

# **Re-engineering Teacher Education**

## **Approaches and Challenges**



**Editors**

**Rev. Dr. D. Thomas Alexander SJ**

**Dr. A. Punitha Mary**



**AASAAN PUBLICATIONS**

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## PREFACE

Dear Teaching and Research Fraternity, Greetings from SXCE, Palayamkottai!

Oh, Teacher Education! Quo Vadis? (Latin phrase for 'Where are you going?'). Where are the teacher educators? Where should we be heading towards? Are we on the precise road? What should be triggered? What kind of teachers do we mold to face the challenges of today's world? These are a few questions being raised among the teachers, teacher educators, educationists, policymakers, elderly citizens, and stakeholders such as parents and well-wishers. In search of reflective answers, our college ventured into the organization of a national conference of teacher educators, focusing on 'Re-engineering Teacher Education: Approaches and Challenges' on February 2nd and 3rd, 2024. It was consciously made offline to avoid the undesirable academic sluggishness and disasters in online transactions. We aimed to provide a platform on which the above questions may be deliberated, and concrete action plans may be initiated.

Teacher education is a foundation laid for the sustainable growth and development of any nation. If education must prosper and function positively in a society, then improving teacher education is vital and indeed inevitable. Teacher education is expected to contribute towards developing a basic understanding of the principles and practice of teaching and learning. It is to produce well-qualified professionals who can adjust to the changing needs of the students and developmental prospects of modern society. In it, knowledge and skills are developed, thereby building teachers/people to become useful to themselves and to the society they live in.

Which means, the need for overhauling and revamping of the system at a regular interval is a must for innovative and relevant training of prospective teachers, and meaningful classroom teaching-learning activities. Therefore, the keyword 'Re-Engineering,' which means a 'systematic process of analysis, design, and implementation' (Akpan et al, 2016), assumes significant importance if teacher education is to be modernized. Needless to say, the reassessment of teachers, existing pedagogic tools and materials will have to undergo stringent scrutiny of its appropriateness in the classroom transaction. Or we must agree, at least to the understanding that the re-engineering will require the use of both traditional and technological tools and modes, building on and extending traditional social forms of teaching and learning.

The current challenges that teacher education faces today after the advent of LPG mainly are related to the lethargic and easy-going attitude of teacher-educators, less enthusiasm among prospective teachers, a disconnect between pre-service training and post-training classroom activity, slow process of evaluation and revamping of learning content, diminishing professional commitment, rare model ethical behavior, and slow adoption to the rapid change of technological and scientific discoveries and inventions in the educational system. Hence there is a need for stimulating the professional spirit among the teacher educators/teachers, retaining the spirit of inquiry and creativity in teachers, enhancing teachers' commitment, training and motivating teachers for effective handling of classroom situations at different levels, and equipping them with modern Learning Management Systems (LMS). There is no one-size-fits-all solution; rather, each locality requires its own creativity, redesigning of content suiting local geographical conditions and needs, and adapting to the growing demands of society.

Thus, the two-day national conference on the above central point of re-engineering of teacher education enabled us to collectively, in person, ponder over various sub-themes and had the privilege of 43 papers being presented on the portal of St. Xavier's College of Education (Autonomous), Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu. Indeed, it was a unique experience to listen to so many speakers, including a thought-provoking panel discussion among administrators, faculty, parents, and students on the existing scenario in teacher education.

We are grateful to all the speakers, paper presenters, and the participants for their wonderful sharing and contributions along with their enthusiastic participation. Thus, we are very proud to publish the collections of the best papers presented at the conference as e-proceedings with an ISBN number. We are sure, this will go a long way to trigger the minds of younger teacher educators and prospective teachers in its way; we hope the responsibility of bearing this torch to further the cause of quality teacher education will continue in the future. I would like to fondly remember the painstaking effort undertaken by Prof. Dr. A. Punitha Mary and other faculty of our college for magnificently organizing the event to the point of relevance, quality, and fruitfulness.

May God bless you.

Prof. Dr. D. Thomas Alexander SJ, Principal,  
SXCE, Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli, TN.  
29.02.2024.

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## **MULTIFARIOUS QUALITIES AND MULTIFACETED RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHER EDUCATORS**

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### **Abstract**

Teacher educators are the professionals responsible for preparing individuals to become effective teachers. Teacher educators play a pivotal role in the education system by preparing and shaping the next generation of teachers by imparting the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for successful teaching careers. Their influence extends beyond the confines of the classroom, as they contribute significantly to the overall quality of education. This article tries to explore the multifarious qualities and multifaceted responsibilities of teacher educators and their impact on the evolving landscape of education.

### **Introduction**

Professional education focus on any individual who needs practice and seek to broaden his human that is his mental, moral and emotional capacities. Professional education plays a crucial role in preparing individuals for specific careers, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in their chosen fields. It typically involves specialized training that goes beyond general academic studies, focusing on practical applications. It is designed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge acquired in traditional education and the practical requirements of various professions. For that it often involves a combination of classroom instruction, hands-on training, and real-world experience, providing students with a well-rounded understanding of their chosen profession with updated knowledge and training on the latest advancements, technologies, and best practices. Lifelong learning is encouraged in professional education, as ongoing developments in technology and society require professionals to adapt and enhance their skills throughout their careers and teacher education is one of the best and most important professional education as it mainly focus on the preparation of teachers.

## Qualities of Teacher Educators

An effective teacher educator must possess strong mental abilities, positive teaching attitude, proper academic qualification, mastery of the subject, innovative teaching experience and sound professional ethics. A.S. Barr and Mitzal(1967) have reviewed several studies of teacher effectiveness and found that teacher effectiveness is highly related to the ability of decision making, mental consciousness or alertness and mastery of his subject or content and they based on these the essential qualities for teacher educators can be categorized as

- Cognitive Qualities
- Emotional Qualities and
- Psychomotor Qualities (Sharma, 2010).

