

Significance of Professionalism in Curriculum Development and Research Process

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Abstract

Professionalism is usually considered the expertise, skill and knowledge of that particular field first, and its application effectively and efficiently than. The curriculum professionals are the people who are associated with teaching and learning activity and they suggest the course of action by taking aims and objectives prescribed by the state. They need to have knowledge of various educational, ideological, sociological and psychological foundations to meet the change and challenges of the post modern era. Their professional characteristics and significance has been discussed, analyzed and assessed by the views of social scientists of different countries in the coming paragraphs. Finally the expertise they need, factors that affect them, major consideration they had to take into account in developing curriculum for the futures is presented as main theme of the article. In the end the effects of globalization, internationalization and information and communication technology which is changing in great speed and strength play a significant role in development of curriculum in this century.

Key Words: Professionalism, Teachers, Curriculum Development and Research Process

Introduction

Teaching is a process which evolves round society, teacher and learner, its primary objective is to prepare and enable learner for playing an effective role in society. Teaching is not a new but as old as human beings themselves, it existed in all religion and civilizations where God is considered by all religion as the first teacher who provided guidance and teachings. Occasionally, he provided guidance directly to individuals and indirectly to society by revelation of verses to a few selected people like prophets. Teaching has a profession does exist since centuries but it took a dynamic status and flourished during past century at a considerable pace changing shape, modes and roles assigned to it by society. The term grew to its full swing during post-modern era. Its concept, role and implications remained opened to change and incorporation of new additions, the term used for teaching profession, being adaptive, got speciality and particular orientation. The questions whether teaching is a profession has valid and enough evidences to make it uncontroversial but the question how this process takes place remained diversified regionally, socially and traditionally.

Page (1991) defines that profession is an evaluative term describing the most prestigious occupations which may be termed as professions if they carry out an essential social service, are founded on systematic knowledge, require lengthy academic and practical training, have high autonomy, a code of ethics, and generate in-service growth. Teaching is judged as profession on these criteria.

Cruess (2004) defines profession as an occupation having core elements on work based upon the mastery of a complex body of knowledge and skills. He further adds that it is a type of vocation that teaches to use knowledge and learning for services of others. Its members remained in control of codes of ethics and profess commitment to competence integrity morality for the good of public within their domain which forms a contract between profession and society which in turn grant the profession a monopoly over the use of its knowledge base, the right to considerable autonomy in practice and the privilege of self regulation and members are accountable to those served, to the profession and to the society. Professionalism means different things at the same time to teacher. It is reflected in behaviour to your students, your attire, your interactions with people around you and commitment to perform your role as assigned by the authority.

Nature of Professionalism

Larson (1977) identified that the criterion of autonomy as a crucial one that helps distinguish professional from proletarian work.

Hoffman and Edward (1986) perceived that teacher professionalism is related to completion of his education, basic teaching capability; consist in duty and skill to used competence effectively.

Murray (1992) claimed that the impact of these wider debates about professions, teacher professionalism in particular has taken on very different meanings over the past century or so. Many parts of the world witnessed several stages in the evolution of the idea of professionalism in teaching, each phase carrying significant residues and traces from the past images and ideas.

Tafsir (1994) says professionalism is an ideology which emphasis on performing teaching tasks by qualified and technical persons.

Davies (1995) regarded it as characterized by elitism, paternalism, authoritarianism, highly exclusive knowledge, control and detachment The feminist sociologists also took a critical stance toward traditional concept of professionalism.

Hamlon (1998) rejected those normative notions for the title of profession. He suggested professionalism as a shifting phenomenon; it is what people think it at any particular time rather than judging teaching profession to some supposed ideal

Maister (1998) differs that technology knowledge and management only make one professional in tasks expertise but it is an attitude, commitment by an individual's for his job.

Frielding (1999) advocated that common sense discourses of professionalism and exercising like professionals withheld by managerial control for white collar workers.

Harja (1999) stated the following four characteristics for professionals. They are high skill of theoretic knowledge, God gifted talent and aptitude, ethical and equal socialized behaviour and reward that keeps one engages all the time in his professional career.

