An Analysis and Evaluation toward the Implementation of Teacher Competency Test in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyze and evaluate the Teacher Competency Test (TCT) implementation in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. In addition, this research analyzed the perspectives of instructors, officer representatives, and academics on the TCT Objective and Implementation, as well as the Program's Effectiveness and Efficiency. This research used a qualitative approach and in-depth interviews. The results imply that the current TCT does not accurately reflect teachers' real-world proficiency owing to teachers' lack of computer literacy, since they were evaluated using a computer-based testing. However, the outcomes of this evaluation are also valuable for government decision-making on the mapping of teachers' requirements and future development. Second, the development of TCT program management and the quantity of financing for teacher training must be enhanced to assure the program's future viability. This research concludes by recommending a strategic shift to enhance student learning; mapping teachers' competency and education and the Sustainable Teachers Training and Development Program. Proper and ongoing professional development would not only assist instructors in supporting successful learning, but it would also enable experienced teachers to work with novice teachers and act as mentors for them, therefore enhancing classroom learning circumstances.

Introduction

A way for assessing the degree of quality of instructors is the examination of the teachers' respective levels of competence. However, evaluation of teachers continues to play a very minor role in educational assessment. Recent discussions on assessment have been mostly driven by a focus on determining how well students are doing. It has been shown by a number of studies that evaluating the capabilities and performance of a teacher is as necessary and valuable as teaching itself (See for example: Rimfeld et al., 2019; Chung, 2008; Reeves et al., 2001). To further this goal of improving teacher performance, assessments and evaluations of teacher performance skills are also carried out. The assessment of teacher competence not only establishes the extent to which instructors have understood the content of the course, but it also motivates instructors to work on their own professional development (Wilkerson & Lang, 2007).

The Government of Indonesia has established a comprehensive program to evaluate teachers using the Teacher Competency Test (TCT). The TCT is administered to evaluate the mastery of pedagogical expertise and the professionalism of teachers. Since 2012, the TCT have been widely deployed and continue to be so to this day. In 2014, 1,611,725 instructors have been
evaluated using TCT. In 2015, TCT will be implemented nation-wide in Indonesia, followed by 2,699,516 teachers.

However, the administration of Competency Assessments (PCA) and Teacher Competency Tests (TCT), on the other hand, is not a simple process. This is particularly true in countries such as Indonesia, where there are more than 3 million teachers and professors. Not only is it challenging to put evaluation into practice, but it’s also challenging to follow up on the results of the PCA and TCT. This examination presents a variety of difficult issues, including the technical execution of examinations for a large number of teachers, the analysis of test data, and the formulation of future test outcomes. Thus, the purpose of this article was to investigate and assess the manner in which the policy of administering a teacher's competence exam (TST) to Indonesian educators was carried out, as well as to provide ideas for making the policy even more effective and efficient. As a result of the situation described above, it is essential to have a discourse about and conduct an analysis of the Teacher Competency Test (TCT) in Indonesia.

Methods

This mini-study utilized a descriptive design or qualitative research with open-ended questions through an in-depth interview (by telephone) lasting around 45 minutes for each respondent, and the participants were selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling method (also known as judgment, selective, or subjective sampling) is a sampling methodology in which the researcher depends on his or her own discretion when selecting study participants from the community. In addition, owing to the nature of the study design and goals, the technique of purposive sampling may be useful when there are only a small number of individuals from whom to choose for in-depth interviews and who may serve as primary data sources (Black, 2010).

The participants involved in this pilot study are: (1) A senior teacher in Junior High School Number 10 Makassar, Indonesia who has participated in TCT test for 3 times (2015, 2017 and 2019) and has passed the passing grade of the test. (2) A junior teacher in Junior High School Number 2 Makassar, Indonesia who has participated in TCT once (2019) and has not passed the passing grade of the test. (3) A professor—the head of English Education Department and certified trainer of Teacher Profession Training by Indonesian Ministry of Education as well as has specialization in Educational assessment and Teacher Education Program. (3) A Regional Education Office’s representative as regional organizer of the Teacher Competency Test (TCT) in Makassar City, South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

