

Chapter 9

Enhancing Quality Teacher Education Programs in Developing Countries

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the need to enhance teacher quality by infusing quality benchmarks in every aspect of teacher education. These areas include: Teacher education curriculum design and planning; Curriculum implementation; Principles of good teaching and learning; Interactive and effective teaching methodologies; Appropriate scheming and lesson preparation; Assessment and evaluation; and Class management and discipline. Additionally, the author explores emerging issues in teacher education and suggestions for future direction. Finally, this chapter is intended to advance the debate on ways to maintain and sustain quality benchmarks in teacher education programs.

INTRODUCTION

Education in general is not static but a dynamic process. Teacher education in particular and its dynamism is influenced by changes in society which tend to create new demands. Additionally, the main function of the school is to improving quality in student learning. Hence the most critical factor within the school in facilitating student learning is the teacher and the ability of those in leadership positions to shape a collaborative, motivated, and effective teaching and learning community. It is the leadership of the head that sets the tone of the school climate for learning, the level of professionalism and morale of teachers and the degree of concern of what students may or may not become. Teacher education is primarily focused on developing students' knowledge of teacher development in the life and learning span of teachers, including pre-service teacher preparation, the induction years, and overall teacher professional development.

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Key Features of Teacher Education Programmes

There are different Teacher Education Programmes at various levels of learning and can be given equivalent names in different countries. Kenya, for instance, has five levels of teacher education programmes. These include:

1. The Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) in which teachers are trained through in-service courses in District Centres for Early Childhood Education (DICECEs). The National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) develops the curriculum, trains trainers and supervisors, and conducts monitoring and evaluation.
2. The Primary teacher education (PTE) that is provided in certificate level colleges through a two-year, residential programme.
3. The Secondary teacher education (STE) that is provided at the diploma and degree levels in diploma teacher training colleges and universities respectively. The pre-service programme runs for four years for learners who join directly after completion of form four, three years for those with primary teacher certificate, and two years with students with a diploma certificate of Teacher Training.
4. The Technical teacher education (TTE) is offered at the Kenya Technical Teachers College in Nairobi. This trains diploma level teachers for secondary schools, technical training institutes, primary teachers' colleges, institutes of technology and vocational polytechnics.
5. Special needs education teacher education (SNE) is provided to professionally qualified practising teachers through a two-year diploma programme at the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE)

THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER QUALITY

There is no comprehensive universally accepted definition of the term quality. Some scholars such as Everard, Morris and Wilson (2004) explain quality as the provision of 'excellent service/product', 'reasonably fit for the purpose', or 'meeting or exceeding the expectations of the customer'. Quality is then the constant maintenance of a value that may go wrong in the service delivery at the school. For example, if the college administrators realize that performance in examinations is poor and stakeholders are dissatisfied, then all these call for appropriate remedies.

Another aspect of quality can be understood from the customer's satisfaction. In a classroom situation, for instance, a quality lesson is the one that makes students happy for understanding the lesson content rather than where teachers feel that they met the criteria. Teacher quality may be defined in different ways including:

- Creating a classroom environment that encourages all students to participate in useful learning activities;
- Ability to motivate low achieving learners to participate in class and attain high academic achievement;
- Possession of excellent skills in mentoring new teachers acting and stabilizing forces to minimize high turn over.

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