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ABSTRACT

Most education decision-makers agree on contributing to better teacher training. Within the educational realm, some postulates have earned universal and general acceptance because of the amount of previous experience and theoretical considerations (i.e., relationship between education and social structure, lifelong learning, universal acceptance of some type of "formal education"). Some problems affecting educational development in developing countries are large numbers of persons still lacking basic education, many children dropping-out before completing elementary school, and increasingly scarce resources. Within this reality, teacher training can be defined as a conscious deliberated, participative and continuous process implemented by an educational system to improve academic performance and the outcome of educational programs, encourage complete self-development and continuous effort for professional renewal among teachers, and reinforce the teachers' "spirit of commitment" to society and the community. By knowing what teachers must do to perform their teaching duties well and to improve their performance and what teaching quality students need and the community demands, training needs can be determined and relevant training programs can be designed. This article suggests an approach to teacher training that considers the improvement of teaching quality, student achievement, and community and family participation in the teaching-learning process for determining teacher training effectiveness. (Author/NQA)

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TECHNICAL GUIDELINES FOR IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

(For Latin American and Caribbean Countries)

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TECHNICAL GUIDELINES FOR IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING
(For Latin American and Caribbean Countries)

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Abstract

Contributing to better teacher training is something on which most decision-makers in educational process agree.

Within the educational realm, there are some postulates that, because of the great amount of previous experience and theoretical considerations, have earned universal and general acceptance (i.e. relationship between education and social structure. lifelong learning. universal acceptance of some type of "formal education")

There are some problems affecting the educational development in developing countries; large numbers of persons still lack basic education. many children drop-out before they complete elementary school. resources are increasingly scarce.

Within the above mentioned reality teacher training can be defined as a conscious deliberated, participative and continuous process implemented by an educational system in order to (a) improve academic performance and the outcome of educational programs; (b) encourage complete self-development and continuous effort for professional renewal among teachers: (c) and reinforce the teachers' "spirit of commitment" to society and the community which they work.

This article suggests an approach to teacher training that considers the improvement of teaching quality the student achievement and the community and family participation in the teaching-learning process as standards to determine the effectiveness of teacher training

Knowing what teachers must do in order to perform their teaching duties well and to improve their performance and what quality of teaching students need and the community demands, training needs can be determined and relevant training programs can be designed.

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I. FUNDAMENTAL

It is believed by most people that teachers are an essential part of the educational process and that the quality of any educational system cannot be better than the quality of its teachers. It seems that on such beliefs there is no further argument. Contributing to better teacher training is something on which most decision-makers in educational process agree.

When recent important documents are examined, i.e. the "Declaration of Mexico", (approved in December 1979, by the Regional Conference of Ministers of Education and Ministers in charge of Economic Planning in the Latin American and Caribbean member states; organized by UNESCO with the cooperation of ECLA and OAS) and the Program Guidelines of the Regional Educational Development Program, 1982-1983, one finds frequent references to teacher training as an educational priority. In Mexico, the ministers urged the Member States to adopt effective steps to reform teacher education and training systems, both before and after teaching begin to give educators the opportunity to enrich and update their knowledge and pedagogical competence.

The 1982-1983 Program Guidelines approved in May 1980 by the Interamerican Committee on Education, recommends deep changes in teacher training and acknowledges the consensus that any possibility of change in the educational system, even when favorable legislation exists, essentially depends upon the innovative activities of its teachers. So much is this so that the priority and importance assigned to teacher training by Latin American and Caribbean educational leaders is unquestionable, though the operationalization of these declarations and approaches might still be a matter for discussion and debate.

II. POSTULATES OF GENERAL ACCEPTANCE

Within the educational realm, there are some postulates that, because of the great amount of previous experience and theoretical considerations, have earned universal and general acceptance; among such postulates the following should be mentioned: (1) there are relationship between education and social structure; (2) education is a social process interacting with specific historic, spatial, and societal contexts; (3) the concept of lifelong learning, as both a human need and a human right, has won universal acceptance; (4) all countries advance, albeit at different rates, towards what might be called universal acceptance of some type of "formal education"; (5) institutions that traditionally have not carried out educational activities are, increasingly, participating in the support, organization and management of educational activities which leads one to think that the concept of out-of-school education is also winning universal acceptance; (6) there is a growing demand to participate in the decision-making process from everyone, including teachers, active in the educational system.

