QUALITY EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITY

1. Veronica Onjoro
onjoroveronica@yahoo.com

2. Professor Peter Koech
Koechpeter@yahoo.com

3. Millicent githui
wmillicent2007@yahoo.com

4. MARYCONSOLATA SHINALI
maryshinali@yahoo.com

School of education
Mount Kenya University
P O box 342-01000,Thika
Kenya

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is no longer reserved to the elite. The internet has globalized the market place, and institutions are increasingly competing for the best students, nationally and internationally. Many professors are now teaching international students, and consequently must develop new pedagogical strategies. Teaching methods have also evolved. Professors who wish to incorporate aspects of on-line learning need to become familiar with new pedagogical methods. Distance education in print form is being supplemented by Internet – based delivery. Harvey and Green (1993) distinguish four definitions of quality that can help us to understand what Quality Teaching might be. First, quality as "excellence"- the traditional conception of quality- is the dominant one in many old elite higher education institutions. Second, quality can be defined as "value for money"- a quality institution in this view is one that satisfies the demands of public accountability. Quality may be seen as "fitness for purpose"- the purpose being that of the institution, for instance getting students to learn sciences efficiently. The last definition listed by Harvey & Green is that of quality as "transforming". According to this definition, Quality Teaching is teaching that transforms students' perceptions and the way they go about applying their knowledge to real world problems. There is no consensus on the fact that these four definitions of quality announced by Harvey & Green have equal value. For instance, Franklin (1992) and Scott (1998) argue that the definition of quality as "fitness for purpose" derives from the consumerisation and standardization of Higher Education, and that this definition can in fact undermine the "quality" of teaching. Next, a study conducted by Newton (2001) demonstrates

that many British teachers complained of increased managerialism, bureaucracy, and intrusion, as a consequence of the introduction of the United Kingdom's Quality Assurance Agency quality system which is rather based upon the definition of "quality as value for money". Cartwright (2007) also reports that external evaluations which generally rely on the definition of quality as "value for money" often raise frustration on the part of professors. Many professors believe that these evaluations are too concerned with the financials and not enough with the teaching experience. Mixed modes of learning have become common: the majority of cross-border distance programmes now involve some form of face-to-face pedagogical or administrative contact, sometimes visits to study centers. Generally people in remote locations and working adults are the first to experience these new forms of learning. Vocational training institutions, which prepare learners for careers that are based on practical activities, are no longer shun. They are now fully considered as an important part of most higher education systems. Lifelong learning now offers a second chance to those who did not attain higher education or to those for whom the knowledge and skills acquired in school are no longer sufficient for a professional career spanning three or four decades (Marginson, Van der Wende, 2007) Change fosters reflection and debate. Higher education has changed in the past twenty years: the number of students has dramatically increased, funding concerns have changed, and the student body has diversified. The current "knowledge era" has reintroduced transfer of knowledge as a major contributor to growth and business success. As globalization continues, the national and international competition for the best students is likely to increase among higher education institutions, thus only reinforcing pressure for better results. The dynamic model of educational effectiveness that attempts to establish stronger links between research and improvement of practice has been developed. Studies investigating the validity of this model and especially its attempt to identify relations among teacher factors reveal that teaching skills can be grouped into stages of effective teaching. These distinct stages move gradually from skills associated with direct teaching to more advanced skills concerned with new teaching approaches and differentiation of teaching. Teachers exercising more advanced types of teacher behavior have better student outcomes. Thus, it is advocated that teacher professional development should be focused on how to address groupings of specific teacher factors associated with student learning and on how to help teachers improve their teaching skills. The main characteristics of this approach, which we call *dynamic integrated approach* to teacher professional development, are analyzed and experimental studies supporting its use for improvement purposes.