Hargreaves (2000) Commented that professionalism requires teachers how they feel, how they are seen by other people in terms of status, standing, regard and levels of professional reward, improving status and standing can result in improvement of teacher professionalism.

Cole and Knowles (2000), Jenlink & Welsch (2001) believed that teacher knowledge is consist of on both personal and professional experiences and they like to share their knowledge and experiences with their colleagues.

.Lyons & LaBoskey (2002) says that narrative combines personal and professional knowledge which makes lived experiences in teacher knowledge construction.

Witty (2002) argued that sociological discourse about professionalism and the state can help us understand the contemporary condition of teachers as professionals which focus its attention on features that an occupation should have in order to be termed as profession. He enlisted four items;

- Use of skills based on theoretical knowledge
- Education and training in those skills and certified by examining body
- Professional conduct oriented towards public and organization
- Systematic and powerful professional organization

Fullan (2003), Ayers (2004), Starrett (2005) commented that teaching and leadership requires a strong moral purpose which is rooted in moral compass. it enables the individuals to identify and commit morality as an enterprise. This makes their decision consistent with their values beliefs and sense of authenticity. The contradiction between espoused ethical beliefs and live actions need to be addressed to become professional

Hoban (2004) emphasized on self study which means sharing of professional insights with other, making it articulated a public theory which can assessed and illuminated and later on may become an agreed upon theory.

Shields (2006) proposed that for teacher professionalism it is necessary to have commitment to the cause of teaching, obedience and loyalty to authority and urge to fulfill the duties assigned him from time to time.

Smith (2006) considered ethical values as prime factor in professional developments as he pointed out and supported six major impacts on professional development. They are phenomenology, teacher's narratives, case works, ethics, self study and self regulations

There are four factors that influence professional development mostly; they are formal and informal education, role modeling of the person with his personal values, believes and experiences and the culture of the entire institutional environment that constitute social organization. A step further it is a process, attitude, values, beliefs, modes of thought and behavior of an individuals rather than a society or collective identity. Domestic and formal life getting more complex relies on the power of informal norms and ethics in day to day life, so as teacher professionalism is increasingly based on cultural and informal, it depends on culture of school, teacher networks and local areas special behaviors. The teacher influence on curriculum, pedagogy, quality assurance and school decision making mostly rely on formal channel but derived informally from society, culture and local norms and values.

Professionalism and Teacher Education

It is obvious that output based on input. The type of training and environment provided to teachers during their training make or break them. They should be provided education and training on the basis of professionalism because they had to take the role of future teacher and curriculum developer. The components of their training must have all the aspects, direction and dimensions of a professional. Apart from core subjects taught in profession teacher's education colleges and universities the following aspects of personal grooming and behavior must also be exercised during training. The core personal traits that required particular attention are duty, commitment to excellence, Altruism, respect for others, honors and integrity, accountability and commitment to lifelong learning. There is no doubt that all these traits are imperative to

become profession teacher but last continuing and lifelong learning needs to be focused and emphasized.

Making of teacher professional is increasingly cultural and informal rather than structural and formal. □ Professionalism is more deeply personal than ever before, so that views of the profession are much more diverse. For some, the job is more satisfying while for others it is more stressful and exhausting. □ However, teachers retain an ideal of a unified, independent and formally structured profession. But the distance between this ideal and the lived, daily experience of teaching creates a sense of a profession that has lost its way. A significant proportion of the teaching profession is expressing its creativity through entrepreneurship and experimentation around teachers' professional roles and status. We need to help teachers to generate new relationships, structures and rituals to share these experiments with one another and to understand their significance for the profession.

Teacher Professionalism in a Changing Context

Making teaching more professional certain experimentation were made in some developed countries but they got shortage of teachers and took the refuge in recruiting the teaching assistants. They have to make changes in their concept of professionalism for teachers. The emergence of ICT and internet has changed the role and impact of teachers on students life but even then there are certain elements that are imparted to learners by teacher himself and his behaviors. The question whether professional teachers are ready to cope with national and international changes and dimensions which are so fast and so rapid. The answer may vary because of the regional social and cultural differences

Professionalism Needed for Curriculum Development

It would be strange to separate teaching and curriculum development because if one is parted the other would not work effectively, therefore, it is advisable to keep them abridged to teacher and curriculum developer. It can be chronologically better to keep teaching first and initial stage while curriculum development at later stage but both are integrated as one starts teaching and learns different components of teachings and then becomes a curriculum designers. Curriculum designers should not be an aloof entity but an active participants of social and democratic institutions and his interaction with all segments of society need to be continued so that he could understand the spirit and pace of the society. Following are some of the professional characteristics required by curriculum developer.

