A Study On Lecturers' Perceptions On Teaching Functions Among The Lecturers Of Community Colleges, Yemen

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Abstract: This paper aims to investigate the perceptions of lecturers on their teaching functions at Community Colleges (CC) in Yemen. The role and functions of lecturers in teaching were reviewed in this study based on the two different views of teaching theories. This paper gives more attention on constructivism view for making change on lecturers' roles in teaching for improving teaching practice. The study survey results show that there is a gap between the lecturers' perception on teaching functions and their roles on teaching at CC in enhancing their professional knowledge and experience.

Index Terms: Lecturers' perceptions, teaching functions, Community Colleges, teaching theories

1 Introduction

The lecturer's job is much more than teaching activities related to student learning. It is therefore desirable that the lecturer assessment models considered professional responsibilities less directly related to the teaching itself. Lecturer's job demands in universities are becoming more complex and lecturers functions and responsibilities have expanded such as working and collaborative planning, projects between universities, management and shared leadership, providing professional advice to parents, creating community partnerships for learning and participation professional development (OECD, 2010, & Smith, 2007). Recently, many researchers have focused on analyzing the role of the lecturer change brought incorporating information and communication technologies (ICT) for teaching / learning processes (Goodyear, Spector, bell and Tickner, 2001; Coppola, Hiltz & Rotter, 2002; Williams, 2003; Klein, 2004; Akdere & Marshall, 2005). Lecturers' perceptions are developed throughout their lives and are influenced by a variety of factors, including events, experiences, and other people in your life (Knowles, 1992). Some experiences are shaped by culture framed. These experiences shape their beliefs about students, curriculum development and the overall process of schooling (McGillicuddy-De Lisi and Subramanian, 1996). Lortie (1975) suggests that lecturer training and teaching experience in the classroom that contribute to the development of pedagogical content knowledge, while disciplinary knowledge in lecturer education contributes to the development of the subject and curriculum knowledge among future lecturers. From this perspective, lecturers must realize first their teaching functions and roles in teaching and learning, this realization base on their perceptions and thoughts about their functions in teaching lecturers; thoughts and idea representative as their beliefs on teaching functions (Kim, 2005; Staub and Stern, 2002). Lecturers need to be helped to explore ways to examine their thoughts, beliefs and practice (Thompson (1992).

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Lecturers' perceptions on teaching functions would provide educators with significant information to help determine curricula and program direction (Pajares, 1992). Some factors influence the lake of understanding of the lecturers on enhancing their teaching functions which due to conflicts with their practice, development and students outcomes. This study survey conducted at Community College (CC) in order to investigate the perceptions of CC lecturers on their teaching functions.

2 THE CHANGE OF LECTURERS' FUNCTIONS ON TEACHING

In recent years, many researchers have focused on analyzing the role of the lecturer change brought incorporating information and communication technologies (ICT) for teaching / learning processes (Goodyear, Spector, bell and Tickner, 2001; Coppola, Hiltz & Rotter, 2002; Williams, 2003; Klein, 2004; Akdere & Marshall, 2005). These researchers pointed out that the lecturers must rethink their role of teaching in order to facilitate communication situations appropriate to the nature of the various inter-relationships between lecturer and student, between students and between lecturers, students and content) in a virtual environment based on online asynchronous learning (Coppola et al. 2002). Due to global changes affecting our universities today require guidance and agreement on the definition of the educational functions in virtual environments and related skills. It is essential to realize the need for training to deal effectively with the changes of lecturer functions in teaching (Pascual, 2010). Lecturer functions as in virtual environments are basically an extension and / or transfer of the functions required teaching in a physical context; it seems obvious that a change in the nature of the environment requires new skills. Online teaching and learning needs are not limited to a set of knowledge and experience, the teachers faces challenges are closely related to the particularities of interaction and communication online. Four major dimensions are defined to categorize lecturer functions in environments introducing ICT: (1) Communication and interaction; (2) Instruction and learning (3) Management and administration and (4) Use of technology (transversal to all). These functions are defined by the competencies they require in practice, which in this study are identified and classified by utilizing the Delphi technique (Williams, 2003). CC lecturers should realize this demands of change in lecturer's role in teaching because CC lecturers teach in such

as this virtual environment and that will be by rethinking about their teaching functions which due to change in their practices.

