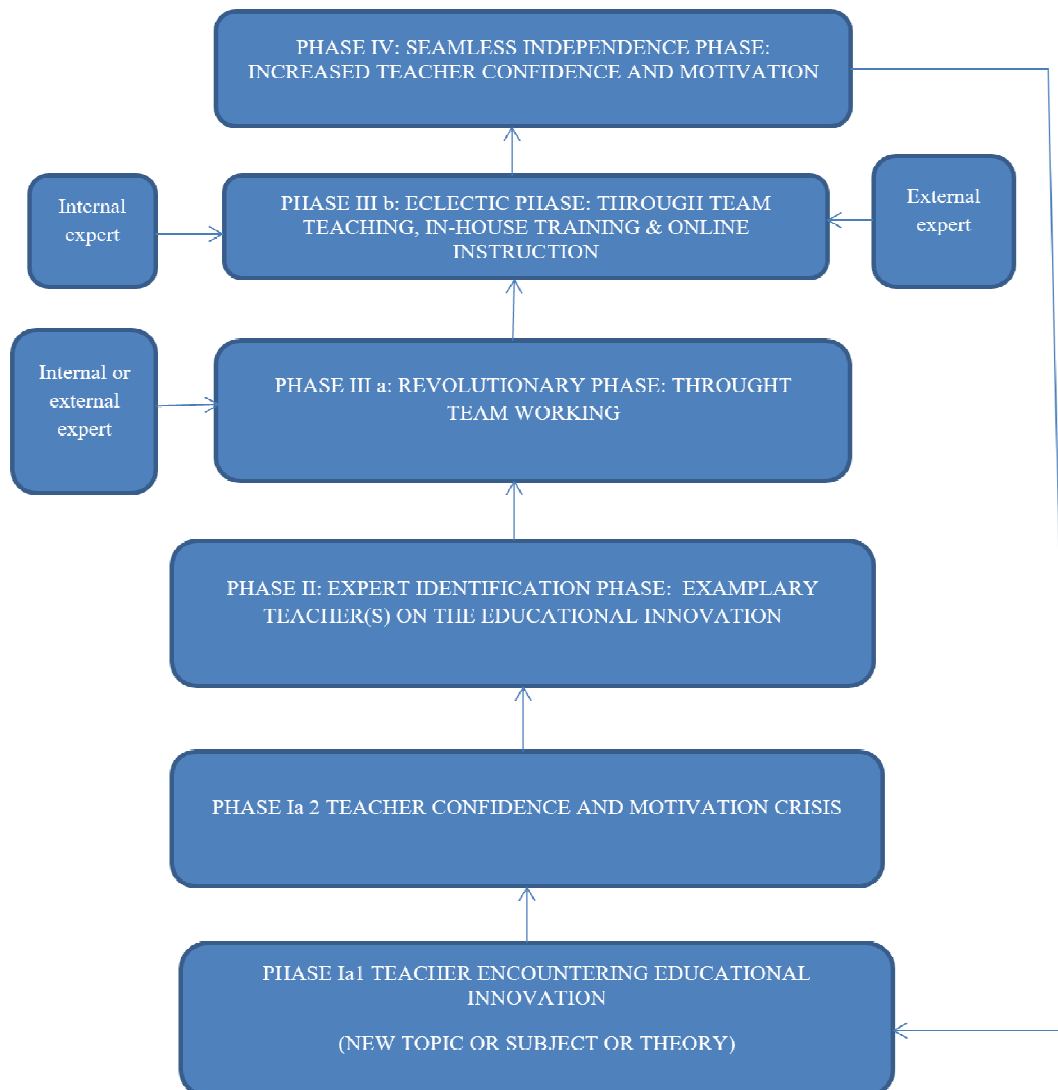
The confidence and motivation crisis stage involves a teacher losing confidence and motivation. At this stage, the confidence and motivation of a teacher goes down. It goes down because efforts applied to understand the topic or course are in futile. A teacher remains despaired and uncomfortable to teach the topic or subject. A teacher may try to look for people to help him or her or may choose to present the contents to students as they appear in a book or notes without clarifications. A teacher may write notes on the chalk board for students to copy. Alternatively, a teacher may ask someone to teach a topic on her behalf. The latter option is pretty good. The latter option takes us to another stage which is expert identification stage.

Where a teacher looks for someone to help them, sometimes it sounds awkward for a teacher to do it. Thus, it is important for a school to have a system whereby teachers can submit to a head of department difficult topics. In this system, the head of department talks to teachers about the topics presented to him to identify teachers who are good at same. The purpose is to plan for in-house seminars to be conducted by teachers in the department. Moreover, teachers who are good in the topics may be asked to teach the topics in classes in the presence of the teacher who cannot teach a particular topic. This is one of ways capacity building in the teaching of a particular topic can be attained and sustained. In the meantime, the head of department has to organise in-house seminars or workshops for topics presented to him/her. It is important that schools have weekly in-house seminars for presented topics to build capacity within their respective departments. It is assumed that this is an important step in improving the quality of teachers through in-house seminars in schools. For this to work, teachers need to have a clear understanding that nobody knows everything, but at least everybody knows something. As Plato (427-347 BC) noted, he knew nothing despite his wit scriptures in different disciplines we see today. Therefore, it is important for teachers to support each other for the green future of a nation. The expert identification stage takes us to another stage which is teaming up in teaching.