This pilot study used several standards adopted from the approach of evaluation by Joint committee program evaluation standards & AEA Guiding principles for evaluation (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007:87-97) to evaluate program of Teacher Competency Test (TCT) in Indonesia (Table 1). The standards of evaluation are used to discuss the research questions of this study. However in guiding research questions, there are some evaluation standards that are still relevant one each other’s, therefore they are used in the same point of the research questions. The standards are described in the table below:

| Table 1. The Standards Used in Performing the Tasks in an Evaluation |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| U1: Stakeholder identification | Deciding whether to evaluate | Defining the evaluation problem | Designing the evaluation | Collecting information | Analyzing information | Reporting evaluative | Budgeting evaluation | Contracting the evaluation | Managing the evaluation | Staffing the evaluation |
| x | X | x | x | | | | }
Further, the research questions guiding this study are: (1) What are the perspectives of teachers, organizer and professor toward the objectives and the implementation of this Teacher Competency Test in Indonesia? (U1 and U4). (2) Does the Teacher Competency Test have been implemented efficiently and effectively in your region due to the technical implementation? What are the potential obstacles faced by the teachers? (F1, A3 and P5). (3) Does the test can be considered as a relevant and valid test to assess teachers’ competency of teachers? If yes, How to ensure that cognitive knowledge and skill of teachers will be in line with their teaching performances in the class? If not, why do you think so? (A2 and A4). (4) If this test worth to continue, what are the recommendations for further improvement of this test? And if it is not worth to implement in the future what are ways that to improve teachers’ competency in Indonesia? (U7).

Results and Discussion

Perspectives on TCT Objective and Implementation

Both teachers agreed that the implementation of this Teacher competency test is one of the efforts of government to encourage teachers to improving their capacity and competency. It is a necessary change employed by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, in one side, the government's efforts to conduct the competency test needs to be highly appreciated.

Teacher A: “This TCT can improve teachers’ ability and teachers also need to improve themselves. Not only students, because pedagogy and professional competence that are tested in this TCT will allow teachers to upgrade their knowledge and reflect to their performance in teaching and assessing students in the class”.

Teacher B: “I have two perspectives on the objectives of this TCT, Firstly this test to improve knowledge and skills of teachers’ pedagogy and professionalism, since after joining this test; teacher can reflect their result in terms of how far they understand about pedagogy and professionalism of teacher as our profession.

Moreover teacher B also add that the application of this TCT is one of the embodiments of National curriculum 2013, where the 2013 curriculum promotes the student-centered learning due to adjust with the 21st Century skills abilities that today’s students need to acquire in their learning and teaching process to succeed in their future career during the Information age, one of that is information and technology literacy. These strategies are intended teachers to work along with the curriculum, one of that is being integrated with technology.

Teacher B: “This TCT is one of way to encourage teacher to be technologically savvy. Because it is along with the implementation of Curriculum 2013 that referring to
technology implementation 4.0 toward learning and teaching process, and to promote active learning using technology. Therefore it is really progressive since it used Computer Based Test (CBT)”.

But another perspective also portrayed by the teacher that this test should need to consider the result of the test, where she thinks that there must be another reason why some teacher couldn’t pass the passing grade of the test.

**Teacher A**: “But in another perspective, teacher who doesn’t pass this test, it doesn’t really represent teacher’s skills and ability in teaching in the class because they might have technical problem during the test or they might not familiar with the model of this assessment test since most of the questions are multiple choices”.

The professor, who is also a trainer for the teachers training program, and the Regional office of Education's representative explained that the test is not only intended to map the quality and competence of teachers nationally, but it will also serve as a basis for the government to develop a training plan for the future quality improvement and professional development of teachers nationwide. Therefore, the government should guarantee that the quality of teachers is effectively checked and that their competence is consistently enhanced. Especially if it is associated with the teacher certification program, which has consumed a significant portion of our national budget. Improvement and oversight of the quality of educators become obligatory. This instance was also highlighted by the test's organizer as representative of the Regional office of Education.

**Professor/trainer of TCT-Training**: “After first test in 2015, in the following year until now, TCT become one of the requirements of teacher to follow Teachers’ Training as the compulsory program that teacher should follow to get certification. Government has commitment to improve teachers’ competency and performance in teaching. Therefore, Previously, Government implemented such kind of programs, such as portfolio test, teacher training, and now TCT and certification”.

