

# NEW ROLES FOR TEACHERS

## WHAT NEW ROLES FOR TEACHERS?

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The roles which teachers play inevitably vary, not only between regions of the world but also between countries and within countries. There are the global differences along the development continuum and with particular regard to the demands of the rural as opposed to the urban situation. Within each educational system teachers play different roles in relation to the age range of the pupils and in relation to the objectives set by the government. Great as these differences are, however, it is possible to recognize certain basic and fundamental changes in the role of the teacher. These changes transcend particular national systems and can be identified in all regions of the world. The cultural expressions of the various changes differ, of course, between one country and another. There is a difference in the rate of change also. In addition, change in the role of the teacher is seen against a background of a continuing belief in the value and ultimate effectiveness of the school as an institution. The aim of this paper is to identify briefly the main direction of change in the role of the teacher and to suggest the implications of such changes for teacher education.

### THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE TEACHER

In the UNESCO publication "Learning to be", the authors began with the bold claim that "for the first time in history, education is now engaged in preparing men for a type of society which does not yet exist." (1) There is no doubt that around the world there is a major emphasis upon effective preparation for participation in the building of a new social order rather than merely a conservation of the old. It is that dramatic change in social expectation and political intention that has led to such a rapid and major change in the role of the teacher. At the UNESCO conference in Geneva in 1975, (2) member states identified the following general trends of change:

- (a) Towards more diversified functions in the instructional process and acceptance of more responsibility for the organization of the content of learning and teaching.
- (b) Towards a shift in emphasis from transmission of knowledge to organization of the pupil's learning, with maximum use of new sources of learning in the community.
- (c) Towards individualization of learning and a changed structure in teacher-student relationships.

- (d) Towards wider use of modern educational technology and the acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills.
- (e) Towards larger acceptance of broader co-operation with other teachers in schools and a changed structure of relationship between teachers.
- (f) Towards the necessity to work more closely with parents and other people in the community and for more involvement in community life.
- (g) Towards acceptance of participation in school services and extra-curricular activities.
- (h) Towards accepting a diminution of traditional authority in relation to children.

Teacher education, like education itself, must reflect a changing world; the nature of social change and its causes vary in their specifics from country to country. However, there are two dominant aspects of change which provide the context for all the above changes in the role of the teacher. They are the simple fact that we now live in a "global village" and in an interdependent world. It is a world where the media ensures that traditional values and inherited customs are constantly challenged, and where continuous change is itself of prime importance. Second, of particular relevance to our present discussion is the enormous rate of expansion of knowledge and its continuous challenge to the validity of orthodox opinion. A sense of membership of one world community is a good deal stronger among young people than among many who still have authority over nations. The Declaration of Commonwealth Principles in 1971(3) represents ideas that are easily assimilated by children. However, many countries are still a long way from achieving the principles set out by the Commonwealth and the United Nations. With regard to the explosion and development of knowledge, it is clear that many students and many members of the community accept that the school can only be one agent of education and that there are many others. Some are supportive and some are in conflict with the school.

Implications for the ways in which the teacher should work are profound. Firstly, teaching has to take place in a global context. He has to teach for a basic world morality and help the school to reflect a world view. In relation both to the rapidity of change and the increasing volume of new knowledge, the teacher has to act as an interpreter and as a mediator. As an interpreter he has to place new knowledge and new experience within the context of what is already known and understood by the pupils. As a mediator, the teacher can make no claim to a monopoly of knowledge. He realizes that to live in this age is to be always learning; his task is to help both himself and others to accommodate to that fact. To be a teacher now is to be a mediator in the encounter between the individual and the mass of information, factual, conjectural and mythological which daily threaten to engulf us. Thus, selection and use of knowledge become more important than its absorption. In order to be a good mediator the teacher has to understand a great deal about the nature of knowledge and also about the way in which people at various ages and stages of development perceive the world around them. In short, as Torsten Husen has said, "more emphasis will be put on learning, not on teaching. The focus will be shifted to the economic management of the teaching function, to a close analysis of its real import and of the purposes it is supposed to serve". (4)

