
The Need for Reorganizing the Evaluation System of the Postgraduate Diploma in Education Programme

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Abstract

The purpose of education is to provide the background process needed to successfully cope with changes taking place in society. The teacher education Programme in Sri Lanka for graduate teachers is known as the Postgraduate Diploma in Education. The evaluation process of this teacher education course has been identified as a major problem which has not been updated. The main objective of this article is to examine the evaluation methodology of the Postgraduate Diploma in Education and make necessary suggestions for improvement. Specifically, this study aims to explore how the evaluation process of the Postgraduate Diploma in Education can be reorganized and improved upon. The study used a survey layout with a detailed research approach which also incorporated interviews. In addition, a course-related lecturer sample was used to collect data relevant to the objective. It was also suggested that the evaluation activities should be reorganized according to the curriculum model presented by Kerr. Recommendations were made to use new assessment methods instead of physical methods and to include new subjects in the course.

Keywords: Evaluation; Post Graduate Diploma in Education; Teacher Education; Evaluation.

1. Introduction

Education is the continuous and timeless process required to move from the past to the present and on to the future. The teacher, therefore, has a unique position as the key player in the implementation of education.

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The purpose of education is to provide the background process needed to successfully cope with the changes that take place in society. The challenge facing providers of education is to develop the individual according to the economic and social demands of the next century, says [1] Young (1996). It is essential that the teacher be prepared to overcome this challenge. The Postgraduate Diploma in Education is one of the teacher education programmes implemented in Sri Lanka to prepare the teacher for this challenge. The Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) was introduced in 1948 for teachers to obtain their first professional qualification [2] Nawastheen and his colleagues (2017). The Open University of Sri Lanka has been conducting the Diploma for the last forty years., and it was. The first professional course for graduate teachers in Sri Lanka. Teachers learn educational concepts and undergo ten weeks of continuous supervised teaching where they apply what they have learnt through the programme [2] Nawastheen and his colleagues (2017). One of the main criticisms levelled against the postgraduate diploma is that it is not up to date and uses outdated methods [3]. The Presidential Commission on Youth (1990) states that it is essential to provide teachers with appropriate training today [4]. The National Commission for Education (1992) also notes that teacher training programmes need to be extensively analyzed and reviewed, some of which are outdated. It has been stated that with proper teacher training teachers will be able to perform their duties with maturity and confidence and with efficiency. The task of providing teacher education under the Postgraduate Diploma in Education for Sri Lankan graduates began with the proposal made by [5] the Kannangara Special Committee Report (1944). Accordingly, the Postgraduate Diploma in education Studies at the University of Ceylon was first introduced to Sri Lanka in 1979. Teachers of today have to face more challenges in the classroom than teachers of the past. Accordingly, in order to fulfill the role of the teacher correctly, it is essential that he/she is provided with a good teacher education; and simultaneously, it is also important to implement a proper evaluation system to check whether he is achieving the desired skills.

2. Literature Review

Curriculum theories were used as the theoretical basis for this study. The reason for this was the emphasis that is placed on assessment in curriculum theories. The linear curriculum model presented by [6] Tyler (1949) was considered as the basis for the cyclical curriculum model introduced in 1967, as well as the curriculum model introduced in 1968 [7]. Kerr (1968) It was important to note that the descriptive format presented pointed out the need to evaluate every aspect of the curriculum. Commenting on Teacher Training, [8] Liston & Zeichner, (1991) states that we are still following the outdated method of training new teachers. Attempts have been made to provide technical training for teacher education in the 20th century. The social person lives in three worlds: the personal world, the social or environmental world, and the spiritual world [9]. Vashisth (1992) [10] Aggrawal (1995) [11] Beardon and his colleagues (1995) point out several skills that a teacher needs to develop. This illustrates the need to adapt the learning process to those skills. It has been stated in the [12] Promkasetrin (1994) [13] Mohanty (1992) - that external examinations as well as continuous assessments are carried out to evaluate teacher education. It has been emphasized that continuous evaluation should be implemented in teacher education. A foreign study has also pointed out the need to evaluate professional performance, overall personality, and extracurricular activities. Student handbooks issued by the University of Peradeniya, Colombo and the Open University show that continuous evaluation is active in teacher education in Sri Lanka too. Theoretical knowledge as well as practical knowledge carries equal importance in teacher education [14].

Karunasena (1981) has pointed out that theoretical knowledge as well as practical knowledge should go hand in hand in teacher education [15]. Nandawathi (1992) and [16] Jayathilake (1996) have also emphasized the need for the reorganization of evaluation in teacher education programmes [17]. Lekamge (2001) and [18] Gunawardana (2001) also point out that continuous teacher evaluation can lead to a skills-based teacher education.

