

Policy Brief



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



International Institute
for Capacity Building
in Africa

Fundamentals of Teacher Education Development:

(No. 5) Quality Assurance of Teacher Education in Africa

July 2016

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Summary

Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures designed to give teachers the knowledge, attitude, and skills they need to be effective educators. This process includes three main stages: initial teacher education, induction, and teacher continuous professional development (CPD).

While it is clear that teacher education quality has a significant impact on quality of education, many global education frameworks ignore this fact. The concern for teacher quality is a result of rapidly increasing enrolments. New systems of quality assurance are emerging, which are discussed in this book. Although it was published in 2013, the topics and issues discussed are still relevant in the current conversations about teacher quality assurance.

What the Research Shows

Definition of Quality: There is no agreed upon definition of quality, however it may include things like classroom observations, student surveys, and student achievement gains. It must include both academic and social components, providing an opportunity for holistic student development.

Ensuring teacher quality is complex for many reasons, including the diverse set of providers of teacher education. Teachers may be educated in any number of ways including: university, government institutions, independent colleges, and various denominational organizations (NGOs, religious organizations, community organizations, etc.). While they all strive for teacher quality, their definitions and requirements may vary, causing inconsistencies when they finally enter the classroom. Additionally, the private sector has begun to play an increased role in education.

There are a number of factors to be considered when assessing teacher quality including, but not limited to: organization and planning skills, interactions with students, substantial content knowledge, classroom management skills, and the ability to reflect on and improve one's practice.

Quality assurance in teacher education: Quality assurance refers to an on-going process of evaluation, maintenance, and improvement of quality education. At a national level, quality of teacher education is determined by its relevance to the national mission, objectives, and priorities. The mission and purpose at the institutional or program levels is also important in determining quality of teacher education.

Mechanisms of assurance:

- 1) **Quality audit:** The examination of a system for quality assurance by an institution, which is not involved in the subject being examined.
- 2) **Quality assessment:** Carrying out an evaluation of the quality of teacher education practices, programs, and services, taking into account the context and objectives being assessed.
- 3) **Quality accreditation:** The outcome of a process by which a government or private body evaluated an institution in order to determine if it has met a certain set of criteria.

Implementing the Process for Accreditation for Quality Assurance

Teacher education institutions should go through the necessary processes for receiving quality assurance. The mission of the quality assurance agency is to ensure quality, continuous development, and efficient performance of teacher education institutes, their systems and program, in accordance with its mission and desired goals.

Example: Quality Assurance Framework for Teacher Training Program of the National Teacher's Institute of Nigeria

In Africa, examples of quality assurance for accreditation rarely exist. The following is an example of an external quality assurance procedure without accreditations.

Objective: Derived from the mission of the Institute, which is to supply good quality teachers for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE), the main objective of the Pivotal Teacher Training Program (PTTP) is to address current and projected shortfalls in teacher supply by producing teachers of good quality through distance education modes (ODL).

Program and Implementation: PTTP encourages the increasing number of secondary school graduates to enter primary teacher education using a mix of distance learning and school-based in-service learning experiences. Students also undergo eight weeks of supervised teaching practice and three months of internship. The Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) is a multi-stage evaluation procedure using quantitative and qualitative information involving all stakeholders such as the government, the ministry of education, teachers and headmasters, students, the community, and National Teachers' Institute. A technical committee met once a quarter to assess the program covering twenty-five criteria and three types of monitoring systems: subject monitoring, teaching practice monitoring, and routine monitoring.

Outcome: The program enables the Institute to generate reliable and useful data for decision-making aimed at improving the quality of the program.

Conclusions

One of the best ways to ensure quality of learning for students is by providing quality teachers to schools. There are a number of ways to define quality, and the context and mission of each nation or individual institution should inform this definition. What is most important is that students are able to make academic and personal gains because of the knowledge and support of their teachers.

Recommendations

In order to ensure quality of teachers, teacher education institutions and programs must provide adequate educational opportunities. Strategies for quality assurance exist at three levels: national, agency, and institutional.

- 1) **National:** The government should facilitate the establishment of accreditation mechanisms but should not interfere with academic matters, umbrella agencies should oversee the functioning of accreditation agencies, and governments should play a role in the formulation of clear and robust policies/legislation to facilitate and support accreditation agencies
- 2) **Agency:** Quality assurance agencies should establish legal basis and receive recognition from competent public authorities, have clearly defined and transparent accountability procedures, and should have criteria for design to ensure teacher support for students, which addresses both personal development and cognitive learning.
- 3) **Institutional:** Individual institutions should set up their own means of quality assurance in addition to accreditation agencies, they should establish assessment mechanisms of their programs in respect to their mission, goals, and objectives, quantity and quality of educational programs, academic standard, quality of learning opportunities, managerial effectiveness, quality enhancement, research activities, community involvement and future plans. They should also ensure financial resources to prepare a self-assessment report.

About the Author

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