



## Quality Matters:

### *Communicating News across the EdQual Community*

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#### What Does 'Learner-centred' Really Mean?

"the constructive principle that learners are active in constructing meaning out of information... should not be compromised"<sup>1</sup>

The term 'learner-centred' or 'child-centred' has become synonymous with quality teaching. But what is learner-centred? Do we all mean the same thing when we say learner-centred? Is it reasonable to expect under-qualified teachers working in under-resourced schools, who have themselves only ever experienced 'teacher-centred' classrooms, to use 'learner-centred' approaches?

In 'learner-centred' approaches, the teacher's role is to facilitate learners' active inquiry and construction of new knowledge through managing a democratic classroom. In western countries, particularly the US, it is assumed that the school environment is information-rich, so learners have access to the internet and a library.

Learner-centred approaches are supported by donor agencies as democratic, respectful of children's rights and inclusive. As teaching, assessment and discipline is personalized, they can be tailored to the needs of diverse learners and hence are likely to attract and keep in school children belonging to disadvantaged groups, including marginalised ethnic groups and children with learning disabilities.

Two lines of criticism have been leveled against learner-centred techniques. Firstly, they are expensive in terms of resources and the lengthy training that is needed to initiate teachers into the underlying principles<sup>1</sup>. Further, personalized assessment is demanding of teacher time and commitment. This line of criticism is used to explain why over the last three decades, initiatives aimed at transforming teachers' practice have had little impact in low income countries.

The second criticism is that unstructured teaching approaches intended to facilitate 'discovery learning' are inefficient and differentially disadvantage low-achieving learners and those from poor backgrounds<sup>2</sup>. This criticism is claimed to be supported by cognitive psychology and 'scientific research' into cognitive achievement. It does not take account of education's affective goals e.g. participative citizenship, respect for human rights, avoidance of risk-taking sexual behaviour.



Whilst the first criticism is based on observations of low income countries, the second mainly arises from research in the United States. Many initiatives claiming to support learner-centred teaching within low income countries, in fact, encourage teachers to structure their lessons. For example, the Cluster-Based Mentoring Project in Pakistan aimed to develop the use of lesson plans as part of child-centred interactive teaching.

*Teacher- or learner- centred? Primary school, South Africa*

## In Our Own Words

### How we can make our schools more child-friendly?

*In February this year, EdQual's Leadership and Management Project conducted a Needs Analysis workshop in Tanzania, as part of their Baseline Study. Two groups of headteachers at the workshop debated 'creating a school environment'; here are their conclusions.*

An attractive school environment motivates children to like school. For example, the compound should be green and shady; the buildings should be colourful and in good repair. The atmosphere should be friendly and children should be praised liberally (positive reinforcement).

How can we identify learners' needs? We should be attentive to pupils by asking them questions, observing them, monitoring attendance, monitoring academic performance and having frequent discussions with parents.

We need to establish and maintain communication channels with pupils, parents and teachers, for example, through visiting parents and pupils at home and talking to pupils in school meetings. (cont. page 3)



*Kibaha Primary School, Tanzania*

### What Does 'Learner-centred' Really Mean? cont.

Curriculum designers in Vietnam prepared lesson plans in the area of health education for use by multigrade teachers.

Learner-centred is sometimes used as a relative term. Teachers are encouraged to be *more* learner-centred, through planning lessons that start by stating learning objectives and use a mix of teaching strategies. Short lectures, whole-class question-and-answer and storytelling have all at some point been included as interactive teaching methods within a supposedly 'learner-centred' lesson plan.

So, what is distinctive about learner-centred? Is it truly democratic and inclusive? Are there principles or practices that should not be compromised? In my own view, the constructivist principle that learners are active in constructing meaning out of information, drawing on their prior knowledge and skills should not be compromised. The second key principle follows from this

∴ "teachers...need..to be able to view curriculum from the perspective of the learner and to build bridges to that view in order to meet halfway" <sup>1</sup>

There are no rigid rules about how these principles should be put into practice, although it may be possible to draw up guidelines for a specific country or context. A teacher may use a balanced mix of teacher-led and interactive techniques but if she totally disregards the learner perspective, her lessons will not be democratic and inclusive. On the other hand, introducing teachers to a 'toolbox' of interactive techniques and encouraging careful lesson-planning may help teachers, who have spent much of their youth sitting passively through teacher-centred lessons, to change how they think about teaching and learning.

