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Ensuring Quality Teaching of English-speaking Civilization and Culture in Higher Education

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Abstract:

المُلخَص:

Quality teaching in higher education has been the focus of many researchers around the world since the middle of the twentieth century. Most of researchers agree that quality teaching matters in terms of students' achievement. Teachers do not come to the classroom as finished product; most of them during their career try to improve and develop over time and become better. A teacher's most significant function is contributing to and enhancing the learning and achievement of the students. In this article, we will focus on the various views towards enhancing quality teaching of English-speaking civilization in higher education. Hence, the teacher in this field has to be featured by certain personal and professional features that enable him to make the courses interesting, valuable, and attractive, enjoyable.

لقد كانت جودة التدريس في التعليم العالي هو محط اهتمام العديد من الباحثين في العالم منذ منتصف القرن العشرين حيث انفق معظم الباحثين أن جودة التدريس تنعكس في التحصيل العلمي للطلبة. لأن المدرسون لا يأتون إلى الفصول الدراسية كمنتج نهائي؛ بل جلهم يسعون أثناء مسيرتهم الوظيفية لتحسين وتطوير مهاراتهم مع مرور الوقت لتصبح أفضل. فالدور الأكثر أهمية للأستاذ هو الاشتراك و السعي وراء تطوير طرق التعلم والتحصيل العلمي للطلبة. فقد ارتأينا في هذا المقال أن نركز أساسا على مختلف وجهات النظر حول تعزيز نوعية تدريس مقياس الحضارة و الثقافة الغربية في التعليم العالي. وذلك لأن الأستاذ في هذا المجال عليه أن يتحلى ببعض الصفات الشخصية و الخصائص المهنية التي تمكنه من تقديم الدروس بطريقة مثيرة للاهتمام، قيمة، جذابة وممتعة.

Background

Ensuring quality teaching and learning in higher education is a key strategic focus area in higher education. In the process of enhancing the quality of higher education, emphasis should be placed on the students' personal improvement for professional life. Quality therefore defines the goals and purposes of education in universities. Hence, quality has a great impact on the content of higher education programs, its processes, its output or product, as it search for developing human resources with required skills. Quality makes education socially and individually significant, but if the quality of education is not well assured then the education, which is supposed to be advocated as a solution to various types of social problems, may itself be converted into a serious problem. Quality in education thus is requisite these days, for permitting individuals, societies and nations to attain the skills and competencies necessary for living meaningfully in a competitive, global world. This issue was seriously stressed by the World Conference on Higher Education (UNESCO 1998), that oblige each higher education institution to define its mission to offer access to quality education which is the basis of human rights and democracy.

1. Ensuring Quality Teaching in Higher Education

In fact, little researches have conducted the issue of quality teaching enhancement. But the major propositions that have been suggested by the scholars were varied in content and purpose. Some supported teachers' role in pedagogy development, others emphasized students' participation, and others ask for the intervention of the governmental authorities in changing the situation by carrying out strategies that can help enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Another perspective also supports the spread of the having the tendency towards building a quality development culture among educators, students, and specialists in the field. These are the main suggestions that were discussed in the literature about quality teaching enhancement:

1.1 Effective leadership discipline

The enhancement of quality teaching, first and foremost, depends upon the quality of academic leadership offered within an

institution. Accordingly, the leadership therefore must create a motivating environment which encourages performance for both teachers and students. Leithwood et al. (2004, cited in Fullan, 2007) stipulate that effective leadership is distributed, shared, instruction-focused, and supportive of teachers' morale. Leaders set directions (shared visions, high performance expectations), develop people (individual support, intellectual and emotional stimulation, modelling) and redesign the organization.

