
Teacher education at the UWI, Trinidad and Tobago

Teacher educators who have had the opportunities of training and career development, especially within the changing context of teacher education, are more likely to be prepared for the challenges of change. It may be, that in meeting these challenges, the promotion of quality in education will be initiated and at the same time will add to a better understanding of what the quality of education really means.

(Policy and practice in initial teacher training, 1993, Commonwealth Secretariat, p. 18)

Background

The Faculty of Education, which started as the Institute of Education in 1963, has always been concerned with teacher education, and the improvement of the quality of teacher education programmes in the contributing territories. Its activities, targeted mainly to primary school teachers, included approving syllabi, developing curriculum materials, conducting in-service courses and convening conferences and workshops.

From 1969 discussions were held with the Ministry of Education on the introduction of an In-Service Diploma in Education. The need for this programme was emphasised following the social and political disturbance of 1971 and the University responded by initiating the programme in 1973. In 1972 the Institute of Education was renamed the School of Education. Collaboration with agencies which started in the late 1960s continued and the Caribbean Language Research Programme and curriculum development programmes in mathematics, science and social studies were of particular interest.

In a restructuring exercise at the University in 1984 the School of Education became a Faculty of Education which continues to respond to the various educational needs of

Trinidad and Tobago through its three functions – teaching, research, and outreach for the promotion of teacher education programmes.

Programmes

Teacher education programmes at the Faculty are available to teachers at different levels in the educational system, with different levels of qualification, and at different stages of their teaching careers. The Faculty's two departments – Educational Foundation and Teacher Education, and Educational Research and Development – are involved in teacher education programmes; jointly for some programmes while for others each department carries specific responsibilities. There are six different types of programmes as follows:

- Outreach professional development programmes for serving teachers
- Continuing professional teacher education through research and development and publications
- Higher degree programmes of teacher education
- Certificate programmes of teacher education
- The Bachelor of Education programme
- The In-Service Diploma in Education programme

A brief description of each type is given below.

1 Outreach professional development programmes

The outreach professional development programmes of teacher education as practised at the Faculty of Education at St Augustine have three main goals. The first is to keep 'the gown and the town' in touch with each other by taking the staff of the Department of Teacher Education to teachers in secondary

schools or by bringing teachers from their schools into the Faculty of Education for the purpose of professional development experience. The second is to provide a modicum of professional skill and teacher education content for the many untrained graduate teachers (currently estimated as 30 per cent) who teach in Trinidad and Tobago secondary schools. The third is to provide opportunities for teachers in secondary schools throughout the country to participate in short refresher courses and update their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Outreach programmes are mainly for teachers at the secondary level. They are usually of one half to one full day's duration, held in the school and attended by nearly all the teachers in the host school. Topics dealt with in the development programmes are usually suggested by the host school. Professional development day programmes of teacher education tend therefore to be tailor-made for the schools requesting such programmes. The Faculty benefits from this professional engagement with schools since it provides an opportunity for faculty staff to keep abreast of teachers' views and of activities in the schools. Evaluation of each outreach programme is usually carried out at the end of the professional development day. Invariably, participants find the workshop approach suitable and the content of the course appropriate. Suggestions are often made for future programmes. Some of the topics addressed at the different schools' professional day programmes included motivation for classroom learning, classroom management, and science teaching methods. Occasionally primary schools request professional development programmes on tests and measurement and on issues related to the Common Entrance Examination.

2 Continuing professional teacher education programmes through research and development and publications

The Department of Educational Research and Development has, as part of its main functions, research into and development of curricula for schools and teachers' colleges. The Department has been responsible for several curriculum projects, including those involving the process approach to teaching science in the primary school and the values and moral education projects in secondary schools. The Department facilitates publication of investiga-

tions in education, especially in the area of curriculum. Three publications are worthy of note: *The Social Studies Education* which reports curriculum development efforts in the field of social studies for schools; the *Caribbean Curriculum* – a journal of educational research and curriculum development activities; and the *Occasional Publications* of the Faculty of Education at St Augustine which report the more extensive accounts of research and curriculum development efforts of higher degree graduates and other scholars who have worked on topics judged to be of relevance and interest to practising educators in Trinidad and Tobago. All three publications are available for wide circulation among practising teachers. Professionally qualified teachers may find them useful as a means of continually updating and sharpening their skills and competencies and improving their knowledge and attitudes in the relevant area. Graduate teachers who have not been professionally trained may also find them helpful. A fourth publication, the *Caribbean Journal of Education*, is owned by the University's three campuses' Faculties of Education. It is an international journal of educational research, practices and theories.

