



## The Relationship between Competence-Based Approach and Administrative Processes in Public Primary Schools in the English-Speaking Sub-System of Education in Cameroon

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**Abstract:** The study sought to verify the relationship between competence-based approach and administrative processes in public primary schools in Cameroon. The mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative approaches with the cross-sectional/correlational survey designs and case study design to make up for the triangulation of data collection. A questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide were used to gather data. The accessible population was 915 head teachers and 5004 teachers. The multi-stage sampling procedures were used to select a sample size of 300 teachers. The purposive and expert sampling techniques were used to select 10 head teachers for the interview. The instruments were validated with content validity index (CVI) of 0.75 and reliability Cronbach's coefficient of 0.805 for the questionnaire. Meanwhile, the interview was trial-tested with two head teachers. Data from questionnaire were analyzed through descriptive statistics of observed frequencies, percentages, sum, mean scores and standard deviations. Data from the interview were analyzed thematically to corroborate the findings from the questionnaire. Hypotheses were analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. It was found that Based Approach has a significant linear relationship with head teachers' administrative processes ( $= 3.16 \pm 0.49$ ),  $r_{xy} = .198^{**}$  and Project Based Approach has a weak linear relationship with head teachers' administrative processes ( $= 3.11 \pm 0.50$ ),  $r_{xy} = .044$ . Hence, the study recommends that the Ministry of Basic Education, as well as other educational bodies should develop strategic plans on periodic sustainable capacity building workshops/seminars for teachers and head teachers on these NPA to enable them to be able to adapt in and innovating their instruction in the classrooms.

**Keywords:** Competence Based Approach, Administrative Processes, Public Primary Schools, English-Speaking Sub-System, Education.

### Introduction

The new pedagogic approaches introduced into the teaching-learning process in the primary schools in Cameroon in general and the Anglophone regions in particular are all efforts to meet up with the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (2015) among others majors. Some of these objectives include: to align with world evolutions and to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy that is

technologically driven and education-based. The Dakar Framework for Action focused among others, on improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (World Education Forum, 2000). According to the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (2009), Cameroon has the quest in meeting up with modern changes in socio-economic, cultural, political and technological levels, in order to meet up with international standards and educational objectives.

Fonkeng (2005) and Ebot-Ashu (2020) stipulate that Cameroon has been striving for quality education. One way is through trying of different pedagogic approaches in the teaching and learning process so as to enable the country attain educational objectives and international standards. Thus, it could be noted that, Cameroon educational system has experienced pedagogic innovations over the decades (Fonkeng, 2005 & Ebot-Ashu, 2020), the public primary English-speaking sub-system of education inclusive.

Head teachers pilot the different administrative, pedagogic, financial and social activities of primary schools. Thus, the level in which head teachers manage administrative processes will depend on professional abilities to handle the new pedagogies coming into the system. This implies that in case a head teacher does not carry out his/her administrative functions well, educational objectives and international standards will hardly be achieved and the reverse will be true (Mbua, 2003).

Furthermore, Achankeng (2004), makes us to understand that, since the 1995 national forum on education proposed certain modifications in the syllabuses of English-speaking primary schools and this was reinforced by Law No 98/004 Of 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1998, the stages of writing weekly lesson plans and daily lesson notes have been undergoing modifications with respect to different new teaching approaches (Tambo, 2003).

### **Background to the Study**

The new pedagogic approaches are the processes of making changes, large and small, radical and incremental, to products, processes, and services that result in the introduction of something new for the organization (school) that add value to learners and contribute to the knowledge store of the organization [school] (Kamindo, 2008).

Teaching approaches refers to the various method used by teachers in teaching learning process. Normally approaches of teaching are usually in-line with teaching objectives (Tambo, 2012). Thus, as the country evolves, so too its educational objectives are changing to tie with what is needed in the economy as per the given time.

In the past decades, teachers used various pedagogic approaches in teaching so as to meet the educational objectives of the society. This shows that, societal needs changes with time since the economy is not stagnant. These approaches are revealed as powerful means of improving quality of education and school output (Fonkeng, 2005). As indicated by Titanji (2017) the 1995 National Forum on Education in Cameroon, revealed severe mediocrity in the educational output of primary school children. Consequently, it sought to give a new vision to the entire system of education.

