TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE GLOBALISED WORLD

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ABSTRACT

No nation can rise above the level of its teachers. Teachers should be given the most appropriate tools during and after their training, including content knowledge and skills as well as teaching methodology to be able to do their work professionally. The globalisation concept, if taken into account, would require that teachers and teaching should be recognised like all other professions and should require stringent training and acquisition of knowledge and skills and professional registration under a global council of unified teacher registration body to allow for easy mobility of teachers across national boundaries. Thus the paper deals with the teacher education scenario in this world of globalization.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education is a global profession that needs to be understood properly. It is essential to grasp a global perspective of the profession as it is today, to make assumptions about it in the near future and to utilize the best thinking and instructional models available in the present times. The American Commission on Teacher Education rightly observes, “The quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of its citizens depends not exclusively, but in critical measure upon the quality of their education, the quality of their education depends more than upon any single factor, upon the quality of their teacher.”

In his Call for Action for American Education in the 21st Century in 1996, Clinton indicated that: —Every community should have a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom. We have enormous opportunity for ensuring teacher quality well into the 21st century if we recruit promising people into teaching and give them the highest quality preparation and training”.

Due to developments and evolution, standards of learning would be higher in the 21st century than it has been in the 20th century. As a result teachers would need to acquire additional knowledge and skills, both general and specific, to be able to survive and be successful in the 21st century school environment. Education has increasingly become important to success of both individuals and nations. Growing evidence demonstrates that, among all educational resources, teacher abilities are especially critical contributors to students learning and consequently the success of a nation to advance in its economic, social and political spheres (Darling-Hammond, 2006).
Looking at the basic values, assumptions, and purposes of various education reforms, four different reform categories can be identified. They constitute a tentative typology of education reforms during the process of globalization. Some aspects of types of reforms may overlap and this categorization is not necessarily comprehensive. The four education reform categories are: equity-oriented reforms, restructuring-oriented reforms, financing-oriented reforms, and standardization-oriented reforms.

The main intention of equity-oriented education reforms that were typical in the 1960s and 1970s is to promote social equity and increase economic opportunity. Equity-oriented reforms often emphasize strengthening the political role of education in building democratic justice, social mobility and equal opportunities for all citizens. These reforms typically focus on shifting public spending from higher to lower levels of education, rural/urban balance, gender issues, broadening the conception of educational quality beyond knowledge and skills in core subjects and moving towards a more integrated curriculum and inclusive organization of teaching.

Restructuring-oriented education reforms that emerged in 1980s are based on structural alignments that aim to ‘normalize’ the current system with international practice. The basic assumption of such reforms is that all education systems that function effectively and produce high quality learning should share the same core values, assumptions and operational principles. The most typical indicators of economically and administratively adjusted education systems are pupil-teacher ratio, class size, school-size, time allocation per subject, education expenditure per capita and length of compulsory education. Recently, as a consequence of restructuring reforms especially in transition economies, several institutional rearrangements have occurred, such as the emergence of independent assessment and examination centers, privately managed education institutions and accreditation agencies.

Financing-oriented education reforms typically aim at reducing the share of public financing of education by looking for ways of users to pay for their education. As globalization increases competition among nations, national economies have to adjust themselves to the new global economic structural reality. In practice, since education is a significant proportion of public sector spending, reducing public spending inevitably means also shrinking education budgets financed from public funding. This, in turn, leads governments to seek financing outside public budgets or to reduce the unit costs within the education sector, or both of these. Financing-oriented reforms have had three direct implications for education. First, shifting public funding from higher to lower levels of education. Second, this leads to privatization of secondary and higher education. Third, reduction of the cost per student is most often done by increases in class-sizes at all levels of education.

Standardization-oriented reforms that have appeared since the 1990s are based on the assumption that in the competitive economic and social contexts the quality of education and productivity of labor can best be improved by setting high performance standards for teaching and learning and then measuring whether these standards have been met.
Focusing on education reforms that are based on greater standardization and related micro-management of teaching and learning. As Hargreaves (2003) has argued, the most commonly used reform strategy is:

- a closely scripted curriculum with predetermined attainment targets or learning standards,
- aligned testing mechanisms that measure the extent to which these standards have been achieved,
- tightened external inspection to control teachers’ and schools’ performance,
- performance-related compensation among other reward-sanction structures.

