Chapter 3

Today’s Demands on Education

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ABSTRACT

The concerns are growing when it comes to today’s demands on education. This chapter will explain how demands on teachers are critical to student success. It is imperative that teacher preparation programs are preparing quality teachers who will contribute to effective schools and student learning. The scholarship of teaching and learning needs to accompany teacher education so that teacher educators can understand and communicate the complexity of instruction and learning. Teachers as professionals need to be able to make informed and accountable deliberations about how they will engage in their practice to increase student learning. Reflective practice needs to begin early in teacher preparation programs and continue throughout the preserves teachers’ programs.

INTRODUCTION

The concerns are growing when it comes to today’s demands on education. This section will explain how demands on teachers are critical to student success. It is imperative that teacher preparation programs are preparing quality teachers who will contribute to effective schools and student learning. Crafton (2005) insisted that the scholarship of teaching and learning needs to accompany teacher education so that teacher educators can understand and communicate the complexity of instruction and learning. Teachers as professionals need to be able to make informed and accountable deliberations about how they will engage in their practice to increase

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student learning. Risko, Vukelich Roskos & Carpener (2002) also felt that reflective practice needs to begin early in teacher preparation programs.

The following are issues to consider when preparing students with the 21st-century skills necessary for a global work-force that will require a transformational change of the education system. This chapter will review issues that may act as barriers to this level of change. These are the parallel implementation of Common Core Standards, the realignment of assessments, and the consideration of the perspectives that are resistant to these changes. All these factors are important considerations with regards to the implementations of 2st-century skills.

Schultz (2005) wrote, “teacher education in the twenty-first century cannot be apprenticeship training, rooted in the model of the teacher a technician who are drawn along” (p. 3). Schultz (2005) outlined how the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba introduced inquiry into their practicum and how it contributed to the “thoughtful and alert of students of education” (p. 3.).

**MAIN FOCUS**

Twenty-first century skills and academic achievement are not mutually exclusive. In fact, Partnership for 21st-Century Skills explains that when basic skills and 21st-century skills is taught together, the two strengthen each other. The vision is not to add more to an already busy school day, but to integrate technology as a tool in the classroom to promote 21st-century skills (Learning or the 21st-Century).

This may be difficult at first as people attracted to teaching as a career may have the interests and skills of traditional teacher-centered approach to instruction, and this could be a reason why they have difficulty with more collaborative, student-centered teaching styles such as “guide on the side” (Collison, Elbaum, Haavind, & Tinker, 2000). Regardless, the times require change and educators must embrace this change or schools will become archaic (NCREL, 2003). As Rod Paige, U.S. Secretary of Education stated, “Education is the only business still debating the usefulness of technology. Schools remain unchanged for the most part, despite numerous reforms and increased investments in computers and networks” (Toward a New Golden Age in American Education: How the Internet, the Law, and Today’s Students are Revolutionizing Expectations, 2004, pg. 22).

One way that teachers can prepare their students for the 21st-century and address core subjects is by “teaching and learning in a 21st-century context” (Learning for the 21st-Century). In other words, “Academic excellence must be acquired within the context of today’s technological environment to fully prepare students to thrive
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