The 1998 Education Law prescribed as a new mission/vision for Cameroonians schools, the training of children in view of their intellectual, physical, civic and moral welfare as well as their integration into the society taking into consideration the economic, socio-cultural, political and moral factors (Ebot-Ashu, 2020). Efforts and reflections in this direction led to the birth of a New Pedagogic Process - the New Pedagogic Approach (MINEDUC & NAP, 2002). These approach, are revealed as powerful means of improving quality of education and school output.

It is often difficult for teachers to switch from one approach with its method of instruction to another, and if this is the main goal of a particular education system (like the English public primary schools in North-West and South-West Regions), a lot of help is needed (Miller, Ziaian & Esterman, 2018).

## Competence Based Approach

Competence Based Approach is one of the approaches that are embodied in NPA. Competencies are skills that are essential to perform certain functions (Achankeng, 2014). For example, social workers must have competencies in a number of areas to be effective. She went further to explain that, teachers must have competencies to teach; to identify learner's needs, to explain concepts, to be flexible in selection of teaching methods, didactic materials and other matters that are necessary for the teaching-learning process.

Competence based approach is one of the new pedagogic approaches that has been in use to address teaching-learning objectives as adopted after the 1995 forum. The context in which the competence based approach has been developing in Cameroon is related to a particular set of political, social, educational and economic factors. In the case of Cameroon, from the political point of view, the 1996 Constitution stipulates that primary education is compulsory. Education For All (EFA), with a special emphasis on primary education, is one of the basic tenets of government policy.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) hold that the competence based approach focuses on the outcomes of learning. It addresses on what the learners are expected to do rather than on what they are expected to learn about.

Significant gaps remaining in relation to minimum required thresholds, the standards of performance are still weak, such as the general average mark of 05/20 obtained by pupils in tests given in 300 primary schools selected to take part in an experiment to reduce repetition in primary education, or the high proportion of repetitions in primary education in general, averaging around 40% (Cameroon, Ministry of Education/ PEII/ CEP, 2003).

As indicated by Bipoupout (2007) this approach is often called the "basic competencies approach", because of the competencies that it proposes to promote at each level of education. These competencies are not viewed as "skills", which frequently appear in large numbers in curricula, but as broad groupings referring to complex tasks that each pupil should be able to carry out at a particular level.

It may be noted that the objectives of EFA and those of the competence-based approach overlap to some extent. Since their aims are similar, it is likely that the competence-based approach will influence the development of EFA in general and the democratization of education in particular.

## Administration/Administrative Process

Administration just like other concepts has been variously defined by experts and educationists. Administration is the effective coordination of resources and people's efforts for the achievement of organizational goals (Jaiyeoba, 2006). According to Mbua (2003), Jaiyeoba (2006) and Fonkeng and Tamajong (2009), administration is: 1) A generalized type of behavior to be found in all the human organization. 2) The process of directing and controlling life in social organization. 3) To develop and regulate the decision-making process in the most effective possible manner.

From these definitions, the important elements inherent in administration are as follows: i) All administration exists within the organization; invariably, without organization, there cannot be administration, ii) All administration must have a leader to coordinate activities and take decisions, iii) Administration involves activity which must have goals and procedures for attaining them and iv) The activity demands the existence of some pre-determined element capable of acting when stimulated. Administration in every organization therefore stands as the process of mobilizing all factor resources for the achievement of goals and objectives (Mbua, 2003 & Ekwuem, 2007).

Since an organization is made up of a group of individuals coming together to achieve a common goal (Mbua, 2003), the achievements of these goals take time, effort and commitment on the part of the members of the organization. It demands that members of the organization must interact with one another for them to be able to work well. Such interactions are carried out through a clearly defined process. The principle of process enhances the smooth running of the organization or system. This is

because the head teacher stipulates what should be done before the other; one thing leads to the other (Mbua, 2003).

