



Pre-Service Teacher Education in Cameroon: A Review of the Current Official Syllabuses for Teacher Training Colleges (T.T.C.)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Just as teacher education is a key component in educational improvement, nursery and primary school teacher education is an important component of education that every country that desires quality in the educational system must not neglect. This is because it is through teacher education that the basis for good schools can be created. Therefore, for Basic Education in Cameroon to realize the quality of education it desires, proper attention must be given to pre-service teacher education. In the same light, the Pan-African conference on education held in Yaoundé, in 1984, declared that “No educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers”. Zumwalt, (1986) argues that there can be no excellence in education without first rate teachers. One can change the curricula, buy more materials, renovate the physical environment, extend the school day, but without good teachers, desired effects will not be produced no matter the change. The Sector Wide Approach to education (SWAPe, 2006) stressed on the need to strengthen teacher quality as one of the strategies aimed at improving the quality of educational services in the Basic Education level. Law No 98/004 of 14th April 1998, in chapter III, section 37 (1) refers to teachers as “the principal guarantors” of quality education (Republic of Cameroon, 1998). This calls for proper preparation of qualified teachers who possess the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes to teach effectively to be the main focus of teacher training education in Cameroon.

Questions to be answered in this write up include: Does the curriculum structure respect the methodological requirements for the development of a curriculum? Is the content of the curricula relevant enough to enhance the required competences? Are the teaching learning experiences rich enough to build the required competences? Are the teaching methods, didactic materials and assessment relevant to the contextual realities of today’s nursery and primary school classrooms?

2. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN CAMEROON

Formal training of teachers in Cameroon dates back to the late 19th century where the earliest kind of teacher education appeared in the training of men to teach the doctrine of various religions (Ndongko & Tambo, 2000). For example, by 1885 and 1907, respectively, Alfred Saker and the Roman Catholic mission provided such training in Douala. To MacOjong (2008), Teacher Education started in West Cameroon in the year 1936 and in East Cameroon in the year 1925 in the Normal College.

The second stage of formal teacher education was similar to the monitor or pupil-teacher system in England where the pupils-teachers taught what they knew and had been drilled in (MacOjong, 2008). According to Farrant (2009), such teachers learnt their trade through the ‘pick up methods’ acquiring professional training on the job. The characterized teaching scenario in such classroom was bound to be rigid, routine and confined to exactly what had been prepared and more teacher-centred. Thus, much could not be expected in terms of competence. Classroom interaction was therefore limited and learning was restricted to rote learning, drill and copying of exercises or notes from the blackboard. This implies that conceptual learning processes were not emphasized.

Tchombe in Tambo and Ndongko (2000) highlights the evolution of teacher education in the following stages:

The first stage in the formal training of teachers was the Normal College which started in 1925. At this early stage, the aims of teacher training were as limited to providing basic skills in the 3RS (Reading, writing and arithmetic) and other useful information. The stimulation of pupils' minds by teaching them to think or to develop general ideas so as to open the way to higher education was not adequately encouraged. Teachers were trained with the view of primary education only. In the early 1930, teacher education was influenced by societal needs and other welfare provisions. This was exemplified in Southern Cameroon where at this early stage, was administered as part of Nigeria. The policy of ruralization of education in Eastern Nigeria in 1931 was also applied in southern Cameroon. The demand for teachers increased with the increase in the number of primary school classes and the need for specialist teachers. The implication here were two-fold: (1) the need for more trained teachers and (2) the need for a new and appropriate teacher in a rural society whose role would be diverse and multifarious.

The second stage in the growth of teacher education witness the introduction of a three-year course for elementary teacher training, leading to the Grade III teacher certificate. Entry was through a competitive examination, with a prerequisite of First School Leaving Certificate (Standard Six) certificate. The grade III certificate teachers were specifically prepared for teaching in the lower primary classes. The curriculum included subjects such as principles and practice of education, general methods, school organization and management, physical education, child study and other primary school subjects. It should be noted that, the three-year teacher's grade III course was not terminal. It rather provided grounds for continuous development. After the three years, successful candidates were expected to teach for a year before qualifying for admission to do the two-year Higher Elementary Training Course (Grade II). The approach had its value in that teachers were able to acquire more practical school experience before continuing with their professional training. Students who qualified for the higher elementary course went to Nigeria. In some cases, they did a straight four-year course.

