CRITERIA FOR QUALITY EDUCATION AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

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ABSTRACT

The discussion underlines the tension reflected throughout the history of education between the individual and the citizen. The purposes of education may emphasize either a —utilitarian‖ end in the narrow sense of the education or —Broad Human Development‖ goal. Education quality must be open to change and evolution based on information, changing contexts, and new understandings of the nature of education's challenges. The discussion also reflects the tension between the interests of each person and those of the State. Institutions and groups with unequal power support each of these two poles of tension around the purpose of education. Its advocates are persons and institutions with a strong voice and knowledge base. People and groups who have equity and human rights in the forefront support the second view. These groups are less powerful to influence decisions but nevertheless are forceful in their arguments and actions. Their views cannot be ignored. The present paper discusses about the enhancement of the quality of the existing education system which is being employed now a days. The paper is mainly based on the criteria of better education system.

Keywords: *Education system, Quality, Human Development*

Introduction

Education is not an island, but part of the continent of culture.

It asks first what function ‗education' serves in the culture and what role it plays in the lives of those who operate within it. Education is situated in the culture as it is, and reflects the distribution of power, status, and other benefits. Inevitably, and virtually from the start, culturalism also asks about the enabling resources made available to people to cope, and what portion of those resources is made available through ‗education,' institutionally conceived.

And it will constantly be concerned with constraints imposed on the process of education – external ones like the organization of schools and classrooms or the recruitment of teachers, and internal ones like the natural or imposed distribution of native endowment, for native endowment may be as much affected by the accessibility of symbolic systems as by the distribution of genes **(Jerome Brunner, 1996).**

Education quality has two dictionary meanings. One refers to excellence as an absolute. The other meaning refers to what is being characterized and whether it is the same or better than others in its species. It is obvious from the examples above that only the second meaning is applicable to discussing the quality of education.

The purposes of education may emphasize either a ―utilitarian‖ end in the narrow sense of the word (education is precisely for this) or a ―broad human development‖ goal. The utilitarian focus locates the purpose of education outside the individual being educated, while the human development view locates it in the person as such. People and groups who have equity and human rights in the forefront support the second view. These groups are less powerful to influence decisions but nevertheless are forceful in their arguments and actions. Their views cannot be ignored.

Wherever one stands between these two poles will mean a different interpretation of what is the meaning of quality in education and of what is needed for its improvement. There is no easy solution to this dilemma. Therefore, in what follows of this paper the issues I discuss, how they are dealt with and with what results, attempt to recognise these tensions.

In the current context of the twenty first century, in most countries education as a tool for

―nation-building‖ is no longer the prevailing view. A stronger ―utilitarian‖ perspective considers education as a tool for economic development and competitiveness and the individual to be educated as ―human capital‖. The ―human capital‖ theory developed in the

mid-nineties operates now within the neo-liberal economic policy framework that is a dominant feature of the ―global‖ world. The goal of education as a process oriented towards human, personal and social development is part of the other pole of discussions on quality, also with a history and presence in ideas, policies and institutions. **Paulo Freire's** concept of

―liberating‖ education (and education as ―consciousness-raising‖) influenced not only the ―popular education‖ movement. International policy documents such as the **Faure(1972)** referred to the purpose of education as development clothed in the garb of human growth: ―in all the richness of his personality, the complexity of his forms of expression and his various commitments –as individual, member of a family and of a community, citizen and producer, inventor of techniques and creative dreamer‖ **(Faure, 1972).**

Many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. The terms efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used synonymously **(Avalos, 2002).** Considerable

consensus exists around the basic dimensions of quality education today, however. Definitions of quality must be open to change and evolution based on information, changing contexts, and new understandings of the nature of education's challenges. New research — ranging from multinational research to action research at the classroom level— contributes to this redefinition. The criteria for enhancing the quality of educational system has been evaluated in this paper on the basis of four central questions. . More recently, UNESCO and UNICEF have put the accent on human rights and the right to education **(UNESCO, 2002; Chaubey, 2003).**

Materials & Method

The methodology thus employed for the study comprises of different elements, these elements include assumptions or taken for granted positions, a set of questions about education needs, key factors known to affect quality in education, and hypothetical links between questions and factors.

