

ASSURING TEACHERS' QUALITY

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Abstract

Educationists, policymakers, and parents hold that good teachers produce good students. Most of education practitioners and experts believe that the victory is in the classroom. The highest standards, the strongest accountability measures, the latest technology, and the most beautiful facilities will do little good without talented, dedicated, and well-prepared teachers. However, because the challenges faced by teachers continue to grow and to change, our definition of what good teachers are is also constantly changing. To be able to fulfill teachers with the expected qualifications, continuous quality improvement is urgently required. In this paper, I argue that quality assurance will only be meaningful if it is conducted in the whole life continuum of a teacher profession; namely, during teacher education, teacher recruitment, teacher induction and mentoring, teacher certification, and teacher professional development. Consequently, quality assurance in teaching profession is not a short time period, but it is a long and continuous process. It is not only the responsibility teacher education institutions, but also the responsibility of all education stakeholders, the central and local government, society and non government organizations.

1. Introduction

In Indonesia the belief that teachers play a very central part in producing quality education has been adopted not only by educationists but also by the government. At the inception of *Teacher Profession Education Institute* in 1954, one of the Indonesian founding fathers, Mr. Muhammad Yamin, said that there should be a tertiary education devoted to teacher training. The argument is that if we have veterinary schools educating students to be professional veterinarian, why don't we have one to educate human beings? Following Yamin, Indonesian government has been trying to improve teacher qualifications. In 1980s, with one year education at a university, a high school graduate could be a junior high school teacher. The requirement was improved to a two year, three year and four year tertiary education in 1990s. Before 2000, the qualification of a primary teacher is two-year university education, but since then all primary teachers should have a four year university education. Even though still underpaid compared to other professions, teachers' salary is also continually improved.

Educationists, policymakers, and parents in USA also hold that good teachers produce good students. John Stanford, as quoted by Dozier (2000), believed that "the victory is in the classroom." Stanford understood that the highest standards, the strongest accountability measures, the latest technology, and the most beautiful facilities will do little good without talented, dedicated, and well-prepared teachers. A report on the Preparation and

Qualifications of Public School Teachers in USA in 1999 has revealed the evidence that confirms what parents have always known—the quality of a teacher is one of the most critical components of how well students achieve. Studies found that students who had effective teachers greatly outperformed those who had ineffective teachers. For example, in the Tennessee study, the report says, students with highly effective teachers for three years in a row scored 50 percentage points higher on a test of math skills than those whose teachers were ineffective. An issue paper from *Educational Testing Service* (ETS) entitled, “Where we stand on teacher quality” reports that a correlation exist between teacher verbal ability and student achievement. Teachers who have majored in the subject they teach are better teachers of that subject than those who have not.

However, most of us would agree that if the teachers should be able to meet the challenge of the future, extra efforts are needed. Challenges faced by teacher education in both developed and underdeveloped countries are almost similar. Because of the increase of enrollments and accelerated retirements, Indonesia is in the shortage of teachers, especially in small and remote islands far away from the local administration center. Consequently, many school districts, given shortages of qualified teachers, hire individuals without sufficient knowledge and skills, or one teacher teaches the total numbers of hours beyond the limit stated by the rule. Indonesia also faces equity problems. Students in poor or slums or remote areas—those who need the best teachers—often are taught by those who are least qualified. Qualified teachers mostly work in favorite urban schools where they might be able to teach in more than one school to increase their take home income, while those who are unable to compete will choose to teach in rural areas with limited income. Student enrollments are high, and while schools in rural and urban settings struggle to hire qualified teachers to meet their needs, the wealthier suburban schools have difficulty finding the science, mathematics and special education teachers they need. Many teachers who got masters degree do not enjoy teaching in their previous place, but trying to teach at university levels for better salaries. Qualified teachers teaching in remote areas but separated from their spouses usually reunite with their couples who are in fact living in suburban or urban areas and result in the lost of teachers in the remote ares. This burgeoning demand for new teachers and an increasing demand for high quality in the teacher workforce have put a spotlight on the preparation of teachers. Researchers, policymakers and the education community have grappled with the problems that face teacher recruitment and preparation such as the difficulty in recruiting the ablest students, under-investment in

teacher education, inadequate pre-service time for teacher candidates to acquire the content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge they need to be successful in the classroom.

