

УДК 37.037

THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY TEACHING IN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Romano Carmen Paul

The article analyzes the connection between teaching quality and student achievement in comprehensive schools in the United States of America. On the basis of research the author defines that teaching quality has been consistently identified as the most school-based factor in student achievement. The article also shows that improvement of teaching quality is an important lesson that the United States can learn from the top-ranked education countries.

Keywords: *quality teaching, teacher qualification, human capital, school leadership, student achievement, top-performing countries.*

“If you commit your life to teaching, America will pay for your college education. We will recruit teachers in math and science and deploy them in under-staffed school districts in our inner cities and rural America. We will expand mentoring programs that pair experienced teachers with new recruits. And when our teachers succeed, I won't just talk about how great they are, I'll reward their greatness with better pay and more support.”

President Barack Obama, 2009, Flint, Michigan

Higher teaching quality in secondary schools in the United States is the most important lesson that America can learn from top-ranked education countries such as Finland and Singapore. It is vital that teachers, school districts and states work in unison to improve teaching quality in high schools across the country. Compared with the more than 70 economies worldwide, America's secondary school students continue to rank only average in reading and science, and below average in mathematics. For a very wealthy nation like the United States, this is most certainly a sorry state in comprehensive schools in America.

This article will present information revealing that America has been trying to raise its academic standards through the improvement of quality teaching for the past decade. In addition, the article will examine how the secondary schools in America can learn from other countries about the

difficult task of improving quality teaching, selection and compensation. The article also argues that the United States needs to elevate the teaching profession to one of high status and respect and how educators and school districts will have to earn this respect by working together for the ultimate goal of improving teaching quality.

The importance of quality teaching in comprehensive schools in the United States of America takes an important place in the works of the following scientists: Dr. Steven L. Pain (2011), Andreas Schleicher (2010), Dr. Lawrence Katz (2001), Claudia Goldin (2001), educators Shawn Fremstad and Andy Van Kleunen (2006). Additional scientific research work has been provided by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009), the think tank Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education (2010), The Washington Post, Quality Education (2006), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2010), The New York Times, Top Test Scores, (2010), and the American Association of Employment in Education (AAEE)

The problem of improving teaching quality in American secondary schools is a major issue facing American education. The inability to improve quality teaching is specifically driven by the inability to attract the best and brightest students from pedagogical programs to enter into a teaching profession. As a Result, this article will discuss and explore the need for school districts to improve and increase its pool of quality teachers. We will also provide research revealing that by reforming teacher colleges and making them more selective can improve teaching quality, and how improving professional development improves teaching quality. The benefit of improving teaching quality in secondary schools in America will provide a strong sense of community among family, teachers and students. And this is believed to be one of the most important indicators and aspects of successful schools.

The aim of the article is to define the possible solutions of the problem of improving quality teaching in comprehensive schools in the United States of America. And to develop theoretically well-founded, experimentally approved models of education quality and to define the possible solutions of the problem of improving teaching quality, which would result in higher student accomplishments in secondary schools.

A world leader in education

The United State of America was the first country to offer every young person the opportunity to obtain a free public education and in the beginning of the 20st century the United States reaped tremendous economic rewards as a result of educating its citizenry. The United States led the world in the number of people earning post-secondary college and university degrees after World War II, at a time when government programs made it possible for thousands of returning veterans to obtain a higher education degree, thus fueling yet another period of economic expansion in the country during the 1950's and 60's [2, p. 4]. Now, the high tech globally inter-connected world of the 21st century, obtaining post-secondary education is quickly becoming even more essential for individual economic achievement, and to ensure the success of entire nations and economies. Jobs and investment capital in today's economic markets flow to those countries that have the best educated people. Thus, as a result of the following information, if the United States wants to continue to be a world leader in education, the quality of teaching in secondary schools must improve substantially. The results of the most recent International Student Assessment (ISA) test scores reveal most recently, these scores pertain to 15 and 16 year old students in 74 educational systems. The ISA results for students in secondary schools in the United States fell around the average range, as they have for the past decade [7]. The scores reveal that American comprehensive schools students score at average for reading and science and below average for mathematics. The top-performing educational systems involved students from South Korea, Finland, and Canada [7]. The United States is still an attractive place to do business. However, there could very well be more job opportunities and economic security, if the country can raise its educational achievement levels to become more competitive within the top-performing ISA nations.

