

Issues in Teacher Preparation Programs

Quality and Innovation in Teacher Professional
Development: Issues and Challenges
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TERG

Outline

- ✓ Philosophy, approach, & culture of teacher preparation programs
- ✓ Quality of teacher preparation programs
- ✓ Requirements for becoming a teacher
- ✓ Requirements for entry in teacher preparation

Philosophy, Approach & Culture of Teacher Preparation Programs

- ✓ 'Service providers' are the departments of education & the schools where student teachers are placed for internships
- ✓ Exposure & experience of student teachers are determined by the departments of education & the internship sites

Issues related to internship sites

- ✓ Private universities place their student teachers in private schools that vary widely in philosophy, policies etc.
- ✓ Universities establish agreements with these schools as internship sites
 - ✓ such agreements are also important for university ranking
- ✓ But internship quality is restricted by the policies of these schools

Issues related to internship sites

- ✓ Some student teachers are exposed to school context that implements constructivism; others are not.
 - ✓ This implies that not all student teachers get the chance to observe & implement what they learn in education classes at universities.

Issues related to internship sites

- ✓ Internship sites vary in experiential learning opportunities they provide for student teachers
- ✓ Some student teachers are allowed to conduct several lessons before their university instructor observes them in action; others are not
- ✓ Some are not allowed to implement teaching methods that are different from those adopted by the internship site

Issues related to internship sites

- ✓ Curricula of internship schools also vary
 - ✓ Some offer the Lebanese Baccalaureate, others the International Baccalaureate, others the French or German and so on
- ✓ Departments of education cannot prepare training in all these programs.
 - ✓ This undermines the internship experience of student teachers

Issues related to departments of education

- ✓ Some departments of education follow up on their graduates once employed as teachers & spend time with them in their classes to provide feedback on teaching, managing classrooms, managing activities etc.
- ✓ Other novice teachers are left to manage on their own.

Issues related to departments of education

Length & quality of the internship experience:

Some departments of education immerse student teachers in the daily life of the schools where they spend day long, week long, internships in schools

Other departments require a certain number of internship hours without restricting student teachers to day long stay at schools

This limits exposure to students in variety of activities & at different times of the school day

Issues related to departments of education

- ✓ Some teacher preparation programs include many liberal arts courses before student teachers start their teaching methods courses & school internships
- ✓ Others focus on preparing student teachers in one subject area or two related ones (science & math); others prepare them as homeroom teachers

Issues related to departments of education

- ✓ In some departments of education, the number of PT faculty undermines the teacher preparation program:
 - ✓ PT faculty cannot always commit to school observations in schools & close follow up on student teachers
- ✓ This influences the consistency and sustainability of pre-service experiences

Requirements for becoming a teacher

- ✓ Neo-liberal market driven universities may also change pre-service /teacher preparation programs e.g.
 - ✓ Introducing fast track programs
 - ✓ Reducing traditional course requirements (e.g. theoretical courses and liberal arts courses)
 - ✓ Preparing teachers to raise students test scores
- ✓ Educators are concerned about the implications of this on the purposes of education around which many universities were established

Requirements for becoming a teacher

Neo-liberal pressures on teacher education may lead to

Preparing teachers as technicians

Shortening teacher education years

Preparing teachers with content knowledge
but not professional knowledge

Requirements for Entry in Teacher Preparation

- ✓ Differ from one institution to another
- ✓ In general requirements are minimal:
 - ✓ Most students are accepted, yet it does not mean that they really want to major in education

What's wrong with all that?

- ✓ Diversity in teacher preparation programs may lead to inequity i.e. practices of varying quality
- ✓ This is unfair to children in rural areas and low socioeconomic backgrounds:
 - ✓ Teachers are not prepared to understand the culture & problems of those children & the contexts of their schools

References

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**THANK
YOU!**