As the challenges are quite big and widespread, we need more good teachers who would be able to cope with the problems. However, producing qualified teachers will not be sufficient if it heavily relies on partial efforts. To this end, I argue that good teachers are the result of synergy among teacher education, recruitment, induction and mentoring, and professional development. Producing good teachers requires that the quality of the processes in all aspects of the teaching continuum as described below is assured. I believe that without total quality management of the whole professional life of a teacher, teacher quality assurance will not be fruitful.

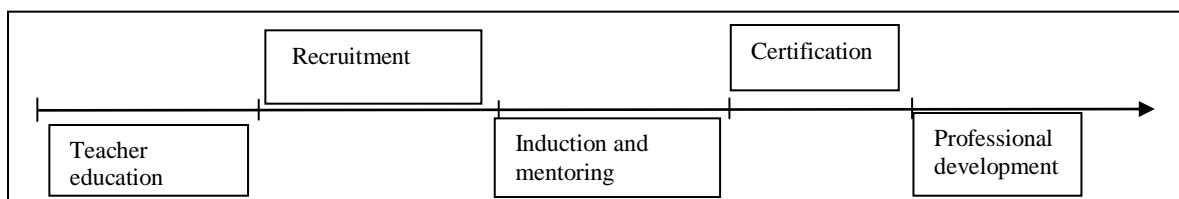


Figure 1
Teacher Profession Continuum

2. What is meant by Quality?

Whenever quality in education is discussed it may be important to reflect on what is understood by the term 'quality'. Many educators, researchers and politicians have tried to define this term and a number of different definitions can be found in the literature. One almost classical definition is the way in which Coombs described quality in his book *The World Crisis in Education: the View from the Eighties*. "Qualitative dimension means much more than the quality of education as customarily defined and judged by student learning achievements, in terms of traditional curriculum and standards. Quality also pertains to the relevance of what is taught and learned - to how well it fits the present and future needs of the particular learners in question, given their particular circumstances and prospects. It also refers to significant changes in the educational system itself, in the nature of its inputs (students, teachers, facilities, equipment, and supplies); its objectives, curriculum and educational technologies; and its socioeconomic, cultural and political environment." (Coombs, 1985, p. 105).

The World Bank has also tried to define quality. In the report *Priorities and Strategies for Education* (1995) it dealt with education policy issues and made the following observation concerning quality: “*Quality in education is difficult to define and measure. An adequate definition must include student outcomes. Most educators would also include in the definition the nature of the educational experience that helps to produce thus outcomes - the learning environment.*” (World Bank, 1995, p. 46). There is also a large amount of other reports and publications discussing quality from a perspective of quality assurance and quality improvement. Spanbauer discusses the need for schools to have a quality policy. As an example he uses the Fox Valley Technical College Policy: “*It is the policy of Fox Valley Technical College to provide quality instruction and service consistent with the highest educational standards. We endeavor to provide precise, prompt, and courteous service and instruction to our students, to one another, and to the employers who hire our graduates and use our services.*” (Spanbauer, 1992, p.11).

Morgatroyd and Morgan propose three basic definitions of quality: 1) “*Quality assurance refers to the determination of standards, appropriate methods and quality requirements by an expert body, accompanied by a process of inspection or evaluation that examines the extent to which practice meets these standard;*” 2) “*... contract conformance, where some quality standards has been specified during the negotiation of forming a contract;*” 3) “*Customer-driven quality refers to a notion of quality in which those who are to receive a product or service make explicit their expectations for this product or service and quality is defined in terms meeting or exceeding the expectations of customers.*” (Morgatroyd & Morgan, 1994. p. 45-46). Morgatroyd and Morgan argue that the quality concept is undergoing a development from what has been referred to as “quality assurance” to “contract conformance” and most important to a “customer-driven” perspective.

