

Exploring the Implementation and Opportunities of HDP Program for Class Room Instruction, The Case of Dire Dawa University

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Abstract: The general objective of this study was to assess the implementation and opportunities of HDP program for class room instruction. To realize the study, a descriptive survey research design was used in this study. About 35 HDP Candidates from Dire Dawa University were participated on the study. Questionnaire, classroom observation and interview were used to gather the data. Statistical techniques like percentage, frequency count, mean and one sample t-test was used to analyze the quantitative data. The data gathered through qualitative methods was categorized and analyzed on thematic basis as raised in the objectives and the research questions. The results show that, however HDP program has a great value for the instructors; in improving their professional development, HDP module, mode of delivery and the program by itself need some amendment.

Keywords: HDP, HDL, HDC, Attitudes, Barriers, Implementation

1. Introduction

Many countries, such as Norway, UK and Sri Lanka have made decisions about the compulsory pedagogical training of university teachers (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004). In Finland, many universities arrange pedagogical training for their teachers, but training is not compulsory. However, for example, the strategy of the University of Helsinki (University of Helsinki, 2003) highlights, that every new teacher should have the possibility to participate in an introductory seminar on university teaching in order to improve teachers' pedagogical thinking and skills. However, the training is voluntary.

Traditionally, discipline expertise has been the most respected feature of a university teacher. In recent years, however, there have been discussions about the need to improve university teachers' pedagogical thinking and skills as well. As a consequence, training of university teachers has recently become a widespread trend in many countries (Postareff et al., 2007). As Gilbert and Gibbs have highlighted, there is a need to establish the effectiveness of higher education teachers' training in improving university teaching. Evidence of impact is needed to guide educational development units to design their courses since earlier research in this field is rather descriptive than evaluative (Gilbert & Gibbs, 1999). An exception to this is a quantitative study conducted by (Gibbs and Coffey, 2004), in which they examined

the impact of training of university teachers on approaches to teaching skills and approaches to learning of their students.

The Higher Diploma Program (HDP) is a professional development course designed with the demand of the Ethiopian MoE, by Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) volunteers, working in cooperation with Ethiopian educators (The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), 2004). The aim of the HDP was to improve the quality of education in Ethiopia through a licensing programme that will develop the skills and professionalism of teacher educators. The HDP includes modules on reflective educator, time management, active learning methods, continuous assessment, and school/organizational placement and action research.

The unit has been operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. The course, which is on-the-job, is mandatory for all faculty teaching staff, and so is attendance. The course must be attended for four hours each week for a year. Attendance must be completed with a successful completion of the modules above 80%. In fact, over the years, the program was updated continually to address government policies and strategies such as the ESDP IV and the Growth and Transformation plan 2010/11-2014/15(GTP). Even though HDP training has been delivered in many higher educational institutions since 2003, the University of Dire Dawa launched the training following the advent of department of Pedagogy and Morality with the ownership of department of pedagogy since 2008/2009. Recently the program is governed by QEAPA director under Vice President for Academic Affairs of the university.

Dire Dawa University has trained nine consecutive batches between the years 2008/2009 to 2016/17. Each year about 30 to 42 teachers have gone through the training. It is also hoped that the program will continue until all academic staffs of the University get certified. To this end, the overall implementation of HDP candidates/ graduates in respect to HDP objectives did not assessed in the University; this is why the researcher initiated to conduct the research.

2. Statement of the problem

As of The MoE direction, University of Dire Dawa has launched the Higher Diploma Programme in the year 2008/2009 as one of the major components for bringing about quality education. The main objective of the programme was improving the instructional practice of lecturers and professors which, in turn, leads to the provision of quality educations to the students. To this end, the university's Education Quality Enhancement and academic program affairs Office, the Higher Diploma Leaders (pedagogy department members) and the Higher Diploma Candidates are investing a lot of their time, effort and resources for the overall success of the programme. Hence, assessing the outcomes of this programme on the instructional practice of instructors has a paramount importance in order to improve its way of delivery to the betterment and to realization of its objectives.

More importantly, the program is supposed to bring about a paradigm shift from the traditional teacher-centered teaching approach to learner centered one where students will be active and independent learners. All these practices are important inputs in order to secure of education in higher education institutions. However, the practical implementation of the principles HDP candidates and graduates have

acquired from the HDP training have not yet been studied in their real classroom settings. Therefore, this study tried to assess the implementation of HDP Program and Implementation barrier on HDP candidates of 2016/17 in applying the training skills in their classroom instruction.

3. Objectives

3.1 General objective

- The general objective of this study was exploring the opportunities of HDP program for class room instruction.