## LEARNING TO TEACH - PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

In discussing actual approaches to training it is important to accept the constraints of reality and to recognize that the training must be related to the particular stage which has been reached in relation to teaching and to the particular nature of the work of the school. Although the broad developments referred

to in the previous section point the general direction of change around the world, the six countries represented at this Seminar vividly demonstrate that the rate and the extent of change varies substantially. Initial teacher training, in particular, represents an intermediate stage between the schooling which the student has received and the teaching which he will be required to do. Another reality relates to the enormous disparity in resources. The idea of a completely graduate profession, for example, may sound acceptable in one society, with full universal education up to the age of 16, but it does not seem anything like so acceptable in a country where reaching the goal of universal primary education still seems very distant.

Again, the iron law of supply and demand is particularly influential in order to help us to understand what can actually be achieved in various regions of the world. Thus, demographic and economic factors may well be crucial. By 1985 even with the maximum rate of growth in the teaching profession and the provision of schools, only 44% of the six to eleven age group in Africa will be admitted to primary education, 67% in Asia, and 75% in Latin America. The twelve to seventeen age group proportions will be 30% in Africa, 36% in Asia and 55% in Latin America. However, while accepting the existence of such realities, this paper attempts to describe an approach to teacher training which can accommodate to a wide variety of demographic and economic circumstances but, at the same time, reflects some of the implications of the universal nature of change which is being experienced in most of the countries of the world. (5)

## THE THREE STAGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION

### a. The Personal Education of the Teacher

There are still many countries in which the formal personal education of the teacher takes place entirely in school. Even where this is not the case the argument for a common base of education for all children, and a comprehensive form of schooling, is particularly strong. This is true if one accepts that one of the main functions of the teacher is to aid in the increasing democratization of the countries in which they work. Even before school, it is important also to recognize that basic attitudes relating to the personality of the teacher have been formed through the pre-school period of family life. The social and health policy related to family and to the community are of considerable significance in shaping the kinds of people who are going to take on the enhanced responsibilities implied by the new role of the teacher. When the teacher was primarily regarded as a "knowledge giver" it could be argued that he should to some extent be separated from the children he was going to teach. However when, as in the Philippines, the teacher is seen as a "social integrator, attitude changer and community worker", he needs to display personal skills which no amount of training alone can create. Teaching is now and will increasingly be a deep and searching personal challenge. It is no longer a job in which the teacher can shelter behind his superior knowledge or step onto a raised desk and look down with authority upon the bent heads of the children.

Thus, democratization enters the classroom and the intimate relationship between the teacher and the taught. The post-school personal education of teachers will require either a higher education course followed by a teacher training programme (a consecutive approach), or higher education studies which accompany the training programme (the concurrent style). In both, there should be a sound and responsive system of basic education with an emphasis upon styles of learning rather than upon the acquirement of knowledge. Ideally, there should be a stage between schooling and specific training which should provide the opportunity for reflection, intellectual and personal development and the acquisition of a capacity for independent study. This should also give the

teacher time to make a critical and informed assessment of the school and of the social context within which it operates. Many, perhaps at some stage in the future all teachers, will have had a period in other occupations and have had relevant experience outside the educational system. Fortunately, in a number of countries higher education is being re-organized in a way which relates much more to the developing needs of the country. This is true of the aims of the university re-organization in Sri Lanka in 1972, and is expressed in India's restructuring of universities to make them more relevant to developing needs. When higher education is coming under heavy criticism it is all the more important that it should be concerned in helping students to understand and deal constructively with the problem of inter-personal relationships, of massive variations in standards of living, both within and between societies and the threat both to the human and the physical environment. Such an approach could have an important influence on the curricula offered in schools. The increasing world interest in continuing or recurrent education is also important for potential teachers. Mature students entering education later in their lives often make the most effective contribution in school.

