

Factors affecting Teaching Competency of Academic Staff

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Introduction

Teaching competency can be evaluated in terms of the student's achievement and attitude as the product criterion. Good teaching is the main criterion of a competent teacher. The competent teacher never stops experimenting to discover what best suits his own particular needs and those of his students. The competent teacher can apply teaching methods that are easier, quicker, better, safer, more rewarding, less labour intensive and more suitable.

The role of a teacher in technological and advanced educational systems in general and agricultural education in particular has become difficult. Earlier, the teacher was the only source of information and used to guide and facilitate access to information. In the present era of information technology, in order to discharge duties effectively as a generator, facilitator of knowledge and assimilator, the teacher is expected to produce dynamic graduates who have to work and compete in high tech areas with persons from other countries (Verma, 2002). Hence, it was felt imperative to workout the level of competency possessed by the teachers for imparting instructions to under graduate students in an agricultural university. The present research was therefore, undertaken with the following specific objectives:

1. To assess teaching competency of the academic staff.
2. To find out the relationship between selected socio-personal and psychological characteristics and teaching competency of the academic staff.

Defining Teaching Competency

Job competence is the extent of possession of adequate abilities / qualities by an agricultural university teacher that aid in performing tasks viz., Teaching, Research and Extension Education in an effective way (Senthil kumar et al, 2001). Competencies are the characteristics of an individual, which underlie performance of behaviour at work (Rao and Rao, 2002).

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Teaching competency in the present research was defined in two ways:

1) Teaching competency refers to the extent of knowledge, skill, mental abilities and other qualities possessed by an academic staff, which aid in performing the teaching job in an effective way.

2) Teaching competency of academic staff is defined as the ability of an individual, which aids in expressing the possessed knowledge, skill, mental abilities and other qualities in planning, executing and evaluating the teaching- learning process.

Methodology

The research was purposively conducted in Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth, Akola and was confined to four colleges viz., College of Agriculture Akola, College of Agriculture, Nagpur, Shri. Shivaji College of Agriculture, Amravati and Anand Niketan College of Agriculture, Warora. The exploratory and analytical research designs of social research were used for the study. The study was confined to the academic staff in the cadres of Associate and Assistant Professors imparting instruction in agriculture at undergraduate degree programme. A well-structured and pre-tested questionnaire was used for data collection. The researcher was able to get the filled in questionnaire from 111 teacher respondents, though it was personally given to 176 teacher respondents actually engaged in teaching. To cross check against the self-rating data of these 111 teacher respondents, the purposive rating of superiors under whom the respondents were performing the teaching job and rating of students @ two students at random per teacher respondent who they were teaching, were also obtained through the intended questionnaire. While obtaining the students' rating for the teacher respondents, care was taken to see that the respondent teacher had taught the concerned students.

The teaching competency of the respondents was measured with the help of a scale developed and standardized for the purpose. The teaching competency scale was composed of 53 statements. Each statement was to be rated on a five-point response continuum namely very much, much, fair, less and very less. The numerical scores assigned to these response categories were 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively. The teaching competency score was calculated by summing up the scores obtained by respondents for three types of rating i.e. self, superior and students on all the items and considered as an individual's score. The teaching competency score on this scale ranged from a minimum of 53 to a maximum of 265. The Teaching Competency Index (TCI) was then worked out with the help of the formula given below.

Teaching Competency Index (TCI)	=	Obtained TC scores	-----
			X 100
		Maximum obtainable TC scores	

The scores obtained by self, superiors and students on the entire five continuums for all the items under each indicator were separately summed up and converted to TC index. The respondents on the basis of TC index range were then grouped into four categories as Poor (Up to 25), Average (26-50), Above average (51-75) and Good (Above 75).

Results and Discussion

The rating from the respondents, their superiors and by students were secured and the distribution of respondents as per teaching competency was worked out as per self rating, superior's and their student's rating and the distribution of respondents as per their teaching competency is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their Teaching Competency

Sl. No	Teaching competency level	Self rating (N=111)		Superior's rating (N=40)		Student's rating (N=222)	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1	Poor (Up to 25)	03	2.71	02	5.00	18	8.11
2	Average (26 to 50)	16	14.41	09	22.50	54	24.32
3	Above average (51 to 75)	67	60.36	23	57.50	126	56.76
4	Good (Above 75)	25	22.52	06	15.00	24	10.81
Total		111	100.00	40	100.00	222	100.00

The data presented in Table-1 emphatically indicates that, over half of the respondents rated themselves (60.36 per cent) to be above average in teaching competency; while 57.50 per cent of their superiors and 56.76 per cent of their students rated them as above average in teaching competency. It was surprising and alarming to note that relatively very low proportion of teachers 22.52 per cent by self, 15.00 per cent by superiors and 10.81 per cent by students rating were rated to be good in teaching competency. The teachers having average teaching competency were 14.41 per cent by self rating, 22.50 per cent by superiors and 24.32 per cent by student ratings. Further it was revealed that, 2.71 percent of teachers by self rating, 5.00 percent by superiors and 8.11 percent by students were rated poor in teaching competency. All three types of ratings indicate that, mean teaching competency of respondents was average in level, which indicates that there is a large scope for improvement in future.