This article is drawn from a draft of an EdQual paper which will be posted at [www.edqual.org/publications/](http://www.edqual.org/publications/) by July. Contact author: [Angeline.Barrett@bris.ac.uk](mailto:Angeline.Barrett@bris.ac.uk)

Angeline Barrett, University of Bristol

<sup>1</sup> e.g. G. Guthrie (1991) 'In defense of traditional teaching' in V.D. Rust, & P. Dalin (ed.s) *Teachers and Teaching in the Developing World*, New York & London, Garland. <sup>2</sup> e.g. H. Abadzi (2006) *Efficient learning for the poor: insights from the frontier of cognitive neuroscience*, Washington DC, World Bank. <sup>3</sup> A. W. Little (2006) 'Multigrade lessons for EFA: a synthesis' in A.W. Little (ed.) *Education for All and multigrade teaching: challenges and opportunities*, Dordrecht, Springer. p. 340.

## From Our Research Projects

### EdQual Implementing Curriculum Change in South Africa and Rwanda

*EdQual ICC aims to understand how curriculum change in mathematics and science education may be implemented in ways that contribute to poverty alleviation and promote gender equity within the contexts of South Africa, Rwanda and Pakistan. A collaborative action research approach will be conducted in six disadvantaged schools in South Africa. Teachers together with researchers will identify problems and challenges within their practice and then develop strategies that address these. Teaching and learning modalities developed through this process will be trialed in a small number of schools in Rwanda and Pakistan, where they will be adapted to the local context. More information on ICC can be found at [www.edqual.org](http://www.edqual.org).*

### Maths and Science teachers debate curriculum changes

EdQual's *Implementing Curriculum Change* project brought together 18 teachers of grades 10-12 from 9 secondary schools in South Africa and 5 EdQual researchers to discuss the effect of the Revised National Curriculum Statements for Mathematics and Science.

South Africa started introducing Outcomes-Based Education in 1998, starting with the lower grades of primary education. Following a review in 2000, Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS) were prepared that were implemented in Years 10-12 in 2004. The RNCS was described as preparing learners for the mainstream economy through relating mathematical and scientific knowledge to other learning areas so learners' can appreciate its wider relevance.

Workshop participants also appreciated that the learner-centred approach of the RNCS develops valuable generic skills in the areas of critical thinking, problem-solving and leadership.

Concerns were raised that RNCS had been introduced without first ensuring equipment, conditions (such as small-size) were in place and that teachers had the necessary competencies. Participants also shared ideas on teaching strategies and collaborative professional development for improving curriculum delivery and suggested indicators of an effective instructional approach.

Taken from a Report by Luneta Kakoma, University of the Witwatersrand

## In Our Own Words Cont

Identify characteristics of the school environment that deter children from coming to school. Examples are excessive use of corporal punishment; use of harsh language in and outside the classroom; teachers not listening to pupils. Pupils may bully each other and stigmatize those who are 'different' due to illness, poverty or disability. Are children's physical needs being met? If food is not available on the school compound they may be hungry.

Lack of furniture may mean some pupils sit for long hours on a dusty floor. Lack of toilets may deter girls from attending school. Are pupils being harassed by adults? For example, a few male teachers may make advances on girls or children may be intimidated by older youths loitering in the vicinity of the school.

How can we make our schools more child-friendly? We can educate pupils to be loving and helpful towards each other. We can establish clear school rules that prohibit verbal abuse and bullying. Ensure that bullying is not tolerated and teachers who do not adhere to the professional codes of ethics are disciplined appropriately. Corporal punishment should be administered according to national guidelines and not indiscriminately. It should be used minimally or not at all.

