

Evaluating Assessment Practices applied in Teacher Development for Primary Schools by Primary Teachers' Colleges, Case Study of Core Primary Teachers' Colleges in Uganda

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ABSTRACT

Realizing the importance of the Primary School (PS) Education in the country's development, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) together with the technical, pedagogical and professional guidance of the Mandated Kyambogo University by Government of Uganda (GWPE, 1992), revised the Primary Teacher Education Curriculum (KyU 2012) to meet the teacher's challenges of the 21st Century. The paper evaluated the effectiveness, efficiency, relevancy, impact and sustainability of the current assessment practices in the development of teachers for primary schools. The study was evaluative; using the mixed method. A sample of 126 participants from the Primary Teachers' Colleges' Stakeholders was involved in the study. The purposive, stratified and simple random sampling was used in selecting the participants. Participant observation, document review, focus group discussion interviews and a survey questionnaire were used to gather information during the study. Data was analysed using qualitative methods, narration and descriptive statistics. Findings included; revised PTE curriculum (KyU 2012) based on a Baseline study report (Margo 2006), Continuous Assessment guidelines, examination rules and regulations (KyU 2012, 2013) and terminal examinations were in use. Assessment practices were more assessment of learning than assessment for and assessment as learning with inadequate staffing. The evaluation also found out the extent colleges were engaging teachers in development in practical assessment and pedagogic support for quality teachers. Tutor capacity in assessment practices, to enhance and strengthen quality teacher development, Use of a teacher's national assessment framework, an Independent National Teacher Policy and National Council for Teachers made some of the recommendations.

Key words: Evaluation, Assessment practices, Teacher development, Quality teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching-learning process and a critical component of the overall strategy and quest for improved education (MoES 2010). In curriculum implementation, assessment is perceived as comprising an inextricable element of the cyclical process of teaching, learning, assessing and planning (Bonfield & Horgan, 2016). This was in line with Halai (2016) about assessment quoted "Assessment for learning is meant to improve learning through modification of learning activities and teaching methods." Therefore assessment is major practice in teacher development in Primary Teachers' Colleges in Uganda. According to the Government White Paper on Education (GWPE, 1992), the quality of education in any country is dependent on the quality of its teachers. Therefore, the quality of an education system requires sufficient and professionally competent teachers' development through the tutor assessment practices. The Uganda Vision 2040, Second National Development Plan (NDPII) [2015/16 – 2019/20], when presenting the Objectives and Interventions for the skills development under MoES (pages 224-230) asserted that teacher education should be conceived of, and organised as, a seamless continuum, which is often divided into three stages; initial teacher training, induction and teacher development or continuing professional development.

The Teacher Issues Sub Sahara Africa (TISSA) Report (MoES 2013) articulates the inability of teacher training institutions to ensure adequate supply of well-trained pre-service and in-service training teachers posing a big problem of quantity and quality of teachers in the country. Further the TISSA Report ((MoES, 2013) identified the challenge of inadequate training and preparation for teaching. It asserts that trainee teachers spend most of their training in colleges and universities learning theory, rather than learning how to teach by spending time in schools observing experienced teachers or being observed and directed by practitioners and then returning to college to write exams based on real teaching experience. The PTE Curricula Review Report (Margo, 2006) revealed then, examination was the major assessment method that tutors used to assess trainee teachers together testing the capacity of the trainee to recall knowledge. The report made the following recommendations.

Recommendation 34: there should be a set assessment ratio of 75:25 for examination and CA in all subject areas; Recommendation 37: devise a Continuous Assessment booklet for training tutors on assessment to include assessment strategies in the Teachers' Guides.

The assertions above point at assessment as one of the major challenges teachers and tutors face during the process of curriculum implementation.

Purpose and objectives of the Evaluation

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, relevancy, impact and sustainability of the assessment practices in the development of teachers of primary schools by Primary Teachers' Colleges in Uganda.

The Objectives to the Study included:

1. to establish the current state of assessment practices in use in the development of teachers of the primary schools by the Primary Teachers' Colleges in Uganda,
2. to find the extent colleges are engaging teachers in development in practical assessment for quality and exemplary teachers of primary schools in the 21st era
3. to verify whether the colleges are applying relevant and authentic pedagogic support procedures that engage teachers in development into functional, instructional and pedagogical leaders.