The success of this aspect of the Faculty's teacher education function unfortunately depends on the resources and willingness of school administrators to make copies of these publications available in their staff rooms. Only seven out of 42 secondary schools visited by the writer during 1993/94 subscribe to one or more of these three publications.

3 Higher degree programmes of teacher education

Improvement in the quality of primary education through a specially designed Master of Education programme for experienced, professionally qualified graduate teachers was the aim of a special higher degree teacher education programme run by the Faculty from 1988-1990. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago entered into an agreement with the IDB to have some 80 graduate teachers pursue the Master of Education programme on various aspects of education, teacher education, curriculum development and supervision, educational planning, and measurement and evaluation which are of relevance to teacher effectiveness and the quality of education in the primary school. The hope was that after

successful completion of the programme which offered various concentrations, graduates would be equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to bring about improvement in the quality of primary education in the country. Efforts were made to focus principally on the primary education level. Graduates, on completion of the programmes, took employment at the teachers' college where they became teacher educators for primary school teachers; or at the Learning Resource Centre where they run in-service short-term courses for primary school teachers; or at the Ministry of Education as curriculum officers, planners, or officers in measurement. Some returned to teach in their schools.

In the current academic year there are 52 graduate students registered for higher degrees in the Faculty. Apart from the Master of Education programme, other higher degree programmes such as the M.A. Education, the M. Phil. and the Ph.D. are also teacher education programmes. These programmes invariably expose experienced graduate teachers, most of whom are also professionally qualified, to higher levels of discourse in the relevant educational disciplines; involve them in empirical research investigations, often on problems related to the practice of education in Trinidad and Tobago; and enable them to make a contribution to knowledge relating to the context of education in their own environment. A significant feature of the UWI, St Augustine, higher degree teacher education programmes is the demand they make on the teacher-researcher to engage in reflective practice. Most of these graduate student-teachers take courses in research methods and four other full courses in the field of education. A number of graduate students who have successfully completed their higher degree programmes of teacher education have subsequently joined the staff at the Faculty of Education, at the teachers' colleges, or have taken positions in schools and in the various departments of the Ministry of Education. Many higher degree holders have contributed articles to educational journals in the Caribbean and abroad. There is evidence that teacher education through the higher degree programme is a worthwhile venture and the dissertations, theses and research reports are valuable concrete outputs of these programmes.

4 The Certificate in Education programmes

Eight certificate programmes of teacher education have been offered by the Faculty since 1984. Five of these continue to enrol students annually. They are in early childhood education, educational administration, the teaching of mathematics, the teaching of science and in materials production. The other three were introduced for a period of two years for the purpose of preparing teacher educators for work as facilitators in primary and junior secondary schools in the special skills of teaching reading, teaching of mathematics and teaching of the hearing impaired.

The three programmes for the Certificate in Teacher Education, teaching of reading, teaching of mathematics and teaching of the hearing impaired, were intended to create a cadre of teachers competent to teach students at primary level. In addition to being competent as teachers in these special areas, the programmes enabled participants to function competently as teacher trainers. They were therefore equipped with the necessary professional skills to work in teachers' colleges, and in schools, as resource teachers and facilitators. The courses combined theoretical foundations of the specialisation with the principles and practice of being a teacher educator. These innovative 'train-the-teacher-trainer' programmes emphasised ways of providing participants with opportunities to develop their competencies as teacher trainers, to improve their skills in developing and implementing curriculum, and to improve their communication and managerial skills. They enabled teachers to enhance their leadership, guidance and resource roles with their fellow teachers; and to diagnose and prescribe appropriate strategies for solving problems encountered by students in the different aspects of their relevant special interests. A total of 121 participants successfully completed these three teacher educator programmes during 1984-1986. The majority of them still function as facilitators in schools or as tutors in teachers' colleges.

The five Certificate in Education programmes of teacher education which continue to be offered at St Augustine are designed to meet needs in each of the five areas: early childhood education; educational administration; material production; teaching of mathematics; and teaching of science. On successful completion of any of these programmes the

teacher would have acquired specific knowledge, skills and practices which are appropriate for competent and effective performance in the particular field. The five programmes focus at the primary level. Educational administration is usually chosen by senior teachers and vice principals of primary schools in preparation for possible appointment as a principal. The purpose of the mathematics and science programmes is to provide trained teachers with additional professional skills to enable them to function as facilitators of the learning of these subjects by primary school students who may have difficulties in mastering the curriculum. Familiarity with the concepts and processes of the relevant subject, with teaching methodologies and with remedial activities in the subjects are important aspects of the programme.

