

Relevance of Teacher Education Curriculum for Quality Enhancement of Teaching Skills

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the extent of relevance of the prevalent B.Ed. Curriculum regarding the development of the teaching skills. To achieve this objective, data were collected from two sources: Review of the B.Ed. Curriculum course outlines and the related textbooks. Interviews were conducted from the teachers of the selected Colleges of Education and information regarding the practices of their teaching for the development of teaching skills. These were analyzed to see any content related to teaching skills and any practice exercises for the development of these skills. The analysis of B.Ed. Curriculum outlines and recommended textbooks revealed that they did not contain appropriate knowledge, examples and practice exercises required for the development of these teaching skills. It is, therefore, recommended that B.Ed. Curriculum may be revised and appropriate topics related to the teaching skills for effective teaching should be emphasized in the curriculum for enhancing the teacher education quality. Teachers of Colleges of Education themselves were not conversant with the teaching skills and methods of development of these skills in prospective teachers. It is further recommended that appropriate teaching

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learning materials for development of these skills be developed for the use of prospective teachers and teachers of Colleges of Education.

Introduction

Professional development is the sole of quality teaching and it guarantees the quality classroom practices (Phillips, 2008). Teacher education programs are organized to develop teaching skills in the trainee teachers. It is expected that an effective teacher education programme will develop such skills in its graduates. The difference between the teaching effectiveness of trained and untrained teachers provides a valid evidence of the effectiveness of training program. It is mentioned in National Education Policy 1998-2010 that quality of education is directly related to the quality of instruction and the teacher is the most crucial factor in implementing educational reform in any country of the world. It means that the teacher education must be efficient as well as effective. Efficiency refers to the relationship between inputs and outputs of a process and can be applied to education in the same way as economists analyze the relationship between inputs and outputs in the productive process, such as manufacturing. Effectiveness is related to the quality of output and has two aspects, firstly that the output is employable in society or that the output is commensurate with the needs of society; secondly that the output is of a high quality.

Without high quality teachers the goal of quality education can not be realized. Teacher quality has a significant relationship with educational productivity. Teacher quality depends upon the professional knowledge and pedagogical skills (Exley, Walker & Brownlee, 2008). Misra (1993) states that excellence in education is linked with effective teachers and only effective teacher education program can develop effective teachers and eventually these effective teachers can enhance the educational standards and quality.

The purpose of teacher education is to encourage the growth of teachers as persons and as professionals. Quality teachers are more growing, are becoming more open, more humane, more skillful, more complex and more complete pedagogues. They are fulfilling their own unique potential of doing for themselves what others expect them to do for students (McNergeny, 1982). Teacher education programme must have goals classified into three categories; teacher's knowledge of content area; teaching skills both pedagogical and interpersonal and teacher feelings and self-awareness. This concept puts equal emphasis on

knowledge and skills of teachers as well as teachers' awareness of students' emotional reactions and their ability to respond to these reactions (Anderson & Minching, 1987; Aggerwal, 1999 & Cooper, 2003). Academic and professional training of teachers has a direct and positive bearing on the quality of their performance and consequently on the students achievement. Knowledge of the subject matter and mastery of the pedagogical skills were also important determinants of teachers' effectiveness (Lockheed & Versepoor, 1991).

Cochran (2003) explains that after completing teacher education programme the effective teacher knows subject matter (what to teach) and pedagogy (how to teach) but also knows how to learn and how to make decisions informed by theory and research from many bodies of knowledge and also as informed by feedback from school and classroom evidence in particular contexts. Researcher suggests that teachers' ability to exercise professional direction is a major factor in student achievement. Teacher should be prepared in four areas of teacher competence to be effective in bringing about intended learning outcomes: Educational recipes and standardized procedures were formally and informally passed on to new teachers to help them survive in classrooms. While this practice still exists, many scientific concepts from psychology, anthropology, sociology, linguistics, cognitive sciences, and related disciplines are now available to help teachers interpret the complex reality of their classrooms. Those teachers who lack the theoretical background and understanding provided by such scientifically derived concepts can only interpret the events of their classrooms according to popularly held beliefs or common sense (Smith, 2002; Chaurasia, 2000 & Halsall, 1998).

Command over subject matter to be taught is an obvious requirement for any teacher. For the preparation of the subject matter the teacher must consider the study of the subject matter itself, along with the judicious selection of the material that can be transmitted successfully to a student. It is stressed that the graduate of a teacher education program in Pakistan should be possessor of intellectual competence, maker of effective and efficient decisions, builder of warm classroom environment, seeker of alternative strategies, possessor of professional pride and consumer of research (Iqbal, 1999; Muhammad, 2002). For an effective educational programme there must be competency in subject matter, a better curriculum development procedure, proper use of instructional technology, an administrative classroom management, diversity as well as reflection and

technology (Good, 1990; Otis Wilborn & Win, 2000; Roth, 1996 and Wingle & White, 1998).