2.1 Lecturers' Perceptions on Teaching Functions

Lecturer perceptions teaching and learning which include direct transmission thoughts" about learning and teaching" and "constructivist thoughts" about learning and teaching. The direct transmission view of student learning implies that the role of lecturers is to transfer knowledge in a clear and structured way, to explain the correct solutions to give students clear and resolve problems, and to ensure calm and concentration in the classroom. (Kim & Hatton, 2008). By contrast, a constructivist perspective view learning as the active construction constructing knowledge in the gradual expansion of networks of ideas through interaction with other people and materials in the environment (Marshall, 1992). The goal of science education could be the development of people who think for themselves (Newbrough, 1995). These people have some measure of control over the meaning they make of their experiences, and ways to build their lives and ideas. Constructivism puts primary emphasis on the independence of the interpretation of each of their own experience (Roth, 1994). The implications of constructivist views the science classroom include the extensive use of hands-on laboratory research, a classroom environment that provides students with a high degree of active cognitive involvement, the use of strategies cooperative learning, and the inclusion of the test objects that trigger a higher level of cognitive processes. Also, the main pedagogical implication is that active student construction of his / her own understanding can be facilitated by teachers who offer inspiring and motivating experiences that challenge existing concepts and engage students actively in the process of teaching / learning (Gil-Perez et al, 2002; Matthews, 2002). Lecturer education programs are largely ineffective in improving the current practice of teaching. Some programs choose not to improve practice, but strive to prepare lecturers to meet the current practice patterns. These programs employ practicing lecturers to offer courses and methods discourage prospective lecturers to study courses that can serve as a starting point to challenge current ways of teaching (Raths, 2001). Cartoonist and Tabachnick (1981) advanced an explanation, namely that the thousands of hours that future lecturers and students spend in the classroom shape their beliefs. These conservative beliefs remain latent for formal training in pedagogy in college and become a major force once the candidate is in its own class. It is unclear what the source of those beliefs might be, a product of their education, a reflection of their life experiences, or as a result of the socialization process (Kennedy, 1997). However, lecturers have strong beliefs about the role that education can play on the explanation of individual variations in academic performance, good and poor in a classroom, and many other areas these beliefs are used to evaluate new ideas about teaching that lecturers and lecturers candidates face in their methods classes and the lecturers' beliefs are recognized and characterized as "what's new?" (Kennedy, 1997). Kennedy went on to say that a belief that lecturers candidates bring to their professional education is "they already have what it takes to be a good lecturers, and therefore have little to learn from the formal study of teaching. Bruner (1996) noted a similar and related. View, he said that most people have acquired what he calls a "folk pedagogy" that reflects certain "cable-in human tendencies and some deeply held beliefs". This view leads to the Bruner called for a new and even revolutionary idea. "Lecturers educators", in theorizing about the practice of teaching in the classroom, lecturers may better consider the popular theories that those engaged in teaching and learning. Thus, lecturers' educators must assume the task of changing some of the beliefs of lecturers and lecturers candidates at the beginning of a program to optimize the impact of the program may have in learning new teaching practices. There may be an even more pressing reason to address the problem of belief change (Raths, 2001).

2.2 Lecturers' Perceptions and Penology in Conflicts

Lecturers are updating their perceptions and beliefs regarding to new forms of instruction, but they are not changing their current teaching methods (Quinn and Wilson, 1997). Kynigos and Argyris (2004) focused on lecturers' beliefs about learning situations, pedagogical role and the role of the computer, their results "support the view that professed beliefs may be inconsistent with the actions during the teaching practice in the classroom. The study concludes that we learn much more when looking at lecturers' perceptions and beliefs through their classroom practices in relation to what they say in interviews. The question arises what happens when there is a conflict between these beliefs and practices. Although, several studies show that lecturer's perception and beliefs have a strong impact on the practice, the study conducted in Turkey by Karaağaç and Threlfall (2004) shows that lecturers' goals, in particular when it "imposes" lecturers ", can bring to class practices that conflict with their beliefs. Furthermore, Thompson (1992) noted that lecturers interact with their environment, some lecturers' experience ongoing conflict between their beliefs and their practices and some learn to live with unresolved conflicts; others, however, appear to recognize their beliefs in responses to the pressures encountered in their teaching environment.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study is a survey online design study. The questionnaire survey was distributed online to investigate the perceptions on teaching functions of lecturers at Community Colleges (CC), Yemen. 15 lecturers of CC who respondent to this questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 9 open ended questions about lecturers' teaching functions; question no. 1 refers to management, question no 2 refers to pedagogical curriculum knowledge function, question no. 3 refers to planning and presentation function, question no 4 refers to teaching techniques function, question no 5 refers to assessing students' learning function, question no 6 refers to activating professional knowledge and experiences function, question no 7 refers to demonstration of instructions function, question no 8 refers to enhancing professional performance practice function, and question no 9 refers to Integration and peer critics for developing professional teaching performance.

