Evaluating the Fast-track Transformational Teaching Program: Improving Kindergarten Quality through Teacher Pre-service Training in Ghana

Ghana Education Evidence Day 2018
Improving Accountability for Better Learning Outcomes in Ghana: Evidence-informed Approaches to Education Policy and Practice

Research by Sharon Wolf, Assistant Professor, University of Pennsylvania
Presented by Madeleen Husselman, Ghana Country Director, Innovations for Poverty Action
wolfs@upenn.edu
mhusselman@poverty-action.org
Acknowledgements

Partners
University of Pennsylvania
Sabre Education

Funders
UK Department for International Development
The Marple Foundation Charitable Trust
Study Context

- The 2012 Government Kindergarten (KG) Situational Report concluded 2004 Kindergarten curriculum is effective, but teachers are not using it.
- High-quality pre-service training may be a solution.
- Seven of 40 colleges of education currently offer a KG certification track.
Fast-track Transformational Teaching (FTTT) Programme

Features of Programme

Resources
• Starter pack and ‘Teacher Resource Toolkit’

Support
• Intensive in-service training workshops
• Continued coaching and training support

Teaching Tools
• Links Kindergarten curriculum objectives and child development goals to specific activities

Engagement with parents
• ‘Open Days’ will showcase the children’s work and share positive results with the parents
Summary of Findings

• FTTT improved knowledge of Early Childhood Education, and the effects persisted over time

• FTTT has mixed effects on professional well being

• Use of child-led instructional strategies increased, but effects completely dissipated over time

• No effect on learning outcomes for students of Newly Qualified Teachers.

• Head Teacher training did not have any impact on student learning
Research Questions

1. Is the FTTT effective as a pre-service teacher training programme (i) during the student-teaching year, and (ii) after teachers become NQTs (newly-qualified teachers)?

2. Is the FTTT programme more effective when Head Teachers in NQTs’ placement schools receive a 4-day sensitivity training?
135 student-teachers (STs) from Holy Child College of Education in 2015

Randomization

FTTT School (69 STs, 23 schools)
Control school (68 STs, 23 schools)

Placement across the country

35 NQT schools randomly assigned to receive Head Teacher sensitization training

Student-teaching year (2015-2016)
Placement year (2016-2017)
Placement of study newly qualified teachers (NQTs) around the country
Results assessed on the following outcomes

• Implementation and knowledge of KG curriculum
• Teacher professional well-being
• Teaching quality
• Student outcomes
## Data collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of curriculum</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early childhood education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher–child interactions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional well-being</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FTTT improved implementation of the KG curriculum; the level of implementation persisted but declined for NQTs.

* Indicates statistical significance

**Impacts on implementation of KG Curriculum**

- **Student Teachers**: 2.40*
- **Newly Qualified Teachers (October 2016)**: Materials 0.39*, Activities 0.33*
- **Newly Qualified Teachers (June 2017)**: Materials 0.69*, Activities 0.32*
FTTT improved teachers’ knowledge about ECE, and these improvements lasted for NQTs.

* Indicates statistical significance

![Bar chart showing the improvements in knowledge for different domains.

- Developmentally appropriate practice:
  - October 2016: 0.47*
  - June 2017: 0.55*

- Child social-emotional needs:
  - October 2016: 0.69*
  - June 2017: 0.64*

- Family-sensitive practice:
  - October 2016: 0.34*
  - June 2017: 0.41*]
FTTT student-teachers and NQTs reported increased more personal accomplishment, but less job satisfaction as NQTs.

NQTs reported increased more personal accomplishment, but less job satisfaction.

* Indicates statistical significance
FTTT had mixed impacts on teaching quality
Classrooms were video-taped for 45-60 minutes and rated on three domains of instructional quality

**Child-led learning**
- Free play to facilitate learning
- Learning activities facilitate work, play and sharing with other children.

**Emotional support & behavior management**
- Positive climate
- Negative climate
- Teacher sensitivity/tone
- Behavior management
- Consistent Routine

**Supporting student expression**
- Student ideas considered
- Reasoning/problem solve
- Connections to life
- Language modeling
FTTT increased child-led learning for STs and NQTs, but decreased other elements of classroom quality. All impacts decrease with time.
FTTT did not affect child learning outcomes for NQT’s students (note: we do not know for MPCs)
Summary of Findings

• FTTT improved knowledge of Early Childhood Education, and the effects persisted over time

• FTTT has mixed effects on professional well being

• Use of child-led instructional strategies increased, but effects completely dissipated over time

• No effect on learning outcomes for students of Newly Qualified Teachers.

• Head Teacher training did not have any impact on student learning
Unexpected Challenges

• Late postings of NQTs (very few teachers at schools before October)

• 20 teachers were placed as NQTs in non-KG classrooms.
  • NQTs from the FTTT group were more likely to be placed in a KG classroom.

• Some children changed classrooms / teachers during the school year
Nearly all NQTs are still teaching in the same schools. Those placed in non-KG classrooms are still teaching other grades:

- 3 teachers in Junior high school classrooms
- 17 in primary classrooms (P1 – P4)

Impacts on ECE knowledge persist; but impacts on professional well-being disappear.
Next Steps

• Assess additional ways to train and engage Head Teachers and parents in the KG curriculum.

• Consulting with implementing organization with the following recommendations:
  • Consider providing in-service training and support beyond the student-teaching year, especially for first year NQTs. *Sabre Education is currently doing this.*
  • Teacher postings should be considered to ensure that NQTs are posted in to the classrooms in which they are trained. *This will involve partnering with national and local GES offices.*
Thank you

• Sabre Education
• Holy Child College of Education
• Ghana Education Service
• Department for International Development (DfID)
• Student-teachers / NQTs and their students who participated in this study and shared their passion for teaching with our data collection team. None of this would have been possible without you!