In teaming up stage, two teachers get in class. The teacher who finds the topic difficult and the teacher who is good at the topic or application of an innovation or theory. This helps the one who finds it difficult to observe how one does without difficulties. At this stage, a teacher who finds it difficult to teach a certain topic attend both classes and in-house seminars or workshops on the same topic. Without doubt, when a teacher has attended classes and in-house seminars the likelihood is that the teacher gains confidence and motivation to teach the topic. However, this stage depends on the availability of internal or external experts on the topic, innovation or theory. The internal expert is the one available in one of departments of a school or college. External expert is the one available in the nearest school or college. Nevertheless, when a nearest school does not have an expert, a schools may use the available communication outlets to obtain an expert to facilitate a topic of interest. This expert can be from a hospital, government authorities/commissions, for instance, Atomic Energy Commission, National Board of Accountants and Auditors (NBAA), Quality Assurers Department (QAD) and many more depending on the nature of the topic to be taught. Soliciting for external expert who is not a teacher, this is the

highest level of solving a problem. That is to say efforts to look for teachers who can build capacity to their colleagues must have failed. Presumably, this is the most expensive alternative schools should use a last resort. Again, the cost of an external expert who is not a teacher expenses large depends on the relationship between a school and the community. Teaming up stage takes us to another step which is independence stage. Moreover, at this stage a teacher may use online lectures on the topic or attend online courses related to the topic if any.

In independence stage, we assume that a teacher has learnt tremendously from an internal or external expert. From the learning, we assume that a teacher develops confidence and motivation to teach a topic or to apply an innovation. However, it should be remembered that this stage is not permanent, but rather it is dynamic. Changes in the education system are permanent. Therefore, a teacher should always expect to encounter new innovations in the profession. This takes us back to stage one which is encountering stage. The cycle goes on endlessly. Figure 1 Summarises the information presented.



**Figure 1 School teacher quality improvement model**

Source: author own construction (2023)

**Relevance, scope, discussion and conclusion**

**Relevance of the model**

As has been noted, the model was developed in 2016. The author developed the model through reflection of observations. The motivations for the development of the model were: First, in Tanzania in-service teacher’s seminars are rare. Second, teamwork and sharing culture among teachers in schools in Tanzania and elsewhere in the world is alarmingly low. Third, there were complaints from some students on the tendency of some of mathematics teachers simply writing the procedures to solve problem without clarifications (copying solutions as there were). This tendency signaled that the teachers who did so were incompetent in topics they taught. These factors contributed to the development of the school teacher quality improvement model.

From the above situation, it seems students and teachers alike have not been enjoying teaching-learning process as expected when teachers have difficulties with some topics in their subjects of specialisation or when there is educational innovation. The author developed the model to contribute to making the teaching-learning process seamless and effective in schools. This model is relevance in low-income countries where often there are budgetary constraints in the ministry responsible with educational matters. As such, there are scarce financial resources for teacher professional development. Indeed, the model could be useful even in developed countries during economic depression. The model was used in two schools in Tanzania, and the teacher's comments were generally positive. No experimental study was conducted to test its effect on teaching-learning process; actually, the model has been improved after receiving comments from the teachers who applied it.

### Scope of the model

The model focus is on improving teaching-learning process when a teacher has low content mastery in a specific topic; when a teacher encounters a new innovation; and when a teacher requires effective facilitation approach in a specific topic. Therefore, the model concentration is on keeping a teacher and students at a comfortable zone during teaching-learning process in classes. As a result, the intended educational learning outcomes are likely to be attained. That is to say the qualities of graduates we desire as a nation are achieved.

### Discussion

The core interest of the school teacher improvement model rests on capacity building in terms of one aspect, teaching-learning process. This is just a minor aspect in one of pillars of quality assurance in education, which is professional development of teachers. Therefore, the model is not a panacea of educational problems. With understanding that educational outcomes are multifaceted, this stands true. However, the application of the model contributes to providing quality education in a country or school. As it stands, the model is different from other quality assurance models in education in two main aspects, the scope and practicalities of the model. While other models, namely organisational learning, legitimacy, absence of problems, process and satisfaction (Cheng & Tam, 1997) are broader in scope. The models focus on the whole institution; the present model concentrates on a teacher, and on one aspect of teaching-learning capacity development in low-income countries. Further, the application of the model in schools is made clearer compared to other counterpart models shortly listed. Therefore, the present model is different from other related models in education.

### Conclusion

There are hundreds of school improvement models. Yet, it is important to develop other simplified models to use to improve some of educational processes to yield desired learning outcomes in schools. Quality assurance models like any other product in a market; it is within the auspice of the users to adopt the product that is the most useful, and easier to apply given their context. The present model is assumed to be useful to adopt in a context where money is a scarce resource. The school teacher quality improvement model is assumed to build teacher's capacity to teach at the lowest cost compared to other models.

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