#### b. Initial Training

Personal education may be seen as the first cycle of teacher education. Initial training is the second cycle in preparing the teacher for his work in school. As will be seen from consideration of the changing role of the teacher, a great deal is being required. Thus, in the Philippines the government stresses that the country is looking towards teachers who can be social integrators, attitude changers and community workers, can understand the nature of child growth, assume roles with regard to rural transformation, health and nutrition and the development of employable skills in the rural setting. They should be able to understand their community, economy and patterns of behaviour. They should be able to contribute to non-formal educational activities and accelerate the acquisition of basic literary communication skills and the development of values. Many other countries have similarly demanding expectations and one of the problems of many initial training courses is that they attempt to produce a "complete teacher" to fulfil such a role. There is a growing movement of world opinion towards the view that initial training should concentrate upon the knowledge and skill required by the beginning teacher.

The first task, therefore, is to define the different areas of competence which schools expect from their new teachers. It also assumes that there will be a third cycle of continuing teacher education. With regard to the second cycle or initial training, however, there is a growing belief that training should be school based and the whole of training should be sharply focused on the skills and understanding which it is necessary for a beginning teacher to establish.

Often initial training will be in two parts. The first part in the college will focus upon the study of school problems, courses in curriculum studies, teaching methods, assessment and evaluation, all based upon regular and sustained experience with children. Social sciences will be studied only in as much as they lead to the better understanding of particular problems in school and to greater success in tackling them. The second part of the initial training should be based firmly in school. In many cases it might be seen as the first year of teaching in special circumstances strongly supported both in and out of school. The school, placed firmly in the centre of the picture will need to be staffed appropriately and should be able to give the new student teacher regular and sustained help as would be the case with an intern in a hospital. Many developing countries have adopted such a school based training approach and these are frequently combined with periods of residence or sustained attachment to a college, when students can reflect upon their experience and prepare themselves for the next stage of their teaching.

Such an approach to initial training is particularly appropriate at a time when the role of the teacher has changed so rapidly and is continuing to change.

Attachments to schools during the training period means that the potential teacher is in touch with the changes that are taking place. He is also able to ensure that he acquires the practical competence to give him the confidence to move on to acquire the more diverse and community orientated roles which are so often required of him. Thus, "a theory of practice is derived from a study of practice." (6) The aim of initial training is relatively modest. However, among the qualities achieved it is hoped would be (1) the establishment of a professional ethic; (2) the acquisition of the capacity to take responsibility for a class; (3) the capacity to organize learning for children of different levels of initial performance; (4) the ability to prepare a sound educational programme, to carry it through and to assess and evaluate its success; (5) a knowledge of learning methods and the technology of education; (6) the capacity to find information, to use sources and resources both for the children and for self-education; (7) finally, the ability to maintain a fruitful and secure relationship with the children and with colleagues.

### c. Continuing Education

"For teachers now entering the school system it should be accepted that teacher education is in fact a continuous or recurrent process of which pre-service education is only the initial phase" - such was the conclusion of the Final Report of the International Conference in Education in 1975. All teacher training is a dialogue between theory and practice, between aspiration and achievement. Without in-service education it is in danger of being all theory and aspiration and little achievement. Thus, its link with the previous two cycles is most important. However, it may also be necessary to develop different structures. It may get its direction from urgent national requirements - as, for example, the Asian programme of Educational Innovation for Development has pointed out, the promotion of rural transformation is vital, and this may become a central theme for in-service education in many countries. One example of this is seen in Malaysia, where in-service training has been central to the national commitment to agricultural education, with mobile in-service units as well as the involvement of the university.

Re-organization of in-service education should not only be a national but a regional and institutional concern, not only for updating and refreshment, but also to enable teachers to play an extended role or to take on new activities. Also, it is becoming evident that many teachers find it difficult to take on new responsibilities, such as a school or a major administrative task. Teachers should move in and out of the profession much more frequently, and in-service training is required as preparation for new occupations and also for enabling different professions to understand each other better. Teachers, community workers, social workers and health workers should be able to learn together, as the success of educational endeavours is often dependent upon effective co-operation in the field of many different kinds of professionals. Finally, such rapid change in the development of education, the need for teachers to be innovators and to be informed critics of their own practice is greater than ever before. For research and evaluation to be effective, a certain distance from the classroom is often required. Innovation requires special support and opportunities for experiment. These again are tasks of in-service education and training.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW ROLES OF TEACHERS FOR THOSE CONCERNED WITH TRAINING

The changes, in both the role of teachers and approaches to training which are discussed above have profound implications for those directly involved: for teachers, teacher educators and educational administrators.