PRESENTATION

Since 1990, Boyer insisted that we "move beyond the tired old teaching versus research debate and give the familiar and honorable term "scholarship" a broader, more capacious meaning". This revised conception of "scholarship" would include four interrelated dimensions, discovery, integration, applicationand teaching. Boyer thus demands that the same habits of mind that characterize other types of scholarly work be applied to teaching. The literature on the topic of scholarly teaching has been considerably growing in the past fifteen years. Many forums and events have

focused on the scholarship of teaching. Some universities are developing infrastructure which is deemed necessary to support the "scholarship of teaching". George Mason University developed on online journal focused on the scholarship of teaching (Hutchings and Shulman, 1999). This notion of a "scholarship of teaching" has since 1990 fostered a plethora of debates. But what is this scholarship about?. "The aim of teaching is simple, it is to make student learning possible" argues Ramsden (1992). "The aim of scholarly teaching is also simple; it is to make transparent how we have made learning possible".(Trigwell, Martin, Benjamin & Prosser, 2000).teachers must keep themselves informed of the evolution of theoretical perspectives. They should also collect evidence of their effectiveness as teachers. Huber & Maeroff (1997) defined six keys to attain and assess all four scholarships described by Boyer: Clear goals, Adequate preparation, Appropriate methods, Significant results, Effective presentation and Reflective critique. Communication is one of the pillars of the scholarship of teaching. Shulman (1993) identifies communication as a key element of teaching. He asserts that to move towards a scholarship of teaching, it is necessary that teachers become active members of communities (communities of conversation, of evaluation etc.).

OBJECTIVE OFTHE STUDY

Diversity of quality enhancement processes. The study was conducted to investigate how universities can enhance quality education. There is no solid typology of Quality Teaching initiatives in the literature. Cottrell and Jones (2003) have drawn a typology of the causes that led teachers in higher education to engage in a quality enhancement process. They list eight possible influences and found that the professors' personal philosophy of teaching was the element that contributed most significantly to the decision of engaging in quality enhancement process (79% of all cases).Quality Teaching initiatives are diverse both in nature and in function, to say the least. Some spring from a top-down initiative, others start at a grass-root level; some are centered on pedagogical methods, others on quality environments in Higher Education institutions; some concern only a couple teachers, others the whole university. Some promote team work, others improve the learning environment of the student. The people and organizations involved in the support Quality Teaching are also very diverse and their role is mostly interrelated, ranging from individual willingness to institution's formalized strategy, in addition to external incentives coming from Governments or induced by external factors like worldwidecompetition. Some quality initiatives steam from State measures that believe that higher educationenhancement can strengthen attractively, invigorate innovation and hence boost the job market and the economy. Individuals define a vision for their students, clear goals for their classes, and eventually develop these techniques into a theoretical framework of quality enhancement.QualityTeaching initiatives are also shaped by the intrinsic profile of the institution which operates in a specific regional or national context (e.g.; a remote vocational-teaching intensive university might support Quality Teaching differently from a world renowned research-intensive one).One way States can enhance the quality of the learning experience is by improving the quality of the teachers' training. Richter (1994) believes that a few years of probation and training should be required before one can officially become a

teacher in higher education settings. Another possibility would be to require that new teachers rehearse their lectures in front of their peer.

METHODOLOGY

The data was based on a sample survey design conducted through administration of questionnaires. Instruments for data collection were questionnaires and interview,newspapers,articles,Journal and internet. Data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The study was conducted in Moi,Nairobi and mount Kenya universities.It involved 15 Lecturers and 3 professors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On a institutional level, indicators that aim to spot Quality Teaching and learning should include four areas of research according to Chalmers (2007): Institutional climate and systems, Diversity and inclusivity, Assessment, Engagement and learning community.The Value of Graduates: The best indicator of teaching quality?"Perhaps the most important assessment indicator as an institutional level outcome measure is the value of graduates" (Chalmers, 2007). One of the main goals of a higher education institution is to prepare students for the workforce, so measuring the value of graduates is only logical in order to assess the quality of the teaching received. Graduates who are efficient on the working place are often those who benefited from teachers for which Quality Teaching was a priority.Knight and Yorke (2004) warn us against the use of some employment statistics. They argue that agencies are wrong to believe that they can measure employability by looking at employment