There are, however, two broad elements that most observers agree characterize teacher quality: (1) teacher preparation and qualifications, and (2) teaching practices. The first refers to preservice learning (e.g., postsecondary education, certification) and continued learning (e.g., professional development, mentoring). The second refers to the actual behaviors and practices that teachers exhibit in their classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 1996). Of course, these elements of teacher quality are not independent; but excellent teacher preparation and qualifications should lead to exemplary teaching behaviors and practices.

We need to assure quality since we see that education over the last decades has developed towards lower quality. We see also an increased concern about education, the quality of education

and the best way of spending money in education. According to the World Bank, 1994, lack of quality is a major problem in many education systems: “*The quality of education is poor at all levels in low- and middle-income countries. Students in developing countries have a mean level of achievement below that in industrial countries, and their performance shows a much greater variance around the mean.*” (p. 3). UNESCO's International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (often referred to as the Delors Commission after its chairperson and former EU Commissioner Jacques Delors) published in 1996 its report *Learning: the Treasure Within*. In this report they concluded that: “... *a greater focus on quality is desirable everywhere, even in countries where all children are enrolled in basic education*” (p.120). It can be noted that quality has since the eighties become a key concept in the education discussion. Everyone wants to improve the quality in education.

3. What are the characteristics of quality teachers?

The OECD report *Quality in Teaching* (1994) defines teacher quality in five dimensions: 1) **knowledge of substantive areas and content**; 2) **pedagogic skill**, including the acquisition and ability to use a repertoire of teaching strategies; 3) **reflection** and ability to be self-critical, the hallmark of teacher professionalism; 4) **empathy**, and commitment to the acknowledgement of the dignity of other; and 5) **managerial competence**, as teachers assume a range of managerial responsibilities within and outside the classroom (OECD, 1994, p. 13-14). The report adds: “*These dimensions of teacher quality should not be seen in terms of narrow behavioral competencies, but more in terms of dispositions. Teacher quality should be regarded as a holistic concept, i.e. as a gestalt of qualities rather than as a discrete set of measurable behaviors, to be developed independently from each other. The integration of competencies across these dimensions of teacher quality is thought to mark the outstanding teacher.*” (OECD, 1994, p. 14). Another interesting approach to describe the good teacher is the ten competences identified by Perrenoud (1999):

- Organizing student learning opportunities
- Managing student learning progression
- Dealing with student heterogeneity
- Developing student commitment to working and learning
- Working in teams
- Participating in school curriculum and organization development
- Promoting parent and community commitment to school
- Using new technologies in daily practice
- Tackling professional duties and ethical dilemmas
- Managing own professional development

Quality can be regarded from different perspectives. For many students quality is a fair system where their skills are awarded and where their achievements are acknowledged. For example, a good teacher can be perceived as the one who “*is very clever, doesn’t shout, helps you every day, is not bossy, has faith in you, is funny, is patient, is good at work, tells you clearly what to do, helps you with mistakes, marks your work, helps you to read, helps you with spelling and has got courage.*” (MacBeath et al., 1996, p. 55). For parents, quality means a school where the students are safe and where they can learn in a stimulating environment. For many teachers, quality is a school where the students want to learn and where the working conditions are good.

When the characteristics of the good teacher are discussed, it is important to keep in mind that no one is born to be an outstanding teacher. Good teaching is a result of education, training and experience. *Educational Testing Service* (ETS) believe that competent teachers should have the following knowledge and skills: 1) Basic academic reading, writing and math, 2) Thorough knowledge of the content of each subject taught, appropriate to the levels of their students, 3) Both generic and content-specific knowledge in areas such as child development, classroom management, motivating children to learn, interpreting and using assessment data, individualizing instruction, aligning content the state standards, developing appropriate instructional materials, and working with children with disabilities or from other culture, and 4) Actual hands-on ability and skills to use the above types of knowledge to engage students successfully in learning and mastery.

