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**When eagles are allowed to fly – a global and contextual perspective on teacher education in Ethiopia**

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**Abstract**

The present reconfiguration of education by neo-liberal forces worldwide is taken as a basis for this essay. Drawing on examples of how this reconfiguration operates on national arenas through decisive and dishonest discourses of commoditisation and privatisation, management and efficiency, education for all and student-centred education, the essay looks at the Ethiopian case and how neo-liberalism operates on that arena and how a counter-hegemonic agenda was implanted through a master course for teacher educators following a different and critical practitioner inquiry approach modelling emancipation and social justice within teacher education and society at large.

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## **Introduction**

Author:

The title of this essay has both a promising and a critical meaning. The promising meaning is connected to the specific experiences I have had in working with teacher educators in Ethiopia and their many potentials 'when allowed to fly'. The underlying critical meaning is related to the present global influences on societies and national education systems from the hegemonic neo-liberal and conservative forces emanating from Western core countries and their destructive effects on educational practices, which 'hinders eagles to fly'.

A metaphor of eagles has travelled with me since the 1970s when I met it for the first time in an educational journal published by a group of teachers, who were inspired by the work of the French educator Celestin Freinet. A free translation of the metaphor was published some years later in the Reform Forum, a journal reflecting on the post-apartheid reform efforts in Namibia after 1990.

### **Eagles do not walk the stairs**

The educator asserted that he had developed his methods in a scientific way. He said that his methods were like stairs in the house of knowledge that could bring the learners right up to the top. He had made careful estimates of the width and height of each step to suit the legs of the learners. He had also built landings at strategic places where the learners could rest and comfortable banisters, which could help the beginners.

However, he got very upset one day, not about the stairs that he thought were well planned and constructed with great wisdom, but with the learners who did not seem to appreciate his efforts.

As long as the educator was around observing how the learners walked up the stairs, they took a rest at the landings and held on to the banister when needed, and everything worked as planned. But when the educator went away – even if only for a short time – there was chaos. Only those who were conditioned to follow instructions without thinking continued to use the stairs the way the educator wanted – like dogs trained by their masters. All the other learners found ways that corresponded to their individual needs. One was creeping up the stairs and another took two steps at a time and did not rest on the landings. Some even became specialists in walking the stairs backwards. However, most of the learners did not find the stairs challenging and interesting enough. They ran around the house and found their own ways. Some climbed up the drain pipe, others climbed with the help of the balcony parapets and reached the top with excitement and in no time at all. On the way down they slid on the banisters only to make another try at climbing to the top.

The educator tried to discipline the learners and force them to follow his guidelines. It never struck him that there were other ways to reach the

top of the house such as by jumping, running or taking your time to investigate totally new tracks. He never thought of a different kind of pedagogy that did not force eagles to walk the stairs. (Reform Forum, 1994: 22)

The travel of this metaphor follows the common traits of educational transfer, borrowing and influence, even though it is based on and follows a counter-hegemonic and critical educational track, where today's generally accepted slogans like 'education for all' and 'student-centred education' are given different meanings, which this essay will demonstrate. Having spent a large part of my professional life both physically and mentally with teacher education in Southern Africa I was approached in 2002 and asked to contribute to the professional development of teacher educators in Ethiopia. This request was mainly based on my work with teacher educators in Namibia that had a reputation of being able to combine academic course work with the practice of an action oriented and critical pedagogy in teacher education. The masters course that was developed for teacher educators in Ethiopia together with a team of Ethiopian and international scholars with administrative and financial support from the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) was carried out from May 2003 to May 2005. As one of my colleagues (Callewaert, 2006: 127) expressed it in retrospect:

Working with education in Ethiopia is a wonderful and painful experience certainly for Ethiopians, but also for participating foreigners. It is wonderful to discover or rediscover a patchwork of regions, societies, cultures, languages, religions and most of all the people who live them. As a European you will soon discover that much of what you believe is your own particular European culture, apparently pretending to become the global culture, was already in full bloom in Ethiopia when your own ancestors were still living their primitive way of life in the forest. You will discover an African country without a colonial past. As an educationist you will perhaps for the first time in Africa work with faculty lectures and students who have the same educational level as yourself and your own students in Europe. But at the same time, your experience will soon be accompanied by an underlying suffering, when you discover that even here you will meet what may become the tragedy of our time, the radical change from education by educationists to education by neo-liberal management. This radical change, which you have met in the USA, the UK, Scandinavia, Namibia and Mozambique, is constantly disrupting our combined professional efforts across national borders to achieve both a broader competence and social justice.