**Regional office of Education’s representation**: “This TCT has passing grade to determine whether teacher pass or not this TCT, but we don’t only test, we observe teachers’ readiness to face this test, and even we follow up the test, if teacher pass this test, they are able to join another teacher training and will get certification which means they will be paid double every month, because they consider as professional teacher. It is Ministry of Education’s way to measure and to improve teachers’ competency and to fulfill our commitment in order to improve welfare of teacher itself”.

### TCT Implementation Effectiveness and Efficiency

On the other hand, it is essential to examine the technological implementation of this TCT or UKG in further detail. Both instructors agreed that it is necessary to examine if this program's test has been sufficiently familiarized with teachers, particularly the deployment of computer-based and online tests. As the majority of instructors take the computer-based UKG, some older teachers who are not technologically aware may feel uneasy with this kind of exam design.

**Teacher A**: “Based on my experience, the test on 2015, 2017 and 2019 that I have followed has good improvement in terms of preparation and procedures. But the problem is still obvious that, it is not really efficient because not every teacher is technologically savvy since there are some senior teacher who has more than 20 years experiences, meaning they started their early career in the year of 90s therefore, they haven’t really used technology like computer and laptop and they don’t get used to with
it. That’s why it is so difficult for them in terms of technical implementation. However, because this TCT is new, those senior teachers have different perspectives on pedagogy since they have less training to improve themselves, they might take it as burden.”

In addition, another instructor shared the similar opinion that some senior professors were not concerned about the exam’s substance, but rather the technical elements of how to handle the computer and gadget, as well as the online test processes. Then, the exam results of instructors were deemed unsatisfactory, since they did not reflect their real performance and aptitude in the classroom, given that they are senior teachers with more than 20 years of experience.

**Teacher B:** “As my experiences, in 2015 and 2017, the government has been so immediate to implements this test, and then there is nothing socialization related to this test previously. Therefore, I think this test still not efficient and effective enough due to the technical problems faced by senior teachers, who don’t get used to with working with technology; this is the most difficult obstacle”.

But teacher B added that in her school, the regional office of education department has conducted further improvement as follow up of this test through socialization and CBT training.

**Teacher A:** “But further, previously there was no specific information and guideline before the implementation of this test, therefore teacher has no picture about this test. But as year by year, the government has socialized and does the pilot test before the test is conducted; therefore, in 2019 teachers have preparation before facing the test”

Furthermore, the perception of the professor and organizer agreed that there was always problems happened during the test, firstly, the implementation of TCT somehow used online test, where firstly, technical problem might be the internet or computer, but more crucial is second about the inability of teachers using the computer well and following the procedures of the online test.

**Professor/ Trainer:** “This test used online test and Computer Based Test, therefore even if the implementation in every region of Department of Education, but somehow, the technical problem is the network, and however, the ability of some teachers who are not really technologically savvy, therefore, they might not get used to with using the computer and follow the online test procedures”.

**Organizer:** “We admit that the implementation of this TCT technically still very problematic since 2015 until 2019 due to the socialization of procedures of this test and the content of the questions. However, we are really working hard to encourage senior teachers to be able to operate computer or laptop; therefore they will not experience difficulties in answering the questions through Computer Based Test (CBT).”

As for the case of teachers who are not integrated with digital learning. Professor added that it is important to encourage teachers to engage in using technology, this presents several fantastic possibilities for schools and instructors to improve teaching and learning by introducing various types of technology into the classroom.

**Professor:** “But overall, as a trainer we worked our best to encourage teachers to improve their skills in digital learning, because they need to follow the demands of this national curriculum where it promotes the use of technology or digital literacy in the teaching and learning process. Through this test, it is not only to measure the result but it benefits the teachers for their future performance in the class but to familiarize teachers with technology, since with countless online resources, technology can help
improve teaching. Teachers can use different apps or trusted online resources to enhance the traditional ways of teaching and to keep students more engaged. Virtual lesson plans, grading software and online assessments can help teachers save a lot of time. This valuable time can be used for working with students who are struggling. What is more, having virtual learning environments in schools enhances collaboration and knowledge sharing between teachers.