3.2 Specific objective

- To assess the implementation and opportunity of HDP program in DDU
- To assess the relevance of HDP program for HDP candidates in DDU.

3.3 Research questions

1. Do HDP candidates implementing the HDP objectives in their class room instruction as of the module presented?
2. Do the candidates obtain the expected skill, knowledge and attitudes as of the purpose of the HDP program to use for their class room instruction?

4. Conceptual framework

4.1 Active Learning Methods and Its Opportunity

Ease of learning a subject and sustaining it for future use to solve any problems that arise in our interaction with the environment is the most applaud benefit of learner centered methods of teaching. This is because, according to Ahmed (2013), active learning draws upon the concept of experiential learning where knowledge is constructed through the transformation of experience. Sablonniere et al. (2009) stated that active learning techniques take advantage of which is termed as the “generation effect” in learning and human memory. They further stressed that this effect refers to the finding that better learning occurs when an individual produces knowledge rather than having it delivered to them by an expert who assumes that he/she knows everything about a subject. When students are taught with the help of active learning methods, it is considered that they are experiencing the challenges of the real world in a confined setting.

School curriculum is the reflection of the real world. The contents to be delivered to students are derived from the real life scenarios surrounding them. This necessitates teachers to allow students to integrate their experiences that they accumulated over time with classroom learning experience and discover a new knowledge. Elaborating this point, (American Psychological Association, 1997) stated that the learning of complex subject matters is most effective when learning is an internal process of constructing meaning from information and experience. As compared to the traditional lecture based approach in which students are passive recipients of information, active learning strategies emphasize constructivist qualities such as independent inquiry and the structuring and restructuring of knowledge (Phungphol, 2004).

Many research studies disclose that the quantity and quality of learning outcome improve owing to the utilization of active learning techniques. Asserting this reality, Attard et al. (2008) suggest that students retain information better and develop better high level thinking skill when these methods are used. They go on to say that these techniques have a powerful impact on students learning such as in the students' ability for the transfer of knowledge to new situations or measures of problem solving thinking, attitude change or motivation for further learning. Needless to say mastery of contents is enormously dependent on students' readiness to learn. Important points from among multiplicity of variables that depict behaviours that entail students' readiness to learn are their learning styles.

A central point in relation to this issue is the responsibility that teachers have to consider the learning styles of students in their lesson delivery. In regards to this, Weimer (2002) noted that identifying the learning styles of students and getting knowledge is a key to effective education. Underscoring this point, Weimer (2002), conclude that "those who accept the premise that different students will learn in different ways will find that active learning strategies not only enliven the classroom but significantly improve their students' thinking and learning capabilities by gearing their lessons towards addressing the learning style of their students.

4.2 Some Basic Active Learning Techniques

Active Learning Methods are important tools that allow students the opportunities to think. The key concept in active learning is that knowledge cannot be transferred; information is transferred but knowledge is what is created when a student thinks about the information (Baines, Blanchford, &Kurnick, 2008).

There will be times when teachers need to tell their students new information; however, there are methods to make their lectures more interactive (Pollard, 2008). Most importantly, in active learning, teachers should provide their students with opportunities to do some work based on the ideas given for them. Therefore, teachers are expected to use a range of variety of active learning methods to address the different needs of their students and to promote students learning styles.

Depending on the difficulty level of the contents to be taught, the students' level of understanding, background knowledge, and other related factors, teachers should use appropriate ALMs that would make students involve actively during the entire instruction.

4.3 Techniques of Active learning method

The most common and basic active learning techniques that are suggested in the HDP handbook (MoE, 2011) are, Visual Aids, Gapped Lectures, Buzz Group, Questions and Answers, Active Listening, Written Material, Research, Demonstrations ,Interactive Learning, Independent learning, Pair work, Pyramiding, Group work, Jigsaw groups, Cross over groups , and Cooperative learning. When students discuss ideas and if they make a diagram of their thoughts, it can help visual learners. The following are different forms of diagrams that students can make in groups, pairs or individually. These include Brainstorming, Spider diagram, Mind map and Thought bubble If a teacher wants his/her students to consider ideas a little more deeply and to clarify their opinions, he/she could use Stimulus material,

Picture analysis, Case studies, Ranking tasks, Matching exercises, Flashcards, Debate, Decision Line, Balloon game, and Role play, Hot seating, Drama, Simulation exercises, Storytelling, and Speeches. Giving Tasks and Assignments can also be used as ALMs. To do so, the teacher provides his/her students pieces of work that students can complete individually or in groups. These could include Creative writing, Report writing, Diary, Newspaper or radio reporting, Drawing a picture, map or graph, Assignment or homework, Problem solving and Presentation A central concept of active learning is that students learn best when they learn from experience.