The above mentioned postulates correlate with one of the major variables in educational activity, teacher training.

III. PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Some of the problems affecting educational development, citing a document from the World Bank, Education Sector Policy, 1980, are:

- (1) Large numbers of persons still lack basic education; this fact is expressed by the high rate of illiteracy in most developing countries. The population of children of school-age grows faster than the supply of resources and, moreover, the educational opportunities, as any other aspect in developing societies, are inequitably distributed.
- (2) The educational systems have deficiencies expressed in the fact that many children drop-out before they complete elementary school; repeaters occupy high percentages of school places; academic achievement is low. Such facts are, of course, determined by social and economic factors.
- (3) There is a grave form of "external inefficiency": most students receiving their high school diplomas do not find appropriate jobs; this fact is also determined by social and economic factors.
- (4) The means, the infrastructure, and the capacity to analyze and conduct research in education are inadequate. The research is relegated and its importance is neglected.
- (5) The resources are increasingly scarce. Inflation erodes budgets in education and the arms race uses funds that otherwise would be for education, within the already diminished public budgets.

IV. RAISON D'ETRE OF IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

Some of the problems mentioned can be approached from the standpoint of teacher training especially those related to academic achievement, educational research and more efficient use of existing resources. Acknowledging the existence of the cited problems, the question arises, what is the raison d'etre of teacher training? The answer is a multiple one:

- (1) The development of new knowledge in psychological and pedagogical topics requires teachers to update their knowledge and skills in order to avoid obsolescence.
- (2) Scientific and technological developments provides new teaching material which teachers need to learn.

- (3) The new segments of the population entering school and those already in the system are developing new anxieties which demand educators to review their teaching methods.
- (4) New methods and equipment are entering teaching practice, especially influenced by technology, therefore requiring teachers to acquire new skills.
- (5) Teachers are expected to be social change agents. To do so they need to become involved in continuous professional self-development, with a sense of commitment to the needs of the specific society within which they operate.
- (6) Educational objectives and goals change in virtue of changes in the social or political environment. This fact creates training needs.

For the above mentioned reasons one can conclude that teachers have the right, the need and the obligation to up-to-date their skills and knowledge, to improve the quality of education students receive and that which society demands. This proves to be the essential issue of teacher training.

V. A DEFINITION OF IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

A doctrine of teacher training implies a framework of reference that relates education to social development and structure; and defines the characteristics of a teacher. In other words, a doctrine of teacher training must conceptualize the meaning of teacher training and its guiding principles.

Teacher training can be defined as a conscious, deliberated, participative and continuous process implemented by an educational system in order to (a) improve academic performance and the outcome of educational programs; (b) encourage complete self-development and a continuous effort for professional renewal among teachers; (c) and to reinforce the teachers' "spirit of commitment" to society and the community which which they work.

For the purpose of teacher training, potential trainees may be found not only in professionals working in the classroom but also among personnel working in the technical and administrative units of educational systems.

VI. FUNCTIONS AND ROLES OF TEACHERS

Everywhere, teachers are faced with new challenges and frequently are assigned divergent responsibilities and roles, many of which are held as ambitious or utopian. Education should be a lifelong process, either in or out of the classroom. It must interact with the community. Science and technology rapidly advance and teachers must learn to creatively adapt

themselves to these changes; the twenty-first century will be a turning point and we must prepare the next generations with critical and creative abilities as well as with a firm sense of identity in their sociopolitical contexts. All of these are to a considerable extent, the responsibility of teachers who should be the agents of change.

Of course, teachers are neither Titans nor should they carry the entire responsibility for domestic social development. For the purpose of teacher training, perhaps it would be more realistic and appropriate to regard the role of educators as the strict accomplishment of their teaching obligations, in the light of their relationships with the student groups, the surrounding community, and the teaching community.