Relevance and Validity of TCT

In addition, the context analysis raises the issue of whether the exam is accurate and trustworthy as a way of judging a teacher's competency. Could this examination accurately assess what it is intended to measure?

Both instructors agreed that this issue is significant since an unreliable exam would provide inaccurate results. The most important aspects of the present model of the UKG are the test models used. Not only does the exam not measure the four areas of teachers' competency as stipulated by the Law on teaching (the UKG does not assess the social competence and personal competence of the instructors), but its dependability to correctly portray teachers' competence is also very questionable. The concept of teachers' professional competencies is really rather intricate.

Teacher A: “Even if the objectives of the TCT are very clear, ideal and beneficial, but in the fact, we couldn’t say that this TCT can be an appropriate assessment to measure or determine pedagogic competency of teachers for overall aspect, because pedagogy competency can be really observed and assessed practically, since pedagogy competence refers to the ability of teacher to design learning, implement learning and the ability to implement the evaluation of student learning outcomes as well as the follow-up of learner assessment. then, when the test are only multiple choices without practices, it might be not valid enough to determine whether I or other teachers have good pedagogy competency or not, but for the knowledge when I passed the passing grade, for that reason, I could say that I have understood the concept and theory of that pedagogy competency. It is also similar with professionalism competency. I can’t say I am a professional teacher just by passing the TCT”.

Teacher B also has similar answer from the aspect of pedagogic and professionalism competence: “Professional competence and pedagogical support each other, meaning that teachers will be delivering course material to students which is good and acceptable if the teacher properly designs the learning process according to the needs of students and implement the learning process by using various methods / learning strategies. Those skills or ability might not really understand theoretically, because as junior teacher like me, I still need to improve my knowledge related to those aspects, but in the reality, what I did in the classroom naturally as teacher we will follow the condition of class and students, therefore, I might improve my teaching strategies and or my ability in handling the class, but I still don’t get used to with the model of questions in that test”.

Further, professor as a trainer in Teacher Profession Program-the program that conducted to continue the result of TCT for certification requirement-also questioned about that validity:

“It is questionable how the test is able to obtain valid information about the ability of the teachers in planning the lesson, effectively starting their classes, and managing the class. Can the test assess their competency in terms of creating a live dynamic and conducive class, or in explaining a complex material in order to be easily understood
by students, then even if the current UKG has tested things such details above, how to ensure that the cognitive knowledge of teachers in the answer sheet is in line with what he is doing in the classroom? I keep questioning those particular questions when this TCT has socialized and applied for the first time by the government”.

Another perspective explained by the organizer from the department of Education. He explained that Pedagogy demands meaningful connections in the classroom and mutual respect between teachers and students. The objective is to assist students build on earlier learning and develop skills and attitudes, and for educators to create and deliver curriculum that is relevant to students, fitting with their needs and cultures. Further he also stated that:

“I believe that the results of the test will help us as government to see the knowledge of teachers related to the aspect tested in TCT, and how do we improve the competence of the teachers in the future. Because, we do really need data and result first to start plan some programs and to fix the problems.”

That justification similar with what the professor added in her argument:

“after following the development of this test and joining the training of government related to the teacher training that would be offered to teachers to follow the Teacher profession training and get certification, we really encourage teachers to have deep understanding both theoretically and practically, in order to understand the concept and upgrade their performances in the class.

She demonstrated the reasons by saying “Teachers are the key actors and have a strategic role in teaching and learning in schools. Teacher’s quality can be seen from teacher’s mastery in his or her subject field and his or her ability in managing the substance academic learning and develop his or her potential. The role of a teacher is very strategic in terms of teaching and learning process as he or she will bring consequences in carrying out his or her duties in a professional manner. Professional competence of a teacher determines the quality of education.

Thus, a teacher with a high score on the UKG does not necessarily indicate that he or she is a notable educator in the area, and those who fail the exam do not necessarily indicate that they are not competent teachers. Because the practice world often has its own location and art. Therefore, the legitimacy of the UKG test result is crucial.

Recommendation on TCT

Regarding the result of TCT and whether or not this test reliable and valid enough to measure the competency of teachers. Teacher A explained that this test still worth enough but still needs improvement to follow up the result of the test or find another alternative of test that is appropriate and suitable to test the aspects of teachers’ competency. In addition, consequently the positive side is the result of TCT gave positive feedback for teachers who followed the test. They consider the result as an evaluation and reflection to themselves to improve more both their knowledge and their ability in operating computer as well as using technology to teach and to improve their teaching materials in the classroom.