Effective teacher education programme develops such effective teachers, who are capable of exhibiting the teaching skills like: coming to class well prepared, making every effort to be on-time for class, informing learners the objectives of their lesson, telling students one's planning to do for the period, after briefly reviewing material covered in the previous class, monitoring seat work and frequently checking progress during independent practice, making teaching interesting by varying class formats; giving directives slowly and distinctly, avoiding lecture directly from the textbook and exercise writing on the board, involving students more actively through questioning and giving encouraging comments, dividing instructional stimuli into small chunks, holding students' attention in the classroom by utilizing different forms of instructional support material, such as multimedia, overheads, videotapes, and films, inviting different people related to the topic to speak to classes, using examples whenever possible (Borich, 1998; Brophy and Good, 2004; Elizabeth, 2003; Masteropieri, 2002; ; Moon, 2002; Philips, 1987; Stephons, 2001; Sadkar, 2000; Rosenshine, 1971, 1983 and Walberg, 1990).

Although, in developing countries, no consensus is observed about the relationship between various indicators of effectiveness and students achievement yet, components of teacher quality, affecting positively the students achievement, were years of schooling of the teacher, in-service teacher training, length of experience, verbal proficiency, salary level, teachers punctuality and regularity, teaching practices and classroom organization including homework frequency, active learning by students, teacher's expectations of students' performance and teacher's time spent on class preparation (Fuller, 1985).

Teachers have the main responsibility in raising the quality of life in a country by playing their role in economic development. But, teachers can play their role effectively only when they are well trained, well educated and well qualified. He criticizes the existing teacher education institutions and says that College of education, which train teachers, use obsolete methods of teaching student teachers. It does not mean that student teachers are not theoretically taught all the new methods and techniques, but these are taught by obsolete methods. The result is that whatever student teachers learn theoretically is neither applied during their training nor is applied by them during their own teaching (Sharma, 2000).

Pandey (1997) identified general education, professional skills reasoning, numerical skill and reading comprehension of the teacher as important factors for better student achievement. Das (1994) conducted a research to study the impact of secondary teacher education programme on teacher effectiveness and teachers' job satisfaction. The main objectives of the study were to determine, if there is impact of training on teachers' job satisfaction and to determine if the performance of satisfied and effective teacher is higher than the untrained teacher. The findings of the study indicated that there was no appreciable impact of B.Ed. programme. The B.Ed. programme was neither vigorous nor-qualitative. Other causes of low teacher effectiveness were found to be of short duration, inexperienced teacher educators, lack of equipments and defective curricula. Trained teachers were found comparatively and significantly less satisfied with their jobs than untrained teachers.

Deficiencies in Teacher Education Curriculum

Existing teacher education structure does not provide any incentive or opportunities for professional growth and the quality of teacher education. Teacher trainers rarely try to develop teaching skills among trainees as they themselves lack in the expertise and treat the pedagogical parts of the training courses as purely theoretical. They are teaching but fail to train. Also they treat the trainees who are adults as adult learners and fail to use the principles of pedagogy. He further added that there is a need for material development, infusion of mass media and training technology in order to prepare teachers for future. The duration schedule and practice teaching of pre service teacher education courses is inadequate and not compatible with the global picture even of the developing countries and neighboring of the developing countries. Secondary School Teacher Education Programmes are of four year education and some are extended up to five years or even six years. For this purpose, duration of training is extended to two years for all levels (Rajput, 1996).

Standards for Secondary Teacher Education Curriculum

National Commission for Colleges of Education (2001) develops the minimum standards for the curriculum of teacher Education by focusing on main ideas that effect development and practice of education including Psychological

health and socio economic factor that may help child education performance. By providing guidance about leaning skills for maximum achievement, instructional/learning strategies should be included in curriculum. There should be an appropriated curriculum process pedagogy instructional materials and methods for maximum learner achievement for extra readings. In this way they can enhance their knowledge, including the knowledge of values and morality and it should be activity based. Major issues affecting teacher education programme in the country and to identify and suggest corresponding solution to these major problem of education in the country should be discussed intelligently and demonstrate proficiency in measuring and evaluating learning out comes and appropriate research on educational problems in the country must be considered (Anderson & Armbruster, 1990; Berliner, 1988; Beyer, 1991; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Harris, 1993; Jenning & Kennedy, 1996; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003 and Schon, 1987) .

In 1987, PTC curriculum was carefully evaluated by the Curriculum Research and Development Centre in Lahore. The evaluation was aimed at the weaknesses and strengths of the existing curriculum and ultimately its improvement as well. Following Conclusions were made during this study: The student teacher did not understand the intellectual growth pattern of the child, relationship between learning and motivation, the techniques of individual and group counseling and the importance of teacher-parent relationships. The curriculum of teacher education should be revised accordingly and the emphasis should be shifted from rote learning to activity-oriented learning were the recommendations made during the study (Baig, 1987).