Teacher training should be oriented towards producing better teachers. It must be based on the fundamental roles of teachers in the teaching-learning process. Teachers must be trained to organize, execute, and evaluate educational experiences; to know the foundations of psychological, sociological, and pedagogical theories behind the educational process, and to know how to relate and utilize the social environment -families and institutions- as a teaching agent. Moreover, teachers must be trained to fully understand their inherent professional rights and obligations.

VII. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES IN IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING: THE CASE OF PROMULCAD (Spanish acronym)

It could be said that every country in Latin America or the Caribbean is undertaking activities in teacher training to improve their educational systems. International organizations increasingly urge and finance projects that list teacher education and training as priorities.

In the Regional Educational Development Program there is the Multinational Project for the Development of National Systems of Teacher Training which is known by its Spanish acronym, PROMULCAD.

PROMULCAD started its operations in 1978 as a joint venture of the Ministries of Education from Colombia, Chile, and Peru. Essentially, PROMULCAD answers to the need countries have to implement systems able to offer to active personnel in the educational system, especially teachers, the opportunity to continuously up-date their professional skills and knowledge, to receive training in specific subjects and to undertake curricular innovations urged by their educational systems. Such goals are based upon the assumption that upgrading teachers directly helps to improve the quality of education. This project functions within the priorities suggested by the PREDE Program Guidelines in regard to strengthening the instruments and agents of education.

The general objectives of PROMULCAD are: (1) to put into action teacher training systems designed and implemented according to local conditions and to achieve national coverage, and (2) to transfer strategies already initiated or applied in teacher training to systematize a valid approach for Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Since 1978, the general activities of PROMULCAD have been:

- (1) the diagnosis of teacher training in Colombia, Chile and Peru reported in a comparative study published in 1978. Since then, the three countries have undergone important changes in their educational organization.
- (2) The validation of teacher training procedures. In this field, Colombia has studied the extent to which training has been effective and has initiated experiences in the production of teaching materials. Chile has evaluated the technical units in charge of region-wide programs and Peru has developed methods to validate procedures in teacher training strategies.

An important outcome of PROMULCAD has been the creation of a group of international professionals who on a permanent basis discuss and exchange experiences in subjects related to teacher training.

For 1982, PROMULCAD will have a new Member State, Panama, and the Department of Educational Affairs of the OAS will have a new programmatic area, Teacher Training.

VIII. AN APPROACH: IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING FROM A PERSPECTIVE WHICH TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE COMMUNITY NEEDS AND THE QUALITATIVE UPGRADING OF EDUCATION

In August 1982, a multinational workshop on teacher training was held in Colombia, as part of the regular activities of PROMULCAD. Coordinators and Directors of the project, working in each of the member countries of PROMULCAD participated in the workshop.

The workshop approached teacher training from a perspective that takes into account community needs and the qualitative improvement of education. The final report includes the following considerations:

- The goals for the qualitative improvements of education are determined by several factors, some of them located within the educational system (or subsystem) and other within the social system which embraces the educational system. Only when the appropriate decisions are made considering these factors, will the goals for qualitative improvement in education be attained.

- Some of these goals are considered by the factors, but the goals are mediated by teacher training; therefore, teacher training can contribute to attain such goals.
- Teacher training is considered in this approach as an "intermediate" variable that is able to contribute directly to the achievement of some goals; but that needs some modification of factors in order to contribute to the achievement of other goals. Moreover, there are other goals that are not matter of teacher training.
- Teacher training, therefore, appears as the intermediary variable. It seems clear, on one hand that training cannot be uniquely responsibility for all the efforts aimed toward qualitative improvement. On the other hand, training acquires an important dimension among educational activities, because it is able to formulate goals which are socially valid and can be placed precisely in the realm of goals for qualitative improvement.
- The reason for defining goals in qualitative improvement is to make them operational in terms of indicators, and to allow for more clarity in decision-making on factors influencing the qualitative improvement. The selected indicators are indeed criteria to evaluate the improvement.
- Indicators of qualitative improvement should be based on the specific social goals. A broader categorization of indicators would open up new areas of educational research and attempt to correlate factors and goals of qualitative improvement of education that become operational via the indicators.
- There are factors affecting the qualitative improvement of education; those factors exist in three components of the educational system: (a) the social component; (b) the educational structure; (c) the community.
- In each of the three system components there exists four additional groups of factors: (a) economical factors; (b) administrative and managerial aspects; (c) curricular programs; and, (d) standards of living.
- To establish the indicator for the qualitative improvement of education it is necessary to identify the general framework (internal and external) that conditions and determines the educational system (or subsystem). Among the issues that affect the educational system are: (a) the type of existing and desired societies; (b) the profile of man (national and international) on both individual and social levels; (c) the cultural tradition (the concepts of man, his world and the fundamental relationships between man and his world).