The school should have the capacity to counsel traumatized or disturbed children. Pupils' problems, including affective problems, can be discussed with parents. Some parents need to be advised on how to recognise when their child needs medical attention. Finally, we may be able to provide practical assistance in small ways, for example, by giving pens, books and uniforms to children most in need.



*Mwanambaya Primary School Band, Tanzania*

## From Our Research Projects cont.

### EdQual Leadership & Management Project in Ghana: the story so far.....

The Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) at the University of Cape Coast leads the *Leadership and Management of Change for Quality Improvement* and is a partner in the *Literacy and Language Development* Project, led by the University of Dar es Salaam.

#### National Consultative Workshop

IEPA launched EdQual in Ghana in November 2005 with a two-day National Consultative Workshop attended by Hon. (Mrs) Angelina Baiden-Amissah, representatives from the Ministry of Education and Sports, governmental organisations, such as Ghana Education Service, NGOs, professional teacher associations, the academic community and chieftaincy institutions. Welcoming the participants, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast, Prof E.A. Obeng, emphasized that: *'Only effective transformative leaders can bring about and implement change successfully'*.



*Mrs. Angelina Baiden-Amissah, Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Addow Obeng and Prof. Leon Tikly.*

#### National Reference Group

Ghana is the only non-UK country in which all three DFID-funded Research Programme Consortia are represented. The *Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty* (RECOUP) and the *Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity* (CREATE) both attended the National Consultative Workshop. In order to maximise their impact, the three consortia have created a joint National Reference Group (NRG). The Chief Director of the Ministry of Education sits on the NRG, to advise on research priorities and communication of research.

### Head Teacher Workshops

With the proposal finalised and a meta-analysis completed, the Leadership & Management project started data collection with two parallel Needs Analysis Workshops for head teachers held in March 2007. In total, 240 head teachers from all six regions attended the two workshops, one at Cape Coast and the other at Tamale in the North of the country. The workshops aimed to, and succeeded in, creating the opportunity for preschool and primary school heads tell their part of the story, and to identify, discuss and analyse challenges they encounter. Within the next month, researchers will pilot a baseline survey



*Participants at the National Consultative Meeting, Ghana*

#### Key National Priorities

The workshops identified these major challenges facing Ghana.

##### Leadership & Management:

1. Improving supervision in schools
2. Improving the level and quality of female participation in school leadership
3. Improving data and information management
4. Improving community participation in the provision of quality education
5. Strengthening the capacity of leaders for transforming schools and managing change

##### Language & Literacy:

1. Developing teaching learning materials in Ghanaian languages
2. Training specialist teachers to enhance the teaching of Ghanaian languages
3. Strengthening the capacity of language departments in teacher training universities (one of which is Cape Coast)
4. Setting up community libraries for school clusters
5. Encouraging children to acquire reading, writing and spoken skills in their L1 and L2 (English and French)

Taken from a Report by Rosemary Bosu, University of Cape Coast

## From Our Research Projects cont.

### EdQual Leadership and Management Project in Tanzania; Head Teachers' Workshop

In February this year, 25 head teachers, 4 Ward Education Coordinators (officers who support a cluster of 5-12 schools) and researchers from the Leadership and Management project met to share ideas about successful leadership practices in difficult contexts.

This Needs Analysis workshop was the first part of the baseline study of the Leadership & Management project to be carried out in Tanzania. A full report is available on the EdQual intranet and a Swahili translation is being prepared to be distributed to participants and other school leaders in Tanzania.

Dr Hillary Dachi convened the workshop and Dr Ndibalema Alphonse facilitated. They were ably assisted by a team of research assistants.

#### How can we improve the quality of our schools?

*Participants discussed strategies that head teachers use within six key areas of their work: Instructional leadership, Developing and maintaining school infrastructure, Mobilising and managing resources, Meetings learners' needs, Managing staff and students, Relations with the community.*

Not unsurprisingly, it was clear that head teachers spend much of their time mobilising funds and resources for their schools. Enrolling children into grade 1 is also time-consuming. However, they still had their eye on the ball when it came to academic performance. They also recognised that children have physical and affective/ psychological needs as well as cognitive learning needs. Some participants stressed the importance of a "child-friendly school environment" and gave some thought-provoking elaboration on what this means.



