

Session IV - Group F: Teachers' Education
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Teacher Education

Introduction

As joint moderator of the Group Session on Teacher Education, my introduction attempts to highlight some important, current ideas about the curriculum of pre-service teacher education. Some of these ideas are formed out of my reading of the *Green Paper on Teacher Education* (Buchberger *et al.* 2000). This reference is listed in the primary resources for this session. My short list of key points from this reading, were influenced by thirty years of experience in Canadian faculties of education, working with pre-service, in-service and post-graduate students. The points were also influenced by my current preoccupation, working with a Canadian project in Kosovo to help Kosovar educators to improve their teacher education programs.

A. Two contextual conditions important for curriculum decisions (Buchberger *et.al.* 2000, p. 54):

1. Pre-service teacher education, including practice teaching, is one part of CPD (Continuous professional development) which starts with the recruitment of suitable candidates for programs and which, after graduation, should proceed with planned induction into the profession, providing newly qualified teachers with support as they gain confidence as teachers. In-service, now a normal expectation, builds on the foundation provided by pre-service and induction. This concept of CPD removes the pressure from traditional pre-service programs to attempt to prepare new teachers for a whole lifetime of practice.
2. Faculties of Education require partnerships with schools in order to carry out their work (Buchberger *et.al.* 2000, p. 53).

These partnerships should be reciprocal in the sense that both the faculty and the school should find benefits in the relationship. Taking student teachers into the classroom should not be considered as a chore or just as a professional responsibility. It is a benefit to the classroom

and the school to have bright, motivated young teacher candidates working with experienced teachers.

For these partnerships to work there should be transparency of roles and division of work so that both teachers and professors are clear about each other's roles. The Faculty should provide special training in supervision and mentoring for teachers chosen as cooperating teachers. Satisfying cooperation in pre-service practice teaching opens the way to in-service cooperation and the possibility of joint research and development work. The Faculty could become a resource center for teachers and a natural professional meeting place. Such partnerships requires Professors who are comfortable and welcome in schools and teachers who feel at home on the campus

B. The work of teacher educators and their students (Buchberger *et.al.* 2000, p.36).

A demanding modern expectation of teacher candidates and their pre-service professors is that they should be able to create powerful learning environments. These are situations that elicit in students active and constructive processes of knowledge and skill acquisition, that offer ample opportunities for interaction, communication and cooperation, that stimulate students to set their own goals, and that guide students to take responsibility for their own learning activities and processes. In addition, new teachers and their professors should be able to transform academic knowledge into teaching and learning situations, create cooperative models of work—cooperative problem solving and team work vs. the individualistic culture of pre-service, and use CT in teaching and learning.

C. Two competing models of the autonomous teacher

There are two models of the autonomous professional teacher, each of which would direct programs of pre-service teacher education in a different direction. Model 1, the autonomous professional, emphasizes research-based knowledge of teaching, studying, and learning, a rich repertoire of empirically validated practices, based on academic and professional training to produce a teacher who is competent to make multiple decisions in particular contexts in the interests of clients (students) and in accordance with ethical values This model is of the reflective practitioner in both senses: (1) learning from experiences, and (2) reflecting on the broader didactics of teaching, learning and schooling.

Model 2 is of the "regulated autonomous professional," (2) whose training is directed to teaching practices that are tightly controlled by government agencies' regulations, in programs that are monitored for adherence to defined standards. This teacher carries out assigned

tasks (content & methods) to a defined level of achievement, using craft skills. In a sense, Model 2 seems to be the product of a political reaction against Model 1 and the independence of the teacher from public policy. The curriculum of pre-service teacher education would obviously be affected by decisions about which kind of autonomy was to be the aim.

References

F. Buchberger *et.al.* (Eds.) (2000) *Green Paper on Teacher Education in Europe*. Thematic Network on Teacher Education, Umea University, Sweden.

John Furlong et al. *Teacher Education in Transition: Re-forming Professionalism*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000.

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Renewal of School Curricula and the Role of Teacher Education

1. Introduction

My introductory thesis shall be: renewal of curricula in schools and kindergartens and pre-service as well as in-service teacher education are firmly interrelated. Therefore in the process of redesigning curricula a close co-operation between

- Ministry of Education
- National Institutes of Development in Education
- Schools and kindergartens
- Universities and/or Teachers' Colleges

is absolutely necessary!

2. Teacher training is a part of an overall system of education

There is a constant danger that teacher training is considered from one angle only (that of administrators, or that of academicians, of school teachers, of parents, etc.): this could be a reason that a project and/or reforms envisaged would not be feasible at all. The reform of teacher education and training should be harmonized with the reform of the overall system of education in the country. And *vice versa*.

What is the question we have to start with and what are the questions, which follows?

- What education for children and youth?
- What kind of teachers?
- What kind of training programs to produce these teachers?

3. What we expect of education? What we expect of teachers?

Today, expectations of education are higher than ever. We all expect education helping *economic prosperity and social cohesion*, therefore we expect:

- public education for me and/or my children, which should enable me/them to acquire as higher qualification as possible; at the same time values education but not indoctrination which harms principles followed in my family;
- an open access to tertiary education; long life learning supported by the government;
- equal educational opportunities are given to people with special needs and to marginal groups;
- quality education, particularly internationally comparable standards and a guarantee to recognize periods of study and diplomas abroad;
- high professionalism, good equipment (particularly IT) and fair treatment in schools;
- influence of parents, employers and other customers to school management; decentralization of educational system, etc.

However, expectations of education are only a mere illusion if they are not accompanied with a deliberate teacher training policy.