Some elements which together defined the responsibilities of administration as a social process, as highlighted by Mbua (2003), Morgan (2007) and Fonkeng and Tamajong (2009) are as follows: To define and set forth the purposes, aims, objectives of the organization; To lay down the broad plan for the structuring of the organization; To recruit and organize the executive staff as defined in the plan; To provide a clear delegation and allocation of authority and responsibility to direct and oversee the general carrying forward of the activities as delegated; To assure that a sufficient definition and standardization of all positions have taken place so that quantity and quality of performance are specifically established and assuredly being maintained; To make provisions for the necessary committees and conferences and for their conduct in order to achieve good coordination among major and lesser functional workers; To assure stimulation and the necessary energizing of the entire personnel; To provide an accurate evaluation of the total outcome in relation to established purposes and to look ahead and forecast the organization's aims as well as the ways and means toward realizing them, in order to keep both ends and means adjusted to all kinds of inside and outside influence and requirement.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The acquisition of quality primary education by any individual irrespective of physical, economic, political and socio-cultural status is both a national and international concern. The New Pedagogic Approaches introduced into the system are some of the majors put in place to meet up with the required standards for primary school leavers.

The New Pedagogic Approach (Learner-centered approach) like; Competence Based Approach among others, is yet to be mastered by most teachers and head teachers. Most teachers are yet to actually understand what it takes to teach using this approach and to differentiate it to address individual pupils' diverse needs in the classroom. Most educational infrastructure and the teaching-learning equipment and environment of the primary schools are yet to be adapted and adopted to suit the CBA of the teaching-learning process. All of these among others, can likely affect negatively the head teachers' administrative processes particularly in decision making, planning, communicating, organizing, supervising, controlling and evaluating the teaching-learning process. The researcher observed that most head teachers are less able to manage these administrative processes in their schools. This is especially with schools that have over-crowded classrooms and are under staffed or are located in areas with no or limited internet network and electricity. The blame for head teachers' ineffectiveness in executing administrative processes is perhaps shifted to the bottle-necks associated with the New Pedagogic Approaches introduced in their schools. Therefore, the researcher decided to carry out a study to investigate the relationship between the Competence Based Approach and administrative processes in public primary schools of the English-speaking sub-system of education in the South-West and North-West Regions of Cameroon (Anglophone Cameroon).

### **Research Question**

- i. To what extent is the relationship between Competence Based Approach and head teachers' administrative processes in public primary schools of the English-speaking sub-system of education in the South-West and North-West Regions of Cameroon?

### **Hypothesis**

$H_{01}$ : Competence Based Approach has no significant relationship with head teachers' administrative processes in public primary schools of the English-speaking sub-system of education in the South-West and North-West Regions of Cameroon.

$H_{a1}$ : Competence Based Approach has a significant relationship with head teachers' administrative processes in public primary schools of the English-speaking sub-system of education in the South-West and North-West Regions of Cameroon.

## METHODOLOGY

This study made use of the mixed methods research approach. This involved study designs in quantitative and qualitative research approaches. According to Ranjit (2016) mixed method designs are the research plans that include at least one quantitative method to collect numbers and one qualitative method to collect words.

This study was done in the South West and North West Regions of Cameroon. The population of this study was made up of all head teachers (4,029) and teachers (13,416) of public primary schools in the English-speaking sub-system of education in Anglophone Cameroon.

### Target Population

The researcher targeted the entire population for purpose of generalization of results of the findings. Table 2 shows the target population distribution of the study:

**Table 1. Distribution of the Target Population of the Study**

Division	No. of Schools (Head Teachers)	No. of Teachers
Fako	145	1080
Kupe-Muanenguba	119	393
Lebialem	98	359
Manyu	221	590
Meme	154	727
Ndian	155	428
Boyo	312	639
Bui	752	1770
Donga-Mantung	520	970
Menchum	254	796
Mezam	770	3924
Momo	282	898
Ngoketunjia	245	842
<b>Total</b>	<b>4029</b>	<b>13416</b>

Table 2 shows data from regional delegations of basic education for North-West and South-West (2021). The table shows that the population of the study which is all targeted is thirteen thousand four hundred sixteen (13416) teachers, and four thousand and twenty-nine (4029) head teachers of public primary schools of the English-speaking sub-system of education in Anglophone Cameroon (see Appendix for more details on the population of the study).

