A University Teaching Qualification Programme's Impact on Teaching Competence and Teaching Practice

Zuwena Adelaar[1], Gerda Visser-Wijnveen[2,1]

[1]Anton de Kom University of Suriname, Paramaribo, Suriname. [2]Independent Higher Education Consultant, Vancouver, Canada

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

University teaching qualification programmes are expected to contribute to higher quality teaching. This study aimed to establish the impact of a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) programme on lecturers' teaching competence and their teaching practice. A longitudinal mixed methods study was employed. 45 university lecturers filled out an existing self-evaluation form at the start and end of the programme and 1-3 years after completion; and 15 lecturers were interviewed. A repeated measures ANOVA was used to determine any significant differences. Moreover, change patterns were identified for individual teachers. Lecturers in cohorts 4-6 differed from those in cohorts 7-9 who followed a slightly adapted UTQ programme. For lecturers in cohorts 4-6 professional growth did not take place during but after completing the programme. Lecturers in cohorts 7-9, conversely, already showed professional growth during the programme which (partly) continued afterwards. Possible explanations for these findings and implications will be discussed.

Full paper

Introduction

In many higher education institutions, academics participate in teaching qualification programmes to support their professional development. Despite their rapid growth over the last decades, there is limited insight into their effectiveness, with most evaluation studies conducted in western countries. This study investigates the impact of a University Teaching Qualification programme in a middle-income South American country. Around 350 participants have participated or are participating in one of the 14 cohorts of this programme, consisting of a 15-month teaching phase where participants compile a teaching portfolio discussed in a criterion-oriented interview.

Beyond measuring satisfaction (cf. Kirkpatrick & Kayser-Kirkpatrick, 2021), this study explores self-reported growth in teaching competence and the programme's impact on teaching practices. The study's central research question is: According to UTQ-certified university teachers, what was the impact of the UTQ-programme on their teaching competence and teaching practice? The following sub-questions were explored: What development in teaching competence took place by university

teachers since the start of the UTQ-programme? And, how has their teaching practice developed since participating in the UTQ-programme?

Research methods

A longitudinal mixed-method study collected data on teaching competence using a self-evaluation form across three points in time: beginning (T1), end (T2), and 1-3 years post-programme (T3). Cronbach's alphas for each of the 6 competences varied between .80 to .92. Data collection and analysis took place in two rounds. Initially, certified academics from cohorts 4-6 were invited, with 19 of 31 participating. Later, cohorts 7-9 were also invited, with 26 of 49 participating. Fifteen participants were interviewed to understand teaching practice changes. The second round was undertaken to confirm if cohorts 4-6 findings held in cohorts 7-9.

Analyses included repeated measures ANOVA and identifying change patterns, as well as axial coding of the interviews, achieving substantial inter-rater reliability (Cohen's Kappa .77).

Results

Significant differences were found for each competency (see Table 1). In cohorts 4-6, no significant differences emerged between T1 (start) and T2 (end), but significant differences were found between T1 and T2 compared to T3 (after) for all competencies except Professional Conduct, which showed differences only between T1 and T3.

However, for cohorts 7-9, significant differences were found between T1 compared to T2 and T3, but not between T2 and T3 for Professional Expertise, Preparing Courses, and Teaching Courses. For Evaluating Student Learning, Organising Education, and Professional Conduct, differences were significant between all points in time.

Tabel *1*. *Teaching competence development*

	Professional Expertise	Preparing Courses	Teaching Courses	Evaluating Student Learning	Organising Education	Professional Conduct
	Cohorts 4-6 (n=19)					
T1	3.65[a]	3.53[a]	3.70[a]	3.34[a]	3.41[a]	4.24[a]
T2	3.84[a]	3.87[a]	3.88[a]	3.71[a]	3.67[a]	4.36[ab]
T3	4.30[b]	4.40[b]	4.36[b]	4.39[b]	4.43[b]	4.61[b]

	Cohorts 7-9 (n=26)					
T1	3.73^a	3.58^a	3.70^a	3.36^a	3.62^a	4.11^a
T2	4.31^b	4.29^b	4.20^b	4.17^b	4.20^b	4.54^b
T3	4.54^b	4.52^b	4.45^b	4.51^c	4.59^c	4.74^c

Means sharing the same superscript are not significantly different from each other (p<0.05). Means with different superscripts are significantly different from each other (p<0.05).

Six individual change patters were identified:

1. No change during programme followed by increase after programme (9+1 academics)
2. Increase during programme followed by decrease/stabilisation after programme (4+7 academics)
3. Consistent increase from start through end to after programme (2+7 academics)
4. Little change (2+1 academics)
5. Decrease during followed by increase after programme (1+3 academics)
6. Increase during programme followed by stabilisation/increase after programme (1+7 academics)

During interviews, participants emphasised how the UTQ programme heightened their awareness of constructive alignment and self-reflection. They described increased use of syllabi and a shift towards a student-focused approach, fostering interaction, collaboration, and facilitating discussions and group activities. Interviewees also highlighted significant changes in assessment methods.

Conclusion & Discussion

Participants demonstrated growth in all six competencies. More specifically, cohorts 4-6 showed no increase during the programme but did show growth afterwards, while cohorts 7-9 showed development during the programme, with competence stabilising or continuing to develop afterwards. Individual change patterns varied, with some showing consistent increase or an increase followed by stabilisation or fluctuation after the programme. These different outcomes between cohorts could be due to either the composition of the group (more beginning versus more seasoned teachers) and/or the changes made in the programme and larger university environment.

Changes in teaching practice were driven by constructive alignment and self-reflection, promoted student-centred approaches, and showed assessment quality awareness. Putting theory into practice facilitated sustained changes, further developing teaching competencies over time. These findings support Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) Teacher Professional Growth model, which

emphasises reflection and enactment in driving change across domains, enhancing our understanding of teacher growth in higher education.

References

Clark, D., & Hollingsworth, H. (2002). Elaborating a model of teacher professional growth. Teaching and Teacher Education. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 18*, 947-967.

Kirkpatrick, J., & Kayser-Kirkpatrick, W. (2021). *An Introduction to The New World Kirkpatrick Model.* Newnan, GA : Kirkpatrick Partners.