National Qualifications Framework* in South Africa: a critical review

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*This presentation refers to an earlier version of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This was amended in 2008 from 8- to a 10-level NQF.
The Commonwealth

THE COMMONWEALTH COMPRISSES 53 DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING NATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

Map Published by the Communications and Public Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat.
The Commonwealth of Learning

WHAT IS IT FOR?

To help Commonwealth governments and institutions use various technologies to improve and expand education, training and learning in support of development.
Where is it?

Vancouver (Headquarters)

New Delhi (CEMCA)
Plan

- Education in South Africa
- The Rationale for NQF
- Lifelong Learning in South Africa
- Lifelong Learning: Concepts & Definition
- From Concept to Practice
- Technology and Lifelong Learning
- NQF and Lifelong Learning: A critical review
- The Way Forward
EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA
South Africa
South Africa

- citizens comprise black Africans, persons of European and Asian descent, and racially mixed people.
- Independence to Apartheid to Post-Apartheid Society

Source: Statistics South Africa, Mid-year population estimates 2014 Retrieved on October 23, 2014
Progressing But......

- High rates of unemployment
- 49.4% people under 25
- Young population looking for education, skills and training
- Great social and racial inequality

Rainbow Nation

“at peace with itself and the world”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education ... that the child of farmworkers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.
Education in South Africa

- three-tier system of education: seven years of primary school; five years in high school followed by tertiary education.
- 23 public universities
- The literacy in 2010: 88.0%
Education in South Africa-
During Apartheid

- Black Africans educated for certain forms of labour
- Inadequate investment and poor quality of education in non-white schools

Photo: http://strifeblog.org/2014/03/04/diary-of-a-teacher-reflections-of-a-south-african-mp-on-education-during-apartheid/
Education in South Africa-Post Apartheid

- Two ministries created: Higher Education and Training, and Basic Education
- 36 universities and technikons merged into 23 institutions
- Vision of quality education in schools: *Schooling 2025*

Photo: http://www.southafricastudy.com/border_technikon.htm
Prof Mandla S Makhanya
Unisa Principal
and Vice-Chancellor
THE RATIONALE FOR NQF
National Qualification Authority

to redress the inequities of the apartheid regime particularly
‘the legacies of job reservation and retrogressive and discriminatory training practices in the ......labour force by creating ladders of opportunity or learning and career pathways’.

Republic of South Africa, 2007
Objectives of NQF

- Integrated national framework for learning achievements;
- Mobility and progression within education, training and career paths;
- Enhance quality;
- Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination and
- Contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large

Republic of South Africa, 1995
National Qualification Framework

General Education and Training (1)

Further Education and Training (2,3,4)

Higher Education and Training (5,6,7,8)

NQF Organization Structure
(a). Oversee the development of the National Qualifications Framework;

(b). formulate and publish policies and criteria for the registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications;

(c). Oversee the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework
LIFELONG LEARNING IN SOUTH AFRICA
Lifelong Learning (LL) in South Africa

...is a more comprehensive and visionary concept which includes formal, non-formal and informal learning extended throughout the lifespan of an individual to attain the fullest possible development in personal, social and professional life.

Aitchison, 2004
Two competing versions of lifelong learning

‘the one visionary and all-encompassing, the other driven by narrower interests related to training, competency and the world of work’.

Aitchison (2004, p.2)

Photo: http://enewsletter.ukzn.ac.za/Newsletter.aspx?id=83
Lifelong Learning in South Africa

Open learning is an approach to education and training which seeks to remove all unnecessary barriers to learning, thus increasing access to, and allowing people to take advantage of learning opportunities throughout their lives.

(African National Congress, 1995, p. 77)
Lifelong Learning in South Africa

First White Paper on Education and Training in 1995 linked education and training as part of one integrated whole with the objective of promoting human resource development.
Lifelong Learning in South Africa

- New National Skills Development Strategy elaborated the objective of “developing a culture of high quality lifelong learning”
- To bring SA into the mainstream of the global economy and to promote social equity.
No dearth of policy statements

- How have these policies translated into practice? What systems have been developed? How have the policies been implemented and what are the lessons for other countries that wish to implement lifelong learning?
LIFELONG LEARNING: CONCEPTS & DEFINITION
Learning to be....