4. How are teachers prepared in Indonesia?

In 1954, Indonesian government established Teacher Education Institutes (PTPG) whose main responsibilities, among others, are producing primary and secondary teachers, counselors, and education administrators. In 1957, the institutes were integrated to universities becoming Faculty of Education (FKIP). In 1963, some of the Faculty of Education was separated from its universities to become Institute of Teacher Training and Pedagogy (IKIP), while others still belong to universities. Some IKIPs, then, changed to universities with the responsibility of educating prospective teachers and non-prospective teachers. Even though converted to university, IKIP Bandung retained “education” label on its name becoming Indonesia University of Education (UPI) with the responsibility of preparing graduates to work on teaching and non-teaching profession. Education label explicitly indicates that UPI is highly concerned with teacher education and believe that

preparing teachers should be seen as the same as preparing other profession such as surgeons or lawyers.

Teacher training institutions like UPI train their students to acquire both subject skills and teaching skills. The first covers the content of the subjects to be taught, while the latter includes skills needed to be professional teachers such as assessment, teaching and learning strategies, research in education skills, curriculum and material development. In addition, the students also study general subjects preparing them to be religious, autonomous, democratic, pluralistic person responsible for the prosperity of the country. Finally, the students also learn supporting subjects such as statistics, entrepreneurship, arts and literary appreciation. Teacher education system can be made integrative or consecutive. Integrative means that the students at the same time are trained to acquire both academic and professional skills, while consecutive means that they first study their subjects or disciplines; then, they learn teaching skills.

5. Quality Assurance in Teacher Education

The purpose of the implementation of quality assurance in teacher education institutions is to improve national competitiveness, autonomy and organizational health. To reach the objectives, three approaches are employed. First, every teacher training institution is required to administer Study Program Evaluation through Self-Assessment (EPSBED). By this measure, every study program is obliged to identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Then, find out the strategic steps to pursue the opportunities and anticipate the possible threats. Second, every teacher training institution should be accredited by either national (BAN-PT) or international accreditation standard (e.g. British Standard, ISO, Malcolm Balridge Awards, etc.). Third, every university should have internal quality assurance system.

As we can observe in the matrix below, EPSBED and quality assurance can be internally or externally driven. It is externally driven because every funding launched by the government requires the implementation of EPSBED and quality assurance. It is internally driven because the implementation of the two measures is up to the readiness of the institution itself. Some higher institutions have already administered EPSBED and quality assurance, while some others are still struggling to understand what and how to do them. Through EPSBED, a university tries to collect, process, and store data and information.

Accreditation, which is aimed at assuring the accountability of higher education implementation, now is moving towards obligatory implementation. Study programs which are not accredited will be announced publicly and public are suggested to stay away from such kind of institutions. Quality control from international accreditation bodies is also endorsed. Directorate General of Higher Education is trying to identify study programs and other supporting units which have already got ISO certificates.

Objective	Quality Control (License provision)	Accountability (Accreditation)	Improvement (Audit)
Characteristic	Optional	Optional/Compulsory	Optional/Compulsory
Evaluation Framework	External standards	External standard, internal consistency	Institution goals
Procedures	External review		Self-evaluation

Figure 2
The Objective of Quality Assurance

Quality assurance in teacher training institutions according to *The Association of Teacher Training Institutions of Indonesia* should be supported by implementation tools which include: 1) the development of competence-based, 2) the provision of experiences and assignment related to competence achievement and happening in authentic contexts, 3) the assessment of academic and professional competence, 4) standardized school partners under effective institution cooperation, competent senior teachers supervising student teachers who are doing their teaching practice, 5) faculty members with at least masters degree, 6) The cooperation of stakeholders in student recruitment, and 7) standardization and good university governance.

Organizationally speaking, quality assurance unit is different from university to university. UPI has internal quality assurance task force unit named Satuan Penjaminan Mutu (SPM) through the Rector assignment. At the faculty level, the dean appointed an internal quality assurance controller task force or Satuan Kendali Mutu (SKM), while at the department level, the dean of the faculty appointed internal quality assurance cluster task force or Gugus Kendali Mutu (GKM). The responsibility of SPM, SKM, and GKM is motivating, supporting, and guiding the process of quality assurance at university level at university level, faculty level, and department level respectively. The activities of internal quality

assurance units are funded by university budget that they annually plan and propose to the university management.