The third stage of the growth of teacher education was the institution of the Grade II course in Cameroon in 1945 at the government teacher training collage (CTTC), Kumba. Due to lack of staff, the college was closed down, but with the change in the staffing situation, the higher elementary course was reintroduced between 1947 and 1950 (Ndongko and Tambo, 2000). From this period onward, more of such institutions were opened by the government and private agency for both grade III and grade II course and in some cases for grade I courses also. The curriculum included courses for the professional development of the teachers, primary school subjects and subjects for specialist teachers such as manual arts, rural science, home economics, handicraft and woodwork.

Grade I certificate at this initial stage were also awarded to candidates who after grade III and II courses, obtained both "O" and "A" level papers in the General Certificate of education examination and passes in the practical teaching examination in either a secondary or teacher training classroom. At this time, the society was more concerned with character formation than with the intellectual development. Therefore, educational psychology and sociology were absent in the curriculum. This early programme did emphasized the aspects of child study which is considered to be an essential course in teacher education because it provides useful knowledge for the teacher.

Ndongko and Tambo (2000) continued to state that skills in the making and use of teaching aids were an important component of yesterday's teacher training. Exhibition of teaching aids was an assessed aspect in the final examination at each level. In this case, a student could not exhibit teaching aids that he/she did not make or use. Teaching and learning were made meaningful, although the methods used in some cases were didactic (encouraging drill and rote). There were elements of demonstration and concretization of teaching activities even with limited financial and human resources.

The fourth stage in the development of teacher education was precipitated in the 1960s by certain issues. First, pupil teacher had to be cleared off the teaching field. The reason for doing this was because it was no longer considered desirable to add these teachers to the number of untrained teachers with job security. As a result of this, a five-year course leading to the award of Grade II teacher certificate was created. Entry qualification was first school leaving certificate with a pass in

the Common Entrance examination. The first three years of this course were given to personal development of the student teachers in secondary school subjects (History, Geography, English Language, Literature, French, Biology, Mathematics and so on). The last two years were employed for professional development.

Beside the above course, two crash programmes were also introduced. One was a one-year emergency Grade III course considered a suitable way of providing opportunity for long-standing “C” teacher too old for the five-year course. The other was an “emergency” nine months Grade II course aimed at upgrading long-serving grade III teachers. Furthermore, to meet with the demand for more teachers created by the institution of free primary education, successful secondary school leavers (some with “A” level) were admitted for training as Grade II teachers, at first for two years. As the demand for more teachers increase, the duration of the course was reduced to nine months.

Other strategies to help teachers were sought. External examination continued to be available and teachers who could not be admitted into training institutions to do the teacher’s certificate course were encouraged to enroll for the external examination. The external system also included competitive examinations. These examinations were taken by professionally trained teachers in order to improve on their civil service status and thus, obtain financial benefits. Persons who had never been trained professionally also took these competitive examinations with the views to become teachers.

In the francophone sector, there were only four private teacher training colleges by 1956 in the whole territory, the first of which had been opened at Nkongsamba. By the early 1970s, only 8% of teachers were trained in the three government training colleges functioning then. This compared rather unfavorably with the anglophone sector where 70% of the teachers were trained in the available 12 training colleges. Entry qualification was either “Brevet d’Etude de Premier Cycle” or “Certificate d’Etude Primaires Elementaire”. Pupils entering on the bases of either these qualifications pursued a one-year training course. Beside college training, teachers were also trained through Bostal institutes. Successful candidates were awarded certificates (Tchombe as cited in Tambo and Ndongko 2000).

In the fifth stage the government in the 1980s opened up grade II (ENIE) and grade I (ENI) training colleges in all the provinces (today regions) of the Republic. This attempt was also to further ensure that candidate for teacher training in both levels and types of teacher education will be educated in their own regions. The essence was to reduce the emotional and financial strains that distance from home posed. The specifications in levels of training have implications in the entry qualification, duration, and salary category of each programme.

Even then in the 1980s, government was still experimenting with teacher education. Whilst government efforts for teacher training provisions at this time was commendable, it ought to be aware of the needs to provide appropriate structures for the various programmes, so as to avoid the production of mediocre teachers who could only reduce the level of our educational system (Tchombe in Tambo and Ndongko (2000)). In the nursery and primary teacher training colleges, there existed two types of Grade II courses. They differed from each other with regards to duration and entry requirements. Students who enroll in the first type were required to have obtained three of four “O” levels. They spent nine months on the course. Of these nine months, six weeks are spent for school practice. Besides, there were also the holiday’s period to be observed. Students who followed the second type of Grade II course, entered with the First School Leaving Certificate. They spend three years of which ten weeks were for school practice. School experience began in the second year. There was, in addition, the Grade I course which also varied in the length of time spent and entry qualifications. Those who enter with two “A” levels or their equivalent spend nine months - six weeks of which are devoted to school practice. Others who were admitted with one “A” level pursued a two-year course, ten weeks of which were spent on teaching practice.