The study evaluated assessment practices applied in teacher development for Primary schools by Primary Teachers' Colleges and was restricted to only the Public Primary Teachers' Colleges, selected from the 23 CPTCs in Uganda.

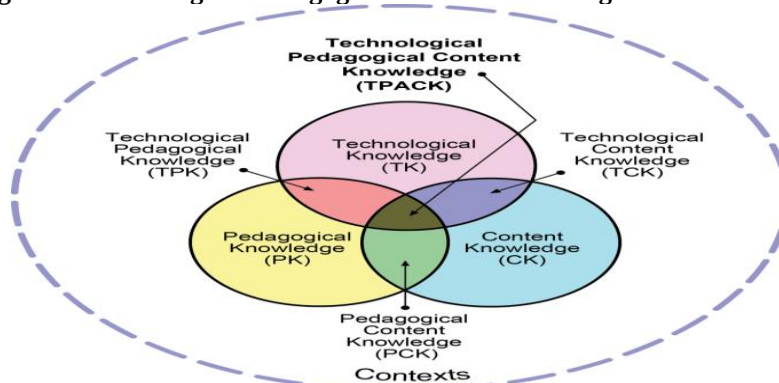
Theoretical Context Perspective of the study

In Uganda, there are 45 public Primary Teachers' Colleges (PTCs) and of these 23 are Core Primary Teachers' Colleges [CPTCs) which offer both pre- service (2-4 years) and in – service (3-5 years teacher programmes)] and 22 non-core Primary Teachers' Colleges scattered in all the four geographical regions and districts of Uganda. The Core PTCs have two Deputy Principals [Deputy Principal Pre-service (DPP) and Deputy Principal Outreach (DPO)]. All PTCs are boarding institutions (MoES 1994 & 2006).

Teacher development in PTCs

The MoES (2016) cites and explains an illustration on the three types of knowledge required to develop a competent- based teacher

Figure 1: Technological-Pedagogical-Content Knowledge



From: <http://www.tpack.org>

The three - type knowledge illustration required to develop a competent- based teacher emphasizes the importance of teacher trainees deconstructing their own prior knowledge and attitudes, comprehending how these understandings evolved; exploring the effects they have on actions and behaviour, and considering alternate conceptions and premises that may be more serviceable in teaching. It also forms the core reflection which also underlies the professional knowledge bases of teachers, especially in the area of assessment practices to produce an effective and quality teacher for the 21st century. On the implementation of continuous assessment in Lower Primary School thematic curriculum, MoES (2007) reported that during support supervision:

- a. A significant number of teachers and tutors found difficulty in creating the necessary assessment records and interpreting Continuous Assessment information during the implementation of thematic curriculum in primary schools.
- b. Teachers had not been adequately trained in implementing Continuous Assessment, need for pedagogical leaders to fully understand what was involved in Continuous Assessment.

Remember teaching is the process of facilitating learning by attending to learner's needs, experiences and feelings, and making specific interventions to help them learn particular aspects. Teachers are key to progress and reform in education.

Assessment Practices

Assessment is the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about students' learning. The central purpose of assessment is to provide information on learners' achievement and progress and set the direction for an on-going improvement in the teaching/learning process (MoES 2010). Assessment Practices include; assessment *for*, *as* and *of* learning. Campbell (2006) defined Assessment *as* learning as "an active process of cognitive restructuring that occurs when individuals interact with new ideas." Meanwhile, Flórez and Sammons (2013) defined assessment for learning (AfL) as "any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting pupils' learning". Campbell et al, (2006) "Assessment *of* Learning is the assessment that becomes public and results in statements or symbols about how well students are learning." MoES (2010) explains that "most tutors and teachers know about assessment and the different assessment tools but find a challenge in using them. They think of assessment as a pen-pencil and book examination/test."

Assessment information is used for a variety of objectives. At the individual student level, assessment is used: (a) to describe students' learning, to identify and diagnose learning problems, and to plan further teaching/learning; (b) to provide guidance for students in selecting further courses of study or in deciding on vocational options; (c) to motivate students by providing goals or targets, by clarifying the nature of learning tasks, and by letting students, and their teachers, know how they are progressing; (d) to certify that individuals have reached a certain level of competence; and (e) to select individuals for the next level of the education system or for a job

