

Role of Pedagogical Methods in Development of Primary Teachers Quality

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ABSTRACT

Education's consumers believe that effective schools and effective teachers are those that are successful in bringing about prescribed results and that true educational reform should serve to improve these results. Teachers, professors of education, educators who work for the state education agencies, and other members of the education community, that is, public education's providers, generally take a different view. Education's consumers and education's providers talk about learning and achievement, but they accord it very different priorities. Educators believe that using correct pedagogical process is more important than attaining any particular level of mastery. Their reason for valuing process over outcome is that they believe optimal educational outcomes-that is, a kind of balanced growth of the whole-are possible only when the right kind of teaching is used. They refer to such teaching as "best practice." Best practice teaching is the open-ended, facilitative, guide on-the-side type of teaching that is extolled by professors of education. It is also called learner-centered instruction because it theoretically puts the overall interests of the learner first-in other words, ahead of the teacher's interest in the student's acquisition ,of knowledge and skills.

Keyword: *Outcomes, Best practice, Educaion, Practical, Enlightened*

Introduction:

Education's consumers believe that effective schools and effective teachers are those that are successful in bringing about prescribed results and that true educational reform should serve to improve these results. Teachers, professors of education, educators who work for the state education agencies, and other members of the education community, that is, public education's providers, generally take a different view. They believe that the knowledge and skills that consumers consider important are only one part of a broad range of considerations with which

schools and teachers must concern themselves. In the world of teacher education, learner-centered instruction is the standard against which all other forms of teaching are judged. In theory, learner-centered instruction permits the student to grow in a way that respects the full range of individual needs, not simply in ways that parents or teachers believe important. Instruction fitted to individual student needs is believed to be conducive to the emergence of a personal synthesis of understanding, that is, an understanding that is practical, not abstract and bookish, relevant to the learner's life, and fully

integrated into the individual's worldview. In theory, teachers trained in "enlightened" classroom methods would be helpful and sympathetic mentors, not taskmasters with a hickory stick. It was a concept that greatly bolstered public acceptance of the idea that teachers need specialised training, not mere subject matter expertise. It began as the "learning can be fun" approach, and it has become the "learning must be fun" approach.

Over the last thirty or forty years, learner-centered methods have attempted to individualise instruction to a variety of cognitive, developmental, socioeconomic, cultural, racial, and personality characteristics. The study of student diversity has become the overweening passion of education professors; and teachers, of course, have been thoroughly indoctrinated with the idea that their first responsibility is to be aware of and sensitive to such differences in their curricular and instructional planning. There are mountains of research on the identification of student differences and an equally large number of studies showing degrees of relationship between student characteristics and success in school.

Result and Discussion:

New Changes in Teacher Education

For decades, members of the lay public and lay policy makers have prodded, encouraged, and supported the education community's efforts at improvement. What they have gotten in return is a seemingly unending cycle of innovations, fads, failures, and reforms, most of which have been variants or refinements of pedagogical ideals¹¹ that have been around since the early part of the last century. These "improvements" are coming right out of the schools of education, and they are creating problems, not merely failing to solve them. Taxpayers are spending billions on educational reforms that have been necessitated by the faulty and ineffective practices in which teachers have

been trained.

The self-esteem-boosting fad of the sixties and seventies is an excellent example. Proponents believed that students fail to benefit from schooling because they lack positive self-regard. In many schools of education, teachers were taught that the student's need for self-esteem must be fulfilled before study, learning, and achievement can be expected. Whole courses were dedicated to teaching teachers how to facilitate the growth of self-esteem. Self-esteem improvement became so thoroughly ingrained in teaching that, at one point, U.S. students may have been world leaders in self-esteem despite their abysmal academic performance.

As is the case with class-size reduction, there was research showing a modest relationship between high levels of self-esteem and academic achievement. As it turns out, however, self-esteem was related to school success not because high self-esteem is necessary to learning but because academic success elevates self-esteem. In other words, the self-esteem researchers had it backward. Improved self-esteem is a by-product of educational success, not a cause of it.

The principal efforts to reform teacher training are being led by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF). The NCTAF is aggressively urging policy makers at the state level to adopt the training standards set by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE); the teacher licensure standards set by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC, a group working under the auspices of the Council of Chief State School Officers); and the advanced teacher certification standards set by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). This entire initiative is premised on the idea that the chief problems affecting teacher quality

are insufficient numbers of fully trained teachers, insufficient training for teachers, insufficient regulation, and inadequate standards.

Instead of training teachers to improve student achievement, current teacher-training programmes—including those that are NCATE-approved—are indoctrinating them in pedagogical concepts that embody educational priorities at odds with those of the consuming and taxpaying public. Adoption of the NCTAF proposals may improve teacher quality as conceived by the teacher education community but if anything, it will make matters worse for education’s consumers. Teachers not indoctrinated in learner-centered views will become harder to find.

The NCTAF is mainly composed of representatives of the education community. That they subscribe to the principles that have guided the education community for years is not surprising. The NCTAF has reams of research supporting its proposals, but virtually all are studies that define teacher quality in ways consistent with the education community’s aims, not with those of the public. The NCTAF-inspired reforms are one more attempt to improve teacher training by promoting the wider use of pedagogical practices that have failed for generations.

The NCTAF’s strategy is to improve teacher quality through closer scrutiny of teacher competencies. They propose to look at both subject matter knowledge and pedagogical expertise. The concept of testing teachers for subject matter competence is sound because knowledge is a valid prerequisite to successful teaching and credible tests are available. As many have noted, teachers cannot teach what they don’t know. The assessment of pedagogical expertise, however, is another matter entirely. Policy makers and the public assume that tests such as the Praxis (formerly the can measure a teacher’s ability to

bring about student achievement. In fact, they are not valid in that sense at all. Rather, they measure whether teachers have learned that which their professors taught them, which is the “best practices” favoured by the schools of education. As was made clear by the recent report of the National Research Council’s Committee on Assessment and Teacher Quality, “There is currently little evidence available about the extent to which widely used teacher licensure tests distinguish between candidates who are minimally competent to teach and those who are not.”