Training colleges of the late 1950s and up to sometime in the 1970s provided teachers for all types of education. Grade I teachers taught in the secondary schools. Other Grade I and II teachers who were trained in colleges such as Government Teachers Training College Kumba, received specialist course offered in technical education. The products of these colleges were also posted to teach in technical and post primary vocational schools. Grade I and II colleges primarily meant to train primary and nursery school teachers also supplied teachers for secondary schools as well. The structure of teacher Grade II and I training was provided in Decree No. 80/195 of 09th June, 1980. Article two of the

decree states that teacher training colleges were responsible for the training, retraining and provision for specialization courses for teachers. These teachers were to be absorbed into cycle B and C of the public service. In article 28, the B cycle training programmes had two major specializations: teacher Grade I for general education and teacher grade I for technical education. Article 30 stipulated the conditions for admission through a competitive examination, while article 32 laid down the duration and entry requirements for the cycle B course. With the introduction of the 1990/1991 structural adjustment programme and its implications for teacher education and training, the training colleges were engaged more in retraining and providing specialization courses.

3. PRESENT CONTEXT OF BASIC EDUCATION TEACHER TRAINING IN CAMEROON

Basic education teacher training in Cameroon is carried out through formal, onsite education in Teacher Training College (TTC) campuses found in nearly every division in Cameroon. The Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC) since December 2011 oversees the training of teachers for Nursery and Primary Schools (in Teacher Training Colleges). The Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB) in 2011, ordered a diagnostic study on the organization and functioning of colleges within the framework of the G.T.T.C. The results of the study highlighted numerous pedagogic gaps, namely:

1. The absence of a sound curriculum, given that syllabuses are presented as a list of contents with 26 disciplines;
2. The one-year course duration for GCE A/L student-teachers is inadequate;
3. The heterogeneous academic entry qualification of student-teachers that led to some shortcomings on the part of GCE O/L student-teachers at the end of the course;
4. The lack of a synchronized programming of pedagogic activities (practicum and evaluation);
5. An inadequate training as concerns the different pedagogic reforms implemented in Basic Education

From this crucial diagnosis confirmed by MINESEC officials, the Minister of Secondary Education with a view to improve on the quality of teacher training for our Basic Educational system, decided to draw up new T.T.C. curricula taking into account the political vision advocated by the Head of State (MINESEC, 2013). In line with this, a more defined syllabus following the Competency-Based Approach (CDA) was drawn up by the Ministry of Secondary Education decree n° 2012/267 of 11 June 2012, (MINESEC, 2012). The main innovations of this approach lay emphasis on: the development of competences, the resolution of professional problem situation, the diagnostic, formative, criterion-reference and integration evaluation. With this, the ministry of secondary education intends to train a new generation of professional teachers who are ready to implement the emergence vision in Cameroon with the support of the curricula.

The requirements for admission into Teacher Training programs vary, depending on the entry qualifications of the aspirants. A competitive entrance examination into Teacher Training Colleges (GTTCs) is launched at the end of every academic year in all the regional headquarters in a unique session. The competitive examination is opened to all young Cameroonians of both sexes ages at least 17 and at most 32. Foreign candidates are admitted under a special status by a decision signed by the minister in charge of teacher training.

The competitive entrance examination into GTTCs is launched by Decision of the minister in charge of teacher training. The decision specifies:

1. The nature and purpose of the entrance examination,
2. The number of available places per school, section and level,
3. The examination centres,
4. The examination time table,
5. The composition and modalities of depositing candidates' files,
6. The registration fees,

The entry qualification varies according to levels as follows:

For the three-year course: The Brevet d'Etudes de premier cycle (BEPC) or the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE O/L) in at least for (4) subjects obtained in one sitting, excluding religious knowledge or any other equivalent certificate/diploma in General education.

For the two years course: All series of Probatoire de l'Enseignement Secondaire General or the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE O/L) in at least five (5) subjects excluding Religious Knowledge or any equivalent certificate/diploma in General Education.

