

Excellent Teacher Training at University of Education, Vietnam National University Hanoi.

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Abstract

This paper discusses the importance of excellent teachers, factors which impact on the quality of teacher training in general, teacher training in Vietnam and the model of excellent teacher training at the University of Education, Vietnam National University in Hanoi in particular.

1. Understanding about excellent teachers and their role in education quality

Evidence shows that, teachers' effectiveness plays an important role in making a difference in student learning. The Teacher Excellence for All Children Act of California states: "Nothing is more important to a student's academic success than a highly qualified teacher," (Imig D.G& Imig S.R.,2007).

Hammond L.D. (January 1, 2000), found in the previous studies that, students who are assigned to several ineffective teachers in a row have significantly lower gains in achievement than those who are assigned to several highly effective teachers in sequence. Similarly, Hanushek and his colleagues (cited from Hammond L.D, January 1, 2000) notice that, replacing average teachers with excellent ones helps to erase the gap in math between disadvantaged students and rich students.

High qualified teachers are teachers who have excellent pedagogical knowledge and skills that contribute to students' success. The Department for Children, Schools and Local Authorities in England, (2007) defines Excellent Teachers as teachers who have length, breadth and depth of experience, pedagogic excellence and coaching and mentoring skills of a high order. Their high quality teaching skills make them a role model for less experienced classroom teachers.

In conclusion, an excellent teacher is the one who is a subject matter expert, pedagogical expert, excellent communicator, student-centered mentor and a systematic and continual assessor (Penn State, 2010).

At our University excellent teachers are considered as:

- New pedagogues (who are teach creatively, develop student potential in the context of globalization and ICT development)
- New educators (who educate global citizens)
- ICT users
- Researchers and

- Community activists

How to recruit, train and use excellent teachers are a concern everywhere including in Vietnam.

2. Factors that impact on the quality of teacher training

Educators consider quality of teacher training results from the training process, job experiences, continuous learning and professional enhancement. The quality of teacher training is impacted by different factors:

- Inputs: teacher student competencies; teacher standards and the quality of the teacher education curriculum; training conditions (quality of lecturers of the training colleges; learning environment and infrastructure)
- Quality of instructional processes
- Outcome quality
- Policies of using and creating a working environment for the professional development of teachers

Because these factors impact teacher quality and professional development, different policies are carried out in different countries to attract talented students to become teachers and attract and retain talented teachers for excellent schools.

1) Attract, recruit, and retain capable people in the teaching profession

This policy allows for attracting potential candidates to become teachers by creating convenient exams, financial supports and incentives, and opportunities for job as well as professional development for teachers.

2) Develop teachers' professional norms, knowledge, and skill.

These policies require equipping teachers with the knowledge and necessary understanding about the teaching profession to realize students' learning needs. Margaret Spellings – the US Education Secretary of State in her 2005 report required that all higher education institutions have to learn principles of developing curricula to prepare and train 21st century excellent teachers with important teaching skills. Teachers have to be trained in research methods and to make teaching decisions based on the research information of teaching subjects and students. In order to achieve these objectives, it is necessary to tie teacher training in higher education institutions to practicums, internships and good supervisions at schools (Spellings, 2005).

3) Create incentives and organizational conditions that support teachers' work

Schools must have incentive policies (non-material and material) to award teachers for their

achievements. US President Obama asks to change incentive policies for the teaching profession as to any important profession so that teachers are satisfied with their job and accountability to students is thus enhanced (Associated Press, Journal Sentinel staff, 11 Mar 2009). These policies include merit pay for excellent teachers and competence based payment according to student achievement. Competence based payment is widely implemented in different countries in the US and England to encourage excellent teachers to become leading teachers instead of becoming education administrators.

- 4) *Realize improvement efforts on a sufficient scale, and do so equitably, within a diverse, fragmented educational environment*
- 5) *Ensure that teacher development and teaching practice relate to improved student learning*

All policies should help teachers invest more in student learning and for student success in their learning as well as in their future professions.

In fact, in different countries the policies for teachers are not sufficient to encourage them to teach well. Many countries including Vietnam pay teachers based on their working year experiences and teachers have the lowest salary among other professions. Teachers lack good conditions for living and working. That is why excellent students do not want to enter the teaching profession and many excellent teachers are leaving the teaching profession in Vietnam.