The scope of internal quality assurance at a teacher training institution covers what the students do from the enrollment to graduation. Adopting the process of making a product in a factory, higher education system can be consisting of input, process, and output. The input component includes the vision and mission, objectives, students, teachers and supporting staff, curriculum, teaching and learning facilities, and money. The process of teacher education includes university governance, program management, teaching and learning process, academic atmosphere, research publication, and community services. Output includes information system, and alumni. In other words, quality assurance a university level should be directed not only to the attainment of 8 national education standards, but also other standards considered essential in improving national competitiveness, autonomy, and organizational health of a university.

The implementation of internal quality assurance by a university can be mainly described into preparation, implementation and evaluation stage. During preparation stage, the top leader of a university appointed internal quality assurance task forces and decides their job description. This team studies and reviews quality assurance literature, prepares quality assurance documents such quality assurance guidelines, quality manuals, monitoring and evaluation manuals, samples of standard operating procedures (SOP), self evaluation instrument, tracer study instrument, and other necessary documents and forms. The next step is designing the road map of quality assurance schedule of the university. If this step is done, the next step is socializing quality assurance program to the whole faculty members, students, and supporting staff through seminars, workshops, personal discussion, facilitation and other advertising strategies. When socialization is considered sufficient, quality assurance staff for the faculty, department, study program, library, and other supporting units can be appointed, following by the implementation of essential training program such as training of writing quality manuals, standard operating procedures, internal monitoring and evaluation, etc. The next step is the implementation of quality assurance process and internal monitoring and evaluation activities.

Even though we have so many standards to be assured, in practice we may prioritize those considered important or directly influential on the quality of the graduates. As we still

consider that the main function of higher education in Indonesia is administering the teaching and learning process, doing research, and community service, quality assurance can be focused on curriculum and material development, teaching and learning process, evaluation, research and community service procedures. However, if the institution has capacity to assure the quality of all input, process and output aspects, the quality assurance of all standards can be implemented. An example of quality assurance activity is the measurement of the students' evaluation on teachers' performance, the satisfaction and expectation of alumni towards the institution, and the measurement of the satisfaction of faculty members and supporting staff towards the service of the university. If the institution can keep or even enhance the satisfaction of the students from year to year, faculty members and supporting staff, and alumni, we can say that the institution has assured some aspects of its quality.

In practice, the implementation of quality assurance is not always as smooth as what we have expected. Resistance from faculty members usually persists. They believe that quality assurance is something that should come from within and does not need to be imposed by anyone else from outside. Some faculty members also believe that what they are doing runs well and has produced good quality graduates so what should they bother themselves with quality assurance? Some faculty members also tend to be inward looking. They do not see that globalization, liberal markets, rapid development of science and technology, will force them to reconsider if what they perceive as good practices will preserve. The next problem in the implementation of quality assurance in addition to the allotment of resources is lack of consistent support from the top leader of the institution. In a paternal society, sometimes only instruction from the top management will be most effective. When the top management does not give a firm direction and supervision to their lower staff, no change will be made. In other words, the most discernible problem in the implementation of quality assurance is the change of mindset and leadership.

6. Quality Assurance in Teacher Recruitment

Quality assurance should be done also in teachers' recruitment so that only the ablest prospective teachers who would join teachers' profession. To achieve the goal, recruitment should be made through several criteria. Firstly, there should be assessment in teacher's recruitment covering not only professional competence, teaching competence, social competence, but also administrative and managerial competence. The instrument should be

developed by central government but the implementation can be done by local government. This examination should be able to assure a teaching force with deep subject matter knowledge. The content should be challenging, and the standard used to declare that teachers have mastered the content should be high. Secondly, there are also other measures that would help speed up future teacher development, namely international language ability and ICT technology mastery. Candidates having these two skills should be put into priority. The evidence of competence of the two skills can be by certificates of course completion or test score record. Thirdly, the recruitment should be administered in a professional and accountable ways involving independent and credible institution. Fourthly, the accreditation of the institution where the candidate did their teacher education should be taken into account. The candidates graduated from Institutions whose accreditation, for example, is A, should be given more weight than those from institutions which are not accredited.