This essay will address the underlying suffering that Callewaert refers to and that has been the worry by many critical scholars like Apple (1993), Samoff (1999), Jansen (2002), Tabulawa (2003), and Tickly (2004) recently, because of the accelerating onslaught on national educational systems worldwide during the last decades carried out by neo-liberal and neo-conservative forces in the name of 'free trade' and 'freedom of choice', not least by international donor organisations as the midwives in the efforts to streamline national education systems in peripheral countries to suit the same hegemonic purpose, that of expanding the idea of a 'free' market to all human and social activities.

### **The invisible dishonesty of neo-liberalism and its educational consequences**

First, we have to acknowledge that neo-liberalism is based on the idea that every aspect of life should be considered as a commodity that can be bought or sold on a market and that this market follows the logic of profit, meaning that anything put on the market is there for the purpose of someone making a profit. Martinez & Garcia (2000) has summarized the main traits of neo-liberalism as: the rule of the market; cutting public expenditure for social services; deregulation; privatization; and eliminated the concept of 'the public good' or 'community'. The neo-liberal discourses and practices that have been taken for granted in capitalist societies since at least the 1980s (Davies & Bansel, 2007) have accelerated their presence also in peripheral states. However, these societies cannot be characterised as pure capitalist societies because of their layered social infrastructures where people live in parallel under different conditions that can be identified as late modernity, modern, feudal, or traditional communal (Dahlström, 2002). Layered societies call for a different analysis than the one that can be carried out in a Western state that is predominately capitalist under late modernity conditions. Findings from such analysis will show the complexities that emanate from the specific cultural and social frameworks that each society carry with it from history (Steensen, 2006) and which are manifested in the layered society. Thus, any analysis of the effects of neo-liberalism needs to be based on contextual understandings with the first step being to disclose the invisible dishonesty of neo-liberalism. Tickly (2004) has looked at the new imperialism dictated by neo-liberalism and its impact on education in peripheral states, while Davies & Bansel (2007) give an idea of what this dishonesty is about in their analysis of neo-liberal impacts on education in Australia and New Zealand. Both Tickly and Davies & Bansel have found the governmentality concept useful in their analysis of how the new imperialism works beyond national borders and how it operates on national grounds when the emerging neo-liberal state replaces the administrative state that once developed the now eroding traits of welfare systems. The historical compromise between capital and work that created the political conditions for the development of welfare concepts and practices (Amin, 2004) after 200 years of workers' struggle (Mason, 2007) is now replaced by a different compromise between capital and the state with neo-liberalism and the market at central stage and with the humanitarian effects that Amin (2004) so vividly has characterized as the 'liberal virus'.

The invisible dishonesty of neo-liberalism is related to hegemonic discourses that have the position to define what counts as valid in times when alternative discourses (like the one of socialism) have lost their discursive value. While education and schooling have gained in importance at the discursive level, the recent neo-liberal policies have undermined its humanitarian values and practices and moved education closer to commoditisation through the introduction of voucher systems, stronger competitions, and further efficiency demands that undermine public education systems globally, following the leading trends in the United States of America (Zeichner, 2006). The commoditisation and privatisation of education follow the discursive patterns of free trade under the slogan of freedom of choice. The illusion of free trade as a humanitarian expansion of opportunity in recent years has already proved its shortcomings even in relation to its own promises of progress, prosperity, and well-being for all. Castells' verdict over the effects of global capitalism is severe:

... the First World has not become the all-embracing universe of neo-liberal mythology. Because a new world, the Fourth World, has emerged, made up of multiple black holes of social exclusion throughout the planet.... much of Sub-Saharan Africa, and impoverished rural areas of Latin America and Asia.... but also present in literary every country... in American inner-city ghettos, Spanish enclaves of mass youth unemployment, French banlieues warehousing North Africans, Japanese Yoseba quarters, and Asian mega-cities' shanty towns... populated by millions of homeless, incarcerated, prostituted, criminalized, sick, and illiterate persons... They are growing in number, and increasing in visibility, as the selective triage of informational capitalism, and the political breakdown of the welfare state, intensify social exclusion. In the current historical context, the rise of the Fourth World is inseparable from the rise of informational, global capitalism. (Castells, 1998: 164-165)

It is under the disguise of the freedom discourse created by neo-liberal economic forces that human beings have been reconfigured as economic subjects ('homo economicus') and education has been discursively moved from the human rights arena within the United Nation and the international solidarity tradition (education as a human right) to the economic market arena within the World Bank tradition (education as a right of choice). With this reconfiguration comes also the invisible installation of new mentalities through the circumscription of an economic discourse that leaves humans to make the choice and end up as "docile subjects who are tightly governed and who, at the same time, define themselves as free" (Davies & Bansel, 2007: 249). Public education is reconfigured along these neo-liberal lines mainly through three integrated discourses. These are the previously hinted discourses of (1) commoditisation and privatisation, (2) management and efficiency, and (3) education for all and student-centred education. These discourses have hegemonic positions world wide but affects national education systems differently because of contextual circumstances, which makes them even more difficult to detect. The following exposé will demonstrate their omnipresence.

