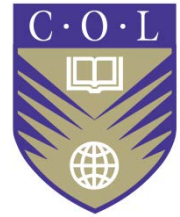


What must we do to effectively prepare teachers for tomorrow?



Video Presentation Transcript

Distance Education for Teacher Training in Africa (DETA) Conference

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Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to be able to share with you my thoughts on educating teachers for the future. But before I do so, I would like to apologise for failing to come and participate in DETA personally. As the Commonwealth of Learning we value DETA because we know it is giving the African continent an important forum to deliberate on issues pertaining to teacher education. On this note, congratulations to DETA for having made 10 years since 2005 when DETA was launched. I hope we will position ourselves even better for the new challenges ahead.

Now, turning to the subject of this meeting, I will be answering the question “What must we do to effectively prepare teachers for tomorrow?” To answer this question, we shall discuss:

- Some predictions for the future
- Implications to teacher education and some of the innovations we need to help us prepare teachers for that future

We know that human predictions may not be 100% accurate but predictions still do help us plan for the unknown. And that is why we rely on weather forecasts, we depend on governments to draw budgets, visions and government plans.

There have been a number of different predictions by futurists, information technology gurus, and other agencies. The National Intelligence Council USA has for example released Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds and in this document they make many predictions regarding global developments by 2030. Some of these predictions are about:

- Population growths and demographics
- Technology and its expanding influence
- Jobs needed and jobs that ‘will disappear’

- Diffusion and nature of power (international and national levels)

In this discussion I will however focus on predictions around three things and these are:

- Populations
- Jobs
- Technology

Populations

The world current population is about 7.2 billion and is projected to grow to about 8.3 billion with 60% of this population living in urbanized areas. It is also predicted that migration will increase. Africa is likely to have 1.6 billion people by 2030 and 2.4 billion by 2050. Like the rest of the world, 60% of this population will live in urban areas. The implications to education of a growing population are that, there will be:

- Increased demand for education
- Need for increased investments
- Need for more teachers to cope with growing population
- Need for lifelong education to provide for older populations requiring retraining as market demands change
- Need to specifically address education needs for peri-urban and slum populations

According to UNESCO, "...an extra 3.3 million primary teachers and 5.1 million lower secondary teachers in classrooms by 2030 to provide all children with basic education". UNESCO also identifies that Sub Saharan Africa alone will need 2.1 million new teachers and another 2.6 million to replace losses due to attrition; implying a total need of 4.7million teachers.

To meet all these needs, I believe we need to hone our strategies in increasing access to education. This should go beyond brick and mortar but should include addressing issues of quality and relevance. Implementation of Universal Primary Education in many developing countries has shown that simply building more and more schools and getting many more children to appear in schools is not yielding results in the quality of learning outcomes. Increasing access must be accompanied by improving quality.

In teacher education, we need to train and retrain more teachers to meet changing demands using flexible methodologies. We also need to increase efficiencies in teacher education by improving completion rates, reducing teacher attrition, providing more relevant, timely and high quality teacher development; and ensuring clear career paths.

Technology

Thomas Frey has predicted in his 2013 blog (Futurist) that by 2030, the world's largest Internet company will most likely be in the education business. The seeds of this are evident already in the growth of Open courseware, the emergence of MOOCs, and the growing power of social media. Bill and Melinda Gates also say, "As high-speed cell networks grow and smartphones become as cheap as today's voice-only phones, online education will flourish" They also predict that

- Little children will be able to use smartphones to learn her numbers and letters
- There will be software to support such children
- Students will be able to ‘collaborate with teachers and other students in a much richer way’

This may already be happening but its spread and reach will be much greater. Gates however concludes that, despite all this huge promise that technology will bring, “there is one thing software will never do: replace teachers”. So, if there is going to be such a revolution in what technologies can bring into the teaching learning environment yet NOT replace the teacher, what type of teacher will be needed then?

The answer may seem obvious – education will need a teacher that can adeptly handle technology and use it for maximum benefit to the learners. Education is transitioning from a teaching to a learning model and will instead therefore need coaches, facilitators and course designers. The truth therefore is that a traditional teacher will no longer be needed. How prepared are teacher education institutions to produce the new kind of teacher needed?