The researcher dropped the sample size from 357 (stipulated by Krejcie and Morgan) to 300 because, according to Amin (2005), the table is to guide the researcher not to go too far above or below the appropriate sample size for a study with regard to the accessible population.

The researcher did not follow the table for selection of head teachers because of the sampling techniques (non-probability sampling) employed and the instrument (interview) administered to the sample of head teachers. Also, as earlier mentioned, qualitative approach associated with case study design stipulates the gathering of thorough in-depth information from few key informants who represent the entire population (Ranjit, 2016). Therefore, the sample size for head teachers was 10, making the entire sample size of the study to be 310.

The researcher used simple random sampling to come out with 60 schools in Fako and Mezam from where the teachers were drawn purposively. Hence, each name of the 14 sub-divisions with accessible schools was written on pieces of papers and each piece of paper well folded and all put in a container. The folded papers were well shuffled and each paper picked at a time by a child of nine years and the name of the sub-division found on the paper unfolded was recorded and replaced in the container. The replacement was to give equal and independent chance for each sub-division to be selected.

**Procedures for Analysis of Questionnaire**

Data from the questionnaire were coded into numerical values and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations) in accordance with the research questions. In order to get appropriate results of data analysis, the researcher prepared a marking guide for the questionnaire together with the analyst. This was followed by preparing a respondent code. Therefore, items with closed-ended questions to solicit quantitative data were coded by assigning numbers to represent the construct to enable the computer to interpret the information. The items on the Likert Scale were also coded as follows: strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree were assigned 4, 3, 2 and 1 for positively worded items respectively. Meanwhile, negatively worded items took the reverse, that is: 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Table 10 illustrates the scoring of items on the Likert Scale.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

*Competence-Based Approach and head teachers’ administrative Processes*

SN	SECTION C: Competence-Based Approach: The teacher ensures:	$\bar{X}$	S	Decision
1	Diagnosis of learners’ needs	3.30	.62	A
2	Pacing instruction based on learners’ needs	3.11	.61	A
3	Creating a meaningful experience in learning	3.17	.47	A
4	Applying basic competencies to manage life	3.18	.41	A
5	Automatic promotion of learners	3.17	.62	A
6	Sequential evaluation of learning	3.32	.57	A
7	Remedial teaching	3.01	.52	A
8	Activities relating to real world tasks	3.09	.34	A
9	Resolve concrete situational problems	3.12	.35	A
10	Use of variety of instructional techniques	3.15	.41	A
	<b>MRS</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>.49</b>	<b>A</b>

MRS = Mean response score  $\bar{x}$  = Mean score S = Standard deviation

From table 5 above, the respondents (teachers) agreed that they ensure the diagnosis of learners’ needs with ( $\bar{x} = 3.30 \pm 0.62$ ) and pace instruction based on learners’ needs with ( $\bar{x} = 3.11 \pm 0.61$ ). In addition, teachers create a meaningful experience in learning with ( $\bar{x} = 3.17 \pm 0.47$ ), and they apply basic competencies to manage life with ( $\bar{x} = 3.18 \pm 0.41$ ). Teachers also ensure automatic promotion of learners with ( $\bar{x} = 3.17 \pm 0.62$ ) and sequential evaluation of learning with ( $\bar{x} = 3.32 \pm 0.56$ ). Teachers also ensure remedial teaching with ( $\bar{x} = 3.01 \pm 0.52$ ) and encourages activities relating to real world tasks with ( $\bar{x} = 3.09 \pm 0.34$ ). Respondents also admitted that teachers resolve concrete situational problems given a score of ( $\bar{x} = 3.12 \pm 0.35$ ), and teachers used variety of instructional techniques with ( $\bar{x} = 3.15 \pm 0.41$ ). Conclusively, it was agreed that there is a relationship between Competence-Based Approach and head teachers’ administrative processes in public primary schools of the English-speaking sub-system of education in the South-West and North-West Regions of Cameroon ( $\bar{x} = 3.16 \pm 0.49$ ).