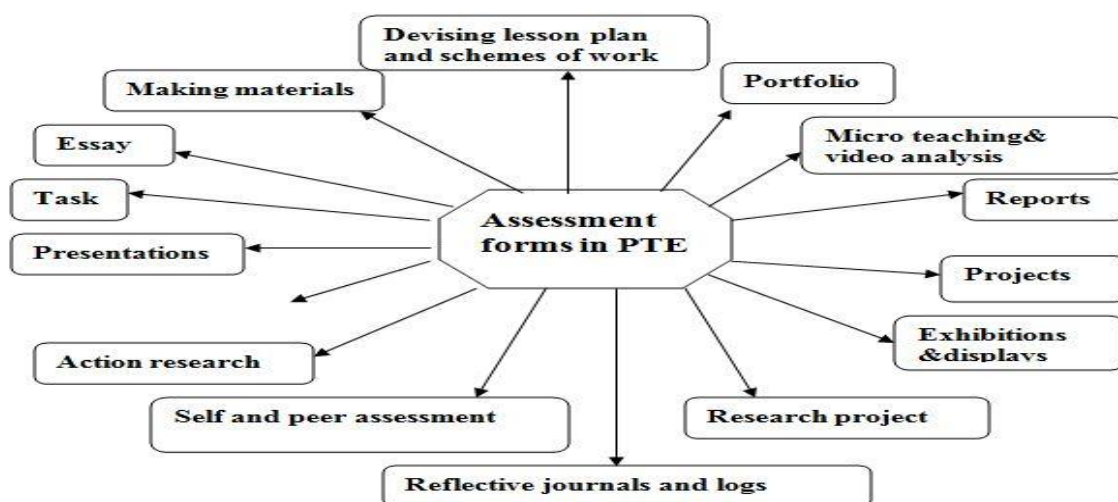


Figure 2: Assessment Forms

Source: MoES –UNESCO 2010

Effective assessment should be competence –based and aim at improving the teaching–learning process. It should emphasise assessment for learning, assessment of learning and assessing as learning by employing a variety of assessment techniques, types, forms and approaches (MoES 2016). Many teachers today consider assessment as a tool for grading and placement. Whereas other (Cooper & Garner, 2012), (Black and Wiliam 2006) express that; all teachers make assessments in every class they teach. Boud (2000), says "to be an active agent in learning networks and to adopt a learning approach to life, members of society need to focus as much on the judgments they make about learning as on learning tasks themselves. These judgments constitute assessment.

Teachers provide different forms of instructional methods, materials and assessment for different students based on their cognitive, affective, physical and cultural needs (Mandinach & Jackson, 2012). Gipps (2004) claims that Assessment is undergoing a paradigm shift, from psychometrics to a broader model of educational assessment, from testing and examination to an assessment culture. Common tutor assessment practices include; demonstrations, displays, exhibitions and projects for practical subjects and theoretical subjects' assessment will be in form of tests, research work, micro- teaching sessions, presentations, projects, tutorials and report writing (MoES 2012, and Race, Brown, & Smith 2005)