1.1.1 Creating a positive learning environment

United Nation of International Childres' Emergengy Fund (UNICEF) also tackled the issue of developing quality teaching in the world. In its paper "Quality in education, 2000", UNICEF affirms the importance of the motivating environment in education by stressing the availability of three essential elements: physical, psychosocial and health service delivery elements. *Physical elements* can be summarized in quality of institution facilities, adequate material, and appropriate class size. *Psychosocial elements* also play a significant role in enhancing quality, therefore institutions should reduce all sorts of discrimination, violence, and unsafety among teachers, students, and administrators. Provision of *health services* in institutions can be of a great help to contribute in enhancing learning through reducing absenteeism, weakness, and inattention among students.

1.1.2 Adopting a visionary leadership system

The role of higher education institutions is promoting a transformative leadership who is competent of translating intentions into actions and actions into quality. Visionary leadership adopts and institutes an effective 'leadership system' for an education organization. (Davis, 2015). The visionary leadership system is supposed to illustrate the mechanism of leadership when exercising, formally and informally, throughout the organization and on which basis the key decisions are made, communicated and carried out. Mahadevappa (2006: 16, cited in Davis, 2015) describes the visionary leadership as:

It includes structure and mechanisms for decision making, selection and development of senior leaders, administrators, department heads and faculty leaders, and reinforcement of values, directions and performance expectations.

Starting from this quotation the major roles of a visionary leadership in enhancing quality have been listed. Roles are summarized in terms of responsibility, creativity, motivation, modeling, and reinforcement. He maintains that a visionary leader should set directions and create a student-focused, learning-oriented climate, inspire and motivate entire workforce and encourage all staff to contribute in innovation and creativity, and serve as role model through in planning, communications, coaching, and recognition.

1.2 Developing quality culture

University teachers must work in collaboration with the administration to achieve a quality culture and enhance quality teaching. Patrick & Lines (2004, cited in Henard & Leprince-Ringuet, 2013) insist that quality culture must be integrated in the university's main goal and mission, as they guess: "For the quality system to be effective, it must be accepted by the diversity of constituencies within the institution while at the same time framing the strategic direction and nature of change for the whole university". Habitual quality culture needs more mental infrastructure than physical infrastructure (Davis, 2015).

1.3 Effective and motivated teaching

Many empirical and theoretical studies obviously correlate teachers' willingness to think about change, and to work positively for its implementation, with teacher barriers in the environment in which the change is required.

1.3.1 Rethinking teaching

Differentiation is a vital educational practice that is often debated by teachers and experts in the field of education, sometimes not well understood, and frequently implemented ineffectively. Biggs & Tang (2011:73-74) encourage university teachers to stop thinking about three situations that can prevent creativity and therefore decreasing the quality:

First, teachers need to stop thinking about what to say in the next lecture that we have to give, or what to do in the tutorial we have to design... The second change in thinking is to shift the focus from what the teacher does to what the student should best be doing... The third change is that we need to

stop assuming that learning is only taking place when it is located inside a teacher-directed classroom.

Teachers' assumption that the lecture method is considered as the only way of teaching in universities requires debate. Lectures have their uses, but they can be restricted in terms of effective achievement. There are other effective ways of using the space in which a variety of teaching activities can be instructed in an entertaining environment. The second change is thinking to shift the focus from what the teacher is doing to what the student are doing. Teaching does not only depend on making students learn through delivering lectures, but rather it depends on how they go about learning. The proposed third change is that university teachers need to stop assuming that learning takes place just inside classrooms. In contrast, learning is not restricted just to buildings; teachers can use the outside environment to open the space for students' creativity and performance.

1.3.2 Teacher accountability

Accountability, according to Davis (2015) is having the capability of being punctual, taking teaching appropriately, reading the up-to-date books and journals, sharing knowledge generously, helping students to achieve positive outcomes, evaluating student assignments fairly and returning them on time. As a matter of fact, this will call for committed teaching staff, only teachers with high intellectual ability, self-confidence and good communication skills alone should be taken to ensure quality. (Leithwood et al, 2002, in Thompson, 2010). Researchers in this field recognize the overwhelming role of teacher accountability, motivation, and commitment to ensure quality in higher education.