1. DYNAMIC TEACHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE 21ST CENTURY GLOBALISED WORLD

For dynamic teacher education and training in the 21st century globalised world, teacher education and training institutions must design programmes that would help prospective teachers to know and understand deeply; a wide array of things about teaching and learning and in their social and cultural contexts. Also, they must be able to enact these understandings in complex classroom situation serving increasingly diverse students. If the 21st century teacher is to succeed at this task, teacher education and training institutions must further design programmes that transform the kinds of settings in which both the novices and the experienced teachers teach and become competent teachers. This signifies that the enterprise of teacher education and training must venture out further and further and engage even more closely with schools in a mutual transformation agenda with all the struggles involved. Importantly, the teacher education and training institutions must take up the charge of educating policy makers and the general public about what it actually takes to teach effectively both in terms of knowledge and skills that are needed and in terms of the school contexts that must be created to allow teachers to develop and use what they know on behalf of their students (Fullan, 1993).

2. STRUCTURE OF A GLOBALISED TEACHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING CURRICULA

Throughout the world, reform and innovation initiatives by nations have triggered much discussion about the structures of teacher education and training programmes (Hébert, 2001) and certification categories into which programmes presumably fit. Building stronger models of teacher preparation in the 21st century would require adequate and progressive knowledge content for teaching as well as knowledge content for the subjects that the teacher would be required to teach. In this respect, the —what of teacher education and training should be the focus of the curriculum.

What of globalised teacher education and training curricula: There are many ways to configure the knowledge content that teachers may need to render their services
professionally (Darling-Hammond, 2006). In articulating the core concepts and skills that should be represented in a common-core curriculum for teacher education and training, there is need for a frame work to guide decisions and practice. In the United States, the National Academy of Education Committee on Teacher Education adopted a framework that is organised on three intersecting areas of knowledge found in many statements of standards for teaching which would be applicable for consideration in the 21st century teacher education and training curricula.

1. Knowledge of learners and how they learn and develop within social contexts, including knowledge of language development.

2. Understanding of curriculum content and goals, including the subject matter and skills to be taught in the light of disciplinary demands, student needs and the social purposes of education; and

3. Understanding of and skills for teaching, including content knowledge of specific subject, content pedagogical knowledge for teaching diverse learners, as these are informed by an understanding of assessment and of how to construct and manage a productive classroom.

For Preparing Teachers for the 21st century The curricula should take cognisance of the ever-changing needs of society, the globalisation scenario, the advancement and proliferation of technology and the way traditional classroom teaching is losing grounds for distance-virtual learning (Allen and Thomas, 2000; Kantrowitz et al, 1987). The content of the curricula should take account of the 21st century classroom. Teachers should be trained on the state-of-the-art hard and soft ware that will become common in the 21st century classroom. Training in technology should encompass telecommunications, satellite access, networking, the internet, video-conferencing and digital components as well as optical technology. These technologies will permit the 21st century teacher in the 21st century classroom feel comfortable and teach effectively and efficiently.

Another scenario is the changing pattern of world employment. There are so many professions in our modern world and this will multiply in the 21st century. The new directions in teacher education and training should take cognisance of this so that teachers are prepared to play multiple roles and take their rightful positions in the teaching-learning environment to face these challenges confidently. We can only improve the quality of education worldwide for our students if we provide our teachers with the required skills, knowledge and experiences. One which deserves mention is the ability of the 21st century teacher to control disruptive behaviour of students in the classroom which makes it impossible for the teacher to work efficiently and effectively and even in some instances puts the security of both students and teachers at risk. Problems of such nature may multiply in magnitude in schools in the 21st century and for this reason, teacher education and training institutions should equip teachers with knowledge and skills in management to be able to address such problems effectively and efficiently. Teacher education curricula should be inclusive and emphasize on lifelong learning, development in technology and its applications and strategies for planning viable alternatives to benefit students. Emphasis should be on democratic principles and practices. The institutionalization of democracy
will make teachers see the role of schools and their contribution to the development of democratic values, skills and behaviour from the global perspective.

