

## IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY, A KEYWORD FOR IMPROVING EDUCATION FACING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Drs. Husain Jusuf, M.Pd  
IKIP Negeri Gorontalo – Indonesia  
hs\_jusuf@olami.net.id

### ABSTRACT

Research shows that teachers are the single most important factor in student learning in schools. Students who have access to highly qualified teachers achieve at a higher rate, regardless of other factors.

Teachers to be highly qualified must be well prepared, especially in improving the quality of education facing global challenges. For this purpose, we need teacher education reform that aligns teacher preparation with the demands of an emerging information society and an increasingly interdependent world at the end of the 20th Century. One concern focused on the quality of students who plan to enter the teaching profession. Generally, teacher profession is not attractive both for the prospective students and for the qualified experienced teachers, because of the low of teachers' welfare. As the result, the good potential students prefer to enter the other profession than enter the teaching profession, while the qualified experienced teacher, draw away from teaching profession and then enter the other profession that ensure better welfare whenever they have the opportunity for doing that. For the teaching profession to be attractive there is a need to improve teachers welfare by increasing their salary and providing good work condition that support them to carry out their task professionally. The second issue is program reform, which led to the development of standards of teacher preparation in various fields, and changes the curriculum itself.

Changing the curriculum must be competency-based, point out the teacher competency. According to Heil (2003), '... a key role for higher education institutions must be to graduate future teachers who think globally, have international experience, demonstrate foreign language competence, and are able to incorporate a global dimension into their teaching'.

**Key Words:** Teacher Quality, Professionalism, Education, Globalization, Technology

### INTRODUCTION

Globalization has brought a great effect to human life not only in economic issues, but also in political, social, and cultural issues. Its effect can be positive, or negative, depends on the quality of human resources. Indeed, human resources with low quality will fail, whether the only human resources with high quality standard will succeed in facing global challenges.

Now is the moment when globalization will give rises to two possible alternatives for everyone and every nation.. The globalization may be as a threat or maybe as an opportunity. To be successful in facing global challenges, everyone or every nation must have great efforts to change the threat to be opportunity. These efforts must be supported by the improvement of human resources.

To produce human resources with high quality, we need education with high quality too. In fact, according to the demand of facing global challenges, we need to improve the quality of education and develop education standards that contain global and international issues. According to the Guidelines for Global and International Studies Education (United States, 2002), among these issues are: what should all our students be expected to know and understand about the world? What skills and attitudes will our students need to confront future problems, which most assuredly will be global in scope? How are the global and international dimensions of learning being addressed by the new academic standards? What do scholars from the international relations discipline and experienced practitioners of global education believe students should know, and how can these insight best be incorporated into the existing standards? What global and international education guidelines are appropriate for precollegiate education? How schools implement these guidelines when confronted with so many other problems?

The answers of the questions stated above present an array of diverse approaches, contents, skills, methods, and values. We need to develop a high quality education system in which every student can be provided access to the educational components that are essential to such system. According to The California Master Plan for Education (2003) among these components are as follows:

1. A qualified and inspiring teacher in the classroom
2. A rigorous curriculum that will prepare all students for success in postsecondary education, work, and society.
3. Current textbooks, technology, and instructional materials aligned with learning expectations.
4. Adequate learning support services.
5. Qualified school or campus administrators, to maintain an educational culture that is inviting and safe, and that places a high value on student achievement and teaching excellence, and
6. A physical learning environment that is safe, well equipped, and well maintained.

All the components stated above should be provided to every students enrolled in public education, from preschool to university levels.

### **A STRIVE TOWARDS PROFESSIONALISM**

For education to improve, all the teachers must have a global perspective, well prepared and provided with ongoing professional development and appropriate support. All teachers have to fulfill the standards of professional teacher. For this purpose, we need standards with international scope and how to achieve these standards.

Based on the standard of the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCAT), the Association of Educational Communication and Technology (AECT), the American Association of School Librarian (AASL), there are some characteristics of professional teachers. Among of these characteristics are as follows:

In general, the competent teacher should have, and continually develop, the knowledge and skills in learning technologies to be able to appropriately and responsibly use tools, resources, processes, and systems to retrieve, assess and evaluate information from various media. The competent teacher should use that knowledge and skills to assist learners in solving problems, communicating clearly, making informed decisions, and in constructing new knowledge, products, or systems in diverse, engaged learning environments.

Particularly, the professional teachers should have mastery about basic computer/technology operations and concept, be able to apply technology in instruction, apply concepts and skills in making decisions concerning the social, ethical, and human issues related to computer and technology. The professional teacher should understand the changes in information technologies, their effects on workplace and society, their potential to address lifelong learning and workplace needs, and the consequences of misuse. Furthermore the professional teacher should be able to use telecommunications and information-access resources to support instruction.