To know the magnitude of indicators constituting teaching competency of the teacher respondents, mean indices as per self, superiors and students rating worked out have been presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents ranking of Teaching Competency

Sl. No	Indicators constituting teaching competency	Self rating (N=111)		Superior's rating (N=40)		Student's rating (N=222)	
		Mean Index	Rank	Mean Index	Rank	Mean Index	Rank
1	Planning ability	64.38	I	62.43	I	57.00	II
2	Knowledge	63.87	II	61.04	III	57.04	I
3	Mental ability	63.82	III	61.93	II	56.18	V
4	Professional Ethics	63.64	IV	60.21	VII	56.67	IV
5	Guiding ability	62.88	V	60.50	VI	56.99	III
6	Teaching ability	62.34	VI	61.04	IV	53.92	VII
7	Communication competency	62.25	VII	60.81	V	55.99	VI
8	Self development	61.23	VIII	58.13	VIII	53.75	VIII
9	Skill	60.93	IX	54.97	X	51.85	X
10	Evaluation ability	59.89	X	57.46	IX	52.72	IX
11	Creativity	59.37	XI	53.76	XI	49.77	XI

Although the overall teaching competency has been below good, the self-rating worked out for all teaching competency indicators, did not indicate much variation. Among the eleven identified teaching competency indicators, the first five positions have been occupied by planning ability, knowledge, mental ability, professional ethics and guiding ability as per self rating. According to superiors rating the first five were planning ability, mental ability, knowledge, teaching ability and communication competency. According to the student rating the first five positions occupied were knowledge, planning ability, guiding ability, professional ethics and mental ability. With regard to the other areas of teaching competency and their ranks from sixth to eleventh, it was observed that controversy exists between the self, superiors and students ratings. Thus, it is seen that there is no agreement in ranking by self, superiors and students for teaching competency indicators.

The magnitude of teaching competency mean indices revealed that, actual teaching competency of respondents as per self rating ranged between 64.38 and 59.37 percent; as per superiors rating ranged between 62.43 to 53.76 percent and as per students rating

ranged between 57.04 and 49.77 percent, which indicates that, the respondent academic staff needs to exhibit effective discharge of various duties and responsibilities attached to their position as academic staff. In fact, involvement of teachers devotedly in the teaching profession is very important. Updating knowledge, preparation for classes and effective communication has to be improved by academic staff themselves. Imparting need-based and regular training in weak areas of teaching competency followed by proper evaluation, effective guidance in teaching skill, mentoring and evaluation at the superior's level and motivating the teachers through rewards and recognitions at an organizational level will help to change the existing situation.

. The results pertaining to regression analysis of teaching competency of the respondent academic staff is presented in Table-3.

Table-3: Regression analysis of teaching competency of the respondents

Sl. No	Characteristics	Partial regression coefficient 'b'	Standard error (SE) of 'b'	't' value
1	Age	1.1878	0.6706	1.7713
2	Educational qualification	0.6089	1.6457	0.3699
3	Post held	3.6562	5.8241	0.6278
4	Total service experience	-1.3463	0.5762	2.3363*
5	Teaching experience	0.0393	0.2955	0.1329
6	Inservice training.	0.3505	1.3961	0.2510
7	Membership of periodicals	1.6628	1.4966	0.7792
8	Contribution in terms of publications	-0.0858	0.1418	0.6054
9	Work load	-0.1688	0.2619	0.6446
10	Availability of instructional aids and facilities	-0.2933	0.5057	0.5801
11	Teaching methods and aids used	1.4590	0.6160	2.3684*
12	Job preference	3.3878	1.8609	1.8205
13	Job Involvement	0.1647	0.3715	0.4433
14	Achievement motivation	1.4981	0.5469	2.7394**
15	Teaching attitude	0.4288	0.3885	1.1036
16	Job satisfaction	0.1447	0.1709	0.8465

** Significant at 0.01 level of probability

R² =0.3510

* Significant at 0.05 level of probability

F-value = 3.29*

The results presented in Table-3 indicate that, the effect of achievement motivation ($t=2.7394$), teaching methods and aids used ($t=2.3684$) and total service experience ($t=2.3363$) was significant in explaining the variation in teaching competency. It means that these three variables contributed significantly towards the variation in teaching competency and it is essential to motivate and take care of these three factors. The influence of other variables was not significant. All variables fitted in a regression equation accounted only 35.10 percent variation in teaching competency ($R^2 = 0.3510$), as could be seen from the value of 'f' ratio 3.29, which was significant.

Conclusion

The findings of the research indicate that, relatively very low proportion of teachers as per self rating (22.52%), superiors (15.00%) and the students (10.81%) rating was found to be good in teaching competency. In order to increase teaching competency of the teacher respondents, corrective measures like imparting regular and effective training followed by proper evaluation in weak areas of teaching competency, effective guidance in teaching skills, mentoring and evaluation at superior's level and motivating the teachers through rewards and recognitions at an organization level will definitely change the existing situation in future.

The variables like achievement motivation, teaching methods and aids used and total service experience contributed significantly towards the variation in teaching competency of the respondents. It is essential to motivate and to take care of achievement motivation, teaching methods and aids used and total service experience of the teacher respondents to attain and exhibit good teaching competency in future.

However, the teachers should always be aware about the professional updates; updating knowledge, preparation for classes and effective communication has to be improved by themselves. In fact devoted involvement of teachers in the teaching profession is very important and teachers should always make efforts to attain and exhibit good teaching competency. Self-development initiatives need to be inculcated in the teaching community.

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