METHODOLOGY

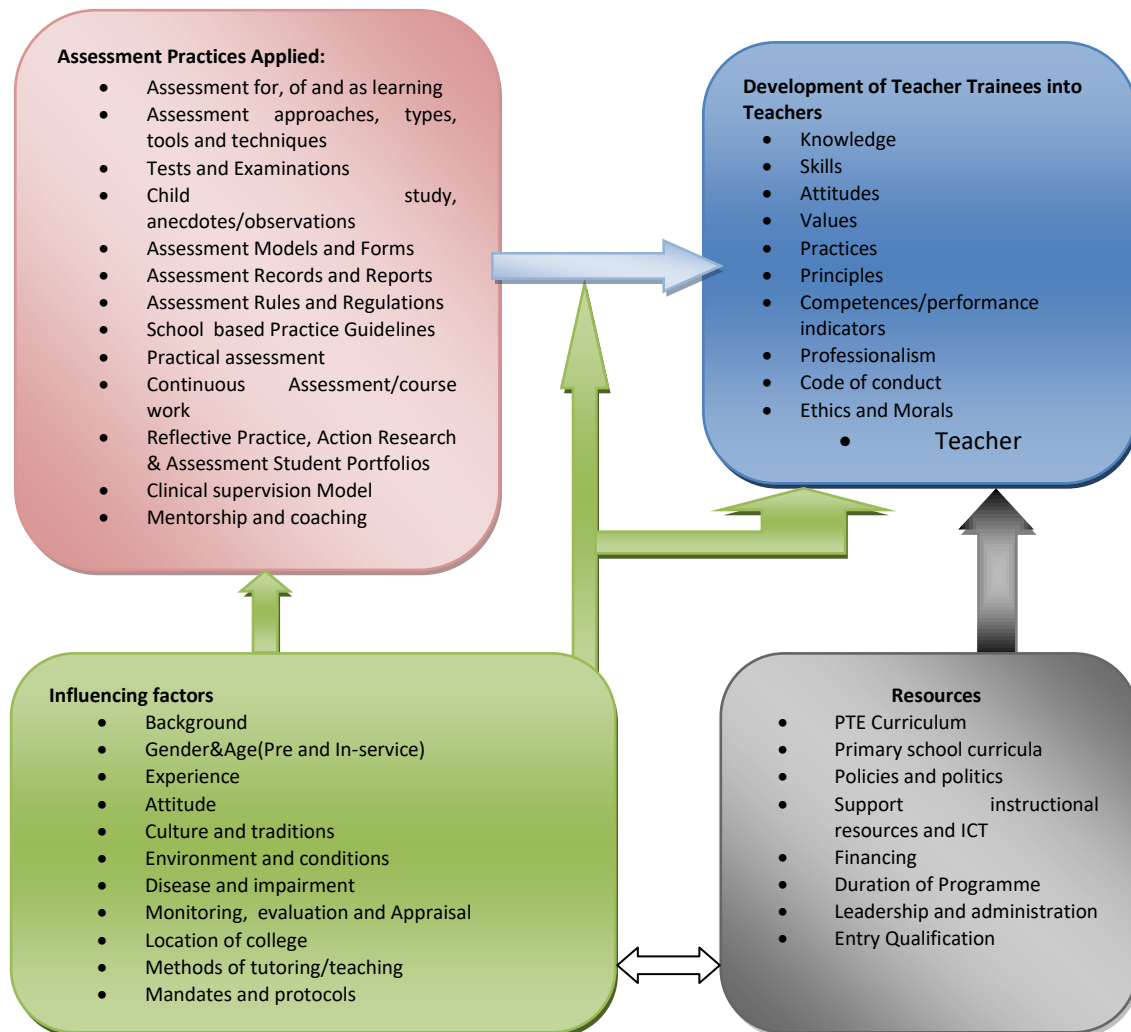
The study was evaluative, with mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) measures. Relevant 126 participants of the Primary Teachers' Colleges' Stakeholders were used. They included; 40 College Administrators and Heads of Departments, 52 tutors, 8 Centre Coordinating Tutors, 4 from Kyambogo University, 2 from Teacher Instructor Education and Training (TIET) sector, 2 from Directorate of Education Standards (DES) and 2 National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) plus 8 PTE Examiners (Practicals and theory). Another 4 participants were from the Local Government (districts/municipalities) and 4 external school practice moderators.

The purposive, stratified and simple random sampling was used in selecting the participants. Participant observation, document review, focus group discussion interviews and a survey questionnaire were used. Data was analysed using qualitative methods, narration and descriptive statistics.

5. Conceptual Framework

The evaluative study focused mainly on Assessment practices, development of teachers for Primary Schools by Primary Teachers' Colleges in Uganda, influencing factors and resources supportive of trainee teacher development. The framework guided the researcher to evaluate assessment practices in the development of teachers for primary schools by Primary Teachers' College

Conceptual Frame Work



Source: Researcher on Assessment practices applied in Development of Teachers for Primary Schools by Primary Teachers' Colleges in Uganda

The researcher conceptualized that assessment practices applied in development of teachers for Primary Schools by Primary Teachers' colleges in Uganda should be inclusive of the assessment practices. The researcher believed that in addition to resources, key influencing factors had a lot of impact created on the kind of teachers developed for Primary Schools by Primary Teachers' Colleges in Uganda.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Key findings established and evaluated covered; Primary Teacher Education (PTE) Programme Curriculum, assessment practices in terms of best, impacting and sustainable PTE Practices, challenges in PTE curriculum implementation and assessment.

Primary Teacher Education (PTE) Programme Curriculum

There exists the revised PTE curriculum (KyU 2012) based on a Baseline study report (Margo 2006), as a revision of the PTE curriculum (KyU 1995) from six to 13 examinable subjects.