Teacher should start from the existing experience of the students and build on it. Research, Visits, Fieldwork, Investigation, Project work, Making models and resources, Experiments, Guest speakers, Quiz, Questioning and Comprehension are activities that are designed to help students learn from their experiences and to learn how to learn.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design

A descriptive survey research design was employed. Survey design was chosen since it is useful to assess whether the higher diploma program candidates of Dire Dawa University implement the training they acquired or not. This method was selected because of its usefulness in elucidating the existing situation or phenomenon based on samples that represent a population (Cresswell, 2003). A concurrent mixed approach was used to collect and analyze the data.

5.2 Research Study Population

The target population of the study was the candidates of 2009 EC in the DDU campus. The university is selected on the basis of the proximity and accessibility of the target population to the researchers. From 41 HDP candidates of 2016/2017 in DDU all of them were selected purposively in order to examine and assess the implementation of HDP objectives.

Table1: Sample Population of the study

Name of the colleges	Sex		Total number of population samples
	Male	Female	
College of Social Science and Humanities	7	3	10
College of Natural and Computational sciences	5	1	6
College of Medicine and Health sciences	6	-	6
College of Business and Economics	6	1	7
College of Law	8	4	12
Total	32	9	41

The above table shows the total number of the sample population from all colleges and departments those of attending HDP in 2016/17.

5.3 Sampling Method and Sample Statistics

About forty one (41) questionnaires were distributed to the HDP participants at one of their two weekly training sessions. Collection of the completed questionnaires was accomplished through the HDP leader. Those students absent from the class on the day questionnaires were distributed and collected were asked to complete a questionnaire at the next weekly class meeting. This process resulted in 35 questionnaires that were useable. From 41 targeted population sample 35 (85.36) were completed and used.

5.4 Instruments

In this study, a variety of instruments were used to collect information about the HDP graduates use of the training skills in classroom instruction and identifying factors that might inhibit the successful transfer of the skill in actual teaching.

5.4.1 Classroom observation

Classroom observation was conducted in order to collect first hand information regarding the current use of HDP training skills in classroom instruction. Accordingly, one from each department was observed by means of an observation checklist. The observation checklist were adopted from Thijs (1999) and Ottenvanger (2001) following the style of HDP. An expert appraisal was used to ensure whether the adopted checklists could fit to the HDP or not. Generally, the observation checklist focuses on HDP candidates (instructors).

5.4.2 Interview

The main instrument used in this study was interview. It helped the researcher to collect information from different sources. In the first instance, interview used to collect information from HDP leader, HDP tutor in order to evaluate the relevance and challenges of HDP in DDU.

5.4.3 Questionnaire

The aim of the questionnaire was to obtain data that would help to answer the research questions and to achieve the objectives of the study. It was prepared by the researchers through consultation with related literatures. HDP candidate's questionnaire had three major components. These are background variables, opportunities of HDP program and practice of active learning methods.

6. Result and Discussions

Demographic characteristics of Respondents

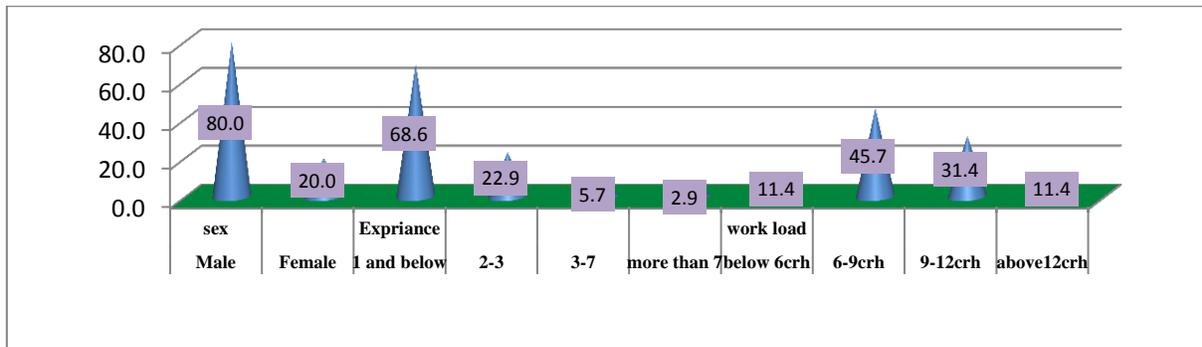


Figure 1: Teaching load of instructors, sex and experience of the respondents

As shown in the above figure, about 80% of the respondents are male and 20% of respondents are females. This shows that most of HDP Candidates of 2017/18 are males. In the other regards about 68.6% of the respondents experience is below one year, 22.9% of the respondent's experience is 2 to 3 years and the others are more than three years of experience. This shows, most of the respondent's has a little experience as shown in the above data. The opportunity to get HDP program for these teachers are more of important than that of other teachers because they need a lot of professional development training as they are from different back grounds with no or a little concept of educational back ground.