For the one-year course: All series of the Baccalaureat de l'Enseignement Secondaire General or General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A/L) in at least two (2) subjects obtained in one sitting excluding Religious Studies or any equivalent certificate/diploma in general education.

However, candidates who do not fulfill the conditions provided are allowed to apply pending the obtainment of the required certificate before their final admission. It should be noted that the minister in charge of teacher training appoints the special envoy (charge de mission) for the written phase of the examination. The regional delegates of secondary education, chief of center for the examination put in place a secretariat, appoints its members and sign the list of invigilators

The written examination takes place in any GTTC found in a Regional head quarter. The subjects taken for the examination are shown on the table 1 below:

Table1. *Subjects for the entry examination into GTTCs*

Level	Subjects	Duration (in hours)	Coefficient
Entry into one year	Reading comprehension/English language	2	4
	Mathematics	3	4
	Second language paper	2	2
Entry into two year	Reading comprehension/English language	3	4
	Mathematics	3	4
	Second language paper	2	2
Entry into year three	General knowledge	3	4
	Mathematics	3	4
	Second language paper	2	2

The results of the competitive entrance examination into GTTCs are published in order of merit by the minister in charge of teacher training. The waiting list of candidates in order of merit and per level is published at the same moment with that of successful candidates. Candidates who wrote the entrance examination waiting results will finally be admitted in the GTTC of their choice upon presentation of a duly certified copy of the required certificate to the principal of the school. Transfer of candidates from one GTTC to another is not allowed. However, under some unavoidable circumstances, (such as sickness and transfer of parents), request for transfer for student teacher who must have made at least one academic year in the college and forwarded through hierarchy, could be authorized by the minister of teacher training.

4. THE PURPOSE OF PRE-SERVICES TEACHER EDUCATION

Pre-service teacher education is the professional education and training provided to student teachers before they undertake any teaching. During this period, student teachers get theoretical knowledge alongside teaching practice. One of the duties of a primary school teacher is to guide the pupils through the process of discovering, analyzing and synthesizing educative experiences. Therefore, the teacher's professional equipment has to be of a high order extending much beyond the technical skills of teaching a subject in a classroom. As stated by Sagar (2019), education enriches a society but teacher education enriches it more in the sense that the qualitative improvement of society depends primarily on qualitative teacher and teaching. Therefore, the major purpose of pre-service teacher education is to apply to the student teacher, the same process of education, as he/she would be applying to his pupils later on. According to Sagar (2019), such teacher is no longer a trainee, expected to go through a constantly revolving mill of practice lessons but a self-directing, investigating, professionally motivated, alert student teacher with as much right to develop his individuality, as his future pupils. In a nutshell, the purpose of teacher education especially in this 21st

century is to recruit and train to acquire the appropriate knowledge, skills, personal characteristics, professional prospectus and motivation to meet the expectations placed upon them by their nation and the society at large. Thus, Teacher education is said to be very significant investment for bringing qualitative improvement in education.

The Law of Orientation of Education in Cameroon (law No 98/004 of 14th April 1998) that lays down the guidelines of education in Cameroon states the general purpose of education in Cameroon as to train children for their intellectual, physical, civic and moral development and the smooth integration into the society... In line with this, the purpose of pre-service teacher education in Cameroon, especially at the basic education level, is indifferent and aims at exposing student teachers to educational experiences that will equip them with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and other forms of behaviour to feed or service the primary schools, thereby enhancing the type and quality of education that states wants for its citizens.

5. THE CURRICULUM FOR TTCS

In general, the curriculum for TTCs is designed by the state and lays emphasis on general and professional or specialized subjects and practices which are necessary and helpful for competent teaching at various levels. Student teachers receive formal training to improve their knowledge about the general and specific contents of the courses they will teach, methods of teaching and evaluation, as well as classroom management, and education administration. Classroom teaching is followed by or interspersed with field practicum, where students are posted to designated institutions (called practicing schools) for direct hands-on experience under the supervision of co-operating teachers (CTs) who themselves are trained and certified teachers at their levels.

The new T.T.C. curriculum was drawn up following the Competence-Based Approach (CBA) in respect to the methodological requirements of the development of a curriculum. The process started with the writing of a Teacher's Referential of Professional Activities with the collaboration of field experts. This enabled designers to identify basic professional competences to be developed during the initial training of a teacher. The basic professional competences were presented in a Referential of Competences used by the editorial team as supporting document to draw up the current curriculum. Therefore, the curriculum is a multidisciplinary curriculum which lays emphasis on common abilities otherwise referred to as "cross abilities" while integrating various practical aspects (simulation, practicum, various practical activities, case studies etc.).