*L&M Needs Analysis Workshop, UDSM Tanzania*

Two researchers from the University of Cape Coast (Dr Linda Dzama Forde and Dr Yaw Ankomah) observed similarities between the dilemmas facing head teachers in Tanzania and Ghana. For example, in both countries heads of small schools have a full teaching load. Consequently, they are torn between administrative duties that often take them away from the school compound and teaching duties.

### Implementing Curriculum Change Project on TV

Dr Shireen Motala, director of the Education Policy Unit (EPU), Wits and a researcher on EdQual's Implementing Curriculum Change (ICC) project, was interviewed on South Africa Broadcasting Channel (SABC)1 Learning Channel 'Teacher Time' programme on 7 March 2007. The interview was conducted by ICC's lead researcher, Dr Kakoma Luneta in his capacity as a presenter on the programme. Dr Motala outlined the rationale, research design, main research questions and communication plans of the ICC project. This was the second time the project had been discussed on the national television. Dr Luneta had earlier mentioned the project and its activities on 'Teacher Time' in February 2007.

### EdQual ICC at the SAARMSTE Conference, Maputo, January 2007

The Southern African Association for Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education (SAARMSTE) held its annual conference in Maputo in January this year. The *Implementing Curriculum Change* (ICC) project was well-represented with papers being delivered by Dr Thabiso Nyabanyaba and Mr Mike Mholo.

Dr Nyabanyaba, formerly lead researcher for ICC, presented a thoughtful paper on the methodological and ethical issues raised by the participatory action research methodology that the project employs with teachers. Mr Mholo, a PhD researcher with ICC, presented a paper demonstrating educators' requirement for a certain level of mathematical literacy for interpreting quantitative data on effective teaching and quality education.

**Dr Nyabanyaba's paper is available on the EdQual intranet.**

Taken from a Report by Luneta Kakoma, University of the Witwatersrand

## EdQual Sponsored PhD Research

### “Swahili is not my first language”



*Gastor Mapunda is an assistant lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Previously he has taught English and Literature at two secondary schools and English communication skills in Higher Education Institutions.*

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Early literacy policy in Tanzania states that “Children at this [primary] level of education will continue to be taught in a language which is commonly used in Tanzania. Therefore: The medium of instruction in primary schools shall be [S]wahili and English shall be a compulsory subject.”

Swahili is the *lingua franca* in Tanzania, an official language and the medium of instruction in all public primary schools, including their pre-primary classes. Although it is understood by 90% of the population it is first language to only 10%. As many as 120 ethnic languages are spoken in Tanzania. The assumption within policy that all new entrants to primary education already know Swahili neglects the learning needs of children living in predominantly mono-ethnic rural areas.



Research shows that it is very much easier for children to transfer literacy skills acquired in their first language to a second language that it is to start learning to read and write in a second language. Literacy skills are essential for all further learning, so children who do not speak Swahili as a first language are likely to be disadvantaged in all subjects.

EdQual has now awarded all ten of its PhD studentships. The names of awardees and their research topics are given on our website at [www.edqual.org/phdresearch/](http://www.edqual.org/phdresearch/). In addition, Dorothy Phumbwe, assistant lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam, has won a Commonwealth scholarship for a PhD on Fund-raising in Secondary Schools at the University of Bristol. Dorothy is a research assistant with EdQual's Leadership and Management of Change project.



*Primary School in Songea Town, Tanzania*

In a country where primary to secondary transition rates are less than 50%, they stand little chance of continuing their formal education beyond the primary level.

In my PhD, I will study classroom interactions in first grade classes (seven year olds) in Songea's rural district to assess the pedagogical practices arising from Tanzania's language policy. Ruvuma, in the South of Tanzania, is one of twenty-three regions. The local ethnic language, Ngoni, is spoken throughout Songea and some parts of the Iringa region. Within the research I will observe and analyse pupil talk, pupils' language behaviour, turn-taking and the non-verbal atmosphere. The research design will be based on micro-ethnography and case study. Data collection methods will include observation, interview and audio and video-recordings.