Among the social determinants are: (a) the institutionalized model of socio-economic development, and (b) the type of government and public administration.

- From this general framework, it is inferred that the social system defines the philosophy and the operational policy held by the educational system (in this case regarded as a subsystem).

The above mentioned considerations form the focus for teacher training.

IX. SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

1. Approach

Faced with the number of teacher training programs in Latin America and the Caribbean, the quantity of resources countries dedicate to teacher training and, especially, the ever present hope that teacher training is the means to improve the effectiveness of the educational systems, one is impelled to recognize the importance of adopting an approach able to create a beneficial impact on the quality of teaching and student performance.

Moreover, such an approach should take into account the determination of realistic and challenging objectives for the training; the identification of the optimal time necessary to obtain effects in teacher training that help to improve student performance; and, finally, the establishment of appropriate criteria to measure student achievement.

Some studies on teacher training say that training has no effect on student learning outcomes. This is so because the programs that are evaluated have been approached in an inappropriate way; the program designed and implementers have thought of teacher training per se instead of the student achievement and the quality of the teaching-learning process where students are involved.

This is the reason for suggesting an approach to teacher training that considers the improvement of teaching quality, the student achievement and the community and family participation in the teaching-learning process as standards to determine the effectiveness of teacher training.

Teacher training programs must take into account the characteristics of teachers according to the specific context within which they work. Teachers are mostly public employees. In developing countries teacher's salaries absorb almost 95% of the education expenditures in the government budget. The fact that teachers are, generally speaking, public employees emphasizes the teachers position as professionals strongly ruled and directed by public policies.

However, teachers maintain daily contact with the people and are aware of their problems, moreover teachers exhibit an increasing involvement in teachers unions. Such facts must be considered in designing teacher training programs. Teachers' associations should participate in the conception, execution

and evaluation of teacher training programs; and these programs should include subjects that deal with the regulations of the teaching profession and the relationships between teachers and government.

Teacher training should occur simultaneously with incentive programs such as better salaries for those successfully completing training, tuition payment at colleges and universities and other similar incentives. Training should be integral to teaching career.

Finally, teacher training should focus on the principles of lifelong learning as teacher's right and as something necessary and inherent in their teaching careers.

2. Topics to consider in in-service teacher training

Knowing what teachers must do in order to perform their teaching duties well and to improve their performance and what quality of teaching students need and the community demands, training needs can be determined and relevant training programs can be designed.

Teachers must know their teaching material and they must be able to organize, execute and evaluate learning experiences. Therefore, they need training in micro-planning, educational administration and teaching methods.

Teachers need to keep contact with their students' families and with the surrounding environment; thus they need training to interact with family and community groups, community organizations, public agencies, and private enterprises located in the immediate environment of their schools.

Teachers must grow as individuals and fulfill basic personal needs. Therefore, they need training in subjects related to their mental and physical health and their leisure time.

Based upon the above-mentioned concepts, the following are some topics to consider for teacher training program:

- Planning of classroom activities
- School Administration
- Evaluation of student achievement
- Program evaluation
- Teaching/learning methods and techniques
- Production of teaching materials and aids
- Use of audio-visual aids
- Organization Development
- Community relations
- Interpersonal relations and communications
- Family, Community and School relations

- Labor relations
- Teachers and Government
- Health and the Teaching Profession
- Management of Leisure Time.

Those subjects refer to general issues which are appropriate to every teacher. Obviously, the training programs must include their own subjects in which teachers are specialists and have curricular responsibilities.