International comparisons show that in the countries with the highest performing secondary school students, professional education credentials are valued more by the general public, and a higher share of educational spending is devoted to instructional services than is the case in the United States school system [11]. Teaching in comprehensive schools in the United States is, unfortunately, no longer a high status occupation. And despite the characteristics by many that teaching is an easy job-with short hours and summers off, the fact is that many teachers in secondary schools in the United States work long hours with little pay and in some cases, insufficient support from their leadership. According to a National Education Association (NEA)

report, nearly 50 percent of new teachers in secondary schools in America leave the teaching profession within the first five years, and they cite long hours, poor working conditions and low pay as the chief reasons [11]. It should be noted that the top-performing countries that have succeeded in making teaching an attractive profession have often done so, not just with increase pay, but by raising the status of teaching, offering real career prospects and giving teachers responsibility as professionals and true leaders of reform [4].

The immediate necessities to improve teaching quality

The top-performing countries, such as Canada and Finland pay very careful attention to raising and maintaining the standards of the teaching profession in secondary schools. These top-performing countries accept only the very best candidates and expend substantial amounts of time and money to mature and develop the talents and leadership attributes of future teachers and principals in secondary schools. The top-performing countries obviously place a great emphasis on secondary education. These countries are routinely ranked exceptionally high in the Newsweek magazine survey of “The World’s Best Countries,” [4] and not only in secondary education achievement, but also in the areas of health care, economic prosperity, political environment and overall quality of life [4]. In the top-performing countries it is a tremendous honor to be a comprehensive school teacher, and teachers are afforded a status comparable to what doctors, lawyers and other highly regarded professions enjoy in the United States. In these countries only one out of every 10 applicants makes it into the pedagogical training pool for teachers. Despite their high status social status, teachers in the top-performing countries are not paid more than teachers in the United States, based on a comparative per capita income [7]. But they do enjoy tremendous respect from both the general public and their nations political leaders. In essence, being a teacher in a top-performing country is the most honorable of all professions, it is a patriotic national calling to be an educator.

Lessons for the United States comprehensive school teachers

The most important lesson the United States can take from the countries that have been most successful in achieving high ISA test scores for their students is to begin investing in the preparation and development of high quality teachers, while at the same time taking steps to elevate the status of the entire teaching profession [3, p. 4]. In order for the United States to improve teaching quality and achieve the goal of becoming a top-performing

country, this may require rethinking many of the methods currently in use in comprehensive schools in the United States for preparing and developing teachers. These methods may include the following:

1. How to optimize the pool of individuals from which teacher candidates are drawn.
2. New guidelines for selecting and recruiting comprehensive school teachers.
3. How the performance of struggling teachers can be improved and the best performing teachers given opportunities to acquire more status and responsibilities [2, p. 583–592].

Teaching programs in the top-performing countries tend to be more selective and much more rigorous than in the United States. In many of the high performing countries secondary teachers can move up and earn higher salaries earlier in their careers by reaching a supervisory status. These supervisory status teachers are outstanding educators who have proven themselves to be more effective in the class room than their peers, and these teachers are also compensated for taking on a higher responsibility with both a higher rank and additional salary.

The top-performing countries have improved the quality of teaching in secondary schools by making teaching an attractive profession and by doing so, offer teachers real career prospects and more responsibility as professionals, and encouraging them to become leaders in educational reforms [10, p. 23]. This requires a teacher education that helps teachers become innovators and researchers in education and not just deliverers of the curriculum. Teacher training in the universities and colleges in the United States should also include more hands on time in the classroom, gaining real world experience [7]. If the United States is to become a top-achieving ISA system, this country must restore the teaching profession to the level of respect and dignity the profession enjoyed just a few decades ago. With the prevailing current economic environment, with the states and schools districts strapped for funds, this will not be an easy task. But, improving the regard with which teachers are held is not tonally how much they are paid.