The how of globalised teacher education and training curricula: The programme designs and pedagogies should attend specifically to the how of teacher education and training. It is important to have well-chosen courses that include core content knowledge for teaching and advanced research background. It is equally important to organize prospective teachers experiences so that they are able to integrate and use their acquired knowledge in a skilful manner in the classroom, especially incorporating research in whatever is taught so that the 21st century teacher becomes teacher-researcher at heart. Three interrelated issues are mentioned that learning to teach requires that the 21st century teachers come to understand teaching in ways quite different from their own experiences as students. Learn not only to think like a teacher but also to act as a teacher. Be able to understand and respond to the dense and multifaceted nature of the classroom environment, juggling multiple academic and social goals requiring trade-offs from time to time and day to day (Jackson, 1974). In short, the 21st century teacher should learn to deal with the problem of complexity that is made more intense by the changing nature of teaching and learning in the teaching-learning environment.

A question that needs explicit answers in relation to the topic under discussion is —How can programmes of teacher education and training prepare the 21st century teacher to confront the identified problems of learning to teach and others unanticipated? Studies (Oberg, 2001; Hébert, 2001; Glickman, 2001, Weiner, 2001; McCall, 2001) examining seven exemplary teacher education and training programmes find that despite outward differences, the programmes had seven things in common namely:

* A common clear vision of good teaching that permeates all course work and clinical experiences, creating a coherent set of learning experiences.

* Well-defined standards of professional practice and performance that are used to guide and evaluate course and curriculum.

* A strong core curriculum taught in the context of practice and grounded in knowledge of the child and adolescent development and learning, an understanding of social and cultural contexts, curriculum design, reform, and innovation, evaluation and assessment and subject matter content and pedagogy knowledge and skills.

* Extensive use of a variety of case methods, teacher research, performance assessment and portfolio evaluation that apply learning to real problems of practice.

* Explicit strategies to help students to confront their own deep-seated beliefs and assumptions about learning and students and to learn about the experiences of people different from themselves.
Strong relationship, common knowledge and shared belief among school-based and university-based faculty jointly engaged in transforming teaching, schooling and teacher education and training.

MODELS OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The new directions will have to grapple with models of teacher education. The current models need reform and innovation and new models would have to be developed that would enable teachers to adapt comfortably to the changing times (Avalos, 1991; Monnathoko, 1995; Popkewitz, 1987, Ginsberg, 1988; Nagel, 1992; Al-Salmi, 1994; Shaeffer, 1990). The new models should emphasize learning to do and learning to think so that we do not produce learned monsters but learned thinkers.

1. There is absolute need for participatory teacher education. In this model, teachers in training should play active role in the training process. They should become participants in decisions regarding the needs to which their training must respond; what problems must be resolved in the day-to-day work environment and what specific knowledge and skills must be transmitted to them. In the participatory model teachers must be self-directed and self-taught. Every aspect of the training must be based on reflection and introspection. The needs, problems, statuses working with students should be emphasized. Teachers must be able to collectively examine and analyse their consequences, assisted by the trainers in solving problems (Akinpelu, 1998; Akyeampong, 2003).

Teachers should be able to:

1. Author and publish experiences and research conducted.
2. Be central and key participants of curriculum reform and innovation.
3. Encourage learners to work together in a cooperative spirit, help each other with their work as well as be able to evaluate themselves.
4. Help learners publish their own work online portfolios.
5. Write a bank of learning activities for learners to access at their own pace.
6. Give learners a wider choice of learning activities according to their own interests and capabilities.
7. Build up a personal portfolio of their best teaching plans so as to share among other teachers.
8. Create exciting learning environment of active knowledge creation and sharing.

2. The new teacher education and training should not lose site of the power of technology for both teachers and students learning. The real power of technology will come when teachers have been trained well in them and have captured the potential of technology.
themselves. In this way, teachers would be able to contribute to model the behaviour that the students are expected to learn thereby making them to grow up not to be learned monsters but more human, creative and productive (Burke, 2000; Holmes Group, 1986).

3. Need for in-depth content and practical knowledge of research for teachers

Research must be a major priority in teacher education and preparation in the 21st century. Professional teachers naturally seek answers to questions and solutions to problems that enable them to help their students to learn. They are decision makers, make thousands of choices on hourly basis regarding the choice of texts, literature, appropriate and relevant technology integration, curriculum pedagogy, assessment and measurement. They are highly reflective and sensitive to the needs of their students. They encounter failures and successes. However, much of what teachers have to offer remains a secret. Teachers seek multiple means of looking at their world of teaching and learning and that of their students by unlocking the secrets within the classrooms. Research is one of such potent keys to help unlock these secrets.