- holistic approach for the complete development of the individual
  Edgar Faure Report

- personal development, social cohesion and economic growth
  OECD
From lifelong ‘education’ to ‘learning’

- shifting to learner-centric approaches, the need for self-directed learning and the view that learning can take place in a variety of settings and contexts.

  Delors Report, UNESCO

- ‘all learning activity undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective’.

  European Commission
North-South Divide

- in South Africa, the concept of lifelong learning initially linked learning and work with the focus on the incremental skilling of workers through formal and non-formal systems.

- addressing the issues of equity and development needs.
Lifelong Learning ‘a continuous process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to realise their full potential’.
LIFELONG LEARNING:
FROM CONCEPT TO PRACTICE
As an Educational Principle

...lifelong learning as a common sense principle — of learning from the cradle to the grave — and lifelong learning as an educational principle that has to be realized in policies, programs and projects.

Medel-Añonuevo, 2002

Integration of Three Approaches

- operationalization of lifelong learning involves the integration of three approaches: pedagogy, andragogy and heutagogy
## The Three Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
<th>Andragogy</th>
<th>Heutagogy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependence</td>
<td>The learner is a dependent personality</td>
<td>Adults are independent. They strive for autonomy and self-direction in learning.</td>
<td>Learners are independent. They identify the potential to learn from novel experiences as a matter of course. They are able to manage their own learning. Self-determined learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td>Mostly external - teacher or institution determines what the student learns</td>
<td>Partly external, partly internal — teacher or institution determines what to learn and the students direct themselves</td>
<td>Mostly internal-student determines what to learn and how to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources for Learning</td>
<td>The teacher devises the transmission technique to pass them to the learner.</td>
<td>Adults use their own and other’s experiences</td>
<td>Teacher facilitates some resources but the learner decides the path by negotiating the learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for Learning</td>
<td>Learn in order to advance to the next stage</td>
<td>Adults learn when they experience a need to know or to perform more effectively</td>
<td>Learning is not planned or linear. Learning may not be based on need but on the identification of the potential to learn in novel situations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# The Three Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of Learning</th>
<th>Learning is subject-centred with prescribed curriculum and planned sequence — competency development</th>
<th>Problem-centred — competency development</th>
<th>Learners go beyond problem solving and use reflections, environmental scanning and experiences — capability development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Mostly from external sources</td>
<td>External as well as internal</td>
<td>Mostly internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the teacher</td>
<td>Teaching students to learn Assessor</td>
<td>Enabling students to learn Partly assessed</td>
<td>Facilitator — getting students to understand how they learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning System</td>
<td>Mostly in formal and non-formal</td>
<td>Mostly in non-formal and formal</td>
<td>Mostly informal and to some extent in non-formal and formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Learning</td>
<td>Single-loop Learning</td>
<td>Single-Loop Learning</td>
<td>Double-loop Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Single-Loop and Double-Loop Learning

- **Single-loop learning**: goals, values, frameworks strategies are taken for granted. The focus is on improving the technique. Reflections are encouraged to make the strategy more effective.

- **Double-loop learning**: the learner reflects on the role of the learning systems which underlie actual goals and strategies. The underlying norms, values, beliefs and actions are assessed.
Three Approaches as a continuum

Level 3: Heutagogy (Realization)
Learner maturity and autonomy required (+)
Instructor control and course structuring required (-)

Level 2: Andragogy (Cultivation)
Learner maturity and autonomy required (-)
Instructor control and course structuring required (+)

Level 1: Pedagogy (Engagement)

Source: Blaschke (2012: 60)
Heutagogy in Practice

- Nursing, engineering and education professions have found heutagogy to be a credible response to the critical issues that the learners are faced with.
- The University of Western Sydney has implemented the heutagogical approach in its teacher education programme.
- Heutagogical approach in three HEIs in the UK have led to reflective learning with learners demonstrating capacity and capability.
Heutagogy in Practice

heutagogical approach in formal learning could be integrated into programmes through learner-defined learning contracts, flexible curriculum, learner-directed questions, flexible and negotiated assessments, collaborative learning etc.