1 Understanding the Ideology of the Society

Curriculum developer need to know the foundation of curriculum because they tell him what to be included and how, he may ignore a single aspects that is considered locally as turning point which later cause obstacles in curriculum implantation. The ideology of the society and its philosophy must be considered when designing curriculum for a class. He needs to be like a specialist doctor who understands the what medicine should be applied for what diseases.

2 Knowing the Process of Curriculum Development

The second element that is needed should be knowledge of curriculum process. He ought to have understanding of the needs, aims and objectives, contents, learning experiences and assessment of the achievement and objectives with implementer evaluation. Knowing of these elements make him more adoptive and flexible to the changes and incorporation of the new ideas and newer techniques. It deems necessary to apprehend all the stages and steps correctly and completely to propose the plans for different levels and stages.

3 Command on Subject Contents

Having command on general areas do not meet the required proficiency of the subject. For curriculum developers it is needed to have sufficient subject knowledge and skills then he would be able to classify the core skill knowledge and values as per required by the subjects contents. A language curriculum developer need to know the language and its relevant aspects thoroughly while a mathematics curriculum developer need to have skill and commands of the subjects which make him able to pick and chose what deemed important for different levels.

4 Know How of Learner Psychology

The knowledge of psychology is very much important for curriculum developer because he suggests the ingredients for different levels so his of the psychology and what could be learnt at which level will help him to design plans and activities that would be appropriate for him. The knowledge of different age groups and their learning capacities will surely guide him to chose the most appropriate contents. Personality traits and motivation plays very effective role in suggesting the tasks and activities. The effect of environment and what is happening around a learner will certainly help curriculum developer to enhance and improve his professional capabilities.

5 Current Development and Trends Developments

The change that has taken place during last fifteen years is many times more than the change occurred during last fifty years. It has become very difficult to incorporate all the things in time they incepted in world knowledge arena but a curriculum developer should have awareness and knowledge of the trends in the world level in general and the trends in local level particular to bring a hegemony of the both level trends. The transformation and translation of the experiences that the elder had to younger generation with modification of the current needs and requirement would be the sole responsibility of the professional curriculum developer. The new research and recommendations that are put forward by social scientists need to be made able to digest in curriculum process.

6 Globalization and its Impact on Education

The media and internet has opened new dimensions and dynamics for teacher and learner to change his role individually and socially. Mobile phones and SMS culture has changed traditional knowledge gap and provided a most rapid chance for learner to accommodate it. The digital library and online access to world leading journal and research papers has underrated the teachers' competencies and expertise because what teacher is going to say is already available to learner in many forms and format. It is professionalism of teacher that makes him vigilant, active, alert and upto date all the time with latest developments.

7 Social Requirements

Society is also passing through different phases of change. The concept of old traditional family system is going to collapse dramatically and a new cyber family system is taking place without geographical boundaries and limitation. It even does not require physical contact, bodily touch, social homogeneity and psychological gender difference. Economics have replaced religious and social values. Financial standing is more considerable than one intellectual posture. Politics and international agenda are chasing all the nations and regions so one cannot make himself aloof of these changes. Curriculum professional needs to go through these rapid challenges and prepare a path to meet them successfully without compromising its ideals and local values.

8 Teacher Discourses

The teacher stories and their personal experiences are a great assets for young learners and curriculum developers. These discourses are full of practical problems and real life happenings that teacher faced day to day, so the variety of events can make them a valuable knowledge that can be used by others. These discourses and narrations should be included in the teachers training courses. It is also important to make them part of an activity for curriculum developers to have first hand information and knowledge that takes place live in the classroom environment.