The concept research and its significance to teacher education and training: There is need to look at the concept research and how it applies to the teaching-learning environment, especially in the 21st century school environment. This will make the professional teacher to identify with the fact that research is a major part of the professional practice. For this reason, research in this discussion will be taken to mean: “...systematic study of a phenomenon with the aim of finding explanations or solutions or understanding and finding patterns among what is studied so that action could be taken to arrest or improve the situation”. Problems of different kinds and magnitudes abound in the teaching-learning environment and these would quadruple in the 21st century school environment. Whenever such problems surface and pose threat to the survival of the students and their progress, a critical study would have to be conducted to find solutions to resolve the threat and improve the situation. Need to provide 21st century teachers with solid foundation in research methods: If the 21st century teachers are to consider themselves as researchers and use research to improve their practice, then the following conditions would need to be fulfilled in their entirety by teacher education and training institutions (Boaduo and Babitseng, 2006).

All categories of teachers – pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary – should have as part of their training a concise detailed course in research methods that would conceptualise and concentrate on the work that teachers do in their day to day practice and not just as a course to fulfil a condition for a degree or diploma certificate.

When equipped with the required content and practical knowledge and skills in research, teachers must be the first people to initiate research in the teaching-learning environment that has significant bearing on their professional practice because they have the knowledge, skills and experiences about the needs of their students and situations that confront them as well as the lives of the education institutions that they are located and operate daily.

Educational researches that are related to teaching – be it in the classroom or for the general improvement of the overall school environment (physical infrastructure,
institutional materials or methods, strategies and approaches) can be effective with the agreement of teachers (UNESCO, 1979). This can only be successfully accomplished if they are given in-depth training by the institutions.

3. GLOBALISING THE TEACHING PROFESSION THROUGH A GLOBALISED TEACHER’S COUNCIL

Currently, every country has its own teaching council with specific objective to register professionally qualified teachers before they can practice. Every country has its own requirements that professional teachers should meet in order to be registered and certificated to teach. Even in the same country, like the USA, Australia and United Kingdom getting registered as a teacher entails delaying. In the USA every state has its own teaching council that registers professionally qualified teachers and certificated with a license to practice. A critical look at this scenario reveals that teacher transfer from one state to another in the same country becomes a burden if not delays while teacher-shortages abound in these countries. In order to make teaching to become a mobile profession worldwide, there is need for 21st century globalised teaching council. The mandate of this council should be to collaborate with institutions and organizations responsible for teacher education and training to develop a common-core teacher education and training curricula as well as the establishment of teacher professional registration council which would be mandated to issue professional teaching licenses for practitioners that would be recognised worldwide to make teacher mobility from region to region and country to country easy and fulfilling.

1) The need for teacher-tracer studies and further professional development by teacher training institutions after training.

2) Need for greater involvement of parents and communities in the governance of the globalised schools.

No nation develops beyond the quality of its education system, which is highly dependent on the quality of its teachers. Teachers should be given the most appropriate tools during and after their training, including content knowledge and skills as well as teaching methodology to be able to do their work professionally. The globalisation concept, if taken into account, would require that teachers and teaching should be recognised like all other professions and should require stringent training and acquisition of knowledge and skills and professional registration under a global council of unified teacher registration body to allow for easy mobility of teachers across national boundaries. Governments are now shifting the focus of their policies and education reforms from standardization of teaching and learning towards developing professional learning communities of teachers and towards emancipating the professional potential of teachers and principals who are able to find new solutions to maintaining the quality of learning. Promotion of such professional communities is based on four elements (Hargreaves 2003):

- collaborative work and discussion among the teachers and principals in school;
• focus on teaching and learning within that professional collegiality;

• collecting data from classrooms and schools to evaluate the progress and challenges in the educational process;

• rearranging time in schools.

There are three different dimensions that schools have to consider when planning their roles in the globalizing world. Schools need to find the most effective ways to teach their pupils in the knowledge society. Then they have to design their curricula and pedagogical arrangements to help pupils to learn for the knowledge society. Finally, school should help young people to protect themselves from the negative side of globalization, such as marginalization and inequality between rich and poor, by educating them beyond the knowledge society. This entails developing the values and emotions of young people’s character, building understanding and commitments to families, communities and group life and cultivating a cosmopolitan identity.

REFERENCES