Some of the responsibility for raising the status of the profession should be up to the teachers themselves. Educators in comprehensive schools in the United States must be willing to step up and be responsible for their own learning, and the learning of their students, to focus more on their ongoing professional development and skills, to seek out mentors and to provide

mentoring to new teachers coming into the profession [2, p. 13]. In addition, it is also incumbent upon political leaders, state and federal elected officials, parents and everyone with a stake in the education of secondary students in the United State to support their teachers.

The United States has the resources and the talent to compete more effectively and raise its level of educational achievement in comprehensive schools. The education policy makers in the United States must demonstrate with its actions that it truly values education, displays an understanding of the vital importance of having an educated workforce that can compete globally, and develops the political will to devote the necessary resources for educational reform. Despite its economic inequality and the shortcomings in its secondary education system, the United States remains a role model for much of the world in terms of creative energy, freedom and innovation.

To improve teaching quality in comprehensive schools, the United States needs great teachers to once again be a great nation when it comes to educational development and achievement, and it must do its best to both develop exceptional teachers and raise the level of professional regard in which the job of being a teacher is held by the public and elected officials.

Literature

1. Goldin, Claudia & Katz, Lawrence (2002) Human Capital and Social Capital: The Rise of Secondary Schooling in America, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 29, 583–623.
2. Fremstad, Shaw & Van Kleunen (May-June 2006) Redefining Public Education for the 21st Century, *Clearinghouse Review-Journal of Poverty Law and Policy*, Vol. 2. 13–17.
3. The Washington Post (May 9, 2006) Half the Teachers Quit in 5 Years.
4. Newsweek.com (2010) A Newsweek study of health, education, economy ranks of the world's top nations. Newsweek.com 2010-0816.
5. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010) Education at a Glance, OECD.
6. Organization for Economic Co-operation and development, Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education, Lessons from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (2010). <http://dr.doi.org/10.1787/9789254096660-cn>
7. American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, AACTE/NCATE (2002) Washington D.C.
8. Darling-Hammond L. (2004) *Doing What Matters Most: Investing in Quality Teaching*. New York. National Commission on Teaching and America's Future P. 35–43
9. US Department of Education, Meeting the Highly Qualified Teacher Challenge.

10. National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) (1999). What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future, New York.

11. Brewer, D. J. (2002) Career Paths and Quit Decisions; Evidence from Teaching. Journal of Labor Economics, 14 (2) 28–32.

ВАЖНОСТЬ КАЧЕСТВА ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ В ОБЩЕОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫХ ШКОЛАХ США

Романо Кармен Пол

В статье анализируется связь между качеством преподавания и успеваемостью учащейся молодежи общеобразовательных школ США. На основе анализа результатов проведенного исследования автор выводит определение качества преподавания, которое считается самым главным фактором успеваемости учащихся. В статье акцентируется внимание на том, что усовершенствование качества преподавания - это важный опыт, который могут почерпнуть Соединенные Штаты у стран с самым высоким уровнем образования.

Ключевые слова: качество преподавания, квалификация учителя, человеческий капитал, школьное лидерство, успеваемость учащихся, страны с самым высоким уровнем образования.

ВАЖЛИВІСТЬ ЯКОСТІ ВИКЛАДАННЯ В ЗАГАЛЬНООСВІТНІХ ШКОЛАХ США

Романо Кармен Пол

У статті аналізується зв'язок між якістю викладання та успішністю учнівської молоді загальноосвітніх шкіл США. На основі аналізу результатів проведеного дослідження автор виводить визначення якості викладання, яке вважається найголовнішим чинником успішності учнів. У статті акцентується увага на тому, що вдосконалення якості викладання – це важливий досвід, який можуть почерпнути Сполучені Штати у країн з найвищим рівнем освіти.

Ключові слова: якість викладання, кваліфікація вчителя, людський капітал, шкільне лідерство, успішність учнів, країни з найвищим рівнем освіти.

Романо Кармен Пол – аспірант кафедри педагогіки Східноукраїнського національного університету імені Володимира Даля (м. Луганськ, Україна – США), timmymaxie@yahoo.com

Рецензент – доктор педагогічних наук, професор В. В. Червонецький

Reviewer – Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor V. V. Chervonetsky