Education of Teacher Educators

In Pakistan the curriculum review is required for teacher educator. Institutional quality depends upon teachers, and they can be made effective by effective teacher education programme, so the need is to improve the programme as a whole (Shahid, 2007). According to Rajput (1996) teacher educator should enhance their professional and academic qualification as they have to train in service and pre service teachers moreover they are very important for implementation of new teacher educator curriculum and concepts. Teacher educators should understand the educational issues; they should conduct researches, surveys and must also help the trainees in doing so. As school quality

is another evidence for effective teacher training so they should be familiar with school situation, school needs, public expectations, policy making, implementing strategies and checking programmes. Generally at elementary school level teacher educators are having B.Ed qualification but at higher level there are serious problems of professional qualification for recruiting teacher educators.

Scheme of Studies for Secondary School Teacher Education (BEd.)

| Component Subject | Paper | Marks | Weekly periods |
|----------------------------------|-------|---------------|----------------|
| Compulsory Subjects: | | | |
| Philosophy, History of Education | 1 | 100 | 3 |
| Educational Psychology | 2 | 100 | 3 |
| School organization | 3 | 100 | 3 |
| Islamic History, Muslim Culture | 4 | 50 + 50 = 100 | 3 |
| (For Non Muslim) | | | |
| Pakistan Study | 4 | 50 | 3 |
| Urdu Literature | 5 | 50 | 3 |
| English Literature | 5 | 50 | 3 |

Group A (Science)

Two subjects will be selected. Every subject has 200 marks.

1. Teaching of Physics
2. Teaching of Chemistry
3. Teaching of Biology
4. Teaching of Elective Mathematics

Students have the right to select any one of the combination.

Physics, Chemistry

Physics, Maths

Chemistry, Biology

The marks distribution of teaching of Physics, teaching of Chemistry, Teaching of Biology, Teaching of General Science, Teaching of Philosophy, Teaching of Hygiene.

Paper A Theory 75 Marks Practical 25 100

Paper B Theory 75 Marks Practical 25 100

Group B (Humanities)

Students have to select one subject from these sub groups.

1. Arabic, Persian, Physiology, Hygiene
2. Pakistan Study, History, Geography
3. Elective Maths, General Science
4. English, Islamyat
5. Urdu, General Science, Art, Model Drawing

Method and Procedure

To check the relevance of teacher education curriculum for ensuring quality of teaching the data were collected from two sources: study of B. Ed curriculum course out lines and interviews of teacher educators. The related recommended books were evaluated to see that whether the content is related to teaching skills and practice for the development of these skills present in these books. The second source was interview with teacher educators. Teachers of Colleges of Education were interviewed and asked the following questions:

1. What do you know about teaching skills and their importance in teacher education program?
2. Is there any content related to teaching skills in the recommended books?
3. Are you satisfied from the curriculum course outlines and recommended books regarding teaching skills?

Population and Sample

There were 106 teacher educators in both the Colleges of education; Govt. College of Education for Men, Lower Mall Lahore (35) and Govt. College of Education for Women, Lahore (71). Twenty teachers from both the colleges were selected as sample.

Analysis of B. Ed. Secondary Curriculum

The results of this analysis were as:

- The content related to the teaching skill, 'clarity in the classroom' (*i.e.* sufficient examples and exercises for the development of this teaching skill) was not present in the course outlines and recommended textbooks.

Interview with the teachers also revealed that they did not organize any practice sessions to develop this skill.

- There is no content in the course outlines and recommend book regarding the skill ‘variety in the classroom’, the interview with the teachers revealed that they do not organize classroom presentations and practice exercises for the development of this skill.
- There is some content related to sub-skill develop unit and lesson plan of the main skill task orientation in the classroom. The interview with the teacher of colleges of education indicated that no specific practice is organized for the development of the skill ‘task orientation in the classroom’.
- There is some knowledge related to sub-skill guided practice in terms of behavioral changes and use of verbal praise in recommended textbooks but practice for the development of main skill ‘engagement in the classroom’ is not arranged.
- Content and practice exercises were not explicitly mentioned in the course outlines and in recommended textbooks regarding the main skill ‘student success’. Interview with the teachers’ also supported this fact.
- Majority of the teacher educators seems dissatisfied from the curriculum used by them in respect of the content present in the recommended books for development of teaching skills in the prospective teachers.
- Most of the teacher educators were not familiar with the specific terminology of the teaching skills.

Recommendations

Following recommendations were offered on the basis of the findings of the study.

- It is therefore, recommended that B. Ed. curriculum may be revised and appropriate topics related to the teaching skills for effective teaching be emphasized in the curriculum.
- It was found that the teachers of the Colleges of Education themselves were not conversant with the teaching skills and methods of development of these skills in the pupil teachers. It is therefore, recommended that teachers of the Colleges of Education may be provided extensive training in this area.

- It is further recommended that Teacher Guides for the use of teachers of the Colleges of Education may be developed and provided to all the teachers of the Colleges of Education free of cost.
- Research based experimental editions of the teaching learning materials for pupil teachers may be developed and after establishing the effectiveness of these materials they may be provided to the pupil teachers.
- Further research in the field of skill development should be encouraged in the teacher education institutions. Incentives may be provided to the teachers as well as pupil teachers to conduct research in this field.

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