In regard to the work load of the respondents, about 11.4% of them were taken below 6crh, 31.4% were 6-9crh and the others are more than 9crh. This shows that the credit hour given for those HDP candidates are equivalent to the expected credit hour as permitted to DDU Senate legislation 2016/17. To this end the number of credit hour of the candidates can not limit the implementation of different active learning method as it is one objective of HDP program.

Table 2: Opportunities Of HDP Program

Variables	Test Value = 3.0		Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df			Lower	Upper
HDP training has improved my relationship with my students	13.696	34	.000	1.14286	.9733	1.3124
HDP training has helped me to know d/t active learning methods	16.833	34	.000	1.42857	1.2561	1.6010
HDP training has helped me to apply d/t active learning in the class room	17.060	34	.000	1.22857	1.0822	1.3749
HDP training has helped me to know the d/t system of assessment methods	8.824	34	.000	1.17143	.9016	1.4412
HDP training has helped me to use d/t methods of continuous assessment in my course	7.854	34	.000	1.08571	.8048	1.3667

HDP training has helped me to know the steps of action research	11.926	34	.000	1.40000	1.1614	1.6386
HDP training motivated me to conduct action research and improve teaching and learning issues	13.287	34	.000	1.28571	1.0891	1.4824
HDP training motivated me to seek a teaching career	8.695	34	.000	1.11429	.8539	1.3747
HDP training has motivated me improve my pedagogical skills	15.305	34	.000	1.17143	1.0159	1.3270
HDP training has motivated me implement new teaching methods	14.733	34	.000	1.34286	1.1576	1.5281
HDP observation feedback has helped me to improve my teaching methods	12.293	34	.000	1.14286	.9539	1.3318
80% of HDP attendance requirement motivates me to be in class	6.592	34	.000	1.02857	.7115	1.3457
HDP certification is a positive motivation for me to complete the course	6.655	34	.000	.94286	.6549	1.2308

Table value at **0.05**

As of the above data HDP has great opportunity for the candidates. The result shows that the hypothesis test value shows that the value ($P < 0.01$) which is highly significant value in relation to the stated table value. Therefore it is possible to conclude that HDP has a great value for instructor to improve their pedagogical skill. The lower and upper value of the table also supports the p - value which is almost similar to the value described above.

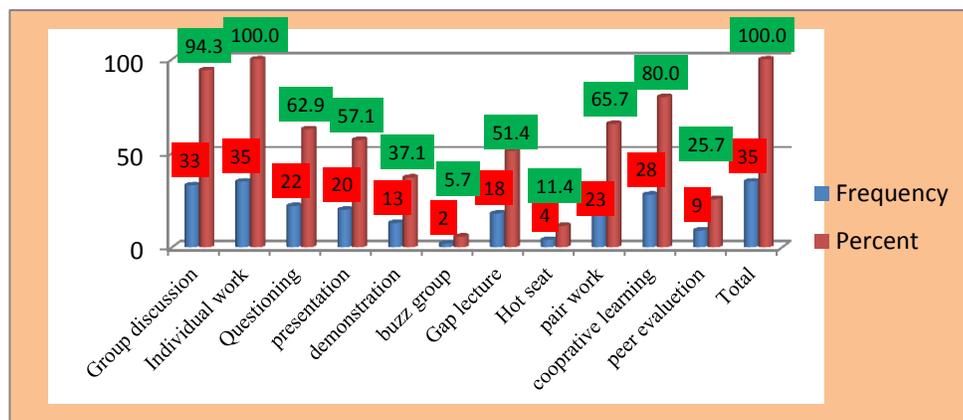


Figure 2: Active Learning Implementation

With regard to the use of varieties of active learning methods, only few instructors were used other active learning methods such as; buzz group 2(5.7%), hot seating 4 (11%), peer evaluation 9(25.7%) and demonstration 13(37.1%) were used with few instructors. Nevertheless, individual work 35 (100%), group work 33 (94.3%), cooperative work 28 (80%) active learning methods were used frequently. These are the frequently and used methods as indicated. This shows that however the instructor tried to

use different active learning method, yet individual work dominates the methods of teaching as of the candidates. However Individual work is one part of active learning method, the redundancy of using the method makes the traditional methods of teaching.

