



Vision and Action for Professionally Developing of Teacher Educator

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Abstract — There is growing interest in the professional development of teacher educators as the demands, expectations, and requirements of teacher education increasingly come under scrutiny. The manner in which teacher educators learn to traverse their world of work in the development of their knowledge, skills, and ability is important. This article outlines some of the crucial shaping factors in that development, including the transition associated with becoming a teacher educator, the nature of teacher education itself, and the importance of researching teacher education practices. Through a careful analysis of these features, a framework for better understanding what it might mean to professionally develop as a teacher educator is proposed. The framework is designed to draw serious attention to the major aspects of teaching and learning about teaching that are central to shaping scholarship in teacher education and offer insights into the ways in which teacher educators' professional development might be better understood and interpreted.

Keywords - professional development, professional vision, teacher education preparation, teacher learning, teacher research.

I. THE PRESENT SCENARIO

Continuing professional development of teacher educators has always been in place. But today it has got a renewed mandate under Teacher Education Mission. The question is how seriously it is being pursued and with what results. We only need to look at the results to decide what processes need to be put in place. Anything that we do needs to be goal oriented. Are our present efforts giving us the results in terms of the goals? If they do not and yet we continue with them, it smacks of ritualism. If we do the same things over and over, we only get the same results. So if we want different results, we need to change our actions!

There are a couple of things that I would like to point out with regard to our present efforts with the continuing education of teacher educators. First of all, it is a top down approach. The authorities decide what the teacher educators need to learn. It is something that is done to them. Therefore, most educators resist it and yet go through with it lest they invite negative consequences for themselves. If this is the case, it goes against the very fundamentals of what learning is. For any serious learning, the learner engagement is an absolute necessity. If we further reflect on the scenario, this is how education is practiced in schools – pushing information and knowledge on students who are unwilling to learn!

Secondly, the approach to training is mostly didactic and prescriptive. It may sound very erudite and one may get the feeling of becoming knowledgeable. But its take home effect and the ability to put it into practice is negligible. Just getting informed does not suffice for the purpose of professional development.

Thirdly, often professional development efforts are clinical and find fault with the present practices. This will only serve to further dis-empower the teacher educators. If this is so, it would be like the treatment becoming worse than the disease itself. This is not to deny the fact that there are things that need to be changed.

II. WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development is not a quick fix, one shot affair. No one is a full blown professional at the end of a professional education degree like that of a B.Ed., M.Ed., or Ph.D. Neither are we just “born teachers”. As teacher educators we are in the process of “becoming” effective teachers. We need to discover who we are and what we stand for, our intentions both for ourselves and for the profession of our choice, and how we want to express ourselves as persons and contribute to the causes we have espoused. We do this through ongoing and consistent study, through our deliberate practice as well as Reflection on our practice and through our dialogue with our peers and mentors. Becoming an authentic educator is also about discovering our unique gifts, building our strengths, learning from others, cultivating our best qualities, nurturing

Ourselves, raising our levels of awareness, connecting with our passion for teaching, fostering meaningful relationships with students and peer groups.

There is a lot of work that we need to do with our inner side, which consists of our thoughts, beliefs, feelings and emotions, drives, motivations, aspirations, interests, values and principles, attitudes and commitments and so on. This is the engine/energy that drives us to do or not to do or how to do things. Working with the inner side leads to self-growth and self-empowerment. Education has neither acknowledged its importance so far nor attempted to develop it in a systematic way. Maslow had acknowledged that the problems that we face both as persons and as humanity is because people are not growing as persons.

III. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Training is one of the major ways that we employ in order to enhance the capacity of teacher educators. Therefore it is necessary that the training is made meaningful and meet their needs. In order to make training meaningful, it should be based on the identified needs of the trainees, that is, what they need and want to know. That is, the training goals must be what they want to learn and do. Besides, the training methodology must be experiential and participatory in approach. We are dealing with adult professionals who have their own experiences and ideas and are responsible for their learning. The experiential –participatory methodology is suitable to engage them and exploit their experiences and provide ways to translate ideas and principles into action. The emphasis is on learning and not on teaching, following the true spirit of facilitation. By having the participants work in small groups, the methodology prepares the learners for cooperative learning as well.

IV. TEACHER EDUCATORS AS LEADERS

Each one of the teacher educators needs to experience that he/she is a leader. The leader is one who says, ‘the buck stops here’, takes the initiative and influences his or her immediate sphere of activities. By doing this we change the prevailing environment of negativity and passivity. Our individual and collective energies are sucked up because of negativity. Instead of succumbing to the crippling negativity and the prevailing culture of blame and victimhood, teacher educators need to see themselves as change agents who will bring about the long awaited -educational transformation. The entire edifice of education rests on the foundation of teacher education and each one of us in teacher education needs to affirm and live by this thought every single day of our life. We have today the technology of training that can initiate a transformation movement.

V. CAPACITY AND CREDIBILITY

I am convinced of the importance of having capable teacher educators. Along with capacity, we also want our teacher educators to be credible. Capacity and credibility are two different things. Capacity is about what one is capable of, what One can do or achieve. It refers to one’s potential. Credibility is about the choices that we make the actions that we take and the results that we produce. We demonstrate through our actions and results what we are capable of. It is what Makes the educator inspiring and worth following. Therefore, we want our teacher educators to be both capable and credible.

VI. CONCLUSION

Through the three dimensional training intervention proposed in the paper, we take conscious steps toward empowering teacher educators with personal, facilitative and professional attitudes and competencies that will help them contribute to the preparation of teachers with such attitudes and skills. In doing this we are responding to the concerns expressed by most of our recent policy documents like preparing reflective, student-centered, with democratic attitude and practice, being able to respond to students’ emotional needs and thus, are able to create a positive and nurturing learning climate. The path is long and arduous as some of the aspects that we deal with militate against strongly held habits, beliefs and attitudes held away from our conscious mind in the subconscious. But the effort is worth it! There is always light at the end of a tunnel

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