Teacher education in a changing Africa: What counts as quality teacher education in/for a changing Africa?

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OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

• ‘Teachers are a key enabling factor in improving the quality of education’ (www.unesco.org/education/gmr/chapter4, 25.07.2011).

• ‘It is our belief that it is not enough for teachers to be good or satisfactory. Anything short of outstanding is a disservice to our institutions and especially to the learners (www.meadowhallschool.com/consult/25.07.2011).

• Teachers are instrumental in the development of appropriate attitudes to learning’ (Delors et al, 1996)

2. NEEDS OF LEARNERS, EMPLOYERS AND SOCIETY

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<th>Learners</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Receivecredible qualifications that are acknowledged by employers</td>
<td>Have skilled and productive employees</td>
<td>Reduce unemployment</td>
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<td>Find employment and an income</td>
<td>Have employees able to deal with ever increasing demands of information and technology management</td>
<td>Create social justice and a democratic society</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Find better employment and a better income</td>
<td></td>
<td>Have citizen with high-level skills to avoid falling behind</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Achieve a higher social status</td>
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<td>Be competitive regionally and globally</td>
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3. CHALLENGES

- **Shortage of qualified teachers** is one of the biggest challenges to achieving EFA goals: ... the Director-Generals of UNESCO and ILO (International Labour Organization) in the joint message to mark World Teachers’ Day, reminded us ... worldwide an estimated 2 million new posts and an additional 18 million teachers are needed if Universal Primary Education is to be achieved by 2015 (1.6 million for Sub-Saharan Africa alone - www.ghanaweb.com, 24.07.2011)

- **Providing a quality education to meet the new demands of the 21st century** is another challenge: Africa is still faced with multiple socio-economic problems – extreme poverty, poor educational attainment, gender inequality, civil wars/political conflicts, HIV/AIDS, social injustice, corruption, etc. All have an impact on the teaching force and on the complexity of the teacher quality issue.

- **Turning policy rhetoric into actions, programmes and investment** for improved teachers’ quality and socio-economic status is yet another challenge.

4. SOME DETERMINANTS FOR MANY SCHOOL FAILURES

- Widespread and chronic absolute poverty
- Inappropriate educational systems
- Under qualified teachers
- Poor quality teachers
- Depreciation and/or lack of school facilities, equipment and books: classes under trees, common use of one course textbook, etc.
- Low social and economic status of teachers: low staff salaries, etc.
- Overcrowded classrooms: Very high teacher/learner ratios, fewer and far apart assignments, lower order questions for assignments and examinations, etc.
5. CHANGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (1)

- **Shift from ‘schooling’ to life-long learning:**
  impossibility to teach everything supposed to be useful for the learner’s life

- **Shift of emphasis from ‘teaching’ to ‘learning’:**
  Teachers are losing a leading place and monopoly on information/knowledge to develop competency for learner-centered education

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5. CHANGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (2)

- **Change of PD models from teacher training to teacher professional learning**

- **Change of teacher development model from university-based training to school-based teacher development and university-school partnership**
5. CHANGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS:

New Approaches to /Content of Learning:
- From teacher-centered to learner-centered curriculum
- From subject knowledge towards intellectual learners’ abilities
- From disciplinary-based curriculum to integrated, inter-disciplinary curriculum
- From individual learning towards cooperative learning
- From memorization of old knowledge to acquisition of instruments of knowing and understanding
- A new balance of scientific-technological and social-humanistic-cultural content of education
- A new balance of general vs. vocational components of education

5. CHANGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS:

New Types of Learners:
- New learners have different values, ‘languages’, and different ways of thinking, reacting, responding and getting motivated in a learning situation
- New generation of learners is ‘growing digital on the net’, with skills and competencies oftentimes better than their teachers in using ICT as powerful learning tools
- New generation of learners is of more diverse backgrounds and ‘cultural identities’ (age, ethnicity, linguistic, economic, religions, etc.)
- New learners are with new traits of independence, creativity, open-mindedness, and enterprising minds
6. CHANGING TEACHER ROLES

- Old roles:
  - The sole source of information
  - An authority of knowledge
  - A transmitter of factual knowledge
  - A ‘chalk-talk’ instructor
  - A solitary worker in teaching
  - An ever ‘teacher’
  - A conservative and resistant force to change

- New roles:
  - One of multiple sources of information
  - A friend and a guide in exploring the unknown; a co-learner
  - A facilitator of knowledge, skills and moral values
  - An artist and scientist in teaching with technologies
  - A team member and communicator
  - A life-long learner; a facilitator of learning
  - An active agent of change

7. LOOKING FOR POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Question: How do we bridge the gap between the school and teacher training institutions?

