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Education: Mastering Primary Teacher Education

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Education is conceived as a powerful agency which is instrumental in bringing about the desired changes in the social and cultural life of a nation and the quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens (Parves and Shakir, 2013) on one hand, the quality of education is directly related to the quality of teaching (Mkumbo, 2012) on the other hand. It is from this point of view we find that teachers are very important and they play a crucial role in shaping the future of individuals through teaching and learning process. The fact that education has no end; it is of value that it should be put into consideration because it enables individuals to develop into a good member of the society.

Education is expected to play several key roles in an effort of developing country socio-economic and cultural status. However, it is impossible to think of quality education without having academically qualified and professionally responsible teachers on the schools. Thus, for teachers to play their role effectively in schools there must be a well-designed and successfully implemented teaching practice program for student teachers that aims at producing teachers who are academically qualified, professionally skilled, and attitudinally and ethically committed to their profession ((Kumar and Ratnalikar, 2005; Msangya, Mkoma and Yihuan, 2016).

The book is set in Kenya. It was developed by experienced authors, examiners and curriculum experts. It covers the four main components of education namely: foundation of education, educational psychology, curriculum studies and education management and administration. The book is divided into two main sections; year one and year two. In each section the topics are arranged in manageable units to be covered as specified in the syllabus. Additional reading sample of research proposal is appended at the end of the book. The authors went further by attaching a model of examination papers that will help the student teacher to familiarize him/herself on how the exams are constructed. The provision of glossary functions as a mini dictionary to the student teacher and trainers.

I have read many books on education but this one concentrates only in new Primary Teacher Education (PTE) curriculum with four areas of education combined together. It provides a comprehensive coverage of all aspects of education, the core subjects for student teacher at the primary teacher training, diplomas and university levels. We all know that education as a subject turns teachers into professionals through acquiring new knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Fourteen years have passed since the book was first published but it is still relevant in today's education context because the presented topics are still relevant to primary student teacher today as well as trainers. For instance, the topics in year one and two are arranged according to the level of the student which is compulsory and important to consider in education.

Foundation of education traces the evolution of education to what it is today. Year one is made up of two units. This part covers philosophy and history of education. Year two has two units which are sociology of education and comparative education. The topics enable student teacher to view education as a social institution and appreciate the interrelatedness of society and education. For instance, the philosophical ideas and concepts from philosophers have played part in current educational practices which is very important to student teacher of today.

Education psychology content gives the student teacher a better understating of the growth and development of the child. Year one has five units while year two has three units. The concept of intelligence and intelligence test is also outlined. The student teacher is therefore able to identify and satisfy the learners psychosocial development needs which leads to effective leaning at the schools. It is in this section where learning process, educational measurement and evaluation and child with special needs are presented. What I found important in the last section is that intervention measures are shown on how to assist children with deferent difficulties.

Curriculum content presented in the book enables the student teacher to interpret, understand its purpose, development process, role, and challenges in developing and implementing the curriculum. Furthermore, important topics such as teaching practice, teaching and learning resources, classroom organization and management and teaching practice are included in the book. This is to say, the student teacher will have a room to select and use the appropriate teaching and learning materials, approaches, methods and strategies to use in teaching and learning process. It should be noted that curriculum process considers levels and abilities of the learners at the schools.

Education administration and management is presented in units also. For instance, year one the student teacher must learn principles of administration and management. Year two includes legal provision of education, teaching as a process, school administration and management, school records and finance, school development planning, organizational structure of the Ministry of Education and other institutions and programmes that support the development of education. The mentioned topics help the student teacher to master teaching skills that will lead to professionalism. In addition to that, the content equips the student teacher with theoretical and practical knowledge on the administration and management of educational institution in general and schools in particular.

Furthermore, comparative education from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania is presented in terms of structure, curriculum, levels, strategies, challenges and financing from pp. 300-324. Additionally, current issues of HIV and AIDS, integrity conservation of the environment, drug and substance abuse, gender issues and children's right are integrated in the book. Generally, the book is still relevant not only in Kenyan context but also in other parts of the world including Tanzania. It can also function as a reference material in education. The book is highly recommended to student teacher as well as trainers who are teaching at the teacher colleges and universities as a source of information. However, research units in this book are not exhaustive; therefore, the student teacher and trainers must consult other research books in order to gain more information in data analysis, validity and reliability. Another weakness is that authors explained ways of presenting quantitative data and leave out the qualitative part. These two approaches must be included in the book since they are different and student teacher is free to select the approach that he/she wants to use in research.

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