PRESIDENT'S PIECE

DEFINING QUALITY OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND IMPERATIVES FOR ACTION[1]

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Abstract

Every nation wants to provide for quality education to its people. The quality of compulsory education is often linked with the quality of teacher education delivered by key institutions in a country tasked to produce those who would nurture its young generation of learners. This paper discusses what makes quality teacher education.

WHAT IS TEACHER EDUCATION?

To provide for a yardstick on defining quality of teacher education, it is important to define teacher education and determine its role. Wikipedia (2011) defines **teacher education** as the set of policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills required to allow them to perform their tasks effectively. Thus, teacher education is universally associated with efforts on teacher preparation and development.

Teacher preparation has been associated also with the traditional normal schools or *ecoles normales* which provided for the standards in teaching on content and pedagogy. For most comprehensive

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universities, the normal schools became the springboard for their College of Education like those in the USA (e.g. Illinois State University and Indiana State University) and the Philippines (e.g. Bicol University and West Visayas State University). Nowadays, the role of teacher education has been expanded to cover the need to serve various disciplines by developing the capability of faculty members in higher education to effectively teach in their fields of expertise.

WHAT IS QUALITY EDUCATION?

Quality in education is quite complex to define. In general, quality can be viewed in terms of what we aim for in education that includes learners, environment, content, processes and outcomes. Since teacher education is part of both of higher education and basic education, it is worth considering what experts say on quality education in these two sectors.

For Green and Harvey (1993), quality in higher education can be looked at in:

- **exceptional** performance (exceeding high standards and passing a required standard);
- **consistency** (exhibited through "zero defects" and "getting right the first time", making quality a culture
- **fitness for purpose** (meaning the product or service meets the stated purpose, customer specifications and satisfaction
- **value for money** (through efficiency and effectiveness); and
- **transformative** (in terms of qualitative change)

On the other hand, Stephens (2003) argues that quality in basic education can be perceived as regards:

- **relevance** to context, to needs (both 'needs now' and 'needs later') and to humanity;
- **efficiency** in setting standards, in meeting standards set and in improving standards;
- **something special**…which goes beyond normal

expectations of a school; and
- **inclusion** (availability to **all** children irrespective of gender, ability or wealth)

Quality in teacher education then has to be understood based on these two propositions. Teacher education as a program belongs to higher education and its products are the key players in basic education.

TEACHER EDUCATION FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Teacher education may be viewed from three perspectives: (1) as the supplier or producer of teachers; (2) as user of products of teacher education institutions; and (3) as policy makers/regulators of the products of teacher education. Corollarily, three sets of quality perspectives inhere in teacher education.

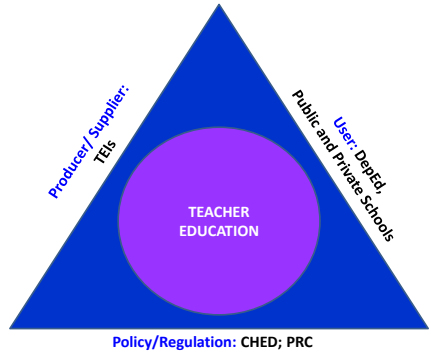


Figure 1. Teacher Education from Different Perspectives

In 2008, the Department of Education provided for the National Competency Based Standards (NCBTS) to ensure quality in the delivery of basic education. Those teaching at the elementary and secondary levels are expected to adhere to the seven NCBTS domains that encompass:

1. Social regard for learning;
2. The learning environment;
3. The diversity of learners;

4. Curriculum;
5. Planning, assessing and reporting;
6. Community linkages; and
7. Personal growth and professional development.

Related to these domains, various basic education studies on assessment of quality in structures versus processes bear out that quality in processes has the stronger link to quality in outcomes. However, one may argue that the quality in processes (teaching approaches and pedagogies) are brought about by the quality of the delivery of the teacher, clearly a manifestation on investment in structure (teacher upgrading and development programs).

This argument is aligned with the view from the supplier/producer side of teacher education. Teacher education institutions have their own expectations of their future teachers. To exemplify, the Philippine Normal University's (2001) defines an empowered teacher as one who:

Exercises effective communication
Manifests professional competence
Possesses adequate knowledge of the discipline
Observes professional ethics
Welcomes progressive innovation and change
Exhibits a deep sense of nationalism with global perspective
Radiates a caring attitude for others
Engages in research for problem solving and decision making
Demonstrates personal integrity

Such statement of what PNU must produce should permeate within the efforts of everyone in the university – the officials, faculty and staff – to ensure quality in its outputs.