Gastor Mapunda, University of Dar es Salaam

## Online Resources (Open Access)

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## Funding Success for EdQual Institutions and Researchers

#### International Partnership to Strengthen Doctoral Programmes

The Universities of Bristol, Dar es Salaam, Cape Coast and Buea (Cameroon) have won a year’s funding to support collaboration in strengthening their Education and Social Science PhD programmes. The England-African Partnership funding is provided by the UK’s Department for Education and Skills. Over the next year, each of the African institutions will develop one research training unit with support from Bristol lecturers.

A key activity will be a conference on research methods hosted by Buea, open to lecturers, assistant lecturers and research students. The project will contribute to strengthening educational research capacity in Tanzania, Ghana and Cameroon and teachers for their rapidly expanding higher education sectors. Bristol lecturers hope to improve teaching and learning, especially with overseas postgraduate students, through opening up their research methods training to scrutiny by experienced African academics.

Angeline Barrett (Bristol) is coordinating the project. Hillary Dachi, George Oduro and Therese Tchombe lead programme development in the universities of Dar es Salaam, Cape Coast and Buea respectively.

#### Student Performance and the Language of Examinations

The University of Bristol (lead institution) in partnership with the State University of Zanzibar has obtained funding for a 3-year project investigating the impact of the language of examinations. The project, title *‘Student Performance in National Examinations: the dynamic of language in school achievement (SPINE)’* is sponsored by jointly by the UK’s Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Department for International Development (DFID).

The central aim of the study is to investigate the impact of the language of examinations and media of instruction (in this case Swahili and English) on examination performance of secondary students learning in a language that is not their first language. The research will provide insight into factors impacting on learners’ performance and understanding in the subject areas of Science, Mathematics and English, which for most students in Zanzibar is a second language. It will provide quality in-depth data through four longitudinal studies and a literature review. The studies will lead to innovation in examination design and guidelines for implementation.

Pauline Rea-Dickins, University of Bristol will lead the project and another member of EdQual’s Literacy and Language project, Katie Scott is also on the team. The Lead Researcher for Literacy and Language, Casmir Rubagumya will be an advisor.

## Reviews

### “Strong Foundations – Early Childhood Care and Education” - a review of the Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2007



*Early childhood care and education (ECCE) remains the forgotten link in the education chain in most low income countries, despite its well-documented benefits, according to the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2007, prepared by an independent team based at UNESCO.*

ECCE is the first of six EFA goals set in 2000 at the Dakar World Education Forum with a target date of 2015. It calls upon countries to expand and improve comprehensive ECCE, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

The report offers a strong case for prioritising ECCE; 738m children aged 0-5 in 2005, 11% of the world population. ECCE encompasses health, nutrition and hygiene as well as cognitive, social, physical and emotional development of the very young; “in the developing world...10.5m children a year die from preventable diseases before age 5,” stresses the report. ECCE is also a determining contributor to better achievement in school. Despite this, the children who stand most to benefit are those least likely to have access to ECCE programmes. The report argues that participation in good quality ECCE programmes can provide for a more equitable society. Good quality programmes include immunization, parent education, home based activities as well as kindergartens, pre-schools or nurseries.

ECCE is seen as setting the foundations for life, guaranteeing children’s rights and contributing to all the EFA goals, as well as contributing to the MDG of eradicating poverty. The report highlights the fact that by reducing drop out, repetition and special educational placements, ECCE can act as a powerful boost to education and development; “children who participate in ECCE ...make a better transition to primary school, and are more likely to begin and complete it”. It claims that investment in early childhood programmes offers a high pay off in human capital, making a strong case for public

intervention. The authors prudently point out that most of the research evidence presented is influenced by perceptions of early childhood in Europe and North America and that more research influenced by other traditions is needed. For example, there is a relevant section on successful intervention strategies in Nepal and Tanzania, combining nutrition and education.