3. Methods for In-service Teacher Training

The methods to train teachers while they perform their professional duties must be based on the characteristics of adults, especially adult with higher education.

Mature persons are able to direct their own training. Therefore, the methods of teacher training account for better training based on individual responsibility. Adults prefer to voice their own training needs, to define learning objectives and to implement training programs. Adults have a different self-esteem than children and teen-agers; their concept of time is different from that held by teen-agers; adults prefer to participate in training programs where their previous experience is respected and considered a fundamental pivot for the training. They learn what they want, when they want it and, usually, motivation is based on perceived need which originates in a problem they think affects their performance.

Interactive methods are valuable for teacher training. For example, small group discussions are appropriate if the training is oriented towards solving management problems in schools or sections of schools; and self-directed methods, if the training is geared to massive needs.

The frequent debate on the dichotomy of traditional methods versus modern methods or passive methods versus active methods deserves some consideration. Experience indicates, and this known by everyone who has been a trainer, that it is not adequate to put the so-called traditional methods as antagonist to active methods. Both categories of methods should be complemented and used, within a single training activity, in balanced proportions.

In the last decades, many innovative training methods have been "invented" due to the influence of technology, the development of the behavioral sciences, (especially Psychology), and changes occurring in organizational management which increasingly uses participative approaches (Organization Development, Planned Change, Management by Objectives, Process Consultation).

Programmed Instruction, closed circuit educational television, computer assisted instruction, case methods, interactional learning (using small groups discussions) have gone into the training programs. An arrangement that has

become very popular in training personnel active in educational systems is the so-called "distance learning" in which several methods, techniques and administrative procedures are combined to offer education and training (mass media, correspondence, programmed text, etc.). This type of training is appropriate when training is for large quantities of teachers or when the teaching personnel are scattered throughout the country.

To decide on training methods, it is suggested, among other things, to determine if the methods under consideration motivate trainees to actively participate in the learning process. Moreover, the investment of time and the necessary resources should also be considered. There are modern and well advertised methods that are very expensive and have little impact to motivate active participation. This is the case of the motion picture as a teaching aid. Computer assisted instruction allows individualized teaching and training based on stimulus-response approaches, but it is also very expensive. The same argument holds for programmed texts.

The case method allows a dynamic group interaction and the use of several teaching techniques during the learning process, but it needs a lot of time and resources to prepare the case and the trainer. To conduct training using the case method, it is necessary, perhaps more than in any other method, to master what is called the "art of teaching."

A method, or combination of methods, recommended to train personnel with higher education, is the so-called interactional method. This method is not based on the reaction of an individual faced with a learning experience, but rather on the interaction among individuals who meet in small groups to learn about a concrete, specific and common problem.

To sum up on methods for in-service teacher training, it can be said that there are two streams of teacher training methods:

- (a) a distance learning scheme, if the training is oriented to large numbers of teaching personnel or scattered teachers throughout the country;
- (b) the workshop, using interactional methods and small groups, when the training is oriented toward improving small scope systems (i.e. a school, a nucleus)

Combined, both streams might also be useful to train teachers.

X. FINAL REFLECTIONS

It has been said above, in brief paragraphs, that there is a general agreement about the priority of teacher training. There are some postulates in education that have won universal acceptance (i.e. lifelong education).

The raison d'etre of teacher training centers around the performance of teachers as professional educators. There are previous experiences in Latin American and Caribbean educational systems (i.e. PROMULCAD). There is a teacher training approach which considers the community needs and the qualitative improvement of education in the light of societal goals, choosing subjects to be taught, and selecting training methods.

When teacher training is studied in-depth, it is easy to learn that it is related to every aspect in the educational process. It touches every level and type of educational system, both formal and non-formal.

Perhaps, a final reflection to be made is that although teachers are professionals highly regulated by governmental policies and they are individuals conditioned by current social values, socio-political structure, school roles, and the nature of the subject they teach, teachers are able to participate in their own training, that allows them to be better teachers, better informed professionals to understand their students' families and the surrounding community; training of "a systemic, multidisciplinary, and ideologically pluralistic nature" used as a means to improve the performance of teachers and the quality of education received by students. The challenge is enormous, but so are the possibilities.