

NEW DIMENSIONS IN TEACHER EDUCATION: CASE STUDIES

Serkan Gumus
Belarusian State University

XXI century has brought new challenges for every profession. There are some professions that are already out of date while some are quite new. For sure, teaching as a profession will never be an old fashioned one. However, it has its own challenges and problems. We may say teaching as a profession will exist as long as there is a human being; but the methods, tools, aims, programmes must be changed and adjusted in order to meet the needs of new century. In my study, I will focus on some examples about transforming teaching education around the world, which is stated in the research named as Transforming Teacher Education, Redefined Professionals for 21st Century Schools by International Alliance of Leading Education Institutes, Singapore.

Example 1

A case of reflexivity in teacher preparation in Korea.

South Korea has proposed that teacher education be changed from a 5-year model to a 6-year one. Here, the main ideas of developing research capacity as well as an open attitude are critical elements in the programme. The final year of the programme requires candidates to complete a dissertation as well as to read courses in research methodologies and professional knowledge required for specialized academic research.

Example 2

A new partnership model in the UK.

In the UK, a professional mandate was arrived at when the historic national agreement, Raising Standards and Tackling Workload, was signed on 15 January 2003. The agreement acknowledged an increase in the pressure on schools to raise standards as a result of the reforms in educational achievement, and marked the decision to relieve this pressure and reduce unacceptable levels of workload for teachers. The signatories came together to form a unique social partnership, the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (WAMG), made up of 11 organizations representing the employers, government and school workforce unions. It introduced a series of significant changes to teachers' conditions of service over three annual phases from September 2003, which included remodelling, setting aside of time to enable teachers to plan and prepare for class, changes to the teachers' pay structure, revisions to teachers' performance management, and new professional standards. The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) website has several case studies that attest to schools seeing a rise in the status and professionalism of teachers, which has in turn produced better outcomes for the children.

Example 3

Singapore teachers as lifelong learners.

The Ministry of Education in Singapore provides all its teachers with an entitlement of

100 hours of in-service training a year. This initiative signals the need for teachers to see themselves as lifelong learners as well as enables them to cope better with new curricula and student learning demands. Teachers are actively guided and advised on their professional development choices and are allowed to take responsibility for their career development. It is interesting that the practice of recertification is not utilized as a means of ensuring the practice of lifelong learning.

Example 4

Career Change Program in Australia.

Australia's Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has a new Career Change Program that seeks to enlist suitably qualified professionals, such as engineers, scientists, mathematicians, trades people and IT professionals, to become teacher trainees. Participants attend a preparatory summer school before entering the classroom in the following school year. They undergo a school-based induction programme and receive ongoing support from mentor teachers. Participants also receive financial support and paid study leave as they balance classroom duties and study towards a teaching qualification within a 2-year training period. If the training period is successfully completed, participants are offered an ongoing teaching position. There is also a retention incentive should the trainee choose to stay at the school they were appointed to during the programme.

Example 5

Introduction of Master of Education in China's rural areas.

This initiative was begun in 2004 by China's Ministry of Education to improve education in its rural regions under the «Plans for Nurturing Master of Education for Secondary

Schools in Rural Areas». As part of the plan, fresh graduates from universities who are recommended for postgraduate study are selected and trained to become teachers with Master's degrees in rural schools. The cycle lasts 5 years. In the first year, the candidate takes on a teaching assignment in a secondary school in a country. In the second year, the candidate applies to do a year of full-time course work at a university. The third year involves the candidate teaching, taking up online courses and completing a dissertation. No examinations are required, except for the completion of the dissertation and an oral examination taken in the third year. The fourth and fifth years are spent teaching full-time in the school. This teaching-cum-learning programme was trialled in poor, rural communities. It was so successful that it has been extended to other rural communities in mid-western China.

Example 6

The M/M Center at California State University, Sacramento, the USA.

The Multilingual/Multicultural Teacher Preparation Center, or M/M Center, in California has developed a comprehensive programme that aims to prepare teachers as change agents working towards social justice in low-income and culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms, schools and communities. Race- and language-conscious policy making and programme development characterize its history and current operations, including candidate recruitment, faculty hiring, and the content and theory of the programme. Multicultural content and the application of theory into practice via extensive field experiences in schools serving low-income and culturally and linguistically diverse students anchor the programme design. Data indicates that the programme and its early recruitment approach have attained significant successes.

plan, om- and rees the hing y. In do a The king tion. r the camil fifth school. was as so rural

State

er Pre-ifornia ne that s wor- ne and rooms, nguage me de- current ent, fa- / of the e appli- ve field me and students ndicates ment ap-cesses.

In 2004, California public school teachers were 72 % White, 15 % Hispanic, about 5 % Asian, 5 % African-American, and 3 % of other ethnicities. Candidates of the M/M Center invert these statistics with over 75 % belonging to ethnic minorities, and their White students are usually bilingual.

Example 7

Lesson study as professional development in Japan.

Japanese teachers have a long history of doing lesson study – cycles of activities in which teacher groups, usually by grade level, design, implement and improve together one or more research lessons and seek to make positive changes in instructional practice and student learning. Such collaboratively and carefully planned research lessons are taught by teachers, with team members observing lessons and taking careful notes on learning processes. This ongoing form of professional development has generated «shareable knowledge» and the development of schools as organizations where teachers can learn and progress together. It is also believed that lesson study contributed to Japan's shift from «teaching as telling» to «teaching for understanding», especially at the elementary level, from the 1970s to 1990s.

Example 8

Fatih Project in Turkey.

«Movement of Enhancing Opportunities and Improving Technology», known as FATİH, is among the most significant educational investments of Turkey. FATİH Project proposes that «Smart Class» project is put into practice in all schools around Turkey. With this project,

42 000 schools and 570 000 classes will be equipped with the latest information technologies and will be transformed into computerized classes (Smart Class).

With FATİH the teachers will:

- have easy access to the updated knowledge and latest teaching techniques which will help in teaching process;
- thus help students gain different points of view;
- create information and transfer it perennially;
- be innovative;
- be able to measure the quality and quantity of their teaching and complete the shortcomings;
- prepare the future generation from today.

Results

1. That teachers' work be re-conceptualized as complex and demanding and that the profession commit to a redefined professionalism that will enable teachers to better meet instructional and professional challenges.

2. That systems need to be innovative in attracting high quality and representative applicants and in constantly improving the design and delivery of teacher education programmes.

3. That a widened framework for teacher induction be adopted to build upon foundational skills and that opportunities be created for more relevant, powerful and teacher-owned professional development; and.

4. That new challenges in improving schooling and student achievement need new partnerships which governments can help resource, facilitate and, where appropriate, initiate.