There are some effective strategies can be implemented:

#### **1. Improve the Curriculum of The Teacher Education by Competency Based, Broad Based, Life Skills, and Technology Based.**

The Competency-Based Curriculum represents an approach to instruction which emphasizes the application of knowledge in a manner which may be observed or measured. Competency-Based Curriculum guides focus on a comprehensive view of each course of study which is delineated into its essential components, a listing of the most important objectives to be mastered, and the competencies which every student should be able to demonstrate after instruction is completed. Competency-Based lessons require students to engage in activities designed to apply learning with an increased emphasis on higher order thinking skills. Students are evaluated not only on knowledge, but primarily on their ability to perform tasks associated with the knowledge acquired.

Likewise an education in life skills is designed to help children and young people to learn the skills they need to deal with the likely demands and challenges of modern life, help children develop a broad range of personal, social, cognitive and environ-mental skills.

Furthermore the philosophy underlying the organization of the curriculum is to provide students with the broad base of knowledge and skill which will not only allow them to compete successfully for high quality entry level positions, but will also provide the basis for lifelong success.

The technology base is more concerned with giving a broad overview of the various technologies available, the functions they can perform and their advantages and constraints. In addition to studying the current capability of a technology, students should be given some insight into how that technology might develop in the future.

## **2. Prepare New Teachers to Use and Integrate Technology.**

This can be done by integrate technology applications into pre-service teacher assignment and activities. We mean by technologies especially learning and teaching technologies are those methods and practices used to learn and to facilitate learning. It is the way we learn and the way we teach. It include the tools we use and instructional design we apply. Technology in learning refers to both tools (the hardware, software, networks,etc.) and the processes (the methods and strategies used for instructions, the design of our educational organizations, learning management systems, etc.)

According to Gradler (2002), ‘. . . a growing challenge in education is establishing and implementing strategies to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for teachers to effectively use technology as instructional tools. The extent to which teachers are prepared to infuse technology into curricula and instruction is a major contextual factor’.

The problems may appear in this case are: what strategies are effective for preparing new teachers to integrate technology, and what can school leaders do to enable teachers to make effective use of technology.

Research findings cried out by Abbot & Faris (2000) indicate that effective strategies for preparing new teachers to use and integrate technology are: demonstrate infusion of technology into instructional practices, require that college faculty use technology in their courses as learning and teaching tool. Preserves elementary teachers learn technology integration strategies by working with and observing practicing teachers and students while they use technology.

In order to integrate new technologies into the curriculum, teachers will have to select appropriate software, construct new lesson plans, resolve a number of logistical problems, and develop appropriate methods of assessing student work.

Furthermore there are five studies identify strategies for school leaders to support and reinforce the exemplary use of technology with curricula, as pointed out by Cradler (2002), as follows:

1. School leaders can support on-site, just in-time learning by tailoring professional development to the perceived needs and curriculum goals and objectives of individual teachers (Cradler & Cradler (1995).
2. School leaders can allocate resources for at least four networked and internet-connected computers in each classroom (Becker, 1999).
3. School leaders need to model the use of technology in their work in order to encourage and reinforce the classroom infusion of technology by teachers (CEO Forum, 1999).
4. School leaders need to support technology policies that provide teachers easy access to technology resources and professional development opportunities (Zhao et al., 2002).
5. School leaders can enable teachers to observe practices in other district and states and to make recommendations for new practices based on their observation (OTA< 19959)

## **3. Select the Teacher Based on Professional Competency and Professional Responsibility.**

In order to ensure the high quality of education, the Government should select the teacher based on professional competency and professional responsibility. In this case, it should be taken into account that not all of the teachers who have professional competency have also professional responsibility. According to Sonoma State University Academic Sonate (2003), ‘. . . the responsibilities of the teachers fall into five main areas: (1) to their subject; (2) to their students; (3) to the institution of which s/he is a part; (4) to their profession; and (5) to the community at large’.

The greatest problem in teaching is how to create, sustain, and motivate good teachers throughout their careers. Recruiting and preparing high quality teachers must remain a priority for policymaker.

## **4. Provide Enough Expenditure to Provide Technological Learning Tools and Equipment.**

When a school or district decides to implement education technology into the curriculum, one of its overriding goals must be to create plans and policies for all members of the learning community to have equitable access and use. Appropriate funding and professional development represent the key means of supporting equitable access and use of technology to ensure technology literacy and to support meaningful learning for all students.

Education technology consists of a wide range of hardware, software, and technical equipment used in schools to promote learning. Computers, CD-ROMs, the internet, e-mail, television monitors, video equipment, and satellite systems for distance learning are some of the education technologies that schools are using.