1.3.3 Teacher professional development

The quality of education relies for the most part on the teacher competence and commitment, but he fails to keep himself in touch with the speedy scientific and educational stream then he would become inefficient and ineffective. Professional development is inevitable in every profession, but in higher education most teachers start their carrier without having any training about the profession in terms of teaching strategies. Contrastingly, they are asked to assure quality in the teaching/learning process. Zuber-Skerritt (1994:146) in his book "Professional development in higher education" clarifies:

There is no pre-services training for teacher in higher education, the only alternatives are in-service training, generally referred to as professional development or staff development, or no formal agreements at all. It may be generally stated that professional development is and it should be voluntary, but it can also be observed that the better teachers are usually actively involved in professional self-development, and the poorer teachers are not.

Professional development as reported by Harrison (1980, in Hattie, 2009) is an effective way in which to improve profession performance and satisfaction through improved professional knowledge, affective feelings and satisfaction; it has also been found to have a lower but still positive effect on student achievement. Another view found that teachers who were prepared in formal teacher education programs felt significantly better prepared for virtually all teaching tasks comparing with those who lacked preparation. (Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow, 2002 cited in Hattie 2009).

1.4 Students responsibilities

In ensuring quality in higher education, students have a major role to play and are also an important participant in ensuring quality in the teaching/learning process. Prasad (2006) claims that university student can be an effective participant in ensuring quality in their universities by being aware of two main responsibilities. First, they have to recognize that they have the entire right to benefit from a quality education. Ensuring quality in teaching is an inevitable matter. Second, they should be aware of the learning responsibilities they have towards the institution. Students are expected to participate fully in their study, taking responsibility for their learning and for moving toward intellectual independence as a member of the learning community of the university.

2. Effective Teacher of Civilization

The teacher of civilization occupies a fundamental position in the teaching/learning process of history and culture courses. The success or failure of a course in civilization relies mainly on the teacher. Also, it is the teacher on whom the real success or failure of any method, material, device or procedure depends. Even though the continuous changes in the teaching aids and the great emphasis on

student centered approaches, the teacher is always considered as the important element that can make history courses interesting, valuable, and attractive, enjoyable. These outcomes are quite achievable simply when the teacher is distinguished by specific features.

2.1 Specific qualities

A teacher of history may not hold all the essential qualities but he has to some extent to outfit himself with the most needed qualities. The following are most specific qualities required in a history teacher according to Singh (2008):

1. Objectivity: the history teacher's role is not just teaching but rather equipping students to be capable of taking decisions relied on objective knowledge. His chief function is not to choose for students but pointing out to them the choices, which they may make themselves through a method by which such choices may be selected.

2. Deep knowledge of the subject: deep subject knowledge is the most important component of being a successful history teacher. It is really very important to be knowledgeable about almost every related topic or misconception. Being short of subject preparation is among the top paramount factors that lead to teacher failure.

3. Application of field study theory: teachers of history should have the tendency towards the application of a field theory in the process of learning, both for themselves and for their students. Theus (1968) explains that a field theory or a cognitive theory describes the process of how a person gains understanding of himself and his world.

4. Well-informed: A reflective teacher of history should be well informed about the nature and purposes of teaching history, by having a continually upward understanding of the field that he teaches, and keeping up with pedagogical developments.

5. Widely travelled: acquiring information as well as visiting significant geographical and historical places such as galleries, museums, cultural centers...etc. enable the first hand information of the important and significant cultural, geographical and historical buildings and places, art galleries, museums, dams, factories and projects...etc. will enable the history teacher to enhance his teaching.

6. A good communicator: Teachers should be aware of the significance of communication skills in teaching history. They must also recognize that it is through a good communication that a teacher can initiate creative and effective solutions to the problems that may

face their students. They can guide debates, increase motivation, and raise interest by being attractive storytellers.