rates six months after graduation. Employment rates do not distinguish between the different types of jobs that the recent graduates hold. When in fact the graduates have reached the same level of "employability" thanks to higher education. Economic cycles of hiring patterns account for variations in employment rates. Employment rates six months after graduation are not a fully accurate measure of the graduates' employability (Knight and Yorke, 2004).A multi-leveled theoretical framework to assess the quality of teaching. On a more theoretical standpoint, some scholars have tried to offer a systematic view of qualityassessment and enhancement. Goh (1996) offers a three-leveled framework for quality assurance. At the university level, the Quality of Teaching, Research and Services is to be evaluated. The teaching assessment itself should have three components: Personal attributes of the teachers (people-ware) Curriculum & management, i.e. the academic system that includes course development, student assessment techniques etc. (software), and third, Educational technology and facilities (hardware).In turn, the quality of the personal attributes of the teaching staff can be factored into three components: the teacher's Knowledge, Skill and Attitude. Teachers possess "knowledge" by virtue of their formal education and professional work. But their "skill" is the way they transfer knowledge, i.e. their innate teaching ability, often expressed through the dynamics of lecture presentations and small groups discussions The third attribute to be assessed, "attitude" is the way they

relate to the teaching function which translates into thoroughness of preparation, enthusiasm in delivery and care about students (Goh,1996).

CONCLUSIONS

Quality assurance schemes lead to clear improvement of theprogrammes judged negatively, according to the Dutsch Audit Chamber (Jeliazkova & Westerheijden, 2000).. But initially well- rated programmes feel no impulse for change or further improvement because of the good quality assurance results, and thus are more likely to maintain the status quo and slower teacher innovation (Jeliazkova & Westerheijden,2000). Kember& Kwan (2000) assert that professors have one type of teaching approach, content-centred or learning-centred.Because of this approach; they implement different types of teaching strategies. Differences lay in instruction, focus, assessment, accommodation for student characteristics, source of experience and knowledge. Teachers who adopt a content-centered approach consider teaching primarily as the transmission of knowledge. Those who have the learning-centered approach are more likely to consider teaching as "learning facilitation". Professors who are content-centred rarely become learning-centred and vice versa. Kember & Kwan believe that a teacher's methods are generally quite stable, just as his or her conception of good teaching is.Professors change their methods of teaching less easily than students change their way of learning. Problem identification: The professor must reflect on the weaknesses of his teaching Information Gathering: The professor must read literature, attend workshops, and work with mentors or student associates. Establishment of assessable goals: The professor must choose a specific project to work on. Development and Implementation of strategies to meet established goals. Project evaluation, both qualitative and quantitative
Gathering information. Teaching Quality Gibbs (1995) insists on the importance of reading and developing teaching manuals as to enhance teaching. Although information gathering is rarely carried out by teaching staff, it is of the utmost important. Thomas and Wilcoxon (1998) highlight the importance of information sharing.
 Quality teaching initiatives are very diverse both in nature and in function. The role of the professors, of the department, of the central university and of the state is analyzed, as well as the goals and the scope of these initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION

 Choosing reliable and quantifiable indicators to assess the quality of one's teaching and the efficiency of teaching initiatives remains challenging. Various methods and their efficiency are discussed here. The factors that determine whether appropriate use is made of the feedback provided are also brought into discussion. Quality teaching has become an issue of importance as the landscape of higher education has been facing continuous changes. The student body has considerably expanded and diversified, both socially and geographically. New students call for new teaching methods. Modern technologies have entered the classroom, thus modifying the nature of the interactions between students and professors. The governments, the