4 RESULTS

The questionnaire results of this study were analyzed to identify the perceptions of CC lecturers on teaching functions. Table 1 shows the questions related to the lecturers' functions and the number of correct and incorrect answers of the respondents. Table 1 and figure1 present the results pertaining to the lecturers teaching functions. This Table and figure show that 11 respondents who answer correctly question number 5 about the lecturers' teaching function of Assessing Students' Learning. This result implies that most of the lecturers at CC know well the assessing students learning methods. Figure 1 shows that 11 respondents answer the question number 6 of Activating Professional Knowledge and Experiences function. This result implies that CC lecturers realize the importance of prior knowledge and engaging in experience discussion. Figure1 shows that respondents answered properly question no 4 which refers to Teaching Techniques. This result implies that CC respondents realize and use different techniques and methods in their teaching planning and presentations. Figure1 shows the respondents' with incorrect answers to the questionnaire questions of their teaching functions. Figure1 shows 12 respondents who could not answer the questions no.8 which refers to Enhancing Professional Performance Practice. This result implies that the CC respondents may have difficulty with realizing their professional performance and they may not engage in experience discussion and sharing experience with colleagues which due to low experience in their teaching. Figure1 shows 10 respondents could not answer question no. 9 correctly which refers to the teaching function of Integration and Peer Critics for developing professional teaching performance. This result implies that CC lecturers do not integrate in professional activities in order to develop their performance in teaching, and they may not know about the importance role of lecturers' in improving their professionalism by participating and engaging in professional activities like peer critics with colleague' discussions, workshops, seminars and other activities. In summary of the results above, this result is indicates that this existing gap in their understanding to their perceptions as lecturers towards their jobs responsibilities. Thus, these results predict that CC lecturers' teaching practice is low.

TABLE 1.
LECTURERS' FUNCTIONS ON TEACHING

Questions	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8	Q.9
Correct Answers	6	9	6	10	11	11	7	3	5
Incorrect Answer	7	6	9	5	4	4	8	12	10

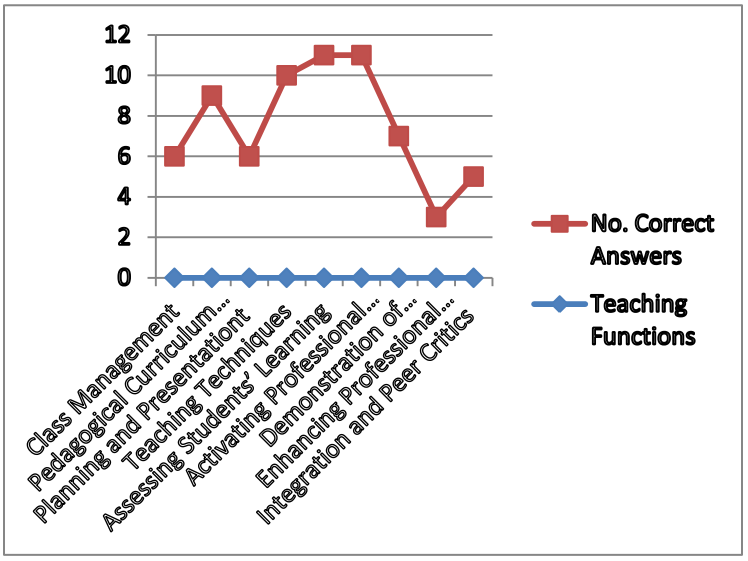

Fig 1 Lecturers' Perception on Teaching Functions at CC

5 CONCLUSION

This paper reviews the lecturer's functions in teaching, and illustrates the importance of changing the role of lecturers in teaching by more emphasizing in constructivism view for this change. This paper presents a survey study results on lecturers' teaching functions and responsibilities at Community colleges in Yemen. The results of this survey indicate that there is a gap between the lecturers' perceptions on their teaching functions and their responsibilities they have to do as lecturers at CC which may influence their teaching practice. Thus, CC lecturers should rethink and realize their roles in teaching, and they should use their own perceptions in order to build up new beliefs on teaching functions. The CC lecturers should realize the importance of activating and integration role of lecturers into professional activities for professional development.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my main supervisor, Professor Dr. Mohamad Najib Abdul Gafar for guidance and critics. I am also very thankful to my co-supervisor Professor Dr. Abdul Hafiz Hj Omar for guidance, advices and motivation. In addition, I appreciate to all CC lecturers who have responded to this study.

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