

PERCEPTIONS OF NEWLY RECRUITED ACADEMICS IN STATE UNIVERSITIES ON ‘QUALITY’ TEACHING AND TEACHERS.

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The importance of quality teaching has emerged as a key requirement of higher education due to the dynamic changes taking place in the education context such as geographic and social expansion and diversification, and it has led to the invention of new teaching methods. Education has undergone many changes over time and it can be observed that teaching is becoming more learner-centred. People have different perceptions of quality in teaching and teachers. They have been addressed and defined by many researchers but, there have not been many attempts to assess perceptions about quality teaching and also teachers in the Sri Lankan higher education sector. Thus, the main objectives of this study were to identify the required knowledge, skills/abilities and attitudes to become a quality teacher and to seek the perceptions on quality teaching from newly recruited teachers. This has been done based on the perceptions of twenty-four newly recruited academics from four different universities. According to the findings from this study, the quality of a teacher does not only depend on education qualifications. Rather many other aspects like an updated and deep knowledge, experience, understanding of different learning and teaching styles and their usage (pedagogies) and communication skills also play a role. They should possess qualities like willingness to help, being kind, friendly and the capacity to inspire students. On the other hand, quality teaching is mainly about teaching in a manner which is understood by all students of all competency levels. Doing research is also seen as a part of quality teaching. Moreover, it is believed that assignments and examinations cannot be considered as an effective measure in evaluating the quality of teaching. However, peer-review is believed to be an effective criterion. However, there are also factors that hinder quality teaching. These perceptions of newly recruited academics can be very useful in order to alter and further develop the idea of quality in terms of teachers and teaching. On the other hand, researchers can further develop this study by conducting a comparative analysis of perceptions using permanent and senior academics from other universities as participants.

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