- Answer: Quality assurance – Interventions at both school and teacher training institutions to enforce teacher professional quality standards.

- NB: Quality Assurance bodies already exist in many African countries, but only for Higher Education Institutions. So, NOT for primary and secondary education subsystems!
7. Looking For Possible Solutions: Quality assurance at school and teacher training institutions

School level:
- Rigorous continuous assessment for promotion or accreditation
- Governance and leadership
- Professional development
- Supply of resources
- Statements of job requirements

Teacher training institutions level:
- Rigorous selection of candidate teachers
- Governance and leadership
- Qualifications and present workload of academic staff
- Curriculum
- Supply of resources

8. TEACHER PROFESSIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS: What is the function of Standards?

- Clarify what teachers should know and be able to do in the light of best practice and research
- Clarify what teachers should get better at over the longer term
- Describe trajectories for professional development
- Provide adequate guidance for making judgments of the degree of teachers’ experience and the desirable level of performance in teaching
- Make statements about what are valued-statements of principle
8. TEACHER PROFESSIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS: Why Standards Are Important?

- As the ‘core business’ for the profession and its members
- As foundation to reshape initial training curriculum for entry into the teaching profession
- As criteria for assessment of teacher competencies
- As tools for professional learning and growth on a continuum
- As instrument to generate improvements in the quality of the teaching-learning process
- As criteria for promotion, advanced certification, accreditation
- As accounting mechanism to clients, parents, society, etc.

Main components of performance-based teaching standards

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<tr>
<th>Content standards</th>
<th>Evidential standards</th>
<th>Performance standards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is expected of teachers?</td>
<td>What evidence will a teacher need to gather to indicate that the requirements were present?</td>
<td>How will we judge performance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What should teachers know and be able to do?</td>
<td>- What rules will we use to gather evidence of practices?</td>
<td>- What level of performance meets the purpose?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Defining the domain of good teaching.</td>
<td>- How to capture good teaching?</td>
<td>- How well did the teacher demonstrate the requirements?</td>
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<td>- What is the scope of teachers’ work?</td>
<td>- What tasks should teachers be expected to perform?</td>
<td>- How will we discriminate between good and poor?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What are we going to measure?</td>
<td>- How are we going to score it?</td>
<td>- How are we going to score it?</td>
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[Source: ACER, Policy Briefs, Issue 1, May 2002]
9. WHAT TEACHERS SHOULD LEARN TO KNOW: Professional Knowledge-Base

- General pedagogical knowledge
- Subject matter knowledge
- Pedagogical content-knowledge
- Knowledge of learner context and their interest
- External evaluation of learning
- Knowledge of strategies, techniques and tools to create and sustain a learning environment
- Knowledge supporting political and social justice
- Knowledge on how to implement technology in the curriculum

9. WHAT TEACHERS SHOULD LEARN TO DO: Professional Skills

- Planning lessons in light of learning goals
- Class management
- Involving learners in interaction
- Seeking feedback and improving teaching
- Evaluating, monitoring and assessing the teaching-learning process;
- Organizing learning experiences in socialization of the learners
- Reflecting on learning practices
- Working with peers, parents and local community
9. WHAT TEACHERS SHOULD LEARN TO BE:  
*Professional Ethical/Moral Values*

- Commitment and dedication to learners and their learning: teaching as a public good
- Respect the rights of the learner to education: equal access, equal treatment
- Love and care of the learners
- Reflect on and improve one’s own practices
- Learning to learn throughout life and making teaching a learning profession

9. WHAT TEACHERS SHOULD LEARN TO LIVE TOGETHER:  
*Professional Attributes*

- Breaking isolation from each other for peer learning
- Communicating and working with learners as coaches of learning and co-learners
- Making the site of teaching the place for professional learning
- Transforming the culture of school as a learning community
- Working with parents and local community
- Acting as agents of educational and social changes and as community members
10. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

• Developing broadened visions of teaching and teacher education in view of the changed learning environments

• Comparative studies of teacher education policies across Africa

• Joint development of ‘framework of minimum teacher quality standards’ adaptable to country/locally-specific contexts, and their implementation in teacher certification and professional learning.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION (2)

• Creation of an African Teacher professional development programme in the pillars of learning, in partnership with UNESCO-IICBA: teacher education policy studies; math-science teaching standards development; use of distance/ICT teacher education; scholarships, etc.

• Encourage governments to propose the update of UNESCO-ILO Recommendations Concerning the Status of Teachers: a possible international document binding national governments for increased investment in teachers
Or to put the presentation more simply

Governments, academics and the wider community need:

- Courage enough to recognise mistakes in teacher education
- Honest enough to admit to wastage of resources

And then:
- Restructuring our teacher training programmes
- Retraining, retraining and retraining our teachers

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