Teacher A: “It is true that the result of TCT from 2015-2017 were not satisfying and especially in Makassar, but moreover, the result of this test was depending on teacher itself, some senior and junior teachers might feel disappointed but they take it as the learning process to improve their capacity and following the new learning of pedagogical aspects in the class. Some of teachers also were excited and motivated to discuss about this test and take it as an opportunity to follow more trainings and
teachers forum. This is also why the Government should follow up this test, not only see the result, but it is urgent and necessary to follow up the result and plan teacher training for teachers to upgrade our knowledge”.

However, the professor stated that “to find alternative models of assessments with a more holistic instrument in assessing teachers’ competency test in the future time. This is certainly not an easy job given the broad scope and complexity of teachers’ competence as discussed above. Even in some developed countries like America which has carried out this kind of test for a long time, many reports indicate that the teacher competency test failed to provide the necessary information as a basis to help teachers grow and develop their competencies.”

Moreover, Teacher argued that TCT is not worth enough and needs to stop. Then government should find another model of test firstly to train teachers more and create more training to improve their competency, and second to continue the process of teachers’ certification due to the problems face by the teachers when they can’t pass the test. It must cause anxiety, stress and burden for teachers because they could not get any certification.

Teacher B: “In the context of Indonesia although the UKG or TCT cannot be the only indicator of teacher competence, its result still indicates that many teachers in Indonesia have not attained the minimum competence required to facilitate quality learning— in spite of the fact that prospective teachers must attend a professional education program for one year after completing undergraduate education. Therefore, the problems might be not the teachers’ competency but the model of questions and implementation that are problematic and not proper enough to begin with or even if the teachers are still have less minimum competency, government as policy maker should aware that our teachers need knowledge and platform to share their experiences and to learn more”.

Those perspectives above lead to the discussion with the professor related to what teacher and government should do to evaluate and follow up the test. The professor explained that, the results of this assessment are also useful for the purposes of decision making in teacher coaching for government and as well as evaluation for teachers to see the level of their understanding of to their profession as teachers.

“It still worth enough to continue, but therefore, government should have more socialization, pilot study before the test to ensure the preparation and readiness of teachers, and more follow up after the test” she stated.

Besides that, she added that the government should also fix the problem of inability of teachers used technology. For instance find the proper test, probably like paper test for senior teachers at the very first time to make them more convenient in answering the questions. Further, the development of management of this program and the amount of funding for teachers training also need to be improved to ensure the sustainability of the program in the future.

Different perspective expressed by the organizer. He stated that “Teacher couldn’t always rely on government, they should take this opportunity to reflect to their competency, because they need to develop their creativity and performance in teaching, because the creative teacher will implement a variety of learning process to make the students feel motivated to learn, therefore creativity and innovation are really needed for the teachers for their future career”.

ISSN 2721-0979 (Print), ISSN 2721-1258 (Online)
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But however, he also realized that policy makers and the organizer of this program should really pay attention and aware to the reality of the results of this test which describe the average knowledge of teachers in Makassar, and sadly overall Indonesia.

“More teachers should prepare learning programs through MGMPs (teachers’ forum) and developing their own capacity either, so it could develop their competency since pedagogy competency’s goal is to help students build on prior learning and develop skills and attitudes and for educators to devise and present curriculum in a way that is relevant to students, aligning with their needs and cultures” He explained.

The strategic move: mapping teachers’ competence and education

The existing system of teacher education has failed to produce graduates with the requisite competencies to become professional educators. In reality, many instructors still lack proficiency in fundamental abilities, such as grasping instructional materials. Even more worrisome is the situation at the elementary school level, where instructors are required to be proficient in all topics, which are crucial to pupils' progress at the next grade level. In the interest of the ongoing improvement of teacher competence, the current mapping of teacher competence using TCT data is imperfect. The existing TCT mapping does not account for the evolution of teacher competence over various career pathways.