7. Quality Assurance in Induction and Mentoring

In countries with high-achieving school systems, beginning teachers not only have solid liberal arts backgrounds, deep expertise in their subject areas, and sufficient education in pedagogy, but they also are inducted into the profession through a clinical, real-world training process. Inductees are able to develop and perfect their teaching skills by relying heavily on the expertise of their more experienced colleagues. As they become more expert, they assume more and more responsibility in the classroom. Therefore, before being declared as competent and professional and getting professional income, a newly recruited teacher should be given an opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills through one-year induction and mentoring period. In this period, the teachers should not be given too much work to do. They should follow training not only in administrative matters, but also in their professional skills such as curriculum and material development, teaching methodology, action research, assessment, paper writing, leadership, and ethics. These training then should be followed by mentoring program. A senior, competent, senior and professional teacher should become the mentor of a junior teacher. The guideline of what and how the mentoring is conducted should be prepared by the central government and the implementation should be supervised by school inspector. At the end of the mentoring period, the junior teacher should submit his/her induction and mentoring portfolios to the committee consisting of school inspector, headmaster, and a senior teacher. The committee then decides if the junior teacher has met the required competence, skills, and personality.

Finally, the committee decides further action to take, whether to promote the junior teacher or extend his/her induction period.

8. Quality Assurance in Continuing Professional Development

Professional development should be strictly regulated for teachers having passed their induction and mentoring period. Teacher professional development can be implemented through the teacher's compulsory involvement in *Lesson Study* conducted and managed by subject matter teacher cluster (MGMP) which should be funded regularly by local education authority and supervised by the school inspectors and in cooperation with teacher training institutions. In addition to lesson study, MGMP can also call for other activities such as essay and paper writing, action research, Internet browsing, and so on. In the mean time, the teachers can also join trainings administered by central and local government and participating in seminars or workshops carried out by universities, government organization, or NGOs.

Every school should have a quality assurance unit involving headmaster, senior teacher, school inspector, and parent-teacher association. This unit set the standard that school should meet, design the procedure to achieve the standard, the implementation of the procedure, and the monitoring and evaluation of the outcome. The developed and agreed procedures should be followed strictly by all individuals involved. The funding of the quality assurance unit should come not only from local and central government, but also from the income generated by the school.

After five years, the junior teacher then can propose to take part in teacher certification programs conducted by the central government. The central government should have the guideline or Standard Operating Procedure concerning the recruitment of teacher certification program candidates to make sure only candidates which will pass that is recruited. For candidates who do not pass their portfolio assessment in service teacher training should be give. When this needs to be done, the materials and skills to be developed should also be strictly supervised and constantly reviewed by competent and independent bodies. Certificates should only be awarded to be those considered competent and professional teachers, by which the criteria are clearly and operationally defined. This certification should be imposed not only once in a teacher's lifetime. It should be done at

least once in every ten years. Only through this measure, continuous quality improvement can be reached.

In addition to teacher certification program, quality assurance in professional development could be also in the form of regular and organized workshop or seminars. The current seminars and workshops are organized by municipal, provincial, and central government. The resources are often spent on one-shot workshops, unconnected to the needs of students and teachers. For professional development to be effective, it must offer meaningful intellectual content; take explicit account of the various contexts of teaching and experiences of teachers; offer support for informed dissent; and be ongoing and embedded in a meaningful way in the day-to-day work of teachers. To be able to do so, seminars and workshops should be delegated to MGMP through block grant financial support as have been mentioned by a senior staff of National Education Minister. However, the government should also supervised the implementation of MGMP program by appointing supervisor, inspector or consultant from NGOs or universities to assure that the programs are conducted well and the resources are used accountably.

9. Conclusion

In summary, we can say that all of us believe that good teachers will produce good teachers. However, because the challenges faced by teachers continue to grow and to change, our definition of what good teachers are is also constantly changing. To be able to fulfill teachers with expected qualifications, continuous quality improvement is urgently required. However, quality assurance will only be meaningful if it is conducted in the whole life continuum of a teacher. In other words, teacher quality assurance should be carried out during teacher education, teacher recruitment, teacher induction and mentoring, teacher certification, and teacher professional development. Consequently, quality assurance in teaching profession is not only the responsibility teacher education, but it also the responsibility of the central and local government, society and non government organization.

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