**Interview of Head Teachers on Competence-Based Approach**

**Head teachers’ expectations during instruction using Competence-Based Approach to teaching**

The expectation of head teachers when carrying out instruction using the competence-based approach used ten respondents. The responses were grouped into three categories namely: Teachers identify learners’ skills, teachers diagnose the skills and teachers teach learners based on their various skills. With respect to teachers’ identification of learners’ skills, the respondents said that “I expect teachers to first verify and identify the various talents that pupils have.” Concerning teachers’ diagnosis of pupils’ skills, respondents admitted that they observe the methods used by teachers in developing individual learner’s skills and talents.

The respondents clearly stated that “I verify and diagnose these skills from learners.” “I observe classroom and time management in diagnosing pupils’ skills.” With regards to teachers teaching

learners using the identified skills, respondents were categorical as all of them said that, “they use workshop method in teaching pupils.” Some respondents also pointed that “they use classroom/clinical supervision techniques” and others said that “they used demonstration and classroom instructional supervision techniques in class room.”

Pertaining to the competence based approach in the primary schools, respondents said that it has come in to enhance understanding; creativity and inferential thinking which has gone a long way in bring sustainability in learners upon completion from primary school. In addition, they posited that the competence base approach enable learners to be creative develop ability of being critical in the way they think and being inferential in thinking. All these enable learners to become self-independent upon completion of the course work thus, being sustainable in the society. On the other hand, the respondents pointed that certain issues are not taken into consideration such as adjustment of time period in each session, the use of grounded resource personnel, and availability of material resources to facilitate teaching and learning process using the competence based approach.

They added that lesser time is given for the approach to be inbuilt into the system and poor implementation procedures. It is worthy to note that if the right procedures are used and available material resources are given these new approaches will bring sustainability to the leaners thus, reduces the level of unemployment. Respondents equally said that this competence based approach is very good because it is child-centered as compared to teacher-centered. The new pedagogic approaches in education enable the learners to understand content very well and they can apply knowledge to other situations to solve a given problem. On the other hand, teachers are not given what it takes for successful implementation. Thus, implementation is poor because of poor method used in introducing these approaches. In this regard, respondents pointed that limited time used to train resource persons, lack of material resources and above all, the objectives of the competence based approach have not been fully understood by some implementers in primary schools.

### Verification of Hypothesis

**Table 3. Relationship between Competence Based Approach and Head Teachers’ Administrative Processes (N=292)**

Variable	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$			
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	$\Gamma_{xy}$	p-value
Competence Based Approach (X)	9236	393664	189228	.198**	0.001
Head teachers’ administrative processes (Y)	5963	128125			

$p^* < 0.05$ ;  $df = 290$ ; critical  $\Gamma_{xy} = 0.113$ ; (N= 292)

Data analyses on table 3 above shows that, at alpha level of significance 0.05 with degree of freedom 290, the calculated correlation coefficient value  $r_{xy}$  - computed is 0.198\*\*. This value is greater as compared to the critical value of 0.113 ( $\Gamma_{xy}$ -critical). Given that the calculated p-value is 0.001 which is lower than 0.05, the interpretation here is that there is a significant relationship between the two variables. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Competence Based Approach has a significant relationship with head teachers’ administrative processes in public primary schools of the English-speaking sub-system of education in the South-West and North-West Regions of Cameroon.

The positive sign on the  $r_{xy}$ -computed value implies that the more the application of the Competence Based Approach improves the more improvement in head teachers’ administrative processes. This implies that the more the correct application of the Competence Based Approach to teaching and learning by the teachers in the classrooms, the more improvement in head teachers’ administrative processes. This is because the head teacher will have more time to attend to other administrative duties in the school considering that he/she is satisfied with the approach used in instruction. Therefore, he/she has less work pertaining to supervision of instruction when Competence Based Approach to teaching and learning is concerned since most teachers are able to teach with fewer difficulties.

The study established that there is a relationship between Competence-Based Approach and head teachers’ administrative processes in public primary schools of the English-speaking sub-system of

education in the South-West and North-West Regions of Cameroon. It was further found that the Competence Based Approach to teaching-learning activities in the primary school has a strong linear relationship with head teachers' administrative processes. This implies that the more the correct application of the Competence Based Approach to teaching and learning by the teachers in the classrooms, the more improvement in head teachers' administrative processes. This is because the head teacher will have more time to attend to other administrative duties in the school considering that he/she is satisfied with the approach used in instruction. Therefore, he/she has less work pertaining to supervision of instruction when Competence Based Approach to teaching and learning is concerned since most teachers are able to teach with fewer difficulties.