The report raises the importance of equity and inclusion. ECCE is a particularly effective way of tackling disadvantage and reducing inequalities arising from poverty, gender, race, ethnicity, caste or religion but access to ECCE is highly inequitable in most developing countries. According to the report, half of the countries with data available have no ECCE policy for children under age three. ECCE is not a priority for development aid, receiving less than 0.5% of the total aid to education for a majority of donors.

Globally, enrolment in pre-primary education has nearly tripled in three decades from 44m in 1975, to almost 124m in 2004. Progress has been uneven however. Participation in pre-school is universal in most Western European countries but only 12% in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report confirms that a more favourable policy environment for ECCE is emerging but argues that ECCE needs political endorsement. In a field characterized in many countries by strong reliance on private funding, the report warns that public policy must set quality standards and regulations to safeguard against inequalities. It suggests that targeting resources to the most disadvantaged children should be the first step of a broader national ECCE policy.

Finally, the report presents its annual assessment of progress towards the other EFA goals. It makes recommendations for urgent policy attention and places ECCE as a priority in terms of its emphasis, finance, training and monitoring.

The full report is available at:  
[www.unesco.org/education/](http://www.unesco.org/education/)

Dr. Rita Chawla-Duggan, University of Bath



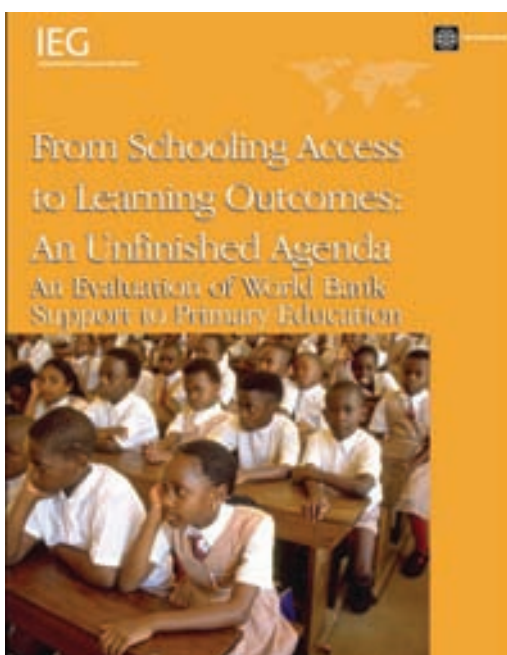
## Reviews cont.

### **“From Schooling Access to Learning Outcomes: An Unfinished Agenda” - An Evaluation of World Bank Support to Primary Education (2006) by the Independent Evaluation Group, The World Bank, Washington DC**

*This evaluation assesses The World Bank's assistance to countries in their efforts to improve their basic knowledge and skills base through the provision of quality primary education, since the beginning of the EFA movement in 1990. It aims to provide lessons for countries in their development strategies, and for the Bank in its support of those strategies.*

The evaluation found that the number of projects managed outside the education sector that include a primary education component is increasingly dramatically. Such projects mainly focus on enrolment so that only about one in five projects had an explicit objective to improve student learning outcomes. Until recently, quality was mostly indicated by increases in inputs (books and materials) and outputs (trained teachers). However, ongoing projects have also included learning outcomes as indicators of quality improvement.

Equity concerns were prominent with girls and “the poor” [sic] being the main target groups, although rural and indigenous children also are targeted. A focus on disabled groups is growing, with 30% of ongoing projects singling them out com-



The three Bank-supported countries that have registered solid learning gains have taken quite diverse approaches. Bank support in Ghana was mainly channelled to the construction and rehabilitation of buildings and the provision of textbooks. India's District Primary Education Projects exemplify a Bank support package that covers both basic inputs and systems of teacher support and pedagogical renewal. In Uruguay, the biggest improvements - those for children from low-income families - came as a result of targeted interventions affecting a child's readiness for school (better access to preschool education) and extra instructional time (the provision of “full-time” schools). These three countries reveal a kind of sequencing of learning outcomes support: from the provision of basic inputs to teacher support and pedagogical renewal to targeted interventions for the most disadvantaged. Where the needs at one level are not met, it would be unlikely that efforts at the next would bear fruit.