The new T.T.C. curricula target the five domains of the contents taken from the former syllabuses. These domains are:

1. Bilingual training;
2. Didactics of Primary and Nursery school activities;
3. Sciences of Education;
4. Educational Technologies;
5. Reinforced alternated practicum (teaching practice)

The training content is the same for the three levels but its dosage takes into consideration the entry qualification of student-teachers.

6. STUDENT-TEACHERS' PROFILE AND TRAINING GOALS

The students-teachers' profile is grouped in two categories: end of course terminal competences and training goals.

End-of-course terminal competence: At the end of the course, the teacher must be a field practitioner who prepares, facilitates and evaluates learning activities in respect to students' differences, professional ethics and socio-cultural environment, by developing adapted communication strategies.

Training goals:The teacher will be a professional who performs the four priority functions which are: (1) Teaching, (2) Communication, (3) Education and (4) Analysis and Regulation. This entails that she/he should be a reflective field practitioner; a teacher who analyses and regulates classroom practices. The four priority functions which makes a teacher a reflective field practitioner is shown on the figure below:

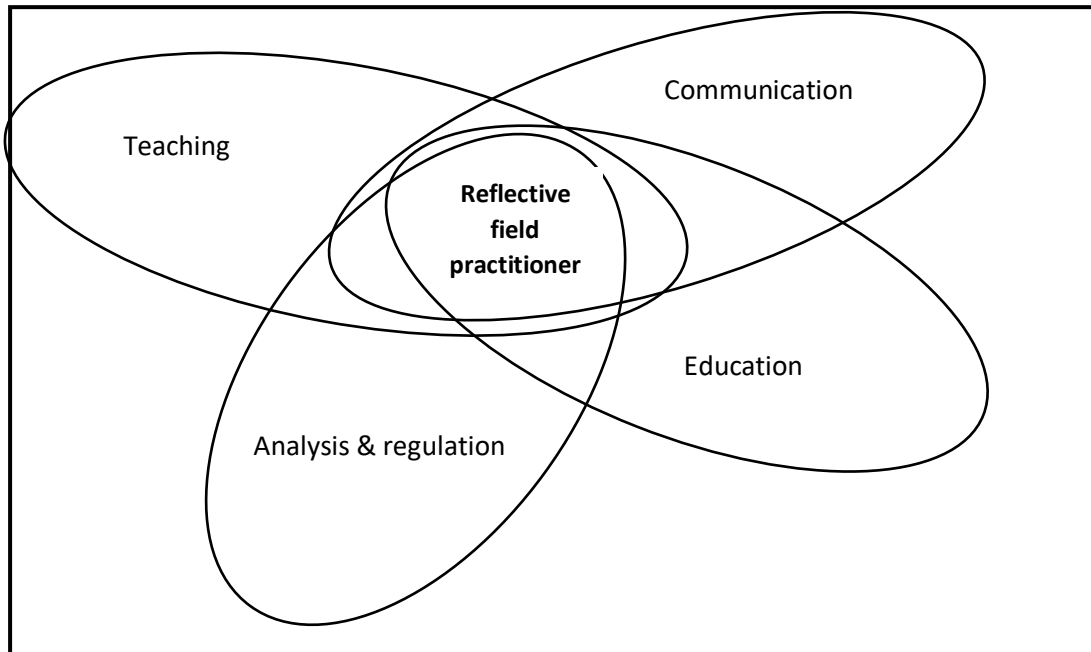


Figure1. *The four priority functions*

The priority functions, major and targeted competences for a reflective practitioner are presented on the table 2 below:

Table2. *The functions and competences for a reflective practitioner*

Priority Functions	Major Competence	Targeted Competences
Teaching-Related Competences	Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ C11: Plan and facilitate learning/teaching activities ➤ C12: Organize class work according to various situations adapted to learners ➤ C13: Produce and use appropriate monitoring, supervision, evaluation and remedial education mechanisms.
Communication-Related Competences	Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ C21: Speak and write correctly the working language ➤ C22: Work in a team, collaborate with the hierarchy and the education community.
Education-Related Competences	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ C31: Work in discipline, respect deontology and professional ethics. ➤ C32: Participate in the conception and the realization of socio-educational activities ➤ C33: Sensitize and accompany the education community in the domain of environmental protection.
Analysis and Regulation-Related Competences	Analysis and Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ C41: Analyze students' results and class performance to evaluate pedagogic practices. ➤ C42: Amend educational practices taking into account changes and innovations.