The government has not yet mapped the phases of competence and growth that graduate teachers, competent teachers, highly successful teachers, and lead teachers must attain. In many industrialized nations, such as Australia, such a system has been implemented to present a clear image of the needed competency of a teacher and the progress they must make to master it. The existing teacher education curriculum also need a full overhaul. Its design should be capable of equipping instructors with comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of the subject matter they teach, effective teaching abilities, and good attitudes toward the varied learning requirements of pupils.

Sustainable Teachers Training and Development Program

One of the initiatives that may increase instructors' competence is teacher training. In addition, the Indonesian government has organized programs for Teacher Professional Education (PPG) and Continuing Professional Development (PKB). Teachers who participate in these supplemental education sessions will profit from the program's utility (Gilmore, 1995; Aslan & Ocal, 2012). Further, Kanokorn et al. (2012) recommend that school administrators give their full support for all quality projects in schools, and that continuous supervision, follow-up, and assessment be maintained so that teachers are able to develop curriculum-aligned learning activities that emphasize critical thinking.

Moreover, in 2017, the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education created two kinds of PPG, pre-service and in-service PPG programs, depending on the targeted populations. However, the implementation of PPG is not without controversy and has been a topic of discussion among academics and educators. The PPG programs are judged unproductive for college-educated instructors since the contents are just a rehash of the college-level courses they have already acquired. Therefore, there should be proper development of teachers training programs by the government by involving teachers to discuss their current condition based on the obstacles and need that they face in the school. Early study by Fenwick (2001) have pointed the supervision of teacher through professional growth plan which suggests structured mechanism that implicates the complex dimensions of their development, including clustering teachers’ needs.
In addition, the government needs to increase the number of trainers it employs, such as lecturers who are knowledgeable in educational assessment and evaluation as well as other pertinent fields of study, in order to better prepare teachers to meet the demands of the classroom in the 21st century. Examples of these types of lecturers include: It is commonly known that the educational climate in Indonesia is plagued with rich complexity, which makes it imperative to use a flexible approach in order to conduct reliable evaluations (Sireci, 2020; Jordan, 1985).

In addition, both the management structure that is being developed for this program and the amount of funds that is being allocated toward the training of teachers need to be strengthened in order to guarantee the long-term viability of the program (Osarenren-Osaghae & Irabor, 2018). In addition to this, Indonesian educational program model itself has to be revised in order to accomplish the educational long-term objectives (as highlighted by: Fitriansyah et al., 2020; Shaturaev, 2021a; Shaturaev 2021b).

If teachers participate in relevant and continuing professional development, they will acquire the skills essential to facilitate the academic growth of their students (Loyalarka, et al., 2019). In addition to assisting teachers in fostering successful learning, appropriate and ongoing professional development would make it possible for more credentialed educators (Evertson et al., 1985) to collaborate with less experienced educators and serve as mentors for the latter, thereby improving the conditions under which students are able to learn in the classroom. If we want to improve the overall quality of education, one of our primary focuses should be on increasing the competence of educators in creating learning environments.

Conclusion

Regarding the outcome of the TCT and the test's reliability and validity in measuring the competence of teachers, a high score on the UKG does not necessarily indicate that a teacher is a renowned pedagogue in the area, and vice versa. Those who do not get the required exam score are not always unqualified as teachers, since the realm of practices often has its own place and art. Therefore, the legitimacy of the UKG test result is crucial. In addition, the findings of this evaluation are valuable for government decision-making about the mapping of teachers' requirements and future development. Professional and pedagogical competence that is not ideal is the result of instructors' lack of creativity or lack of expertise in employing a range of sources to complement the curriculum-based teaching materials. The government should be informed of this factual information and consider alternatives. However, the phenomena is also reflected in the performance of the teacher in the administration of learning programs; hence, instructors should take this exam as an assessment of their degree of knowledge pertaining to their profession.

To maintain the program's long-term viability, it is necessary to strengthen the program's administration and the amount of funding allocated to teacher training. Teachers will have the necessary skills to assist student learning if they get appropriate and ongoing professional development. Proper and ongoing professional development would not only assist instructors in supporting successful learning, but it would also enable experienced teachers to work with novice teachers and act as mentors for them, therefore enhancing classroom learning circumstances. Improving teacher competency in enabling learning must be a top goal if we are to enhance the quality of education.

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