Means, Blando, Olson, Middleton, Morocco, Remz, and Zorfass (1993) suggest grouping education technologies according to their instructional use. They categorize education technology into four basic uses: tutorial, exploratory, application, and communication:

1. Tutorial use includes expository learning, demonstration, and practice. Examples are drill-and-practice software, tutoring systems, instructional television, computer-assisted instruction, and intelligent computer-assisted instruction.
2. Exploration applications may promote discovery or guided discovery approaches to helping students learn information, knowledge, facts, concepts, or procedures. Examples are CD-ROM encyclopedias, micro worlds, hypermedia stacks, network search tools, and microcomputer-based laboratories.
3. Application uses help students in the educational process by providing them with tools to facilitate writing tasks, analysis of data, and other uses. Examples are word processing and spreadsheet software, database management programs, graphic software, desktop publishing systems, hypermedia, network search tools, and videotape recording and editing equipment.
4. Communication uses are those that allow students and teachers to send and receive messages and information to one another through networks or other technologies. Examples are interactive distance learning through satellite systems, computer and modem, cable links, and e-mail.

#### **5. All Teachers must be well provided with Ongoing Professional Development and Appropriate support.**

If we are to improve education, we must avoid the tendency to rely on simple generalizations and dichotomies. We need to attend to pre-service and in-service issues in improving teacher quality. We need to be discerning in the kinds of professional development that we support.

Teacher quality is not solely determined by a credential or degree, and we should think of it as a characteristic that evolves throughout a teacher's career, rather than as a static achievement. Teacher quality is an attribute that grows or diminishes based on conditions in which a teacher works, personal motivation, and opportunities for growth and development.

In order to make effective use of educational technology, not only new teachers but all of the teacher should have to master a variety of powerful tools, redesign their lesson plans around technology-enhanced resources, solve the logistical problem of how to teach a class full of students with a smaller number of computers, and take on a complex new role in the technologically transformed classroom. All teachers should recognize that they will never stop learning.

According to Schrum (2002), '... technology allows all sorts of possibilities for continuing education for teachers, but first they must be comfortable using it.. What we know doesn't work is somebody standing at the front demonstrating how to use a computer, and then everyone goes home. We know that becoming comfortable with technology takes an intense amount of time and that educators need to have the computers at school and, typically, at home if they are truly to become users'.

#### **6. Enhance Teacher Welfare.**

To do the task as teachers professionally, need full concentration and inspire by the teacher. Indeed, for the teachers to be able to concentrate and to be inspiring teachers in their professional tasks, their welfare should be reasonably fulfilled.

Quality teachers can be attracted, and retained by the promoting of an atmosphere of positive support for education, providing improved training and professional development, increasing teacher salaries, and installing outstanding facilities. Furthermore, special efforts must be made to attract to these schools qualified teachers who have the disposition and passion to persist in challenging environments and these teachers must receive the support necessary to enable them to improve their effectiveness.

In order to attract individuals to the profession and retain them, teacher salaries should be attractive for both new and experienced teachers and salary schedules should offer opportunities for increased compensation without leaving the classroom. In addition, we must create a school culture in which teachers assume leadership roles in school decision-making, collaboration occur on a regular basis, professional development is ongoing, and new teachers are supported. Investment in the professional development of the teachers should not be lost by incentives and practices that draw most experienced teachers away from the classroom.

## CONCLUSION.

Global challenges that influence all areas of human life in the world are the conditions that are naturally going on as the consequence of the rapid development of science and technology. It is impossible to be avoided but have to be faced by using resources with high quality especially human resources.

To face the global challenges successfully, we need the qualified human resources that can only be produced through authentic educational program and authentic educational process with high quality.

Teachers' quality is the keyword for ensuring the quality of education that indicated by the quality of output and outcome. Without qualified competent teachers, it is impossible to build a high quality education. On the other hand, qualified competent teacher will not able to carry out their task professionally without the proper conditions that support their task. Hence, in one hand we need to continually improve teachers' quality, and on the other hand we need to provide a proper condition to support teachers in their professional tasks.

## RECOMMENDATION

1. To provide a high quality education, the Government should be committed to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to learn from a qualified and inspiring teacher.
2. To provide a high quality education, there is a need to develop a professional culture that respects teaching and learning, professional staff are supported in their effort to continually improve their effectiveness in promoting student learning, school sites are well maintained, school leaders build and maintain effective partnerships with parents, community groups, and local business, and instructional material are current and aligned with the academic content standards.
3. The Government should provide grand funding to develop the quality of human resource by providing enough expenditure for education development.
4. The Government should promote recognition that becoming a qualified and professional teacher is, a long term, and developmental process.
5. The Government should pay enough attention to teachers welfare to attract the good potential students to enter the teacher profession through the institution of teacher education, and retain the qualified experienced teacher for schools.

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