Key:C means the targeted competences

They are four major competences (priority functions), each having sub-competences called targeted competences. The first major competence referred to as C1 (teaching) has three targeted competences: C11 (Plan and facilitate learning/teaching activities), C12 (Organize class work according to various

situations adapted to learners), and C13 (Produce and use appropriate monitoring, supervision, evaluation and remedial education mechanisms).

The second major competence referred to as C2 (communication) has two targeted competences: C21 (Speak and write correctly the working language and C22 (Work in a team, collaborate with the hierarchy and the education community).

The third major competence known as C3 (education) has three targeted competence: C31 (Work in discipline, respect deontology and professional ethics), C32 (Participate in the conception and the realization of socio-educational activities), C33 (Sensitize and accompany the education community in the domain of environmental protection).

The fourth major competence C4 (Analysis and Regulation) has two targeted competences: C41 (Analyze students' results and class performance to evaluate pedagogic practices) and C42 (Amend educational practices taking into account changes and innovations).

The major and targeted competences are enhanced by the different subjects taught in TTC as shown on table 3 below:

Table3. Major and targeted competences and the accompanying subjects

Major Competence	Targeted Competences	Subjects
Teaching (C1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C11: Plan and facilitate learning/teaching activities • C12: Organize class work according to various situations adapted to learners • C13: Produce and use appropriate monitoring, supervision, evaluation and remedial education mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Psychology • General Pedagogy • Educational Policies and Comparative Education • School Administration and Legislation • Philosophy of Education • Sociology of Education • Deontology and Professional Ethics • Didactics of Nursery Education • Didactics of Practical Activities • Didactics of Music, Songs and National Culture • History and Geography Didactics • Didactics of Sciences and Environmental Education • Didactics of Citizenship Education • Didactics of Sports and Physical Education • Didactique Du Français • Didactics of Mathematics in Primary School • English Didactics • Didactics of Educational Technologies • Didactics of National Languages
Communication (C2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C21: Speak and write correctly the working language • C22: Work in a team, collaborate with the hierarchy and the education community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Administration and Legislation • Pedagogic Supervision • Philosophy of Education • Sociology of Education • Deontology and Professional Ethics
Education (C3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C31: Work in discipline, respect deontology and professional ethics. • C32: Participate in the conception and the realization of socio-educational activities • C33: Sensitize and accompany the education community in the domain of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Psychology • General Pedagogy • School Administration and Legislation • Pedagogic Supervision • Philosophy of Education • Sociology of Education • Deontology and Professional Ethics • Didactics of Nursery Education • Didactics of Practical Activities

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	environmental protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History and Geography Didactics Didactics of Sciences and Environmental Education Didactics of Citizenship Education
Analysis and Regulation (C4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C41: Analyze students' results and class performance to evaluate pedagogic practices. C42: Amend educational practices taking into account changes and innovations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational Policies and Comparative Education Pedagogic Supervision Deontology and Professional Ethics Introduction to Statistics Applied to Education Didactics of Nursery Education History and Geography Didactics Didactics of Practical Activities Didactics of Music, Songs and National Culture Didactics of Sciences and Environmental Education Didactics of Citizenship Education Didactics of Sports and Physical Education Didactique Du Français Didactics of Mathematics in Primary School English Didactics Didactics of Educational Technologies Didactics of National Languages Initiation to Action Research

All the subjects have terminal competences which student teachers are expected to acquire at the end of the training course. The subjects are structured in themes, with each theme having specific resources grouped under knowledge, skills, attitudes (for some subjects) and suggested activities.

7. TRAINING TIME ALLOCATION

The training time allocated to the teaching of Didactics of Primary and Nursery school activities, as well as the duration of teaching practice are shown on Table 4 below.

