Chapter 10
Quality Assurance for Teacher Education in Democratic Globalized World

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter it is argued that when determining quality assurance in teacher education there is need to take into account not only what teachers are taught but also how they are taught. New perspectives on learning and teaching at school level and the changed nature of the role of the teacher form the basis for suggesting a focus on the "how" of teacher education in addition to or more than the "what." It draws on research underpinned by a critical realist philosophy to demonstrate the changed nature of the school system and the need to adopt a sociocultural approach to learning and teaching in teacher education.

INTRODUCTION

The school system has transformed in many parts of the world to ensure learners are provided with quality education. However, as many researchers have noted, the meaning of quality in education is contested and difficult to define. Quality of education may be understood from an economist perspective (Barratt, Chawla-Duggan, Lowe, Nikel, and Ukpo, 2006), also called a quantitative view (Motala, 2001). It can also be understood from a humanist perspective (Sanyal, 2013; Barratt et al, 2006), and termed a qualitative (Motala, 2001) or a reconceptualist view (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004). The humanist view places emphasis on educational processes that occur in schools and in the classroom, while the economist view "is macro in focus" (Motala, 2001: 62), measuring educational quality in relation to the extent to which it is able to serve economic sector needs (Lotz-Sisitka, 2010; Barratt et al, 2006; Motala, 2001).

No matter which view is taken the idea of quality in education alters what should be taught and how it should be taught. The economic view is based on the assumption that the role of education is to prepare learners or students for the world of work that has changed. For example, education providers are expected to focus on academic knowledge as well as the development of 21st Century skills such as

creativity, problem solving, innovativeness, decision-making, and lifelong learning (Nikitina and Lapina, 2017; Lock, Kim, Koh, & Wilcox, 2018) which are crucial for the business world that the students will operate in as workers or owners of business. This calls for schools and institutions of higher learning to change what they teach and how learning and teaching is conducted (Baren, 2013) in order to increase the quality and relevance of graduates. The humanist approach is based on the understanding that socio-economic problems affect participation in education causing education to discriminate against some students and favour others who are often the affluent ones. Problems of unemployment, poverty, HIV and AIDS, geographical location and other socio-economic difficulties that many countries face threaten the right of the child to education that is of quality. Therefore, from a humanist approach quality education is one in which all, regardless of socio-economic status, have equal access to education and benefit equally from the education provided (Fredriksson, 2004; Komorowska, 2017).

To ensure relevance and equality of education, transformations have been made to global education systems. According to Fredriksson (2004), improving quality in education may be crucial to help teachers improve their teaching methodology and skills. The adoption of actively engaging methods of learning and teaching is viewed as important in ensuring quality in education. Education providers therefore have been called upon to adopt child-centred (in the case of primary schools), learner-centred (in the case of secondary schools) and student-centred (in the case of higher education) strategies of learning and teaching. Because they are capable of helping to produce the kind of person that can fit in the new socioeconomic world (Nikitina and Lapina, 2017). The ability of teachers to use such strategies of teaching is therefore critical in ensuring quality of the education learners receive in schools. Sanyal (2013, pp. 7) argues that, "Education policies, however well-intentioned and official curricula however well crafted, cannot succeed without the teacher, whose professional management of the teaching-learning process ensures that education really takes place". Curricula reforms, meant to improve quality in education, are therefore determined primarily by teacher competence which include his or her ability to teach in ways which enhance quality of the education learners receive in school. Ensuring that teachers can teach using new innovative strategies that actively engage learners in the learning and teaching process is therefore an important aspect of teacher education.

Teacher education refers to the preparation of teachers for effective participation in the school system. Teacher education therefore has to be of the highest quality to meet the demands of current education systems. Quality in teacher education therefore could be seen as the degree to which the teachers produced meet the requirements of the school system.

A number of studies have shown that qualified teachers in Asian (Ramen, Moazzam & Jugurnath, 2016; Nguyen et al., 2006) and African countries (summarised in Schweisfurth, 2013a & 2013b) are unable to teach using the methods which actively engage learners in the learning and teaching process. The studies indicate that qualified teachers who have gone through teacher education teach new learner-centred education systems using traditional approaches that do not help much in enhancing the quality of the education learners receive in schools. A number of useful explanations have been provided in literature for this lack of change at classroom level. Without blaming the teacher and learner, some studies have implied that the problem lies with the teacher, the learner, and their social environment. Others see new education systems themselves as the problem since they are considered foreign and not appropriate for the contexts where they are being implemented. Teacher education remains untouched in most of the explanations given.

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