

Re-engineering Teacher Education

Approaches and Challenges



Editors

Rev. Dr. D. Thomas Alexander SJ

Dr. A. Punitha Mary



AASAAN PUBLICATIONS

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St. Xavier's College of Education (Autonomous)

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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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EVALUATION PROCESS IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Teacher education programs are critical for preparing effective educators who can facilitate student learning and respond to various educational challenges. The evaluation process within these programs not only ensures the quality of teacher candidates but also fosters continuous improvement of the teacher education curriculum. This article examines the multifaceted evaluation strategies employed in teacher education, including formative and summative assessments, feedback mechanisms, self-reflection, peer review, and the use of educational technologies. It highlights the importance of aligning assessments with instructional objectives and the need for evaluation tools to be both reliable and valid. The role of accreditation bodies and professional standards in shaping evaluation processes is discussed along with the challenges faced by teacher education programs in assessing non-cognitive attributes such as attitude and professional behaviours. Finally, the article explores innovative practices in the evaluation process that contribute to the holistic development of teacher candidates and the creation of competent educators.

Key words: self-reflection, instructional objectives, professional behaviours

Introduction

The evaluation process in teacher education serves multiple purposes. It helps in assessing teacher candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions; provides a framework for reflection and professional growth; and ensures that teacher education programs maintain high standards. An effective evaluation strategy gives educators-in-training the feedback they need to improve their practice and prepares them for the varied challenges they will face in the classroom.

Evaluation Strategies in Teacher Education

Evaluation in teacher education can be divided into two main categories: formative and summative assessment. Formative assessments occur continuously throughout the program, providing ongoing feedback to students for improvement. Summative assessments, on the other hand, are typically used to determine whether students have met the necessary qualifications to progress or graduate.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessments include activities such as classroom observations, lesson plan critiques, and reflective journals. These methods enable teacher educators to give immediate, actionable feedback. Peer review can also be an integral part of formative assessment, offering a unique perspective on a candidate's performance and fostering a collaborative learning environment.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessments often take the form of final teaching portfolios, comprehensive exams, or standardized tests. While summative assessments can effectively measure a wide range of competencies, there is an ongoing debate about the weight they should carry in the overall evaluation process.

Feedback Mechanisms and Self-Reflection

Feedback is a cornerstone of the evaluation process. It must be timely, constructive, and targeted to encourage teacher candidates to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses. Self-reflection is another crucial component, which allows candidates to internalize feedback and set personal and professional development goals.

Ensuring Quality: The Role of Accreditation and Standards

Accreditation bodies play a crucial role in the quality assurance of teacher education programs. The standards set forth by these organizations often guide the development of curricula, assessment rubrics, and the evaluation process itself. Programs must demonstrate compliance with these standards to earn and maintain accreditation, which is essential for institutional reputation and for graduates' eligibility to secure teaching credentials. The use of professional standards also fosters a national consensus on what constitutes effective teaching, offering a framework for evaluating teacher candidates across programs.

Evaluating Non-Cognitive Attributes

Non-cognitive skills, such as classroom management, professional ethics, and interpersonal relationships with students and colleagues, are harder to assess through objective measures. These skills are integral to the teaching profession, and their evaluation often requires qualitative methods, such as reflective essays, mentor teacher reports, and situational judgment tests. The subjective nature of these assessments can lead to

inconsistency, making it necessary to train evaluators to recognize and value these diverse attributes reliably.

Incorporating Educational Technologies in Evaluation

The rise of educational technologies offers new avenues for teacher candidates' evaluation. For instance, video recordings of teaching practice allow for detailed analysis and self-reflection as well as peer and supervisor feedback. E-portfolios enable candidates to document their growth over time, showcasing their development through diverse artifacts, including lesson plans, student assessments, and reflective pieces. Technology-enhanced simulations are also emerging as a method to assess candidates' abilities to respond to classroom scenarios in a controlled environment.

Innovative Trends in Evaluation

Teacher education programs are increasingly emphasizing performance-based assessments, such as edTPA (Teacher Performance Assessment), to evaluate candidates' readiness to teach. Such assessments require candidates to demonstrate planning, instruction, and assessment skills in authentic classroom settings. Collaborative assessments, where teacher candidates work with experienced educators to reflect on teaching practices, are also gaining traction as they blend skill development with real-world experience.

Emphasizing Continuous Improvement

An effective evaluation process in teacher education should foster a culture of continuous improvement, both for the candidates and the program itself. Program evaluation, involving feedback from graduates and their employers, can provide insights into the program's effectiveness and areas for enhancement. Such assessments are crucial for the iterative refinement of teaching methods, content, and evaluation practices within the teacher education program.

Conclusion

The evaluation process in teacher education is dynamic and multifaceted. It is essential for preparing educators who are not only knowledgeable but also adaptable, reflective, and compassionate. As the field of education continues to evolve, so too must the strategies we use to evaluate our future teachers, ensuring that they are equipped to meet the needs of diverse learners and the challenges of a rapidly changing educational landscape. A comprehensive and balanced evaluation process is vital for developing competent,

reflective, and adaptable educators. Teacher education programs must use a combination of formative and summative assessments, alongside innovative practices, to ensure candidates are well-prepared for the demands of the teaching profession. Aligning with professional standards and incorporating feedback, reflection, and technological tools, teacher education evaluation must evolve continuously to produce teachers capable of shaping the future of education through innovation, empathy, and leadership.

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