Table 4. *Training time allocation*

Training Domains	Levels					
	Three-year course: 1st year (in hours)	Three-year course: 2nd year (in hours)	Three-year course: 3rd year (in hours)	Two-year course: 1st year (in hours)	Two-year course: 2nd year (in hours)	One-year course (in hours)
Teaching practice	222	222	222	222	222	222
Didactics of Primary and Nursery school activities	510	420	510	510	510	510
Sciences of Education subjects	420	510	420	450	420	510
Bilingual training	60	60	60	60	60	60
TOTAL	1212	1212	1212	1242	1212	1302

- Annual duration: 36 weeks**
- Average number of weekly teaching hours: 34 hours**

8. ORGANIZATION OF TEACHING PRACTICE IN AN ACADEMIC YEAR.

The time allocated for teaching practice and Didactics of Primary and Nursery school activities is six weeks per level, divided for both nursery and primary school practice. Teaching practice is organized in three types including

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1. Observation (O)
2. Guided Practice (G.P.)
3. Autonomous Practice (A.P.).

The nature of teaching practice is presented on table 8 below:

Table8. Organization of teaching practice for an academic year

Levels	Number of Sessions	Nature of Teaching Practice	Duration (In Weeks)	Structures	
Three-year course:1 st year	2	Observation	6	3	Nursery school
				3	Primary school
Three-year course:2 nd year	2	Guided practice	6	3	Nursery school
				3	Primary school
Three-year course:3 rd year	2	Autonomous practice	6	3	Nursery school
				3	Primary school
Two-year course:1 st year	2	Observation	6	2	Nursery school and primary school
		Guided practice		4	Primary school
Two-year course: 2 nd year	2	Guided practice	6	2	Nursery school
		Autonomous practice		4	Primary school or nursery school
One-year course	2	Observation	6	1	Primary school
				1	Nursery school
		Guided practice		1	Primary school or Nursery school
		Autonomous practice		3	Primary school or Nursery school

9. TIME ALLOCATION AND COEFFICIENTS

Time allocation and coefficients for each subject are presented on table 5 below.

Table5. Time allocation and coefficients

SUBJECTS	Three-year course: 1 st year	Three-year course: 2 nd year	Three-year course: 3 rd year	Two-year course: 1 st year	Two-year course: 2 nd year	One-year course	Coefficient
Educational Psychology	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
General Pedagogy	3	2	3	2	3	3	3
Educational Policies and Comparative Education	2	1	1	1	1	2	1
School Administration and Legislation	2	1	1	1	1	1	2
Pedagogic Supervision	//	1	1	1	1	1	1
Philosophy of Education	//	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sociology of Education	//	11	1	1	1	1	1
Deontology and Professional Ethics	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Introduction to Educational Statistics	//	1	1	1	1	1	2
Information and Communication Technologies	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
First Language	2	2	//	2	//	//	1
Second Language	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
French Didactics	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
English Didactics	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Didactics of Mathematics	2	2	2	2	2	2	1

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Didactics of National Languages	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Didactics of Sports and Physical Education	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
Didactics of Educational Technologies	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Didactics of Songs, Music and National Culture	1	1	//	1	1	1	1
Didactics of History and Geography	//	1	1	1	1	1	1
Didactics of Citizenship Education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Didactics of Practical activities	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Didactics of Sciences and Environmental Education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Initiation to Action Research	//	1	1	1	1	1	1
Didactics of Nursery Activities	1	1	//	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	34	35	32	35	35	35	31

10. PEDAGOGY

A “cross abilities” pedagogic approaches which integrates various practical aspects such as simulation, practicum, various practical activities, case studies etc. is recommended. It is important to note that this curriculum is a competency-based curriculum and therefore, can adopt a pedagogy of integration with teaching and learning anchored on Project Based Learning (PBL), Cooperative Learning (CL) and other learner-centred teaching methods.

11. DIDACTIC MATERIALS

The curriculum recommends didactic materials that arouse the learner’s senses. Concrete objects, illustrations, audiovisual equipment etc. are recommended to permit easy understanding of the concepts and good classroom practice. To that effect, student-teachers must be able to produce didactic materials from local and salvaged materials.

12. ASSESSMENT

The curriculum recommends the use of diagnostic, formative, criterion-referenced and integrating (i.e. using problem-situations) assessment. Diagnostic assessment is recommended for use by teachers before the start of each lesson to help determine the level of knowledge, skill and attitudes which student teachers bring to the training programme. This will guide the selection of teaching strategies the teacher will use to select the activities and methods that can best be able to ensure that the learning needs of each students are taken care of and ensure that the set learning outcomes will be achieved as stated by Alemnge (2020). Formative assessment is prescribed to be used as an integral part of the teaching and learning process and should keep learners in permanent interaction with both the learning activities and their peers, and give the teacher the opportunity to provide feedback on a sustained manner. This is expected to lead to the achievement of the goals of the curriculum. Summative assessment is used to measure the extent to which student-teachers have attained the set learning outcomes of the curriculum and is recommended to be used periodically by teachers to achieve this goal.