3. Teacher training in Vietnam

3.1. Education system in Vietnam and teacher types

Education levels	Teachers	Number
Nursery & Kindergarten	Nursery & Kindergarten teachers	172,978
Primary education	Primary teachers (One class has one teacher who teaches nearly all subjects: math, language, art and science subjects; other teachers teach music and physical education)	344,853
Lower secondary education	Lower secondary education teachers (Each teacher teaches one or two subjects)	312,759
Upper secondary education	Upper secondary education teachers (Each teacher teaches one or two subjects)	134,246
Technical vocational education	Teachers (Each teacher teaches one or two subjects)	
Higher education		56,120 (Only 1.,5% PhD and doctoral degrees)
Three year college	Three year college lecturers	
Bachelor, master and doctoral levels	Lecturers, professors	
Special education	Special education teachers for either gifted students and/or disabled children	

(MOET source, 2007-2008, <http://www.moet.gov.vn>)

The number of teachers who were trained at college and university levels for lower secondary schools is 94.9% and for upper secondary schools is 97.1%.

3.2. Types of teacher training institutions

Vietnam has 64 cities and provinces and each city or province has its own teacher training college.

Systems of Teacher Training Colleges, Departments and Universities

- 1) Traditional pedagogical universities and colleges
- 2) New training model of the University of Education, Vietnam National University in Hanoi
- 3) Two National Universities of Pedagogy in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City
- 4) Tech- pedagogical university
- 5) Faculties and departments at universities

3.3. Policies for Teachers

Vietnam has a tradition of respecting teachers. In the feudalistic society, teachers were ordered after King, but before parents: “King – Teacher – Parents”. This tradition has remained and nowadays in Vietnam Teacher Celebration Day is held on November 20th every year.

Our Government pays much attention to teachers and promulgates different policies to improve teachers’ conditions. Teacher rights and responsibilities are defined in the Education Law, General School Charter and Higher Education Act. Under article 26 of the College Charter there are requirements of student selection for the teacher profession:

College has priorities in keeping students, who graduated bachelor, master and PhD with good marks, who have good ethical qualities, practical experiences and have a desire of becoming teachers to continue to educate them to become lecturers at the colleges.

The Government has released different policies for teacher salary, for waiving tuition fees for students who learn at pedagogical colleges and universities, and to invest in the professional development of teachers and educational managers (Central Organization of the Communist Party of Vietnam (15/6/2004).

However, there still are many difficulties and obstacles for teacher recruitment, training and daily work in Vietnam that lead to teachers leaving their job or feeling unsatisfaction.

Nowadays training teachers in Vietnam has been impacted by different factors:

- the country requirements for high qualified human resources and new education in the context of developing the market economy, modernization and industrialization
- Globalization and internationalization in education
- New requirements to teacher training standards and education
- And our university besides these factors also has been impacted by the requirements of the mission of the Vietnam National University as a multifunctional university.

3.4. Teacher training models in Vietnam

Vietnam has gone through different periods of development and therefore, teacher education is one important part of the country's development and has gone through different stages with different models.

a) Teacher training model before 1956, the second education reform

During 1945-1954, due to the war, the teacher training in the freedom zone was done in the Learning Area in Quelim – China at only the first vocational level. At the same time, in the colonized region of Hanoi the French colonists upgraded the Teacher Training College that was founded before the August Revolution to a College similar to Ecole Normal Supérieure in France to train lower secondary school teachers.

After the war with France, in 1954, a Mixed University was opened in Hanoi to train both upper secondary school teachers and researchers. Also at that time a People's University was built to train lower secondary school teachers.

b) Teacher training from 1956 to 1990

In 1956, The Mixed University was divided into two Universities: a General University and a Pedagogy University. Since then, the system of Pedagogical Universities has developed widely and many other pedagogical universities appeared: two National Pedagogical Universities in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, as well as Thai Nguyen, Hai Phong, Vinh, Hue, and Quy Nhon Pedagogical Universities. These universities train teachers at different levels for kindergarten, primary and secondary schools with a bachelor degree. Only a few universities have the function to train teachers at the masters and PhD levels.

General Universities train researchers, but after graduation, most of them come to teach at secondary schools without being equipped with pedagogical knowledge and skills.

c) Teacher training in “Doimoi” period when the country developed a market economy through modernization and industrialization

Teacher training is considered as one of priorities of Vietnam's education development strategy. In the Vietnam Pedagogical Colleges and Universities there are three main training forms:

- Prepare students with a bachelor, master and/or PhD degree – the most important role of universities of education is supplying high qualified human resources for the education system
- Upgrade teachers and carry out other training forms such as distance education, evening classes, part time training and short training courses
- Disseminate knowledge for society

4. High qualified or excellent teacher training at the University of Education, Vietnam National University in Hanoi.

Considering excellent teachers as one who master well his/her teaching subject and according to the fact that, many students after graduating from the General Universities come to teach secondary schools without a teaching certificate, our University decided to train teachers by recruiting from different science member universities within the Vietnam National University in Hanoi and other neighbouring universities. We offer, implement, and manage programmes with diplomas in teacher education for secondary and higher education teachers at either the University or joint institutions with a regular annual enrolment of over 1,500 students.