The evaluation is likely to be influential not only because the Bank is the largest international funder of education development but also because many bilateral agencies follow the policy-lead of the Bank. The distinction between learning outputs, such as number of children completing education or number of teachers trained, and learning outcomes, i.e. learners' skill and knowledge acquisition is a crucial one. This evaluation reinforces the 2005 *Education Sector Strategy Update* in urging the Bank to focus more on learning outcomes, especially for the “disadvantaged”. However, it stops short of expanding what learning outcomes should be other than “basic literacy and numeracy that are essential to poverty reduction”. Likewise, there is no mention of the thorny issue of measurement of skill acquisition and appropriate indicators. This is exactly the type of debate that research education needs to open up and EdQual should be at the forefront of the debate, effectively communicating its main messages to both national and international policy makers.

“An Unfinished Agenda” and other key papers relating to education quality can be accessed through the ‘education quality’ pages of the EdQual website, [www.edqual.org/educationquality/](http://www.edqual.org/educationquality/).

Dr Angeline Barrett, University of Bristol

## Events

### 'Development, Disruption & Debate' CAL Dublin, March 2007

*Alphonse Uworwabayeho (Kigali Institute of Education) and Rosamund Sutherland (University of Bristol) represented EdQual's Use of ICTs in Basic Education project at the CAL 2007 conference. Together they presented a paper entitled "Teaching and Learning with ICT in Rwanda" prepared collaboratively with Jolly Rubagiza (KIE), Edmond Were (KIE) and Enrique Hinostroz (Universidad de la Frontera, Chile) (abstract available at: [www.edqual.org/news](http://www.edqual.org/news)).*

The conference theme was 'Development, Disruption & Debate.' The aim was to "debate the alleged disruptive nature of technological development in the area of learning at the individual, institutional and national level". The conference programme was structured around four themes: creative expression and learning, ICT and learning, new directions, and ICT for development.

Many of the presentations were concerned with the process of teaching and learning with technology – how to use ICTs to stimulate curiosity, maintain engagement and foster creativity of learners or users. Researchers in this field tend to prefer participatory/collaborative action research methods that engage learners and teachers in the process of designing technology to fit their needs and enable them to access all resources within their environment that might effectively support learning.

Case studies were presented studying how various technologies, e.g. mobile phone, whiteboards, computers, have been exploited in informal learning (online learning) and formal learning. These presentations emphasized the role of the convenor/teacher in ensuring effective learning. Case studies were conducted in developed as well as in developing countries and in differing social-economic contexts.



*ICTs in Rwanda*

### EdQual's *Use of ICTs in Basic Education* project

The *ICTs in Basic Education* project focuses on building teacher capacity to exploit technology already available in Rwandan schools for teaching and learning mathematics and science. Additionally the project aims to support the implementation of ICT in education policy in Rwanda by continuously transferring its results to the ICT unit at the Ministry of Education, Rwanda. The project centres around an interactive and iterative model of teacher development in which groups of teachers, teacher educators and researchers work together to design and evaluate learning initiatives that harness the potential of available technology for teaching and learning.

#### ICTs in low income countries

"Many developing countries have made substantive but wasteful investments in ICTs as they have been deployed to educational institutions without sufficient thought to issues of pedagogy, curriculum, teacher development, software, maintenance, scheduling and other policy issues. It is too often assumed that "what works for one country works for all". Such an approach leads to copy-cat technology deployment and use, without critical evaluation with reference to country context."

A.Dufborg. 'Perspectives on ICT4E in developing world'

#### Barriers to uptake of ICTs in Education

"Firstly, many entrants to the profession lack technological awareness and secondly, the high-stakes school leaving examination is treated by many students as an exercise in memorisation and reproduction, so creative approaches to using technology by teachers are seen as being unrewarding. Taken together these factors combine to make it difficult for beginning teachers to envisage technology-rich education." K.Johnston, A. FitzGibbon & E. Oldham talking about education in Ireland in their paper 'Disruption? What disruption? None are as blind as those who do not envisage a different scenario'

Further details on CAL at: <http://www.cal-conference.elsevier.com>

Alphonse Uworwabayeho, Kigali Institute of Education and Rosamund Sutherland, University of Bristol

## Events cont.

### “Conflict, Education and the Global South: towards a critical research agenda”

Amsterdam, February 2007

*The aim of this conference was to bring together; national and international policy makers, donors, NGO-practitioners, researchers and academics to explore common areas of interest, new research directions and conflicting perspectives on this important theme.*

Representatives of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNESCO and UNICEF presented on themes such as peace education in the curricula of conflict and post-conflict countries, obtaining data to plan primary education in emergency situations, protection of the community – especially children - from conflict and access to quality education.