The Certificate in Materials Production is a teacher education programme designed to equip experienced professionally qualified teachers with the special skills to produce print and audio-visual educational media materials for facilitating learning in the classroom. Thus, in addition to the relevant aspects of foundations of educational technology, principles and practice of instructional design, and organisation and functions of learning resource centres, participants receive hands-on training in writing for print and for audio-visual media; in the local production of instructional materials – slides and video materials; interactive computer technology; and use of educational films and audio recordings. A total of nine courses are taught on the programme which is evaluated largely by practical assessment. Successful graduates work in educational broadcasting, in the learning resource centre and as schools' educational technologists.

The University ensures that all resources needed for the professional upgrading of primary school teachers with appropriate skills and knowledge to spearhead improvement in the quality of primary education are provided. Teachers who apply for these courses appreciate the quality of the programmes, as is evident in the fact that the programmes are virtually self-financing. Most of the 340 students who have successfully completed the different certificate programmes sponsored themselves. These certificate programmes may well be the forerunners of specialist teacher education programmes which the Faculty may wish to mount as its resources permit. Professional upgrading, updating, retooling and fine tuning of teaching skills in different areas of the

school curriculum constitute important aspects of the function of the Faculty.

All certificate programmes are evening programmes. Students attend three or four evenings a week, two hours each time, for 30 weeks. Practical teaching and practical assessments are carried out in the teachers' schools by faculty staff. Written assignments and project reports are assessed for final grades.

5 The Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme

The Bachelor of Education is a professional teacher education degree which is normally intended for practising teachers. It is designed to serve two groups of teachers. First, teachers without a previous teacher training qualification who have the minimum qualifications for admission to a university's degree programme could be admitted for a period of three years, after which their Bachelor of Education degree serves also as an initial professional certification for teachers. The B.Ed. is also available to non-graduate, professionally qualified teachers who wish to improve their academic status and professional skills. The teachers usually serve for some years after graduating from teachers' colleges before applying to the Faculty at St Augustine for a one year Certificate in Education programme following which the teacher is eligible for admission, upon application, to a two year B.Ed. programme.

The B.Ed. degree comprises education courses and other academic courses in the Faculties of Arts or Science or Social Science. It is a requirement of the programme in each year that students must earn a specified number of credits from another faculty. Apart from common foundation courses in education, classroom testing and evaluation, curriculum theory and practice, and educational research, students choose education courses which are related to their cross faculty subjects. Assessment is by means of a combination of university examinations at the end of each semester, written assignments, practical assessment of teaching competence and assessment of students' reports of field research projects.

A third intake to this new programme began in August 1994, also focusing on primary education. The Bachelor of Education programme of teacher education is, however, designed to accommodate the needs of both primary and secondary school teachers' in initial teacher education and professional development. B.Ed.

teacher education programmes are envisaged pending availability of funds in certain areas, for example, educational administration, technical and vocational education, special education and guidance and counselling. It is noteworthy that 15 of the first batch of 34 Bachelors who came on two years study leave obtained First Class honours, 14 received the Upper Second Class honours degree, the remaining five, Lower Second. Such is the quality of the teachers awaiting further training that good use is made of the opportunity to participate in this programme.

6 The In-Service Diploma in Education

During the period 1987-88, there were 4,884 secondary school teachers in Trinidad and Tobago of whom 1,293 or 26.47 per cent were trained teachers. That was 14 years after the In-Service Diploma started at St Augustine, during which time 1,113 teachers were trained in the diploma programme. By July 1994, a total of 1,732 secondary school graduate teachers successfully completed the In-Service Diploma in Education. In this, the 21st year of the In-Service Diploma 102 graduate teachers have again enrolled. The In-Service Diploma in Education programme is cost-effective. It requires the minimum of release time for secondary school teachers and helps them to function more efficiently and effectively in their schools, while undergoing training. Thus student teachers are engaged in supervised practice in their schools during the school year and in addition attend the university during school vacations and on Fridays of the school term. Some characteristics of this programme are given below.

- The teacher education programme for the In-Service Diploma consists of two elements: the theory of education and the practice of education.
- There is no examination: instead continuous assessment and formative evaluation take place throughout the course. A letter grade system is used for each of three assignments and for school practice. Outstanding students would be awarded a pass with distinction either in theory or in practice or in both.
- The first assignment assesses competencies in theory such as the foundation areas of philosophy, psychology and sociology of education, and language in education. Each area is treated for its relevance to the prac-

tice of education and especially the classroom applications of relevant concepts. Students also participate in discussion in theme groups which enable them to draw together the relevant insights from the foundation areas as they relate to perceived needs of teachers and students in Trinidad and Tobago schools. Six themes which allow for cross disciplinary links are chosen.

