



Preparing FET learners for work:
Are we doing things right?
Or are we doing the right things?

Stream 2:
Educators and Educational Institutions
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Overview

- Introduction
- Assumptions
 - Education; learners; modes and types of knowledge; curriculum; educators; policy
- Hope or despair?
 - Education, learners; modes and types of knowledge; curriculum; educators; theories of action (policy)
- Conclusion

Introduction

- Statistics
 - Only the top quintile perform adequately
 - 65% sixth graders – literate and numerate at the right levels (less than 1% of African children)
 - Maths and Science scores of the lowest in the world (TIMMS)
 - 1 million new entrants to school
 - Less than half reach grade 12, of which just more than half passed in 2008
 - Census 2001 (20 years and older)
 - Only 8,4% participated in higher education
 - Only 20,4% completed secondary education
 - 53, 2 have completed some primary and some secondary education
 - 17,9% has had no schooling at all

Assumptions: Education

- “Education prepares learners for the world of work”
 - Education as a means to an end versus an end in itself
 - Stats - are these learners prepared for anything?
 - FET learner entering FET colleges
 - Lack of readiness – demands of the curriculum; discipline
 - The weak learners – not even Grade 9 level
 - Socio-economic problems leading to absenteeism
 - Negative school experiences, expectations
 - If they fail the NCV, what then?

Assumptions: Modes and types of knowledge

- “Disciplinary knowledge is what counts”
 - Two ‘cultures’:
 - College – a ‘school’ culture, subject based, sequenced, logical - disciplinary
 - Work - ‘vocational’ culture, vocational praxis and vocational knowledge – trans-disciplinary
- “Academic knowledge is what counts”
 - Theory and practice
 - Head and hands
 - Disparities of esteem

Assumptions: Curriculum

- “The curriculum helps learners to bridge the divide between school/college and work”
 - Subject knowledge enhances..., or does it?
 - Language and communication skills
 - Problem-solving skills
 - The ability to analyse
 - To integrate theory and practice
 - To apply knowledge in different situations
 - Assessment is for learning..., or is it?

Assumption: Educators

- “Educators are equal to the task”
 - Policy overload
 - Poor levels of support
 - 60% of Foundation Phase trainees are white women
 - Mainstream schools are ‘black schools in relatively poor socio-economic circumstances’ – these are the ‘normal schools’
 - Educators are de-motivated
 - Cognitive development to challenge their learners?
 - Pedagogy is outdated/inappropriate, e.g. FET study

Assumptions: Policy

- “Large scale systemic policy changes can change education practice”
 - Parity of esteem
 - Equivalence of qualifications
 - Equivalence of institutions
 - Equivalence of theory and practice
 - Quality assurance leads to quality education
 - Inappropriate quality assurance regime for education
 - Procedural, technicist monitoring versus qualitative moderation, e.g. levels of moderation in FET colleges

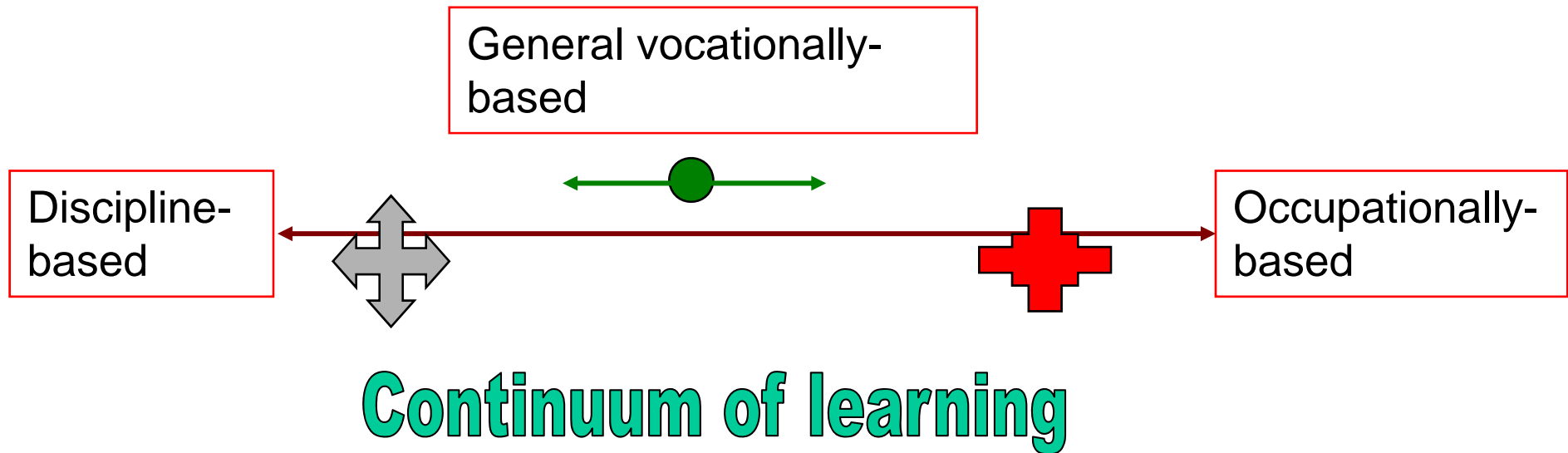
Hope or despair?

- Quick wins, (e.g. laptops) or long-term gains?
- 3 years MTEF, or 30 years on?
- What are the implications for policy?
- What is the theory of action for mainstream schools/colleges in respect of being prepared for work?

Education for the World of Work

- ‘Strong foundation of general education, the desire and ability to continue to learn, to adapt to and develop new knowledge, skills and technologies, to move flexibly between occupations, to take responsibility for personal performance, to set and achieve high standards, and to work co-operatively’ (White Paper on Education and Training, 1995)
- In other words, we start preparing our children for the World of Work at pre-school

Modes and types of knowledge



Curriculum

- Problem-centred
 - Work integrated learning
 - Work based learning
 - Work relevant learning
- Sites of learning
- Assessment for learning
 - Application of knowledge
 - Doing, as part of learning



Educators

- Set an example
 - Work ethic
 - Impart values, life skills
 - Excellent communicators
- Reflective of own practice
- Experts
 - Disciplinary knowledge
 - Trans-disciplinary skills
- Ability (and willingness) to learn
- Pedagogy

Conclusion

- A gloomy picture?
- Driven by the question: **'Are we doing the right things?'**
- Ask this of each of the past Ministers of Education:
 - Fix the curriculum – 5 years passed
 - Fix HE – 5 years passed
 - Fix FET – 5 years passed
- The next five years?
 - Fix what?
 - 2 Ministries of Education
 - Positioning anew
 - New policies

Are we sleeping while our beds are burning?

Are we dreaming while the world is turning? (with apologies to
Men at Work)

15 years into our new democracy:

What new injustices/barriers/exclusion are we creating
while we are playing?

What are the right things that we should be doing?

References

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