

Review

Internationalization of teacher education in universities: Implications in implementation

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Globalization has brought with it close contact and interaction between nations. This development has been shown to have tremendous consequences in cultural, economic social and educational terms. As a result of migrations within and over national boundaries, people are meeting each other under different circumstances. This mobility has resulted to workers with different professional backgrounds finding themselves having to work in countries far away from where they undertook their training. In particular, teachers found themselves in a difficult situation in trying to fit into systems that did not totally match the skills and knowledge they received in the different training programs they underwent. In a bid to fill some of the gaps that emerged between the various Teacher Training Programs. There have been attempts to internationalize Teacher Education in order to create harmony among Teacher Training Institutions in the global village in which the world has come to be. The concept of networking as an instrument of learning has been used as one of the processes to achieve the internalization of Teacher Education. It is through networking that is possible to respect each other's value systems in international understanding. Internationalization of Teacher Education has positive and negative effects and the challenge posed is participating and interacting in the internationalization while preserving educational identity of the respective nations involved. This paper proposes to discuss the benefits of internationalization of Teacher Education, the processes involved and the risks that are likely to arise from the internationalization. The paper examines how Teacher Training programs should produce a teacher who competently discharges his/her duties in any corner of the globe and at the same time maintain the uniqueness of education systems of the various nations.

Key words: Internationalization, Teacher Education, Universities

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has penetrated into all dimension of nations existence, ranging from history, tradition, culture to education. In response to globalization and culture to education: In response to globalization, there has been need to internationalise education in a bid to prepare students to meet the demands of a fast changing world. Internationalization of education cannot be achieved without a teacher who understands the international perspective of Education. It therefore means that the teacher preparation programme must be internationalized to produce teachers who are competent to face the

challenges of the dynamic society. The usefulness depends on active, resourceful and competent teachers. These qualities in teachers can only be realized when the standards of teachers education programmes are good educators (Reyes, 2010; Dooly and Villanueva, 2006).

Migration, ease of communication economic and environment interdependence have necessitated teacher educations to transform their own and their student's learning and teaching practices to ensure that future generalization are equipped with knowledge and skills to live and work in this internationalized, globalized world.

Teacher education has to be responsive to the challenges faced by education systems in this time of globalization. Ideas, experiences and technologies must be shared globally in the administration of teacher

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education through the use of technological appliances, exposures and expertise (Kafu, 2003). The aim of teacher education is to provide teachers who can facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes by the learners. The teacher is an essential facilitator in the implementation process of any curriculum. Shiundu and Omulando (1992) state:

... The one whose role is most important in seeing that the programs are successfully implemented is the teacher, who organises learning experiences and manages the learning environment for the benefit of the pupils who must experience the curriculum”.

Clark *et al.* (1996) explains that teacher educators are faced with two challenging tasks, first to prepare teachers for cultural diversity and to instil in them the seriousness of a multicultural curriculum. In an attempt to overcome the challenges, internationalization has been infused into the teacher education programmes in some countries.

Internationalization, however, has been defined in various forms by different people. These definitions have shaped the approaches that universities have taken to internationalise teacher education. One such definition is that which states that internationalization is a process based on values, cooperation, partnership, exchange, mutual benefits and capacity building (OECD, 2011). The definition is a summary of what can be said to constitute internationalization. The key aspects derived from the definition is that communication across borders must occur, common values must be established and that learning from one another is very important strategies have been used for internationalization information communication and Technology.

Many universities have tried to embrace modern technology as means to internationalization in the teacher education programmes. Student teachers are now more than ever before expected to be competent in the use of information and communication technology in the instruction process and for their own professional development. Teachers can do extensive research and obtain information via the internet, thus accessing knowledge from any part of the world. The University of Lagos, for example has invested in information technology as a major tool in advancing teaching, learning and research and is fast moving towards e-learning (Oye, 2007).

OVERSEAS PLACEMENT

It has become a common practice among universities to have prospective teachers undergo teaching practicums in a foreign country with a completely different system from that of the student teachers home system. The Swiss Foundation for Education Development together with Swiss Universities for Teacher Education has had

exchange programmes with student from N'Djamena and Moudou Universities in the Chad for a long time. A study in the universities of Ontario, Canada also indicated that after incorporating internship into the B. ed programme teacher trainees have increasingly shown interest in doing internship in foreign countries. In 2010, there were 63 teacher candidates interning abroad (Laurillard, 2013).

Overseas placements bring about transformation on the part of the student teacher to be critical, reflective and change their view of other countries education systems other than their own. Thornton (2009) advocates the complete immersion into a supportive intercultural environment for trainee teacher. She argues that when the teachers are exposed internationally, it makes a difference since they meet and work alongside peers in real life as collaborators. They can find out that frequently discussed psychological issues in their home country, like small class sizes, are meaningless in a country like Eritrea, for instance, because only a part of the children go to school and class sizes are mostly over eighty (Oser, 2011).

Teaching staff exchange partnerships. It has become a common trend for universities to form partnerships in the exchange of teacher educators. Faculty members from education departments are trained abroad to undertake teaching assignments. Those international experiences play a very important role in influencing the pedagogy and curriculum of teacher education. Biesta (2009) have summarized the need for staff exposure to international experiences by stating that:-

“Indeed, it is fully to ask teacher education facility to promote an international teacher education without having experienced and studies international education”

The other approach that has been adopted in internationalization of teacher education is that of offshore students, a relatively new phenomenon. This entails registering at a foreign university but studying partly or wholly in one's resident country. In the U.K there are an increasing numbers of offshore students. Also in the recent past Australian universities and universities from the United States of America have partnered with institutions in Kenya to provide teacher education programmes.