3. Research Methodology

The main objective of this article is to examine the evaluation methodology of the Post Graduate Diploma in Education and make necessary suggestions. Accordingly, continuous evaluation was aimed at identifying the trainee's need to evaluate their practical skills and abilities. The study used a survey layout with a detailed research approach. The questionnaire interview protocol was used as a data collection tool. All the teaching students pursuing postgraduate diploma studies is considered as the research population and a sample of 200 was selected by random sampling out of 512 postgraduate diploma teaching students at the University of Peradeniya in 2018. In addition, a lecturer sample was used to collect data. Percentages were used for data analysis and the data obtained from the interviews were qualitatively analyzed.

4. Data Analysis

Of the sample selected, 52% were women, 48% were men, and 94.5% were graduate teachers. The rest of the sample were from the education services. Out of graduates, 79.5% are art graduates. This clearly shows that the majority of those who enter the teaching profession in Sri Lanka are arts graduates. Teacher students were asked about the objectives of pursuing a Diploma in Postgraduate Education. 40% of teachers said they wanted to improve the quality of the teaching process and 26% of teachers wanted to develop new knowledge and skills. Only 12% of teachers study this course for promotion. When asked about the current nature of the postgraduate diploma course, 37% responded that it follows traditional teaching methods and assessment methods. The respondents pointed out that subjects such as educational research methods (60.5%), values education (59.5%), computer technology (58.5%), education law (34) and English language (53.5%) should be included in the postgraduate diploma course. The sample suggested that the evaluation process should be reorganized; 37% stated that marks for assignments should be added to the final evaluation while 33.5% stated that practical continuous assessments should be made. At present, such methods are not included in this course. Also, 21.0% of the sample were of the opinion that oral assessment methods should be included. The advantages of continuing assessment in practice, as brought out in the survey, were that teacher students' weaknesses could be corrected on a daily basis (68.0%), it provided motivation for self-study (66.0%) and a continued interest in the course (51.0%). In addition, the benefits of continuing awareness about the development of skills, being able to receive feedback, and having the opportunity to self-evaluate were also cited. Teaching training was also evaluated through this research. Of the sample, 57.5% said they were happy with the assessment of teaching training and 42.5% said they were not happy with it. Clearly, there are many who are not happy with the teaching. Teachers and students did not like the fact that teaching training was limited to a supervisory evaluation process. 'Supervision often limits the scoring according to the assessment paper', this statement made by a teacher-student showed that the students were not satisfied. There were also suggestions that the

assessment training could not be evaluated properly due to factors such as, the assessment being limited to a few occasions, a lack of feedback, the assessment being intertwined, the assessors' subject knowledge being weak, and congestion in the classroom as well as the unsatisfactory environment. Of the respondents from the lecturer sample, 80.5% acknowledged that the written test also gives priority to evaluation. This provides the basis the acceptance of the teacher confirms the ideas of the students. Lecturers also suggested alternative evaluation methods. These alternative assessment methods were, conducting interviews (75.0%), practical performance evaluation (58.3%), thematic examinations (44.5%) and assignment marks to be added to the final assessment (41.7%). In addition, the following proposals were put forward; awarding marks for course participation, teaching evaluation, awarding multiple choice question papers for each subject, awarding marks for oral presentation, maintaining a self-assessment system, 60% of marks awarded for a final written examination and 40% for continuous assessment. The response by 88.9% of the sample stating that the teaching training evaluation should be reorganized, clearly shows that even the lecturers are not satisfied with the course at present. The lecturers have also put forward alternative ideas to be adopted such as peer evaluation, self-assessment, and evaluation by graduates. It was further pointed out that continuous assessment can minimize the problems faced by students in the written test.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Reference [19] Kakkar (1995) states that teacher education should produce an ideal teacher. The data analysis in this study showed that the aims of both the teachers and students was to improve the quality of the teaching process. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the aim of the teachers included in this course, is to bring about a qualitative improvement in the teaching process. It also indicates that the evaluation process should change, leading to the conclusion that there is a need to introduce alternative evaluation methods. From the feedback of the respondents, it can be concluded that the teaching training evaluation process needs to be reorganised. It may also be suggested that a new curriculum plan should be developed based on the model presented by [7] Kerr (1968) regarding the evaluation of teaching training. Subjects such as research methods, education law, and value education should be included in the curriculum. It is necessary to conduct a status analysis at least once every five years and reorganise not only the evaluation process but the entire course accordingly. Thematic tests for evaluation, continuous evaluation, practical activities, oral presentations can be conducted. It is also recommended that a competency-based assessment methodology be included in the postgraduate diploma programme. It must be noted that it is essential to formulate the evaluation methodology in such a way that the curriculum of the postgraduate diploma helps in the qualitative development of the teacher.

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