- The second assignment assesses competencies in a curriculum area. Each teacher is expected to be able to teach some subject well. Subject choices include English; foreign languages; mathematics; science; and social science. The teachers meet in separate curriculum groups, with specialist lecturers to study both the content and methods of teaching the relevant curriculum area and to acquire, develop and sharpen the necessary skills, competencies and attitudes needed for effective teaching of the particular subject in the secondary school. The main course of each group is the curriculum process relevant to the teaching of the subject of the group. Other ancillary courses are measurement and evaluation in education, the use of media in instruction and arts in education. The assessment takes the form of a curriculum study.
- The third assignment is a dissertation on a particular education topic demanding extensive reading and analysis in foundations and curriculum under the supervision of a tutor with interest and expertise in the field chosen by the student. The extensive in-depth reading of a topic of interest is intended to motivate teachers to read more, to read more critically, to discuss and reflect on what they read, and to think critically about education and their own role in the education process.
- School practice is supervised by specialist tutors. The focus is to equip the student teacher with skills and competencies which they will manifest by the way they select and manage suitable learning classroom experiences for their own students at school. Student teachers are expected to put into practice the theory acquired, especially in the curriculum areas. Assessment seeks evidence of competence in the teaching of a chosen subject to an appropriate group in the secondary school, of ability to set appropriate objectives, manage learning experiences and situations and stimulate pupils' positive learning outcomes.

Certification and recognition

All degree, diploma and certificate programmes of teacher education receive the award of the University of the West Indies. The Ministry of Education of Trinidad and Tobago recognises all these awards. Teachers with the qualifications for which the appropriate certificates or degrees or diplomas have prepared them are given relevant duties in the educational service of the country. However, better qualification does not necessarily mean better status or better grading or greater financial benefit; it enables those who hold such qualifications to become eligible for posts with better remuneration and for promotion whenever such posts become available.

Administrative arrangements

All teacher education programmes offered by the Faculty enjoy the full co-operation of the Ministry of Education and the schools. For the In-Service Diploma in Education, the Ministry of Education releases teachers who have been selected for admission by the Faculty. On admission, the Ministry approves and permits the student teachers' attendance at the University for one full day each week. The Ministry requests principals to take into account the fact that some teachers from their schools have been admitted to the diploma programme. The schools in turn co-operate with this request from the Ministry.

Co-operation and links between the Faculty and the schools take dynamic and productive forms. Faculty staff go to the schools to see student-teachers on school practice. School principals are, from time to time, invited to the Faculty to discuss with staff, ways and means of making the relationship continually functional.

Organisation of courses

All teacher education programmes: certificate; diploma; and degree, have similar patterns of course organisation. A one year course is organised around a 300 contact hour teaching time. In addition, practicum of the equivalent of at least six weeks duration is required during the year of the course.

Course delivery takes the form of lectures, seminars and tutorials for the theory part of each course. The practicum is supervised by one or two tutors who have expertise in the particular subject area. Each lesson is followed by full discussion between the student teacher

and the supervisor about the events in the teaching experience which the supervisor observed, and about the lesson plan for that particular lesson.

Issues and concerns

The Faculty of Education at St Augustine continues to emphasise the need for adequate provision of training of teachers. The concern is that there has not been a greater political will and a policy on the professional preparation of graduate teachers for secondary schools are required. As present there are over 1,000 graduate teachers in secondary schools who are not professionally trained. It is necessary that a plan of action be put in place which would enable all these teachers to receive professional training through the In-Service Diploma in Education programme. At the same time, in order to ensure an adequate supply of qualified graduate teachers, the Faculty is of the view that it is necessary that a Pre-Service Diploma in Education programme be started for graduates to receive professional training before embarking on their teaching careers.

The quality of secondary level education available to the nation's adolescents is in large measure a function of the quality of the teaching force in the nation's secondary schools. The Faculty therefore views with great concern the fact that some 1,900 teachers attached to secondary schools have no university degree and considers that it ought to be a matter of policy that non-graduate secondary school teachers should have an opportunity to upgrade their knowledge, skills and abilities through teacher education programmes such as the B.Ed. (secondary education).

Continuous upgrading of skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies should become a norm for the teaching profession. All teachers at all levels should have the opportunity for professional development throughout their teaching career. It is, however, not sufficient to provide upgrading programmes of teacher education and to encourage teachers to avail themselves of the opportunity so provided. It is important that government should provide financial incentives by upgrading salaries for teachers who have successfully completed a programme of professional upgrading. It is indeed commendable that hundreds of teachers who undergo professional upgrading and achieve higher levels of teaching efficiency continue to work in their schools without any salary increments.