### ***Commoditisation and privatisation***

The recent policy in the U.S., named 'No Child Left Behind' (NCLB) seems to be the most decisive and cunning when it comes to commoditisation and privatisation. The NCLB policy is test and school performance driven, like the league tables in the British system, and has reintroduced 'apartheid schooling' as it produces segregation between Whites, Latinos, and African Americans; inequalities in school funding by race and gender; inequalities in access to teachers; inequalities in teacher retention; and inequalities in access to advanced courses. Further on, the measures that create this situation undermine public education that aims at social justice and democracy, according to Zeichner (2006). In Sweden has the same trends influenced the education system and created a new type of 'parallel systems' with the mushrooming of private education. This has been possible through the neo-liberal reconfiguration of a strong collective culture based on conceptions of the welfare state and free public schooling into a public voucher system, with the effect that taxpayers' money are now financing the profits of private companies running private schooling. The neo-liberal trends of commoditisation and privatisation have also appeared as 'cost-sharing' in peripheral

states like Ethiopia, where poor parents are supposed to contribute to the costs of public services like education and by that poverty has been turned into a deviant and at times a criminal human characteristic as sending your children to school as a compulsory parental duty stipulated by most governments cannot be accomplished by poor parents in layered societies.

### ***Management and efficiency***

The second discourse has moved the preferential right of interpretation from teachers to managers and created 'the tragedy of our time' mentioned by Callewaert, namely a reconfiguration of education by educators to education by neo-liberal management. Educators are then reduced to curriculum implementers of decisions taken elsewhere who are externally controlled and monitored in the name of the economy. A business-like discourse has entered schools that are supposed to be managed efficiently just like any other corporate business. The selection of a tough school principal who can coach the teachers and students towards good tests results and high positions on the league tables to the lowest cost will be the first priority for the headhunting school board in societies that transform its education system according to this logic. Meanwhile syllabuses and other steering documents are transformed following competency or outcome-based logics that can easily be measured through goal-fulfilling multiple choice testing, leaving the processes of knowledge construction and skills development behind. Teachers have by many neo-liberal educational managers been reconfigured as obstacles to efficiency and therefore been sidelined through the introduction of teacher proof instructional material that are said to be predictable, at least as a delivery system, but gives no guarantees for learning to take place. The discourse of managerialism and efficiency started with Thatcherism also as an attempt to reduce scholarly influences on teacher education perceived as another troubling obstacle to develop teacher education along a technical rationality that did not give allowance for critical perspectives. When critical approaches managed to defend their position in teacher education the neo-liberal forces tried to reconfigure them along technical rationalities. This happened within the areas of curriculum development through the transformation of broad humanistic goals into narrow behavioural entities following logical frameworks where every step is well motivated and described, giving no room for emancipative thinking or actions, when the final score is counted on the competitive educational market. Schooling as a human right has been turned into a market value through the influences of the neo-liberal agenda that has become the new common sense taken for granted in core as well as peripheral states.

### ***Education for all and student-centred education***

The third discourse is probably the most cunning one because of its dishonest semantic dress, just like the policy of 'No Child Left Behind', and works contrary to its literal meaning. The 'education for all-consensus' was initiated in 1990 through the Jomtien Conference in Thailand with UNESCO and the World Bank as the main sponsors, supported by national donor organisations from the Western core countries and dutifully attended and agreed to by peripheral countries and thereby turned into a policy hostage. Education for all promises education – at least a minimum of four

years primary education - for all children 'in due time' as it was originally aimed at 2005 and now moved forward until 2015!