Table 1 Categorisation of Subjects in the Revised PTE Curriculum

Category	Categorisation	Curriculum Subjects
Part A	Core Subjects	Professional Education Studies (PES) • Foundations of Teacher Education (FTE) • Generic/General Methods (GM) • Special Needs Education (SNE)
Part B	Traditional Subjects	English Language Education (ELE) Social Studies Education (SSE) Integrated Science Education (ISE) Mathematics Education (MTE)
Part C	Now Full Subjects	Religious Education (RSE) Music Education (MSE) Physical Education PHE Integrated Production Skills (IPS)
Part D	New Subjects	Local language Education (LLE) Kiswahili Language Education (KLE) Early Childhood Education (ECE) Agriculture Education (AGE)

Source Revised Primary Teacher Education Programme Curriculum (2012)

The subjects were categorised into four; with special case of the core subject referred to as Professional Education Studies (PES) that was uniquely made with three in one to respond to the key findings in the baseline study report (Margo 2006), which recommended for the special inclusion of a package well thought of the Generic/General Methods to reduce on the knowledge content based curriculum PTE Curriculum of 1995. Findings revealed that in the revised PTE curriculum (KyU 2012) each of the subjects is now taught and assessed as a full subject. The Integrated Production Skills' subject comprises four sub- disciplines; Fine Art, Entrepreneurship/Business, Technical Education and Home Economics; a requirement for special qualified tutors to teach and facilitate authentic assessment practices to the teachers in development. Part D subjects were newly introduced to follow and relate well with the three in one Primary Education Curricula [NCDC (Thematic Curriculum: P1-P3; 2006 -2008), (P4 Transition Curriculum; 2009) and (P5-P7 subject curriculum; 2010 -2012)

Assessment practices during teacher development in PTCs

The Kyambogo University, (GWPE 1992) under the PTC and Affiliation Coordinating Unit with support of professional, technical teams and committees addresses and coordinates the day to day Teacher Education emerging Issues, activities and assessment. While the monitoring of the PTE curriculum is well articulated in the PTE curriculum (MoES 2012) little if any monitoring and pedagogic support has been done in the colleges by Kyambogo University except for the moderation of school practice, practical, promotion and final Examinations

Overall tutor assessment practices indicate that tutors apply more of the assessment of learning in comparison to assessment as learning and assessment for learning in the teacher development. The interview results revealed 2 major processes that tutors engage the teachers during the school- based practice in the Primary Schools in Uganda; the Process/Procedures of School-Based Practice and the Process of Assessing Teachers during School-Based Practice. Survey questionnaires (68.2%) showed as teachers were assessed 1-2 times during each school - based practice. Another set of 40 (31.8%) out of 126 participants indicated as teachers are assessed continuously during the course. This was contrary to the at least 4 times guidelines as highlighted in the PTE programme curriculum (KyU 2012).The findings also indicated that the level of tutor knowledge on and related concepts to assessment practices and their applicability during teacher development was inadequate to cause effective and quality teacher products for the primary schools in the 21st century.

The evaluation study in specific terms revealed the following categories of assessment in primary teachers' colleges; Classroom practice –based assessment, School Attachment and Child Study, Continuous Assessment/ course work, Practical Examinations/assessment (IPS and ECD), Supervised School Practice and Theory Examinations.

School Attachment and Child study Assessment

The PTE programme exposes teachers to a month's School Attachment and Child Study in schools under the supervision of the school administrators who write confidential report on the trainee(s) to the College. The trainee is supposed to write the First Child Study report on Kyambogo University format presented to the college administration.

Continuous Assessment

The Baseline Study Report (Margo 2006) on the former curriculum (KyU 1995) recommended inclusion of continuous assessment in the revised PTE Curriculum (KyU 2012) provides for a 25% in form of course work and 75% for the theory examinations.

Table 2: Performance in the Theory written examinations before incorporation of continuous assessment and consolidated marks with CA

Paper Code	Paper Name	At 50% without CA		At 50% with CA	
		%age Pass	%age Fail	%age Pass	%age Fail
P201	Professional Education Studies	98.78	1.22	98.73	1.27
P202	English Language Education	28.90	71.10	69.57	30.43
P203	Social Studies Education	99.29	0.71	98.72	1.28
P204	Integrated Science Education	68.88	31.12	92.33	7.67
P205	Mathematics Education	16.31	83.69	45.42	54.58
P206	Religious Education	94.26	5.74	98.20	1.80
P207	Kiswahili Education	55.44	44.56	83.80	16.20
P208	Local Language Education	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
P209	Music Education	93.37	6.63	98.60	1.40
P210	Physical Education	96.62	3.38	99.40	0.60
P211	Early Childhood Education	63.20	36.80	98.60	1.40
P212	Integrated Production Skills	98.59	1.41	99.39	0.61
P213	Agriculture Education	99.92	0.08	99.86	0.14