### a. Teachers

In future, teachers will be increasingly expected to assume a very specific and influential part in the training of new members of the profession. When initial training is more school based, much of the effectiveness of training will depend upon the quality of the teachers who are supervising the students' practice. They will need to discuss his work, guide him through critical experiences and influence his teaching style. A major task of in-service training will be to prepare teachers for such tasks and enable them to look critically and constructively at their own practice.

### b. Teacher Educators

For teacher educators the change will often be dramatic. There is a need for a much more practical orientation than has often been the case in the past. Work will often have to be divided between the college and the school, and teacher educators will need to be in regular contact with children and with the problems which the schools face. The teacher educator will also have to acquire the very difficult skill of developing a "theory of practice". He will need to help teachers to be critical about their own work, but also enable them to retain confidence in their own ability. As an educator himself, the teacher trainer will need to be more aware of his own practice and the ways in which an on-going analysis of his own performance can assist his work with students.

### c. Educational Administrators

Educational administrators will need to appreciate the significance of the changed function of the school. When the school is also required to be a training agency, good resources will need to be available. Teachers' workshops and staff libraries should be associated with adequate study time which will only be possible if pupil/teacher ratios are favourable. Teachers' centres should be encouraged as part of a general strategy. Administrators need to be conscious of the multiplier effect of broadening the scope of teacher training. The direct involvement of the profession and the schools will encourage the whole staff of the school to look more closely and consistently at current practice, and commit the teaching profession more strongly to the changed role of the school.

## CONCLUSION

As in many other fields, education is increasingly faced with the need to establish hard priorities. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Asia. The regional planning workshop of the Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) pointed out that most of the countries in Asia face tremendous problems. They have a runaway population growth and a high dependency ratio. They have a population structure that is overwhelmingly young and which is concentrated in deprived areas with low productivity. There is uneven and slow economic progress and excessive population growth combined with severe

shortages of food, social services, electrical power, water supply and qualified manpower. In addition, there are inadequacies in infra-structure, all of which are essential to national development. Many of the countries are former colonies of western nations and have a legacy of uneven development and a foreign educational system which is often ill-adapted to new national needs.

21. Such a situation could easily lead to despair and to a concentration upon extreme action. However, very few countries seem interested in the ideas of the de-schoolers. Most countries want to "re-school" their society and make the schools more reflective of the urgent needs of contemporary society. They accept that a double burden will be placed on teacher education - that of preparing students to cope effectively with the school as it is and also to possess the skills, the understanding and the insight to make fundamental changes. That double task can only be accomplished after a radical review of the system of teacher training and of the roles which educators play in the process.

## APPENDIX 1

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## INTRODUCTION TO LEAD PAPER ON NEW ROLES FOR TEACHERS

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Mr. James Porter prefaced his presentation with an analysis of the processes involved in innovation and fundamental change. He traced the development of an innovation through the stages: idea - innovation - implementation - integration, and indicated that an innovation can get lost at any stage. He said that innovations are modifications of existing situations and need not be fundamental changes. A fundamental change arises out of a major societal event - political, ideological, natural or catastrophic, leading to new priorities, new groups, new ideas (clusters) and new institutions. He then proceeded to highlight some of the main ideas in the lead paper.

During the discussion that followed, it was pointed out that new and challenging curricula could provide the background for innovative teaching. The ever-changing curriculum makes the traditional role of teachers inappropriate and leads to innovations such as team teaching and pupil and teacher learning together. It was also brought out that teacher training should not be an isolated, self-contained process. It should be integrated with school and community activities.

Mr. Porter pointed out that a cause of failure of innovations lay in placing too high a level of expectation on what the teacher could do and overloading him with tasks, while overlooking his basic function of looking after pupils and their personal development.

Referring to the research and development aspects, Mr. Porter indicated that these should be defined broadly and in relation to real educational tasks.

In discussing new roles for teachers, it was pointed out that change in itself is nothing new to teachers. What is new is the rapid pace of change. Therefore teachers have to be prepared for mastering this change. As such, teacher training should take into account the need for giving the teacher the instruments of learning, logic and inductive reasoning. It was felt that a course such as Education and the Social Order could be a device for providing a suitable foundation.