7. Skilled in the use of technological aids: It is becoming more and more difficult to motivate students with just chalk and a blackboard. Teachers of history are highly asked to master certain skill in the use of technological aid which can play a great role in stimulating students' participation and engagement..

8. An interpreter of various experiences: from the main roles of a history teacher is to bringing together the past and the present, the old and the new, the native and the alien a history teacher is in a very advantageous position to bring together the past and the present, the new and the old, the alien and the native. The near and the distant. Jackes, M.L (cited in Singh 2008:): “Above all he is an interpreter-interpreting not only the experiences to his pupils but also the community to which they belong, its past no less than its present”.

2.2 Essentials qualities

Teachers of history have to think deeply in selecting effective ways in order to gain the interest and engagement of their students. Aggarwal (2007) conceives that an effective history teacher has to possess a number of essential qualities that can be categorized as follows:

1. Scholarship: it is not only a desirable but an essential acquaintance with current problems through reading relevant references on the subject matter being taught. In the field of history, a reflective history teacher is required to have a broader knowledge than the subject that he teaches. Hence, he must have:

a. A sound knowledge of the subject matter: a history teacher has to possess a sound knowledge of the subject content he teaches. Gearon (2015) perceives that a sound subject knowledge compromises mastering sufficient substantive knowledge to correctly teach history but this is relied to the understanding of conceptual and procedural frameworks and a deep understanding of the implications of these upon pedagogical choices. Furthermore, Haydn (2012) clarifies that recent studies into effective teaching emphasized the significance of teacher's awareness of sound subject knowledge.

b. A background of general and liberal education: The teacher of history needs to be open-minded and have wide-ranging of interests by applying his mind in many subjects and activities.

2. Originality: being up-to-date to the newest information in history through reading books, newspapers, magazines, and reports, enables the teachers to form their own independent judgment instead of being restricted only by what others think.

3. Professional background: Professional background is an essential process for teachers of history to develop their knowledge and skills they need for addressing students' learning challenges. For this reason, professional background is significant for successful history teaching. It includes:

a. Professional attitude: Teachers' competency relies on the attitude they possess towards their career.

4. Professional training: A good teacher of history must undergo professional training that can include studies of effective methodical procedures, as well as appropriate use of audio-visual aids.

5. Personality: Personality is very crucial in teaching /learning process, both for teachers, as well as students. Many researchers believe that teachers' personality has a great impact on the success of students' learning (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). These are some characteristics that can construct a good teacher's personality

6. Human relations: According to Business Dictionary (2015) human relation is a discipline within resource management which addresses interpersonal behaviours. Factors that are considered include leadership, communication, team building, and negotiation.

2.3 Main role

Teaching about civilization and culture is not only teaching about the nations' achievements and collapses throughout the past but also dealing with the contemporary events and incidents of the world and subsequently is of a particular importance. The significant responsibility of history teacher has been stressed by Lord Bryce. R (? , cited in Aggarwal, 2015): "The teacher of history must have the power of realizing the date passed in a living present and have a touch of imagination as well as vastly large amount of positive knowledge, then he will attempt to pile upon the memory of his class". Thus, a history teacher should be knowledgeable of current affairs; this will permit him to make the history course very interesting.

Conclusion

Both university staff and students are responsible for quality assurance in teaching and learning. Responsibilities for ensuring quality in teaching and learning in higher education reside in structural and organizational entities as well as individual staff and students. Cooperatively, teaching staff and academic managers are accountable for ensuring that the design, development, management, teaching and assessment of courses leads to effective learning, while students have responsibility to engage actively in the learning process. The essential qualities and the foremost role that lead to an effective teacher. Teachers of civilization and culture in EFL classrooms occupy a fundamental position in the teaching/learning process; it is on whom the real success or failure of any method, material, device or procedure depend. Most researchers agree upon the core personal and academic qualities that are vital in history teachers' career.

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