Source: PTE and Affiliation Unit of Kyambogo University Report 2016

The candidates' marks were analysed at two performance levels; without continuous assessment but at 50% pass and with Continuous assessment aggregated theory 75% and continuous assessment 25%. The researcher established the non-coherence and authenticity of the continuous assessment by the colleges. There was no significant positive relationship of the student's performance in CA and in the theory paper. A case in point is the performance for example of English Language Education and Mathematics Education.

Practical Assessment

Document Review revealed Practical Examinations in Integrated Productive Skills (IPS) and Early Childhood Education (ECE) and two Supervised School Practices (Semi and Final). The results from practical assessment are marked out of 100% and factored out of 75%, added to the respective paper out of 75% and an average reached which is then added to the averaged Continuous Assessment sent by the college for a consolidated and composite mark for the candidate. The document review was in line with the PTE Curriculum (MoES 2012) stating that:

There shall be two blocks of supervised School Practice (SP) P214 and P215 in the primary schools each with duration of 6 weeks in the second year (Term I and Term III). The first school practice shall constitute 25% Continuous Assessment to the final school practice.

The school –based practice assessment is arrived at after merging both the CA mark out of 25% after external moderation and Unit 18 CA.

Regional Examinations

Five PTE regions are in operation each with an Academic Committee In -Charge with Chairpersons. Regional Examinations are administered on the criteria of 25% CA and 75% Theory Examinations. They include; Pre-promotion (Year I- pre-service and Year II – In-service) and Pre-mock (Year II and Year III, pre service and in-service respectively).

Promotion Examinations

Students are assessed on 13 compulsory papers at both CA (25%) and Theory Examination 75%. Papers are administered on Kyambogo University Timetable, National Examinations, Scouts and supervisors' rules and regulations. College tutors are the invigilators. The 13 subjects are summarised in the table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Subject Examination Papers for Promotion Examination

P101	Professional Education Studies	P108	Local Language Education
P102	English Language Education	P109	Music Education
P103	Social Studies Education	P110	Physical Education
P104	Integrated Science Education	P111	Early Childhood Education
P105	Mathematics Education	P112	Integrated Production Skills
P106	Religious Education	P113	Agriculture Education
P107	Kiswahili Education		

Source: Revised Primary Teacher Education Curriculum (MoES 2012)

A student passes each subject at a consolidated total of 40% and may fail up to three subjects to continue to the next year of study.

Grade III Final Theory Examinations

Nine subjects form the final theory examinations offered by the Year II Pre-service and Year III In- service candidates in addition to supervised and externally moderated School Practice. Out of the thirteen (13) subjects, the seven (07) subjects are core. The six (06) remaining subjects are electives. A candidate chooses two (02) subjects as guided by both the revised PTE curriculum (MoES 2012) and General assessment Guidelines (KyU 2013).

Table 4: Categorised Year II subject papers

Core Subjects		Elective Subjects	
P201	Professional Education Studies	P208	Local Language Education
P202	English Language Education	P209	Music Education
P203	Social Studies Education	P210	Physical Education
P204	Integrated Science Education	P211	Early Childhood Education
P205	Mathematics Education	P212	Integrated Production Skills
P206	Religious Education	P213	Agriculture Education
P207	Kiswahili Education		

Source: revised PTE curriculum (MoES 2012)

6.2.7 Passing and Grading of trainee teachers

The pass mark and grade is a combination of CA 25% and Theory 75%. Each subject is graded out of a maximum of 100 marks and assigned appropriate letter grades below:

Table 5 Promotion and Final Assessment and Grading

Promotion Examinations			Final Examinations		
Mark %	Grade	Letter Grade	Mark %	Grade	Letter Grade
80-100	D1	A+	85-100	D1	A+
75-79	D2	A	80-84	D2	A
70-74	C3	B+	75-79	C3	B+
65-69	C4	B	70-74	C4	B
60-64	C5	C+	65-69	C5	C+
55-59	C6	C	60-64	C6	C
50-54	P7	D+	55-59	P7	D+
40-49	P8	D	50-54	P8	D
00-39	F9	E	00-49	F9	E

Source: Revised Primary Teacher Education Curriculum (MoES 2012)

The pass mark for promotion examinations is a consolidated 40% and final examinations at 50%. The curriculum has special consideration for teachers in development with special educational/learning needs to fail in any case Mathematics Education and pass.