Table 3: Relevance of HDP Program

Variables	t	df	Test Value = 3			
			Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
I didn't get a good a pedagogical skill from HDP as I expected a lot b/se of some irrelevant course content	-1.501	34	.143	-.28571	-.6727	.1012
10 months for HDP program is too long in relation to its content	3.505	34	.001	.68571	.2881	1.0833
HDP module doesn't consider the maturity level of the HDP candidates	4.431	34	.000	.88571	.4795	1.2919
some terms and phrases used in HDP module are vague	3.667	34	.001	.71429	.3185	1.1101
There are skill, knowledge and attitude d/ce with that of fresh and senior HDP candidates teachers	-1.599	34	.119	-.37143	-.8434	.1005
The time given for HDP program 4crh per week is appropriate with its module	-1.785	34	.083	-.34286	-.7331	.0474

As of the above data, from the stated variables, HDP module doesn't consider the maturity level, some terms and phrases used in HDP module are vague, 10 months for HDP program is too long in relation to its content were resulted as $P < 0.01$ which is highly significant in relation to the stated table value. Due to this, the null hypothesis was rejected. The other variables, I didn't get a good pedagogical skill from HDP as i expected, there are skill, knowledge and attitude d/ce with that of fresh and senior HDP candidates, the time given for HDP program 4crh per week is appropriate with its module were not significant at $P > 0.05$.

As of interview with HDL and HDT's, In response to question addressing the implementation of a student-centered approach by HDP graduates, HDL and HDT responded that they didn't say exactly HDC are implementing or not as far as no consistent follow up has taken place. However, since they have two years' experience in leading and tutoring the program at DDU they concluded that HDP training skill is rarely applied as of its objective. Above all, no follow-up plan was designed to check and support the candidates after graduation. Hence the University gives a little attention for the HDL and HDT's in regarding to remuneration and encouragements even for the normal class of HDP. As of the respondent, however there is no payment supported from Teacher Development Fund [TDP] like others Universities for the in-existence of the found the University couldn't afford the payment for trainer as well as for tutors.

In order to solve the problems the University gave mandates for pedagogy department since they have no regular students in the winter. This makes some dissatisfaction with that of the trainer and tutor of the program. Another factor for the absence of follow up service, as described by the respondents, HDP is attributed to lack of one responsible organizer. No person is assigned or employed only for such purpose officially/ with an official letter. Therefore, the respondents strongly advise the program would be able to assign for a specified leader in order to ran and facilitate the program officially in separate with QEAPA and TDP with possible financial support and official letter either from experienced HDL or based on computation like other positions.

The other great problem in regard to HDC as of the individuals, the candidates are seeking the program to get only the certificate this makes some dissatisfaction to acquire the expected skill, knowledge and attitude as of the objective of HDP. As of the MoE direction, all higher educator teachers should graduate in HDP until 2016/17. Therefore most of the candidates are attending the program not only to improve their professional skill rather to be certified.

The other issue for HDL and HDT were about the HDP module. As of these individuals, the module has its own problems like grammar, some words are vague and the content mostly consider the teacher educator rather than other faculties like medicine and institute of technology as of their teaching methods are different the preparation of the module is better to consider other faculties especially in dealing other activities like organizational placement and similar activities. The evaluation, method of assessment and activities are also difficult to strictly follow and support the candidates since the manual gives high value for attendance and the completion of the activities. It needs some revision as of the individuals.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

As of HDP HDL, HDC and Higher diploma tutor, there is a great challenge in regard to its implementation and on the preparation of curriculum (module). Particularly motivation from the top level management, the process of requirement for HDL and remuneration for the leader and facilitator terms used in the module were some challenges during the all training of HDP.

7.2 Recommendation

In order to enhance the quality of education, teachers have great role especial higher education teachers. To realize this improving the skill, knowledge and attitudes of these professions has indispensable part both in subject and pedagogical wise. Having this in mind, the study recommends the following strategies as a remedy for the prevailing problem:

- The university should better to discuss and revise the HDP module with concerned bodies.
- HDP office should give equal emphasis to the follow-up service like that of initial training. There should be on workplace support that pressurized instructors to use the training skills.

- The University should follow and motivate the candidate's makes other staff members to attain the program.
- MoE needs to revisit the curriculum manual in collaboration with that of University professionals.

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