Blaschke (2012: 60)

TECHNOLOGY & LIFELONG LEARNING
Innovations Using Technology

- The integration of pedagogy, andragogy and heutagogy in lifelong learning necessitates going beyond the didactic mode of formal education.
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) central to making this transition.
## ICT Development Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>IDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea (Rep)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: International Telecommunication Union, (2011:13)
ICT in South Africa 2004 - 2013

## Digital Divide in South Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Individuals aged 16 and above who know what the internet is (%)</th>
<th>Individuals aged 16 and above who use the internet (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: International Telecommunication Union, (2011:118)
Mobile Phones and Learning

- Mobile phones generating employment opportunities for women in South Africa

- Mobile phones used as a learning tool in formal education strengthened peer to peer learning enhancing the competency in mathematics

(Vaanska and Roberts, 2011:5)
ICT, Social Media and Lifelong Learning

- Social Media for strengthening heutagogy
- Online tools such as *Virtual Philosopher* encourages the learners to evaluate and re-evaluate their learning (Hornsby and Maki, 2008)
- Active use of social media helps learners develop cognitive and metacognitive skills in contrast to passive use which is less effective (Blaschke, Porto and Kurtz, 2010)
NQF & LIFELONG LEARNING: A CRITICAL REVIEW
National Qualification Authority & Lifelong Learning

- How is Lifelong Learning conceptualised in the NQF and what are the fundamental flaws therein? Can the NQF adequately promote Lifelong Learning?

- What are the paradigmatic changes that need to be made to enhance the NQF’s capacity to promote Lifelong Learning in South Africa?
A study on NQF by Department of Labour and Education pointed out

‘lack of recognition of the diversity and complexity of the education, training and skills system which led to the design of a National Qualifications Framework with a “one size fits all” approach’ (2007).
“It is fair to say that current...policies and practices, in spite of much rhetoric about lifelong learning, are increasingly locking into complicated and heavily structured programmes and qualifications that look remarkably like... those already entrenched in schooling. Although the NQF purports to embody desirable attributes such as relevance, flexibility, access, portability and recognition of prior learning, the actual language by which it is described is complicated, jargon filled and by no means simple”.

Aitchison (2004:16)
National Qualification Authority & Lifelong Learning

- Formal and Non-formal Learning are seen as Lifelong Learning
- Promotion of Self-Directed Learning and Informal Learning - Limited
National Qualification Authority & Lifelong Learning

- Pedagogy - very strong
- Andragogy - Limited focus
- Heutagogy - No focus
Need for a paradigm shift

- Policy and Criteria for the recognition of Prior Learning
- A step towards strengthening heutagogy
- From Policy to Practice
THE WAY FORWARD
Equitable, Quality Education & Lifelong Learning for All by 2030

UNESCO: post-2015 education agenda

- Basic Education (incl ECCE & lower secondary)
- Post-basic (incl upper sec & tertiary)
- Quality and relevant teaching learning
- Youth & adult literacy
- Skills for life and work
Conclusion: South Africa

- Has progressive and proactive policies
- Need for finer tuning of these policies
- Emphasis on guidance and facilitation
- Create a model to provide a blueprint
Way Forward

- move towards andragogy and heutagogy
- NQF should not be just an assessment and validation tool but also a facilitation, formative guidance and counselling tool
Way Forward

- Emphasis on ICT for Learning
- Focus on OER and ODL
- From pilot to scale
- Integrate formal, non-formal and informal learning
Way Forward

- Institutionalized Process of Stakeholder Engagement is Vital
- Promote Regional and Global partnerships
- Adopt/adapt Good Practices
THANK YOU

www.col.org