We are the first and only university in Vietnam to offer diplomas for teaching with two new models:

-3 plus 1 Model, Teacher Education Program: where students spend the first three years in either the University of Science or the University of Social Sciences and Humanities and the last year in the University of Education. After one year at our University, students receive a teaching diploma in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Literature or Linguistics according to their basic subject that they learned in other universities.

- 4 plus 1 Model, Teacher Education Program (one- year, full-time and in-service): for BA holders in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Literature and Linguistics.

The model can be described as follows:

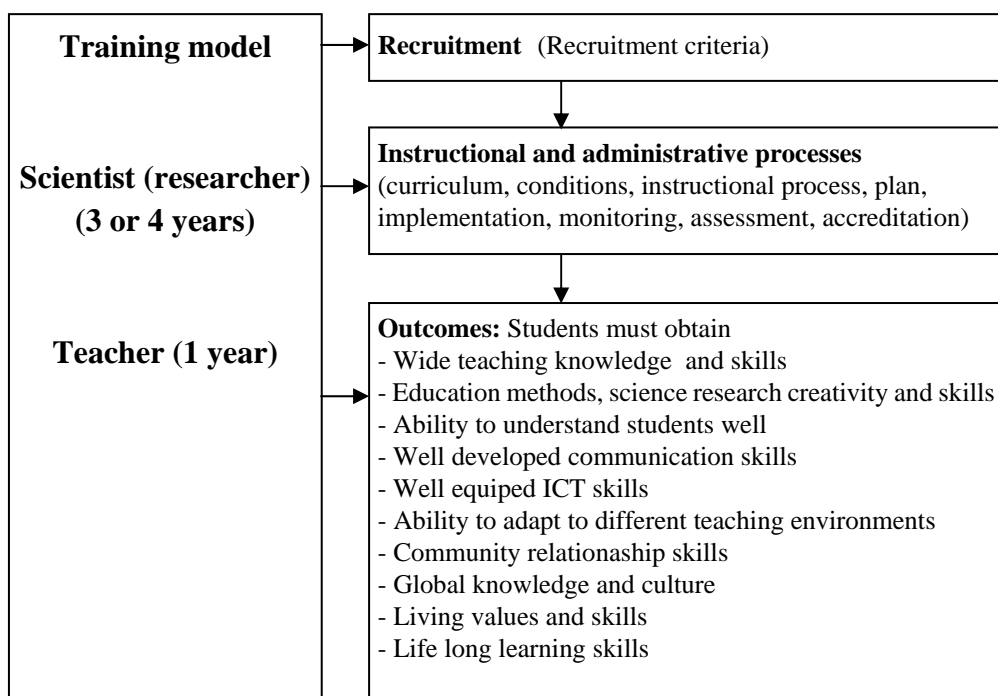


Figure 1: The new training model of excellent teachers at the University of Education, Vietnam National University in Hanoi (Nguyen Thi My Loc, 2008)

We prepare students as 21st century teachers who can teach their students creativity, the skills needed to search for information and live in a digital environment of a knowledge society.

We develop programs for different teaching subjects considering their focus on defined outcomes; ensure systematic approaches and balance between theory and practice. We prepare and equip our lecturing staff with new, creative teaching methods and knowledge so that they can teach students creatively. Besides we create good financial conditions and equipment for the lecturer to teach and students to learn. Good relationships between our university and schools have been developed.

After nearly five years, we have trained nearly 1,000 teachers with the new models.

However, with the current training scope and with difficulties in the policies for teacher training in Vietnam, especially the policies for excellent teachers, the number of excellent teachers we have trained cannot meet the requirements for excellent teachers needed nationwide.

Based on learning experiences from other countries and from our own, we would like to suggest some recommendations about excellent teacher training to other countries that are similar to Vietnam:

- 1) To attract talented students to learn in teacher training institutions each country has to have financial support – incentive policies for talented students, who want to learn and who are learning the teaching profession.
- 2) Disseminate and enhance awareness of the teaching profession in general, of excellent teacher training programs and policies in particular among upper secondary school students and university students.
- 3) Develop 21st century teacher standards and excellent teacher standards and develop programs based on these standards.
- 4) Develop resources for training teachers and excellent teachers, using internet resources.
- 5) Improve teacher payment based on their competencies and develop a path for talented teacher development from school age to retirement age for those who are talented and love the teaching profession.
- 6) Give schools autonomous in recruiting and paying salaries for teachers so that they can recruit talented people for their schools.
- 7) Have different policies and incentives for the professional development of these teachers after their graduation.
- 8) Build good working conditions, a good teaching and learning environment in which teachers work, study and relax.

We continue to improve the preparation of excellent teachers by working with internal and external education experts as well as implementing different policies for them. They are the new educators who are and will bring new education to school students in Vietnam to contribute to the high quality of human resource training in our country.

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