The rest of the paper develops these elements on the basis of the four central questions about educational purposes.

1. Development of people's capabilities and how it can be achieved through education

2. Educating within the cultural context and as part of the global society

3. Educating for the construction of democracy and civic participation

4. Education for economic development

Hypotheses

On the basis of the elements and questions selected for the study a hypothesis is proposed so as to evaluate how strong their influence on quality might be, on the basis of what is known through research and experiences.

Result & Discussion

Education quality is affected by composites of factors that may be negative or enhancing ones. Negative factors slow down or impede the delivery or reception of quality education and may be described as external to education or located within the systems that support them. A number of external negative factors are outlined in the EFA Monitoring Report such as poor national economies, poverty, HIV/AIDS, wars and resulting displacement of people. Negative factors located within the educational systems are described as combinations of inefficient bureaucracies, inadequate cultural and educational background of teachers, depressed teaching conditions (salaries, crowded classrooms, lack of resources), policy inflation (multiplicity and heterogeneity of responses to problems), lack of autonomy in management and pedagogy (teaching methods and forms of relating to students). the study results are reported in Table 1.

Table 1.

Questions evaluated for education enhanced education quality	Suggested enhancing factors
Developing people capabilities	Comprehensive culturally sensitive education system (language, heritage)
	Relevant and appropriate curriculum frameworks and syllabuses
Educating within the cultural context as well as opening to the world	Resources in appropriate combinations (time, materials, teaching & learning environment)
Building or reconstructing democracy and enabling citizen participation	Meaningful and affective pedagogical interactions (relations, strategies, management)
Preparing for economic and productive participation	Supportive administrative and management systems (in and out of the school)
	Targeted actions and inclusive education schemes
	Teacher / Educator knowledge and capability

The study answers to the selected questions as reported in table 1, for the question regarding developing people's capabilities from the perspective of schooling these capabilities often appear as goals in educational policy documents, or as statements about expected outcomes of educational reforms. In this paper, they are described as cognitive, social, and emotional and as capabilities related to practical / moral judgment. Through a combination of relevant curriculum and teaching interactions, children are expected to develop these capabilities to levels of competence more or less precisely described.

The second question considered for the study regarding the Educating within the cultural context as well as opening to the world, the study reveals that the coexistence of cultures and languages in countries around the world takes on various forms. If the languages and cultures have equal status in one country or among countries their learning is often encouraged and the needed resources are provided for the purpose. On the other hand, unequal status relationships among linguistic groups means that the subordinate group is restricted to its cultural milieu and has less probability of getting education of reasonable quality. Subordinate linguistic and cultural groups, especially indigenous populations, are often among the poorest in their countries and regions.

The third question was dealt with building or reconstructing democracy and enabling citizen participation and it was evaluated that this is an important goal for societies that have emerged from undemocratic systems, wars and other upheavals with sustained violation of human rights. It is also a goal for countries with stable political systems that require educated citizens to build and sustain their institutions. In considering this topic I refer first to

issues that surround the discussion of civic education and secondly to educational forms of dealing with them.

The last question was preparing for economic and productive participation according to the study; the education for economic development implies preparing human resources with the capabilities needed to push a country forward economically. However, it is much more difficult to decide what is needed for this economic push. In the past, responses addressed the concept of —vocationalising education, especially secondary education. Today, emphasis is on preparing the —human capital considered essential for economic development. This preparation is described as developing cognitive capabilities, encouraging longer years of schooling, and providing flexible options for lifelong education. In other words, it means improving the quality of education and insuring that as many as possible has access to it.

Teacher education and policies that promote adequate learning conditions must of necessity be part of providing quality in teaching and learning processes. Not surprisingly factors that enhance quality are often the reverse of the medal of the negative factors and are generally not in the hands of the educational policy maker nor even of single governments. Without economic growth some countries may not be able to afford quality education systems for all their population. Yet economic growth is not the simple effect of the country's efforts to grow.

Among the internal factors that could improve education quality those most cited refer to teachers and their education, to compensatory schemes for various forms of disadvantage, to stimulus for better performance and to the establishment of quality control systems. Inputs such as teaching resources, appropriate curriculum, and competent school management structures are also listed among these factors.

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