The last view is from policy level and national policy and regulatory functions performed by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Philippine Regulation Commission (PRC). CHED has

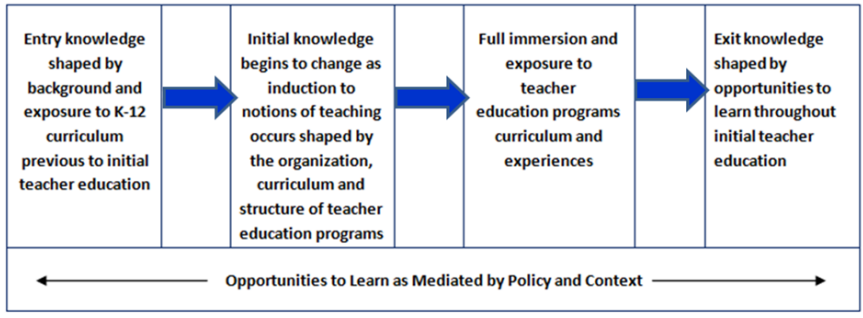
defined its standard for teacher education thru CMO No. 30, Series of 2004 which provides for the number of units required in the teacher education curriculum (BSEEd and BSEd), while the corresponding proportion of items in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) has been provided by PRC for the three learning areas, as shown below.

Table 1. Policy/Regulation of Teacher Education in the Philippines

AREAS	CHED		PRC	
	BEEd	BSEd	BEEd	BSEd
General Education	63	63	20%	20%
Professional Education	54	51	40%	40%
Content/Specialization	57	60	40%	40%
Total	**174**	**174**	**100%**	**100%**

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Teacher Education in Universities. Teacher education programs in the universities include both degree and non-degree programs. While degree programs embrace pre-service or teacher preparation programs at the baccalaureate level and graduate degree programs for masters and doctorate levels, the in-service programs for teachers cover certificate, diploma or customized programs. Teachers who would like retooling or upgrading of their competencies normally go back to universities to pursue either short-term or graduate degree programs.



Adapted from: Tatto, M. T. (2008). Teacher policy: a framework for comparative analysis. *Prospects: Quarterly Review of Comparative Education*, XXXVIII (38), 4 / 148, p. 487-508.

Figure 2. Teacher Learning Trajectory

Teacher Learning Trajectory. In trying to understand teacher education development and the influence of institutions, it is important to appreciate the process by which a future teacher is immersed into various forms of learnings. Maria Teresa Tatto (2010) proposes that the learning trajectory of a future teacher go through the processes, as defined in the figure below.

The Professional Development of Teachers. As teachers start their profession in the school system, they move in the ladder from novice teachers to emerging teachers, then as experienced teachers to specialist teachers. It may be pointed out that those who reach the peak as specialist teachers continue to engage in professional development – in most cases pursuing graduate degrees.

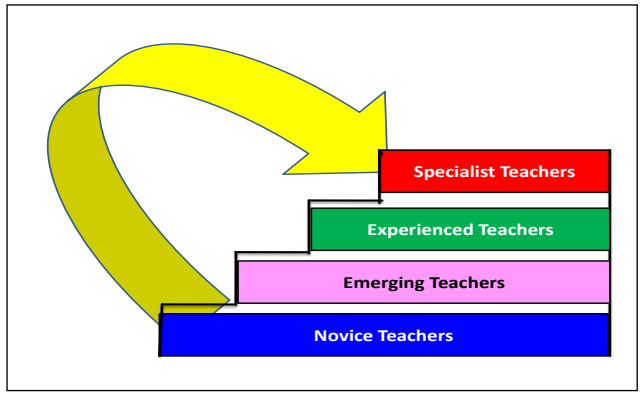


Figure 3. The Professional Development of Teachers

The Teacher and the Curriculum. The effectiveness of a teacher is manifested to a large extent by the performance of his/her students. Their performance may be measured by competencies developed by the students, as shown by the implemented versus the intended curriculum. The closer the implemented curriculum with the intended curriculum, the better is the expected students' performance. The teacher that delivers the least gap between the two is considered to be an excellent teacher. Universities are branded as good ones if they produce a significant number of good and excellent teachers that correspondingly produce good students.