13. DISCUSSION

As started earlier, any curriculum developed for pre-service teacher education in Cameroon is required to response adequately to the methodological requirements for the development of a curriculum, provide relevant content that enhance the required competencies, provide adequate teaching learning experiences to build the required competences, provide appropriate teaching methods, didactic materials and assessment strategies relevant to the contextual realities of today’s nursery and primary school classrooms. Therefore, the discussion provided in this section of this paper will be guided by these indicators.

First, methodological requirements for the development of a competency-based curriculum requires that competency-based curriculum be characterized by the development of clearly defined

competencies, a mapping of the curriculum to achieve those competencies, and an assessment process that matches to the competencies (Jones, Voorhees, & Paulson, 2002). Such competencies must be linked to workforce needs, as defined by employers and the profession. That is, specific knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) valued by working practitioners in the field. The creation of the curriculum for TTC in Cameroon started with the writing of a Teacher's Referential of Professional Activities with the collaboration of field experts which aided the designers to identify four basic professional competences to be developed during the initial training of a teacher (teaching, Communication, Education and Analysis and Regulation). These competences are believed to build the teacher to become a reflective field practitioner and are sub divided into targeted competences to be enhanced by the different subjects.

Second, the content is thought to be relevant because there are meant to enhance the major and targeted competences. There are twenty-five subjects on the curriculum, each enhancing one or more of the targeted competences.

In addition, the curriculum provides adequate teaching learning experiences to build the required competences. The syllabus for each subject is divided into themes, each theme has a well stated body of knowledge, skills, attitudes and suggested activities that are aimed at provided sufficient teaching learning experiences needed to build the required competences in student teachers.

As far as the teaching methods are concerned, a "cross abilities" pedagogy that integrates various practical aspects such as simulation, practicum, case studies, Project Based Learning (PBL) and Cooperative Learning (CL) recommended by the curriculum is relevant because these are the 21st century pedagogy that can make a teacher a reflective practitioner.

In response to didactic materials, recommending instructional materials that concrete, illustrative, audiovisual, and arouse learners' senses meets current standards of developing and using instructional materials that relevant, common, and reflect to the contextual realities. This also enhance creativity in the part of the student teacher.

Lastly, the curriculum recommends the use of diagnostic, formative, criterion-referenced and integrating (i.e. using problem-situations) assessment which constitutes common assessment types used in most educational experiences. It should be noted that, one of the required assessment strategies strongly recommended by the CBA curriculum is the criterion-reference assessment which measures a student's performance based on mastery of a specific set of skills. It measures what the student knows and doesn't know at the time of assessment. The student's performance is NOT compared to other students' performance on the same assessment. Students are assessed based on pre-determined criteria and performance standard which are clearly defined and communicated to the student before teaching and assessment takes place. To enhance teacher professional competences and to bridge the gap between field practice and academia, such assessment strategies, structured on the process of connecting KSAs to assessment is critical. However, other forms of assessment such as portfolios which are effective assessments for both formative and summative performance is equally recommended.

14. CONCLUSION

Primary school pre-service teacher training in Cameroon has moved from being theoretically focused to a more experiential learning process; a process that relates theory to practice with numerous classroom and field practices. The country's 2035 vision of development calls for a major redefinition of the tasks assigned to schools and pre-service teacher education has taken a strong stand with the implementation of the CBA curriculum. Like many developing countries in Africa, Cameroon has a high demand for teachers. The state has not only given room for the training and recruitment of teachers but is determined to enhance quality in the teacher training colleges. However, developing a good curriculum is not enough. Efforts need to be put in place to ensure its effective implantation. Educational stakeholders must learn to manage challenges posed by teacher quality, inadequate and ill-equipped school buildings; insufficient educational material; high pupil-teacher ratios; and low payments, leading to high dual job-holding rates as stated by Nsamenang (2006) and Tambo (2003). In addition, it should be noted that teacher development is a process not an event. It means comprehensive growth and support. Therefore, in-service training programmes should be encouraged

to enhance ongoing development of knowledge of subject matter; concrete skills to teach, observe, assess and reflect; incentives; and career growth.

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