Educational Quality – A Systems Perspective

Thomas J. Smith (UM College of Education & Human Development School of Kinesiology)

Quality means different things to different people. This presentation profiles a number of different systems perspectives on the concept of educational quality. Each perspective specifies different sets of criteria for assessing what organizational and/or educational quality means. Perceptions of, and decisions about, educational quality thus are context specific [15] -- there is no generalized ‘recipe’ for achieving educational systems quality (one size does not fit all). Responsibility for educational quality performance consequently should be left to individual schools and school districts.

Key Conclusions: (1) Seven different perspectives on assessing systems performance quality are addressed; (2) Five of these perspectives are directly relevant, and two indirectly relevant, to assessment of the quality of educational systems performance; (3) Quality performance criteria specified with these perspectives are categorized into input factors (influence on education and operational performance of educational systems) and output factors (longer-term effects beyond educational systems); (4) No two perspectives introduced here specify closely comparable sets of quality performance criteria; (5) There thus is no general ‘magic bullet’ for achieving educational quality; (6) Responsibility for quality performance should be placed primarily on individual schools and school districts.

References