**Cognitive Qualities:** The most important characteristics or quality needed for an effective teacher educator is that he/she must have full understanding of subject or in other words subject/content mastery. At the time of interview or appointment in teacher education institution main emphasis should be given on the academic qualifications. The teaching aptitude also considered for appointment as it is very important for success teaching profession. Another quality needed for an effective teacher educator is that he/she must know their students and the subject. It is a very old saying that “John Latin”. Here ‘john’ means student and ‘Latin’ means content or subject. These are the essential qualities of teacher educators that they must know (full awareness) of their students and must know their subject (mastery of the content).An effective teaching requires full understanding of content, terms and concept used by a teacher in the classroom. D.G. Ryan(1970) found in his research study that the ineffective teachers have poor academic qualification and they do not understand the subject well.

The effective teacher educators should have high mental ability and high mental consciousness. They should have creative abilities to deal with bright or gifted students and on the other hand must capable of dealing with average or slow learners also. Effective teacher educator should have basic knowledge in teaching principles, pedagogy, techniques and maxims of teaching. They should also have ability to maintain the classroom discipline during teaching.

***Emotional Qualities:*** This type of quality involves emotion, adjustment, interest, attitudes and values. It is related to professional ethics of teaching which is considered as one of the most important characteristics of teacher educator. The doing aspects of teacher educator is most effective than telling or saying since it is easy for the student teachers to imitate.

The classroom involvement of teacher educator in his presentation will definitely motivates the whole class. An effective teacher educator generates social and emotional climate in his/her class by the verbal and non-verbal behaviours, because it is found that there is relationship between verbal and non-verbal behaviours. The verbal behavior must provide more opportunities to students in participating in classroom verbal interaction.

Teacher educators should have integrated personality as they have to adjust with new groups and new students. It is an essential quality for teaching profession. D.G. Rayans (1970) has concluded that effective teachers provide encouragement and motivation to his students during classroom teaching. It relates professional ethics of a teacher.

***Psychomotor Qualities:*** Teaching is considered as an art as well as science. Art of teaching or art of questioning is the essential characteristic of an effective teacher educator. There are several teaching skills which are required for effective teaching. For example skill of questioning, skill of reinforcement, skill of stimulus variation, skill of introducing a lesson and the other micro teaching skills are expressed as psychomotor behaviours inside the classroom. Also, a good teacher educator must capable of demonstrating non-verbal communication tactics in an effective way.

The teacher educator community should possess these qualities and follow the code of ethics which may bring credit to the entire profession by creating 'N' number of committed teachers.

### **Responsibilities of Teacher Educators**

***Understanding the Students:*** It shall be the primary duty of teacher educators to understand their students, to adjust, to be courteous, to promote a spirit of enquiry, fellowship and joy among them, not to do or say anything that would undermine their personality, not to exploit them for personal interests and to set before them a high standard of character, discipline and personality.

***Pedagogical Expertise:*** Teacher educators are responsible for equipping pre-service teachers with the necessary pedagogical skills and knowledge. As highlighted by Darling-

Hammond (2017), effective teacher preparation programmes should focus on developing a deep understanding of subject matter, instructional strategies, and classroom management. This expertise is essential for producing competent teachers who can create engaging and effective learning environments.

**Reflective Practices:** Zeichner and Liston (2014) emphasized the importance of fostering reflective practices among pre-service teachers. Teacher educators guide future educators in critically examining their teaching methods and continuously improving their instructional approaches. This reflective process is crucial for the professional development of teachers and their ability to adapt to the changing needs of students.

**Incorporating Technology:** In the digital age, teacher educators play a crucial role in preparing teachers to integrate technology into their classrooms. Mishra and Koehler (2006) discussed the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, highlighting the need for educators to seamlessly integrate technology, content knowledge, and pedagogy. Teacher educators must ensure that pre-service teachers are proficient in leveraging technology to enhance learning outcomes.

**Cultural Competence and Diversity:** The globalized nature of contemporary society demands that educators possess cultural competence. Villegas and Lucas (2002) argued that teacher educators must instill an awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion in their students. This involves preparing future teachers to navigate diverse classrooms and adapt their teaching practices to meet the needs of a wide range of students.

**Research and Innovation:** The field of education is dynamic, and teacher educators must stay abreast of current research and innovations. Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2005) highlighted the significance of connecting theory and practice in teacher education. By engaging in scholarly activities, teacher educators model a commitment to lifelong learning and inspire pre-service teachers to adopt a similar mindset.

**Professional Commitment:** To be sincere and honest to the works and to go with proper preparation to the class, to endeavor, to maintain the efficiency by study and other means. They should not do or say anything which may lower the prestige in the eyes of our students, not to exert any pressure upon our students or their parents, not to act as an agent or accept monetary benefits and other compensation for any kind of students' works or assistance.

***Towards Society:*** It shall be the important duty of the teacher educator to set an example in citizenship, to promote the public good, to uphold the dignity of the divine calling in all the occasions, to size up the demands and aspirations of the society, to be dynamics leaders when required and to be ideal followers when desired.

## **Conclusion**

Teacher educators serve as the architects of the education system, molding the future of teaching and learning. Their impact extends far beyond the individual classrooms of their students. By imparting pedagogical expertise, fostering reflective practices, incorporating technology, promoting cultural competence, and staying abreast of research and innovation, teacher educators shape the foundation of a robust and responsive education system. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, the role and responsibilities of teacher educators becomes increasingly vital in ensuring the preparedness of educators to meet the diverse needs of students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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