Join curriculum design and Development Internationalization of teacher preparation calls for a model of systematic change (Bass and Heeks, 2011). A teacher preparation design an approach that enhances global competencies should take account the overall experiences and studies that are exposed to the teacher. It is along this line that the university of Maryland has taken a lead in Internationalizing teacher education through the Global awareness in teacher Education program which begun in 2007. The program aims at transforming a variety of courses in order to equip

student teachers with knowledge and skills leading to high standards in global competence.

RISKS ARISING FROM INTERNATIONALISATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION

internationalisation, like any other endeavour cannot be implemented without creating risks in the process of implementation. Some of the risks are as outlined.

Emphasis on unfamiliar teaching technologies

Developing and the developed world are miles apart in terms of utilisation of modern technologies. In this case the developing world the developing world is disadvantaged when modern new technologies are used as agents of internationalisation of teacher education. It is even more challenging as technology is believed to be part of the subject content internationalised teacher education.

Destruction of local and cultural identity

In the process of internationalising the curriculum, some important cultural aspects of a nation are likely to be lost. All teaching education programmes have objectives that contribute to development of values which enhance the uniqueness and backbone of the nations existence. Internationalisation of teacher education could easily ignore this important role that teacher education plays in different countries.

Divergent views on internationalisation of Teacher Education

There are and maybe no correct meaning and interpretation for internationalisation of teacher education, but varied interpretations can lead to many versions in implementation. This can result into disharmony and solidarity in the pursuit of producing globally competent teachers.

Adopting issues affecting one region

Zeichner (2010) states that teachers in the U.S. hold privileges and access to power that position them in a global context and it is important for them to understand how these privileges disadvantage others as well as themselves. This statement is also true for other developed countries. Trends in teacher education indicate that issues that shape it to a large extent have always originated from the countries that are considered

advanced. The developing countries struggle to absorb these issues in a bid to raise their status to the global level. There is a danger of omitting key issues influencing teacher education in these countries thus failing to take a position in internationalisation in teacher education.

Low academic standards

In recent times it has been observed that universities priorities and rationales have changed to establishing an international profile at the expense of international standards of excellence. This trend is likely to water down the quality of students recruited into the teacher education programme. International accreditation services may become commercialised and profit driven. Knight (2008) explains, "Diploma mills and rogue providers are selling bogus qualifications and causing recognition". Since the quality translates to the quality of the education transmitted to the learner, any attempt to interfere with enrolment to teacher education programmes impacts negatively on the future learners of any country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. In internationalising teacher education, awareness of limitations that exist in developing countries is key. Information Communication and Technology advancement poses a challenge. When new innovations in technology are introduced, it takes quite a long period of time to be adopted. The rapid changes that occur in technology have left Africa and Asia lagging behind because before they are ready for one, another is on the way. Information and Communication Technology of different levels and ages should be maintained in the teacher internationalisation process.
- ii. Teacher education programmes in every country have objectives that are geared towards national identity and cohesion. Internationalisation of teacher education should not lose sight of these country specific objectives. Apart from international perspectives in teacher preparation programmes, the curriculum should include high social and community content because the teachers must be sensitive to the needs of students and the environment. Internationalisation of teacher education should not produce globally competent teachers who cannot be claimed by any nation.
- iii. Internationalising will always mean different things to different people and nations and very little can be done to alter this situation. Instead the values of cooperation, exchange and partnership should be strengthened and focused on. These relationships will definitely result into similar understanding of internationalisation of teacher education.
- iv. Teacher education aims at constructing internationally

appropriate teachers. In this regard all regions in the globe should be brought on board in preparation programmes. The East, West, North and South at the centre of intersection to contribute to components of an internationalised curriculum. Teachers in Europe and America for example, should have an opportunity to discuss and conceptualise issues such as alternative approaches to education such as mobile schools, multi shift and multi grade that are used in parts of Kenya to increase children's accessibility to learning. In the same way, teachers and Africa should be well aware of matters that influencing teaching in other regions of the world.

v. Accreditation procedures should be carefully spelt out in order to maintain high standards in the recruitment of students into the teaching programmes. Quality assurance procedures in teacher education should benefit approach from international input and approach.

vi. An internationalised teacher education programme design and pedagogies should address both the on and how to adapt to any situation and operate effectively and efficiently in diverse education conditions and environments.

viii. A teacher education curriculum should have clearly defined objectives, realistic as far as expectation is concerned and also avoid overloading. The curriculum should emphasize integration of theoretical understanding with their practical application.

CONCLUSIONS

A lot of efforts have been made towards internationalisation of teacher education and there is no doubt about this. The benefits that come with internationalising teacher programmes can be enormous especially in the present dynamic and globalised world. Current global trends clearly indicate that the teacher is no longer a commodity to be consumed only at the national level but beyond the geographical and social boundaries of their countries. However during the process of internalisation caution should be taken to avoid risks that would create regional imbalances in regard to what comprises internalisation in teacher education. In brief, internalisation of teacher education should prepare teachers to head to all corners of the world to take up their teaching responsibilities.

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