Teacher licensure tests are not designed to predict who will become effective teachers. The same can be said about all of the various portfolios, rubrics, and classroom performance indicators that are embodied in the “competency-based” approaches to teacher assessment now recommended by the NCATE, the INTASC, and the NBPTS. All afford the candidate the opportunity to exhibit his or her grasp of “pedagogically correct” methodology, not of practices that are known to bring about increases in measured achievement. From a consumer standpoint, these assessments are nothing more than a new way of ensuring that trained teachers are all grounded in the same ill-suited doctrines.

Several recent reports agree that sound methods of assessing teacher quality are sorely needed. A 1999 U.S. Department of Education report concluded, “... indicators of teacher preparation and qualifications do not directly address the actual quality of instructional practices.” Similarly, an April 2000 report by the American Federation of Teachers called for teacher-training programmes to develop a credible core curriculum in pedagogy: “We can no longer tolerate a ‘do your own thing’ pedagogy curriculum.” An improved exit/ licensure test was one of its major recommendations. A fall 1999 report by the

American Council on Education not only called for improved assessment of teachers but also bluntly urged college presidents to either strengthen the quality of teacher-training programmes or close them. Tests of pedagogical knowledge and competency-based assessments of pedagogical skill are valid to the extent that they serve as proxies for effective teaching. In other words, they are valid to the extent that they predict what a teacher will actually do with students.

The problem, however, is that the available tests and assessments have all been validated against the criterion of what teachers and professors think novice teachers should know and be able to do rather than what the public wants them to know and be able to do. In other words, buried in the debate about teacher quality are competing definitions of quality. One is quality as defined by the NCTAF et al., and the other is quality as defined by the public and by value-added assessment. Value-added assessment of a novice teacher's ability to bring about student achievement solves the problems of uncertainty and bias in the assessment of teacher competence by observing the criterion of teacher effectiveness instead of its fallible predictors. It defines teacher quality as the demonstrated ability to increase student achievement, the public's definition. With value-added assessment, policy makers would no longer be dependent on test scores and subjective interpretations that embody a hidden set of educational priorities. Instead, they would, in effect, stipulate the meaning of teacher effectiveness and teacher-training effectiveness in a way that is aligned with the public's educational priorities. Unlike training in law and medicine, teacher education has never had to respect consumer priorities because its graduates have never had to survive in a marketplace. Top-down regulation of teacher training has been largely

ineffective, as well. The agencies in charge of regulating teacher education were originally formed to promote the expansion and enhancement of public education, not to perform oversight and control. They have been subject to what economists call "regulatory capture"—they are unduly influenced by the parties they are trying to regulate.

The training, licensure, and certification standards now in place were all approved by state education agencies. With value-added indicators of teacher effectiveness in place, policy makers would be able to identify successful programmes and adjust their support accordingly. School officials would have a much improved basis for making hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions, and parents, of course, would be pleased to have assurance that their child's teachers were meeting objectively measured performance standards. Teachers, perhaps more than anyone, would benefit from a change to objective assessment of their work. One of the most frustrating aspects of teaching is that you can do an excellent job of getting students to learn and your efforts may never be noticed, much less appreciated. Even if test scores are reviewed, they are subject to administrator interpretation; and teachers well understand that friendly administrators make friendly interpretations and unfriendly administrators make unfriendly ones. With value-added assessment, the results are visible and they speak for themselves. Subjective job performance assessments flavoured with favouritism are among the most demoralising and demeaning aspects of teaching in public education.

In the absence of objective performance data, it is no wonder that teachers prefer salary schedules based on time-in-grade and earned credentials. In Tennessee, where value-added assessments of teacher performance have been in place for some years, teachers are gradually being won over.

Students seeking a career in teaching would also be able to make good use of value-added data. They would be able to see which schools of education were training effective teachers and which school systems were hiring them. Over time, teacher-training programmes whose graduates get the good jobs would flourish and those whose graduates were less successful would decline. Title II of the 1998 Higher Education Act required teacher training programmes to report on the quality of their graduates. One problem has been a lack of data comparable from one state to another. Teacher performance data, such as that now collected by Tennessee's Value-Added Assessment System, would be an excellent gauge of programme performance, and it could be compiled in any state that has already been regularly gathering student achievement data. Given the education community's aversion to standardised tests and its affinity for so-called authentic assessment, value-added assessment of achievement gains would seem to be an attractive alternative to the proposed exams of pedagogical knowledge. Realistically, programme assessments based on the value-added performance of novice teachers would have to be phased in over a period of several years. Substantial rethinking and curricular adjustment would be necessary. The change would not be easy, if for no other reason than shortages in appropriately trained faculty. However, with the growth of on-site training in local schools and similar alternatives, the need for trained teachers would be served by either reformed schools of education or their replacements.

Conclusion:

The method of path analysis is widely used in social sciences now a days, the best approach to all the problem to which it can be applied is to regard it solely as aid to the correct use of

regression equations. It is a convenient approach to regression problem involving two or more regression equation. The method of path analysis is superior to ordinary regression analysis since it allows to more beyond the estimate of direct effects, the basic output of regression. Rather, In most instances, computer programs are available to perform the laborious work of generating of path analysis. The best applications of causal modeling will involve interplay between theory, research design and data; because to have confidence in data analysis result, the path model must be will designed, whether recursive or non-recursive in nature

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