TEIs need to keep abreast of changes taking place, ensure regular and frequent curriculum reviews and transformations; invest in technology, and ensure continuous professional development for teacher educators as well. We have to move beyond believing that it is only teachers that need continuous professional development, teacher educators need this just as well. In addition, there is need to also reflect on the following questions:

- Who gets admitted into teacher training?
- What skills and competencies do the teacher trainers have?
- What types of curricula are in place?
- How is training being conducted?
- How much control do the learners have of the teaching/learning contract?
- What kind of resources and technology are being used and how are these being used?
- What kind of skills and competencies are the teachers going out with? And lastly
- How effectively are ICTs woven into the entire teacher education fabric?

Besides, a lot more care is needed in determining when and how teachers are actually deployed, the nature and quality of continuous professional development, support provided to teachers and the career paths available to them.

So, yes technology can drastically change teaching and learning offering more opportunities for creativity, innovation and greater learner participation and control in learning, but the teacher will still be needed. The skills, competencies and roles of this teacher will therefore have to change. The onus is on us as teacher educators to rise up to this challenge if we are to make a difference. There are a number of current initiatives with use of OERs (TESSA, ORELТ by COL, Khan Academy resources...), MOOCs, use of LMS, and 1Tablet per child in Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Africa. However these need to be expanded and institutionalized.

At the same time, there ought to be commensurate changes in the other education systems and structures as well. There ought to be a coherent approach to transforming teacher education. We can no longer

afford to work in silos. Real change will happen when we work together: TEIs, different organs of Ministries of education, accreditation agencies, examination councils and parents/guardians.

Jobs

The last prediction I wish to discuss is to do with jobs. According to Thomas Frey,

- 2 billion jobs will disappear,
- most will come back in different forms
- most jobs will be freelance projects rather than full-time jobs

New jobs will bring with them demand for additional or totally new skills. The implication of this is that all training institutions will need transform their programmes and training strategies to cater for demands for new jobs and new skills.

Some of the skills that will be most needed in these new economies will be:

- Learning and innovative skills including critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration
- Information media and technology skills
- Life and career skills including flexibility, adaptability, initiative, self-direction, leadership and responsibility.

The foundation of each of these is laid in schools. Teachers in the schools and teacher educators in TEI must therefore of necessity have these skills and have the ability to help learners acquire these skills. One of the biggest mistakes Africa has made in the past is to assume that these soft skills can only be ‘given’ in colleges and universities. Children spend the most years of their lives in schools (10 – 13 years) as opposed to only 3-6 years in colleges or universities. Let’s take full advantage to prepare children for the new job climate.

To produce teachers with these skills, teacher training institutions will need to:

- Teacher educator with these skills
- Transform curricula to include these ‘soft skills’
- Integrate technology in teaching, learning, assessment and research
- Prepare teachers to be global citizens

There are already a number of country and regional efforts at transforming teacher education. COL is for example working with a number of governments and institutions on a variety of innovations:

- Integration of ICTs in teaching and learning
- Supporting institutions to convert either face to face or print based programmes into e learning programmes
- Integration of OERs
- MOOCs
- Revision of curricula and

- Development of various policies and guidelines

A lot more is still needed.

Conclusion

So, in conclusion, none of us knows for certain what the future holds for us but there have been some predictions based on current happenings and our history as humanity. In this presentation, we have shown that population in Africa is exploding, technology is here to stay; and the market place has new demands. The implication for this is that:

- Teaching must shift from a teaching to learning mode
- Current programmes & strategies will not prepare teachers effectively for tomorrow so teacher education must change
- There are already many innovations, can we expand and institutionalize these to ensure effective and sustainable teacher education

Thank you for listening to me and now, I would like to leave you with this as food for thought:

“We need to prepare students for THEIR future not OUR past” (Ian Jukes, educator and Futurist <http://bit.ly/V57C5P>)

Please take time to respond to the clicker questions as given in this last slide.

The best way of covering soft skills is to:

Integrate the skills in subject content	YES	NO
Integrate the skills in methods of teaching	YES	NO
Integrate the skills in assessment	YES	NO
Create a new course for these soft skills	YES	NO

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