Impacting and sustainable PTE Practices

Document reviews and focused group interviews revealed as in place and use were relevant Revised PTE curriculum (MoES 2012), Baseline study report (2006), specific and relevant assessment tools/rubrics, guidelines, implementation and regulatory examination rules and regulations, practical examinations for a few programme subjects, specialisation of teachers at lower primary and upper primary and two subjects during teacher development for primary schools, component of CA 25% against 75% theory examinations, quality assurance mechanism of Scouts and scouting, External Moderation of School -based practices, support Modules and application of family (tutorials) mechanism

Challenges in PTE curriculum implementation

Table 6: General Challenges on assessment in PTCs

Challenge	Responses	%age
Delay in release of promotion and final examinations	119	94.4
Staffing in colleges	111	88.1
Monitoring and support supervision in colleges by KyU	106	84.1
Delay to send assessment guidelines for practical examinations to colleges	100	79.4
Delay of sending Continuous Assessment to colleges	91	72.2
Accommodation of tutors	87	69.0
Hard to reach, stay and teach allowances	77	61.1
Missing student results and delay of feedback for corrected results	68	54.0
Tutor capacity in assessment and evaluation	48	38.1
Facilities, materials and human resource for certain subjects	37	29.4
Negative attitude to education by both students and college community	23	18.3
Failure to raise the expected number of trainees due to revised entry requirements	16	12.7

Source: Current Researcher 2017

From table 6, there is delay in release of promotion (Year I) and final examinations (End of Course) (94.4%), staff and staffing (88.1%) ceiling is still not fully open for recruitment and deployment in PTCs to cater for the full and newly introduced subjects, no monitoring (84.1%) of the implementation of the PTE programme by Kyambogo University,. A number of 48 (38.1%) out of 126 tutors have challenges with assessment and evaluation,

Other challenges revealed included; lack/inadequate infrastructure to embrace the inclusive education in colleges, inadequate level of ICT for education application in teacher assessment. Teacher Education and Extension exist but with very inadequate personnel in service and completely lacking staff for mentorship and continuity.

Other challenges articulated were; inadequate funding for the pedagogic support to tutors, limited artefacts of peer supervision, peer mentorship and peer coaching among tutors and evidence of documentation on crucial pedagogic practices like micro-teaching, reflective practice, action research and support supervision by college Interviews with TIET official revealed as there has been a lot of effort to staff the colleges with tutors and college administrators on replace method.

CONCLUSION

Overall results revealed that generally and in many specific assessment practices, there is a lot of effort by Primary Teachers' Colleges to develop an effective, relevant, sufficient, impacted on teacher in some form and sustainable for the Primary Schools in the 21st Era. Findings revealed that the assessment practices applied in the development of teachers for primary schools were more evaluative than assessment. They were more terminal than in built (majorly summative rather than formative), more examination focused than continuous assessment, more classroom oriented less community engagement and participation by the teacher trainees was minimal.

Tutors by large revealed inadequate awareness, knowledge and applicability on many of the concepts related to assessment and set mind on the application of the Clinical supervision as a tool for impacting assessment, pedagogic support and reflective practice during teacher development. However, a lot needs to be done by the different stakeholders to make other influencing factors a constant in order to address the gaps identified in the state of assessment practices in teacher development by the colleges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MoES should guide on opening staffing ceiling for the PTCs, expedite legalisation of a National Teacher Policy and Independent National Council for Teachers to oversee teacher education for quality assurance. Kyambogo University to put in place an assessment framework on assessment practices and a documented Support Supervision Manual governing teacher development, enforce the monitoring and support supervision, scale up the percentage of the Component of CA, more specialisation at subject level, review the extension of practical assessment, prioritise the PTE and Affiliations Unit and Teacher Education in terms of adequate and relevant staffing and leadership, utilise a comprehensive mechanism to follow on the qualified teachers in the field for sustainability purposes

Tutors should integrate ICT in assessment practices, reflective practice, action research, portfolio development, mentorship, microteaching and peer supervision in the development of teachers for primary schools. Experienced and specialised practicing tutors should be empowered to use the Clinical Supervision Model in providing support supervision.

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