students and their families, the employers, the funds providers increasingly demand value for their money and desire more efficiency through teaching. Some scholars regard quality primarily as an outcome, others as a property. Some consider teaching as the never ending process of reduction of defects and so Quality Teaching can never be totally grasped and appraised. In fact, conceptions of quality teaching happen to be stakeholder relative: students, teachers or evaluation agencies do not share the definition of what "good" teaching or "good" teachers is.The literature stresses that "good teachers" have empathy for students, they are generally experienced teachers and most of all they are organized and expressive. "Excellent teachers" are those who have passions: passions for learning, for their field, for teaching and for their students. But research also demonstrates that "good teaching" depends on what is being taught and on other situational factors. Research points out that quality teaching is necessarily student-centred; its aim is most and for all student learning. Thus, attention should be given not simply to the teacher's pedagogical skills, but also to the learning environment that must address the students' personal needs: students should know why they are working, should be able to relate to other students and to receive help if needed. Adequate support to staff and students (financial support, social and academic support, support to minority students, counseling services, etc) also improves learning outcomes. Learning communities – groups of students and/or teachers who learn collaboratively and build knowledge through intellectual interaction – are judged to enhance student learning by increasing students' and teachers' satisfaction. Quality teaching initiatives are very diverse both in nature and in function. Some of these initiatives are undertaken at teachers' level, others at departmental, institutional or country level. Some quality initiatives aim to improve pedagogical methods while others address the global environment of student learning. Some are top-down process, other induce grass-root changes. The most currently used quality initiatives seem to aim to enhance teamwork between teachers, goal-setting and course plans. However scholars have developed holistic theoretical models of how quality teaching initiatives should unfold. Gathering information and reading the literature – looking outside the classroom – are important tools to improve quality teaching, but they are still under-employed. Another important point to keep in mind is that in order for student learning to be enhanced, the focus of quality teaching initiatives should not always be on the teacher. Rather it should encompass the whole institution and the learning environment. One of the major drivers for enhancement of quality teaching concerns teachers' leadership – most quality teaching initiatives are actually launched by teachers. However the role of the department, of the educational support divisions and that of the central university – which can make quality culture part of its mission statement – are central. Scholars proved that bottom-top initiatives are born-dead without institutional support. Quality teaching initiatives must seem legitimate to peers in order to succeed and expand. It is essential to measure the impact of the quality teaching initiatives in order to be able to improve these initiatives. However assessing the quality of one's teaching remains challenging. This difficulty may in part explain why the two most famous international rankings rely heavily on research as a yardstick of the universities' value and leave aside the quality of teaching. This may however change in the future, as the concerns about quality teaching and student learning are increasing.

The choice of indicators to measure quality teaching is crucial, because it has been shown that assessment drives learning: how the teacher is judged will undoubtedly impact his or her teaching methods. Indicators to assess the quality of teaching (the value of graduates, satisfaction of teachers, retention rates,etc.) of an institution proved of use but carry various meanings and can even lead to misunderstandings. Researchers agree that reliable indicators should be chosen, and not just the most practical ones. Moreover, room should always be left for discussion of the figures obtained. Other tools than indicators exist. Using student questionnaires can seem logical, because students are the individuals that are the most exposed to and the most affected by the teacher's teaching. However, many teachers give little credit to the answers of the students that they perceive as biased. The answering students tend to blame teachers for all problems, forgetting the role of the administration or the infrastructures. Measurement should clarify its own aims (improvement or punishment?) before implementation. Peer-in class evaluations present the advantage of focusing on the process, not merely the outcomes. But these evaluations by peers may lead to self-congratulation and may hamper teaching innovations (the teacher being evaluated fearing to be poorly judged if too creative). Peers may also be influenced by a widespread conservatism of judgment. Using teaching portfolios to evaluate quality teaching seems fairer as more sources of evidence are considered, but then a question remains: how much should each source of evidence be weighted? Assessing the results of Quality Teaching initiatives has proven to be difficult, and this issue has received increasing attention in the literature. Many researchers now address the numerous paradoxes that the measurement of quality sometimes induces. For instance, a well-rated programme or a rewarded teacher feels less incentive for change and becomes therefore more likely to maintain the status quo. Teachers who follow-up on quality assurance schemes are also those who believe that it is in their power to improve student learning. Last, most teachers will try to improve the quality of their teaching only if they believe that the university cares about teaching. Hence, if an institution wants its teaching to be of good quality, it must give concrete, tangible signs that teaching matter.

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