## DISCUSSION ON NEW ROLES FOR TEACHERS

### TEACHERS

The four most important professional skills that a beginning teacher should have on entry to the profession were thought to be:

- (a) The skill to communicate at the level of the pupils to be taught.
- (b) Skill in testing and evaluating pupil achievement in the learning process.
- (c) Skill to organize and manage learning activities.
- (d) Skill in diagnosing and remedying pupils' learning difficulties.

In addition, it was felt that teachers should possess the necessary attitudes for successful teaching.

There was no agreement on whether in-service training for teachers should be voluntary or compulsory, although the group was unanimous that such training should be available.

It was felt that the priorities of in-service teacher education should be decided by those involved in the system though the responsibility for providing in-service training facilities should be that of Ministries of Education.

In the interest of ensuring consistency in educational practice in the schools and the relevance of what is taught to national needs and priorities, it is necessary for every country to institute a resource and development strategy. The manner of operation of the research institution, i.e. whether it is to be on a centralized state controlled basis, a semi-government statutory body basis, or an independent institution basis would depend on the circumstances and needs of individual countries.

### TEACHER EDUCATORS

The four most important professional skills for beginning teachers were considered to be:

- (a) Self study skills
  - (i) The ability to gather material related to the teacher's professional development.
  - (ii) The skill to make, improvise and use effectively, teaching materials and resources with special reference to the use of the chalk board.

- (iii) Skills in evaluation.
- (iv) Skills in how to gather material from various sources.
- (b) Effective communicative skills in the classroom situation.
- (c) Awareness of:
  - (i) the socio-economic background of the child,
  - (ii) the needs of the individual child, and
  - (iii) the needs of the community as a whole.
- (d) Ability to think creatively.

The group did not consider it necessary to arrange the skills in any order of priority.

It was emphasized that teacher educators, themselves, should develop and further the self-learning skills expected of those entering the teaching profession.

In response to the question of whether in-service teacher education should be voluntary or compulsory, the group felt that in-service training should be voluntary. Providing incentives and making qualitative improvement in in-service training would be sufficient to draw a large number to such courses. Moreover, compulsory in-service training may not be possible in some countries due to the non-availability of sufficient funds. Short-term programmes were recommended by the group. However, such programmes would depend on the needs of the country.

Concerning who should determine priorities for in-service teacher education and who should be responsible for it, the group was of the opinion that the individual teacher, the school the local unit of educational administration and the Ministry of Education had a place in deciding priorities. It was suggested that a Central Planning Committee comprising representatives of these four components be responsible for deciding areas in which in-service training was necessary.

With reference to national strategies for research and development, it was suggested that:

- (a) Every country should have a research and development strategy.
- (b) The bulk of research should be of an applied nature rather than fundamental.
- (c) The research strategy should be geared to the overall development of the nation.

#### EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

The group identified the following as the four most important professional skills that a beginning teacher should have acquired on entry to the profession:

- (a) Skill in organization and management of learning,

- (b) Communication skills.
- (c) Diagnostic and evaluation skills.
- (d) Human relationship skills.

The group discussed the necessity for in-service training throughout a teacher's professional career. However the group was of the opinion that there should be two types of in-service training:

- (a) Compulsory courses - arising out of national needs.
- (b) Optional courses - contributing to the overall development of the teacher.

The group also recommended that some incentives should be provided for those who attend in-service training courses.

The group thought that the priorities for in-service training should be decided at the national level but in consultation with the teachers, schools and local units of administration.

Responsibility for training should be taken by the Ministry of Education and implemented through the teacher training institutions and the local educational administration unit in collaboration with other relevant persons and agencies.

The group was of the view that each country should have a research and development strategy, and that this function should be carried out at three levels:

- (a) Higher educational institutions such as ministries, institutes of education and curriculum development centres.
- (b) Teacher training institutions.
- (c) Schools.

Financial assistance should be provided for teachers and teacher educators to engage; in action-research at their own level. Higher education institutions and teacher training institutions should conduct pilot studies to examine specific problems.