In modern societies, even expectations of teachers are very high. They:

- need to be experts in one or more specific subjects (academic qualification); as professionals they have to act autonomously;
- must continually update their expertise and knowledge;
- have to complement their subject-matter expertise by pedagogical competence, including motivation to learn, creativity, co-operation, understanding social context of education, etc.;
- should understand pedagogical potential of technology and develop ability to integrate it into the teaching-learning process (particularly IT);
- should know how to integrate principles of long life learning into the teaching-learning process;
- should attain international (European) standards of teaching; etc.

Finally, high expectations of education provoke the articulation of new goals. On one side, education is considered today as a main lever of economic prosperity and social cohesion. On the other side, it is considered in relation to categories as quality, professionalism, fair treatment, open access, etc.

Both moments prove that an overall reform of the educational system is demand of the time. However, here we have to ask ourselves: Are these goals feasible from the point of view of the existent system of teacher training? Who could give professional support to the educational reform? Etc.

4. Analyses of the inherited system of teacher training

Inherited systems of teacher training contain a range of discrepancies, as for example:

A. Different levels of education / degrees (pre-service education): in some systems teachers with upper secondary education could be still found in schools while teachers graduated from colleges offered short programmes (2 years; "Teacher Academy") are still prevailing in primary schools of the region.

B. There is often a discrepancy between subject and pedagogical competency in pre-service training. As more "academic" teacher training is as less stress it puts to pedagogical competence. As more "vocational" it is as less stress it puts to subject competence. The first approach is mostly linked to teaching in upper grades (and *vice versa*).

C. Epistemological difference: *teacher training vs. teacher education & training*. Are teachers only "trained"? Is a teacher just a routine technician, one-dimensional specialist or is s/he a "reflective practitioner"?

D. Traditional mode of short teacher training has produced a negative selection (motivation) of freshman; it has closed entrance to post-graduate studies, etc.

That is: inherited system of teacher training does not allow pursuing new educational goals.

5. Promoting teaching profession as an academic profession

In order to overcome the existing situation in the region and to fulfil new goals education (with its inter-disciplinary, problem-centred approach) should become an *academic discipline* and teacher education & training should become a *university study*.

British philosopher of education R.S. Peters asked many years ago: "What are the basic reasons why the teaching profession, like the legal or medical profession, should be closely associated with universities?" Analyse of these traditional academic profession calls our attention to three important dimensions of *academic education and training*:

- *advancement of knowledge*, interpreted in terms of disinterested research (science);

- *development of knowledge* that can be applied to *the practical needs* of the community and with the training of people for the professions;
- opportunities for *liberal education* in the sense of all-round understanding which is relevant to the personal development of students."

In this context, Peters concluded: "Education in our society is not unified by any particular religious or political idea. The nearest approach is made to such a unifying ideal is the demand for autonomy, that each individual should develop the capacity for authentic choice and learn to make something of himself within a developing cultural heritage. The universities should provide one of the main growing points of this cultural heritage and should also provide an institutional safeguard for the freedom of schools and colleges from too much direction from central or local government." (Peters, 1977, pp. 181-182, 192).

Faculty of Education as a University institution has some evident advantages. First, it guarantees the *advancement of knowledge, a research-based study*: basic and applied research in different subject disciplines and in education as an interdisciplinary, problem-centred field; more balanced relation between "subject knowledge" and "education" as well as between theory and practice. Secondly, it should also give ground for the development of knowledge that can be applied to the practical educational needs of the community and the training of teachers. This is the best starting point for the *collaboration with schools and other educational institutions* (monitoring; counselling; educational policy development) while at the same time it can take an important institutional *support to national educational reforms*.

References

F. Buchberger *et.al.* (Eds.) (2000) *Green Paper on Teacher Education in Europe*. Thematic Network on Teacher Education, Umea University, Sweden.

R.S. Peters, *Education and the education of teachers*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977.

About the Work in the Group

About 20 participants joined the work in Group F. After short presentations given by both facilitators a fruitful discussion was raised in which nearly all participants took an active part. Main issues raised during the discussion were as follows:

Renewal of teacher education and training institutions is closely linked with the care for teachers of teachers: how to rejuvenate their structure? In many countries this occupation is not attractive for young people from various (economic, social) reasons. If the influx of young specialist into teacher education and training institutions remains hindered national education will soon encounter serious problems in this field.

In all countries of the region there is an obvious need for national standards in teacher education and training, which should also be compatible with other European countries. Pre-service education of teachers should be based on professionally reconsidered principles. Common standards in teacher education can assure quality and compatibility on a national scale.

While developing new curricula teacher education and training institutions have to pay particular attention to a rational equilibrium between pedagogic methodology (special didactics) and subject (content) study. Professional practical work should also find a proper place in new curricula. Last but not least, sociological and ethical issues should be incorporated as well.

Teacher education and training institutions also play an important role in the development and provision of INSET training. In the region, faced with huge problems and lack of resources, this field of human resource development is of highest importance. System of in-service education and training, which is well structured and supported from the Ministry can decisively help in providing potential (critical mass) for the implantation of educational reform. In addition, teachers with former associated degrees (two-years) should be supported to enrol into part time study to get full university degree.

In many countries of the region the paths to postgraduate studies in teacher education are lacking or hindered. Further development of national education largely depends on the opening of such postgraduate studies. Also in SEE region discussions on the so-called Bologna Process are going on; it is crucial to decide what will be the future place of teacher education in the overall systems of higher education.

Research and development at teacher education institutions should be enhanced and improved! It is an important tool of improving quality at the institution. At the same time, research and development

projects at teacher education and training institutions can be decisive for the success of the reforms of national education.

Participants expressed satisfaction that at the conference on curricular renewal a special workshop was dedicated to issues of teacher education and training. There was a common estimation that these issues are of uppermost importance everywhere in the region today and a firm conviction was expressed that in future a special conference on teacher education and training should be organized.