Future directions

Future plans of the Faculty for Teacher Education include the following:

1 The gradual provision of a full range of Bachelor of Education programmes: primary and secondary to include offerings in the special areas of early childhood education, education administration, guidance and counselling, technological studies, technical and vocational education, and special education.

The aims of the expanded and diversified B.Ed. programme are to afford the opportunity for the upgrading of the knowledge, skills and abilities of teachers and educators at all levels of the education system; to meet existing needs in specialised areas; and to provide initial training for those who need it.

2 Full-time Diploma in Education programme which untrained secondary school graduate teachers could take during a one year study leave, and also which graduate would-be teachers could take as a pre-service requirement.

3 The provision of teacher education programmes for teacher educators. Hitherto, teachers for the teachers' college have been recruited from primary and secondary schools. Sometimes the teachers recruited may not have been trained teachers themselves. The assumption has been that such teachers would teach the academic subjects which their degree qualifications indicate. The unity of the teacher training activities, in content and in method, has not always been appreciated. The Faculty believes that not only should all teachers of teacher training students be trained teachers themselves, but ideally, they should have received training in how to teach would-be teachers. Professional education of teacher educators in non-formal educational institutions is also of concern to the Faculty.

4 Provision of a teacher education programme available for teachers of adults; not to prepare students for adult education work *per se*, but rather to meet the need for equipping teachers of adult students in tertiary institutions and industries' shop floors with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for the facilitation of learning by the adult learner.

5 The establishment of teacher education through distance learning, as part of the University-wide effort to reach a wider audience of students. The Faculty plans to begin a programme of teacher education through distance learning directed to student-teachers in Tobago and other parts of the country far away from the University. The Diploma in Education would therefore become more easily available to graduate teachers in these places. The Certificate in Education would also be available to teachers in the primary schools who desire upgrading in the various subject areas. It is intended that the proposed teacher education programmes through distance learning should also be available through the UWIDITE network to reach teachers in the neighbouring islands of the Eastern Caribbean. The faculty's multi-media and printing departments should be of great help in the production of teaching materials for this purpose.

6 Extension of training opportunities for educational administrators, planning and policy makers.

7 Improvement of the delivery capacities of trained educational technologists for schools and tertiary institutions to accelerate the production of educational materials.

8 Strengthening of research activities.

Innovative programmes

Economic circumstances have forced the Faculty to deliver programmes that can be considered to be innovative. The In-Service Diploma in Education – with its school-based school practice four days a week for most of the year, day release system during the school year, and a faculty-based theory session during the vacations – is an innovative programme which started long before current discussions on the benefits of school-based teacher education programmes. (The Faculty's advocacy for a full-time pre-service programme does not preclude the school base element.)

The establishment of the Caribbean Educational Research Information Service (CERIS) is an innovative attempt to make information on teacher education in the Caribbean accessible to all in the Caribbean region. The existence of the experimental laboratory school for early childhood care and education activities is another innovation.

Conclusion

Teacher education programmes began in 1963 with curriculum development activities for serving teachers. Starting with the In-Service Diploma in Education in 1973, the Faculty's programme of teacher education added to its task the preparation and accreditation of professional teachers who hold graduate qualifications. From 1984 the scope included various specialists and semi-specialist teacher education programmes and upgrading certificate programmes for primary school teachers. The higher degrees programme of teacher education also provides scope for further upgrading. In 1992 the B.Ed. programme took in the first group of qualified primary school teachers. Future plans include diversification of B.Ed. intake, the start of a full-time Pre-Service Dip. Ed. programme and teacher education by distance teaching.

Augmentation and improvement of the Faculty's programme for teacher education for all levels of the educational system is a continuing objective. Research into new methods, new educational technologies and new theories is encouraged. Systematic investigations of the different problems encountered in schools are undertaken from time to time by staff and students.

In conclusion, the present state of teacher education at the Faculty of Education, St Augustine can be characterised by:

- Growth and stability – objectives, focus, vision, direction and sense of purpose
- Institutional identity – in form, pattern and diversity of programmes
- Coherence within each programme and between theory and practice – with emphasis on the production of reflective teacher practitioners and educators
- Integration between programmes – each programme leading to a stated end qualification, yet some measure of articulation can be perceived among the programmes
- Effectiveness – not only do most of the products of the different programmes achieve a desirable level of competence, they express satisfaction with their professional education, they hold responsible professional positions and reports about their work are often satisfactory
- Resilience – the programmes offered by the Faculty have survived difficult conditions of financing and staffing
- Relevance – each programme is relevant to the nation's needs.