During a brief presentation on the relationships between conflict and education, the presenter highlighted how education is affected by conflicts and how education is used to provoke and prevent conflicts, the major question being the type of peace education that is needed. The presentation concluded that the notion of “Peace Education” needs to be incorporated at the four levels of sector, curriculum, school, classroom.

Case studies were presented on North Uganda, the South Sudan, Somalia, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Georgia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and Nepal that illustrated the impact conflict can have on education.

#### Peace education in Rwanda

The construction of a new History curriculum for Rwanda that can contribute to peace and reconciliation after conflict is recognised by national organisations and the National University of Rwanda as a major challenge. Peace education must be relevant to a particular context, to groups as well as to individuals. As we say in Rwanda, “One finger cannot wash a face”.

For a more detailed review of the conference visit [www/edqual.org/news](http://www.edqual.org/news) or visit the conference website at <http://www.fmg.uva.nl/english/home.cfm>. For more information see [www.crise.ox.ac.uk](http://www.crise.ox.ac.uk) and May 2007 issue (vol. 27, issue 3) of the *International Journal of Educational Development*.

Alphonse Uworwabayeho, Kigali Institute of Education

## Forthcoming Events

### ESD & Quality at Ox-Con, UKFIET, Oxford September 2007

Jutta Nickel, a researcher at the University of Bath, will be convening an open themed section on ‘Education for sustainable development and quality education’ together with Kelly Teamey, a colleague at the University of Birmingham. The last decade has seen ‘Education for Sustainable Development’ (ESD) grow in influence in policy-making at all levels. A key challenge of ESD lies in how we re-think education quality in terms of diverse places for and communities of learners, and its invitation to explore what sustainability means to livelihood, lifestyle, well-being and community development. Jutta aims to bring together EdQual’s work on education quality with the research in the field of ESD.

More information on the UKFIET conference can be found at [www.cfbt.com/UKFIET/](http://www.cfbt.com/UKFIET/)

### eLearning Africa, Nairobi, May 2007

The second eLearning Africa conference was held in Nairobi on 28-30 May 2007. Once again, EdQual’s project, *Use of ICTs in basic education*, sent researchers who presented a paper at this conference.



More information on the eLA conference can be found at [www.elearning-africa.com/](http://www.elearning-africa.com/)

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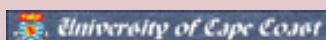
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## Forthcoming Events cont.

### “Going for Growth: School, Community, Economy, Nation” UKFIET conference, Oxford, September 2007

#### EdQual at OxCon

EdQual will be convening a symposium at the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the UK Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET). To be held on 11-13 September 2007, this conference is the single largest event within UK concerned with education in low income countries. This year the theme is *Going for Growth: School, Community, Economy, Nation*.

For EdQual it is a key forum for communicating our research to our funders, the Department for International Development (DfID), and international donors, such as Oxfam and Save the Children Fund, who always send delegates to this conference. It is therefore important that we have a strong representation and papers we deliver are of the highest quality.

EdQual will deliver 9 papers. We have also invited at least one international NGO to present within our sessions in order to strengthen our communication with user groups based in UK.

In addition, our EdQual Programme Director, Leon Tikly, will participate in a round table event with the directors of the two other DFID-funded research programme consortia on education, CREATE, which focuses on access to education and RE-COUP, which is concerned with educational outcomes for poverty reduction.

More information on the UKFIET conference can be found at  
[www.cfbt.com/UKFIET/](http://www.cfbt.com/UKFIET/)



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