Professionalism and Research Process

There is no doubt that research process requires more professionalism than any other area because it gives the true picture of the phenomena. Research process involves scientific method in determination of objectives, stating out problems, tools to collection of data, type of data and analysis of the it quantitatively or qualitatively. All these stage cannot be carried out if there is not enough expertise and skills to perform them. That is why professionalism in education is required to conduct and perform them in better way. Although the process remains same for many researches but it content of the research and topics that matters a lot, the following areas need to be covered by curriculum professionals.

1 Research and Education

Research is an integral part of education. Education without research is like a tree without water. It is imperative for curriculum professional to design curriculum linked with research and development. From small projects to new exploration some type of research must be enhanced in education to provide training and skill for future endeavors. Research and education should interlink so that new development and findings could be added and the trends of the time could be transformed to young learners.

2 Exploration of Unknown

Problem solving was one of the techniques to provide exercise for learners to take greater endeavors but it is of the early stages later on learner must be prepared to explore unknown ideas, theories, skills and concepts that may benefit human being better than the previous one. The idea to find unknown is not new because all the discoveries and inventions were unknown before they were dug out. Probing, experiments, projects based activity and pilot studies should be made compulsory component of the learning process if one has to compete the world knowledge societies.

3 Technology and Education

Science and technology has invaded all area of human life so from energy sources to ultra modern technology, all these gadget are the product of education and research. The multimedia, three Ds' animation, Google earth and various software's are some of the things that pave way for futures tasks. Technology like computer and information technology has widened the scope and horizon of knowledge fabric. The new concepts ICT and internets digital literature and digital contents, books and instructions need to be enhanced in curricula.

4 Enhancing Rapid Changes and Discoveries

The pace of the world is so fast and so diversified that they should be handled and incorporated in curricula by the professionals. They should also make themselves aware of these latest developments in sciences, social science, agriculture and industry computer and ICT. The professionals have two dimension tasks ahead one to equip himself and to prepare learner to be equip them

6 Benefiting the Past Experiences

Past is like a torch light that provides information of the past happenings and gives light and vision for future courses. The nations that did not learn from their past experience remained lingering behind in comity of nations. The past experiences and research can be taken into

account for setting future aims and goals. The tasks for professional is to keep a vigilant eye on all these happenings and set direction for future.

Discussion

Transformation in the world arena is the biggest tasks that teacher have in the world. The expectations of the state and teachers are getting higher and higher. The standards of performance are raised; the quality of education made top priority and lifelong learning has got a true momentum. The gulf between rich and poor, developed and developing countries sources and demands is making curriculum development a hideous task. In this situation the curriculum professionals tried to make a bridge between these gaps and perhaps creating another class of educated and enlightened people who have their own agendas. The interaction of the civilizations, mutual understanding, peace and prosperity and social uplift of the down trodden people should be placed at international agenda. All these things have drawn closer to work collaboratively. The demands and pressures on students to learn new skills like team work, higher order thinking skills, effective use of technology, call for new styles of teaching forced teachers to adopt the ways that they themselves were not taught. Making teacher forums, teacher clubs, teacher interaction centers beyond their schools to enhance and improve their skills could work to develop professionalism. The hurdles like shrinking of public sector finance, tight policy controls have made teacher to work more compliantly for limited rewards.

Conclusion

The debate for the significance of curriculum professionalism brought three major distinctions for the teachers and curriculum developers. First of all the professional must have the qualities of head and heart, command on subjects and knowledge of curriculum foundations. Second, He has to be well versed with curriculum development process and the means available to him for implementation it. Third, the responsibility held by him is grave and serious. He holds the power and strings of the future leaders and other professionals in his hands if he remained unengaged to future developments it would be disaster for the nation. Fourth, he needs to have awareness and adaptation of information and communication technology. The latest moves from different parts of the world and how they have changed the social fabric of the society. Fifth, He needs to hold a spirit of flexibility in his behaviour and temperament to incorporate international changes. Sixth, He needs to move toward teaching through media and sow the seed of lifelong learning in the process of curriculum development rather than just making them machine oriented learners. Seventh, the concept of socialization and globalization, its future impacts and current influences with local needs and requirements ought to be part of curriculum change.

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