The education-for-all-consensus is an extension of the European individualisation project that has its roots deep in the history of Europe that through the education-for-all-consensus has been re-conceptualised as a way to install Western liberal democracy through an 'inclusive' global neo-liberal agenda that persists to call on people to join the global village. Peripheral states are drawn into the agenda through donor demands that force them to submit to the education-for-all-consensus in case they also want to benefit from the inevitable and strongly needed financial and technical support from the donors. Tabulawa (2003) has demonstrated how this 'inclusion' process has worked in the case of Botswana during the 1980s and 1990s. My own experiences from work in Namibia (Dahlström, 2002), Ethiopia (Dahlström, 2003) and Laos (Dahlström, 2006) confirm the omnipresence of the education-for-all-consensus and its operational logics played out through student-centred methodologies. However, when student-centred methods, once introduced by critical pedagogy, through the neo-liberal agenda are reduced to technical rationalities they seldom work educationally but are more successful on the political level to implicitly install a feeling of dissatisfaction that can be cured by the market through consumerism. The example from Laos is stunning in this regard. Laos followed the other socialist countries in Southeast Asia and introduced what is called the New Economic Mechanism (NEM), another name for a market-oriented policy, towards the end of the 1980s. Demands for educational reforms followed suit through donor sector reviews and concepts like student-centred education and action research began to surface in the beginning of 1990s. Student-centred education has since then been the central concept used in the reform discourse in Laos. However, student-centred education was reduced to the 'five-pointed star' at an early stage following the technical rationality congenially adapted to a still communist influenced discursive situation and according to this policy instruction teaching should be followed by activities, go with questions, have teaching aids, divide students in groups, and connect to real life. Classroom observations carried out by a group of PhD students from Laos (Bounyasone et al., 2006) report that the policy of student-centred education has been adapted to the ordinary classroom situation and the teachers' understandings in such a way that it can be characterised as:

Teaching from the textbook in the absence of other material; asking closed factual questions on the textbook content as teachers do not know how to relate the real life to the content of teaching; and after the teacher has delivered the content of the lesson students are expected to 'discuss the topic in groups'. p.7

It is rather clear that the educational effects of student-centred education in Laos are meagre if it is meant to alter what is commonly known as 'teacher-centred education' and the 'old methods'. However, there is a strong implicit message in the Lao society that formal education is the key to modernity and with that to become part of the Lao 'communist' version of neo-liberalism, the New Economic Mechanism.

### **The case of teacher education in Ethiopia<sup>1[1]</sup>**

The present system of teacher education in Ethiopia goes back to the objectives and strategies of the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia of 1994. Some years later a task force was created and one of its findings was unprofessionalism of teachers, who also demand constant salary increases. This led to the development of the Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) policy document that was initiated in 2003. The TESO policy represents a paradigm shift according to its own writings (Ministry of Education, 2003) that officially follows the international trends of active learner-focused education operationally installed through a neo-liberal filter. The implementation strategies include changes both in structure and content of curricula, such as through reductions of programmes from 4 to 3 years at the universities and a move from subject to professional emphases including practicum. New areas are also included like action research, civics and ethics, English communication skills and ICT. Furthermore, teacher education institutions are expected to become centres of excellence and to establish effective means of 'quality' control starting with the centrally planned and standardized curricula (at the Ministry of Education) for all schools and universities in the country, despite the differences in experience and resources like expert specializations and materials. However, observations and findings from interviews with teacher educators who are expected to implement the new policies show gaps between what are stated in the policy documents and what are practiced, not least because of system overload (Engida, 2006; Kassahun, 2006).

Critical scholars who are familiar with the situation in Ethiopia worry about educational development in the country. Negash (2006:48) claims "the Ethiopian experience is that of mistaking modernisation for Westernization, that is, a process whereby the borrowing of Western technology and rationality meant the progressive dissolution of the Ethiopian mentality". Tessema (2006:1, 10) claims that teacher education in Ethiopia is characterized by persistent contradictions, challenges, and chaos and an obsession with the rhetoric of system overhaul and reform. Tessema continues "although three years have passed, the state 'change agents' themselves are not yet familiar with and conversant in the metaphors and curricular concepts their consultants had introduced to them" and concludes that the reforms have created deskilling, deprofessionalization, and dehumanization; they have been top-down in spite of their participatory discourse; and follow a standardisation model that ignores local knowledge, diversity and social justice in spite of their rhetoric of educational equity. Hussein (2006:13) examines the value conflicts in teacher education practices in Ethiopia and concludes "the practice of pedagogy as a process of transferring and learning as a process of consuming knowledge are what neo-liberals reinforce" and "that our education is under a battering influence of neo-liberalism of variegated local manifestations". One of these manifestations will be discussed in greater detail as it has far-reaching consequences for teacher education in the country.