Achankeng (2014) confirms to these findings by saying that teachers must have competencies in a number of areas to be effective. She went further to explain that, teachers must have competencies to teach; to identify learner's needs, to explain concepts, to be flexible in selection of teaching methods, didactic materials and other matters that are necessary for the teaching-learning process.

The findings are supported by Richards and Rodgers (2001) who hold that the competence based approach focuses on the outcomes of learning. It addresses on what the learners are expected to do rather than on what they are expected to learn about. The CBA advocates defining educational goals in terms of precise measurable descriptions of knowledge, skills and behavior that pupils should possess at the end of a course of study. Therefore, the competence based approach is based on a set of outcomes that are derived from an analysis of tasks typically required of students in life role situations. More so, Tambo (2012) states in confirmation to these findings that competence based approach is performance based process leading to demonstrated mastery of basic and life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in the society.

From the interview with respect to what head teachers expect teachers to do when carrying out instruction using the Competence Based Approach, the findings are supported by Mezirow (2006) who refers to this approach as based on a number of principles that convey these concerns, such as: "the whole is greater than the sum of the parts"; "not all things are equally important"; "even the most skilled make mistakes"; "the ability to find effective remedies is what makes the difference between professionals and the rest"; "what a learner finds significant lasts longer".

Considering the things head teachers observe during classroom visits when CBA is concerned, the findings are in confirmation with the findings of Mezirow (2000) accepting that the competency-based approach in education is multifaceted in as much as several ways of introducing it exist today in educational systems, each stressing different characteristics. However, varied they are, all of them attempt to overcome the challenges that face educational systems: the need to respond to the growing quantity and accessibility of information; the need to make learning meaningful; and the need for greater internal effectiveness, efficiency and equity.

The findings are in confirmation with the report of the Cameroon Ministry of Education/PEII/CEP (2003) research work and training activities that have been undertaken in an effort to improve substantially both the teaching/learning process and school performance. As a result, Basic Education has gained new educational inputs, such as the educational approach using the development of inferential thought and the pedagogy of integration.

Fonkeng (2010) putting his argument in confirmation to these findings by writing on, "strategies to reduce repetition in Cameroon primary schools" and posited that, 40% repetition rate among primary school pupils in the country at that time of his study, constituted educational wastage which posed a serious problem to the state, parents, and individual pupils/victims. This put a question mark on the efficiency of the educational system that should normally enable graduates' sustainable education within the time frame prescribed. All these posed question marks on the teaching approaches used in teaching and the proper functioning of administrators in carrying out their administrative duties properly. This perhaps may be some of the reasons among others, which led to changes in pedagogic approaches to teaching and learning.



## Recommendations

The adoption and innovation in instruction in efforts to stay abreast with new knowledge and trends in the teaching methods and strategies, teaching materials, content and technologies and to accommodate the learners with diverse needs when using Competence Based Approach to teaching and learning should be revisited by the teachers and head teachers through intensive seminars and workshops. This can enable the head teachers to ensure that teachers and pupils carry out learning by doing; trial and error learning; learning from simple to complex; practical learning exercises; use of common salvage gadgets; learning by manipulating objects; teachers act as facilitators of learning; learners gain knowledge by experience among others.

The head teachers should improve on the administrative processes so as to make sure that correct application of the Competence Based Approach to teaching and learning by the teachers and pupils is carried out in the teaching-learning process. The head teachers should be able to ensure that the teachers carry out diagnosis of learners' needs, pace instruction based on learners' needs, create a meaningful experience in learning, and apply basic competencies to real life situations.. If this is done adequately, the head teacher will have more time to attend to other administrative duties in the school considering that he/she will be satisfied with the approach used in instruction. As such, he/she will have less work pertaining to supervision of instruction when Competence Based Approach to teaching and learning is concerned since most teachers will be able to teach with fewer difficulties.

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