CHALLENGES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education contends with several challenges such as:

- Education is increasingly becoming demand-driven
- New management technologies are transforming institutions toward excellence
- Technology is revolutionizing the way education is facilitated
- The standards movement is defining quality in teacher education
- The move is toward holistic and authentic learning
- The K to12 program of basic education

These major challenges are summed up as regards the need to enhance global competiveness and relevance. The latter requires that Filipino and ASEAN identity be developed in view of the challenges posed by the opening up of the ASEAN community by 2015, otherwise known as ASEAN 2015.

A teacher education institution that responds to these challenges will make it competitive. In turn, a competitive teacher education institution attracts good students, funding for research, and expertise. Every institution aspires to have this level of recognition.

TEACHER EDUCATION MODELS

Types of Teacher Education Programs. The first international Teacher Education Study in Mathematics (TEDS-M, 2008) has developed a framework for various teacher education programs and has classified various teacher education programs in 17 participating countries into two major models. As shown in the figure below, subjects on content, pedagogy and others are taken altogether in the **concurrent** program that leads towards a bachelor's degree in teacher education. However, the **consecutive** program allows for one who has finished a BS/BA program to take a certificate or diploma that covers pedagogy and practicum.

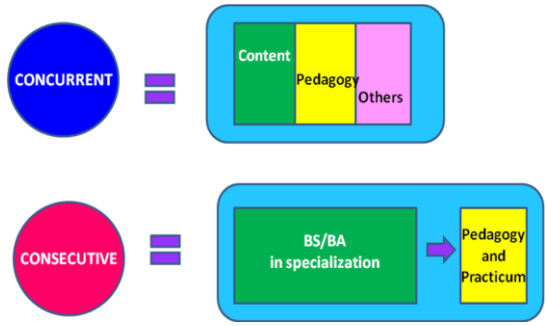


Figure 4. Types of Teacher Education Programs

What should teachers know. A lot of literature on education suggests that teachers have to be adept in three competencies to be effective: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and content pedagogical knowledge. The latter provides for the competency consistent with and similar to Shulman's (1986) idea of knowledge of pedagogy applicable to the teaching of specific content.

The Teacher Education Requirements in a University. There are two types of delivery systems of education in the Philippine universities that implement programs from bachelors to doctorate levels – a normal university focused on teacher education and a college of education in a comprehensive university. A normal university, like PNU, must target to develop capacity within a department for a discipline – 2/3 of its faculty in the education related discipline and 1/3 for pure discipline. Expectedly, in a comprehensive university the education related faculty work in the College of Education and the pure discipline faculty with the corresponding colleges, like the College of Science and Arts and Social Sciences.

Other Models. New and emerging models in teacher education consider the development of capacity for quality instruction of faculty members nurturing future professionals and emerging specialists in the different disciplines by training them and equipping them with competencies on pedagogy, measurement and assessment in education delivery. This may entail understanding

their role in providing for appropriate mentoring approaches for students in doing research and development at the higher year levels.

SYSTEMS APPROACH TO DEVELOPING QUALITY

That quality teacher education in universities be developed at the system level cannot be overemphasized. The approach calls for the need to define the quality of outputs/products and their corresponding reach and impact to target communities. Equally, it requires that the university identify the kind and quality of inputs and the processes necessary in delivering quality outputs/products. Quality in the processes will necessarily demand capable faculty, a good curriculum, a favourable learning environment and facilities, a culture and tradition on research to ensure that the university outputs are aligned with its intentions.

IMPERATIVES FOR ACTION

The challenges of the government's K to12 program provide for urgent measures for collective action. The following recommendations are put forward to respond to the need for delivering quality education:

- Define teacher education programs to match the required competencies of the 11th and 12th grade of the K to 12 program
- Strategize transition of teacher education in preparation for the full implementation of the K to 12
- Review the supply and quality of graduates of degree programs in teacher education
- Revisit curriculum vis-à-vis intentions
- Benchmark with international standards
- Address mother-tongue issues in basic education
- Identify program niches and distinctive competence
- Develop research-based programs in teacher education
- Consider concurrent and consecutive teacher

education models, especially for secondary school teaching
- Underscore the role of teacher education for developing teaching competence in other disciplines
- Develop a network of TEIs for program collaboration and improve the quality of education delivery
- Open opportunities for program and research collaborations with foreign universities and institutions

DEFINING QUALITY OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Having stressed the role of teacher education, its quality requirements for program delivery, we can say that the quality of its graduates defines the quality of the teacher education institution. Correspondingly, the quality of teacher education is defined by the quality of teachers and their students' performance.

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