#### ***The plasma teacher phenomenon***

This phenomenon is officially called Educational Satellite Television Programmes but is commonly known as 'plasma' or 'surrogate' teachers. All students

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<sup>1[1]</sup> This part of the essay is partly based on a paper by Lars Dahlström & Brook Lemma (2007) Critical Perspectives on Teacher Education in Neo-liberal Times: Experiences from Ethiopia and Namibia, submitted for publication in Southern African Review of Education.

from Grades 9 – 12 are watching lessons in natural sciences, mathematics, English, and civics that are presented over plasma televisions. In principle, the role of the ordinary teacher in the classroom is to unlock the cage where the screen is placed and to slide the screen in front of the class and eventually to introduce ‘the topic’ by writing it on the board. The teacher has five minutes for this work before the transmission starts following a nationally directed time schedule. During the entire lesson the teacher is then reduced to a spectator just like the students until the plasma television programme ends. This is followed by an 8-10 minutes summary by the teacher on the lesson just transmitted until the next subject with another teacher and the whole cycle exercise resumes. Throughout this process, 80 to 90 students remain seated in a room designed for 35 students. The analysis of this situation is based on classroom observations and discussions with teachers at two occasions separated by six months. (Lemma, 2006; Dahlström, 2006)

The general impression is one of passivity and uni-directional lectures, contrary to the officially proclaimed student-centred policy, unless you define student-centred education as a practice where the teacher is seen as an obstacle in the classroom. Teachers have nothing to do during the lectures of the plasma teacher and students try to follow the speedy lesson tempo at the beginning of each lesson but many eventually loose interests and turn into passive spectators of the plasma teacher as the TV lectures progress. Occasionally, students are asked to carry out tasks that are framed by a ticking clock at the screen indicating the 20 or 40 seconds allocated per task are elapsing. Most students do not cope with the situation and are not able to finish the tasks on time. After all, it does not matter if students attempt the tasks or not; the answers will anyway appear on the screen at the end of the allotted seconds. To this we can add the following observations: The plasma teachers are not Ethiopians but South Africans, the lessons are carried out in perfect English, but with a South African accent alien to students in Ethiopian secondary classrooms, lessons are culturally framed within alien contexts (e.g. in a civics TV lesson by referring what happens among the audience in the darkness of a cinema theatre in South Africa), and classroom teachers are dehumanised and deskilled. The introduction of plasma teachers has been very successful, if the intension has been to bypass what have been evaluated as inefficient classroom teachers. Teachers claim that their job has become much easier as they do not need to prepare lesson plans any longer and do not have to execute the lessons in class. Instead, the ready-made plasma lessons that are uniform to all students in all parts of the country enter the classroom despite the contextual differences of students. The policy of continuous assessment has been turned into a multiple-choice final examination per subject given at the end of each semester, since the whole semester is taken up by plasma teacher lectures. Our observations also pose many contextual questions related to the future role of teacher education, the status of the teaching profession, and the vulnerability of high-tech solutions as the remedy to educational problems in remote African situations. We also leave it to readers to put themselves in the shoes of the Ethiopian students who must watch TV sets for hours 5 days a week over 4 years of high school completion and imagine what it feels like to be put up against an inanimate object that does not have any feelings or that never interacts with you.

What is the future of teacher education, when plasma teachers perform the lessons? At one occasion we found a school totally deserted by teachers and the administration (Lemma, 2005). We were told that they had gone for a meeting and the

caretakers or guards (as they are called in Ethiopia) of the school have been instructed to open the classrooms for the students who then arranged their own lessons with the plasma teacher. It has also been observed that eventually out of frustration of neglect from lesson planning and curricula organization, teachers start to appear late at school or even be absent for petty reasons. This makes very little difference for the students since the surrogate plasma teacher replaces teachers and since teachers are systematically pushed out of their profession where they are paid meagre salaries for 'doing nothing', let alone instilling critical thinking in the growing minds of students. What kind of teacher education is needed in such situations or is it enough to engage caretakers as teachers? Parents are worried about the teachers' responsibilities in school, as they do not know who is accountable for the education of their children. Purely out of concern and professional commitment, many teachers had developed their own schemes of tutoring students during evenings and weekends to compensate for the lack of learning during plasma lessons and this at times became even contradictory to its purpose as there arose further questions about teachers' activities during ordinary school hours amongst parents, and as students and teachers seemingly are engaged in education seven days a week. These extra efforts eventually died out since they were not remunerated or officially acknowledged as part of career development for teachers. In fact they were indirectly de-motivated since they undermined the efforts put into the plasma teacher by the government. Total media solutions to educational issues are hence questionable mainly because of educational concerns and its technical vulnerability becomes obvious in contextual situations that are affected by the uncontrolled power of nature as we have been told about schools that have 'lost' their plasma teachers because of the inconsistency and unpredictability of electric power supply, repeated failures to receive satellite images, and other schools that have missed lessons for weeks when they have run out of petrol for the generator.

It is therefore difficult to refrain from commenting when you realize the damages the plasma teachers do to students, teachers, and education in general. Outrage comes forward when you understand that it is deliberately planned and installed through neo-liberal common sense under the official banners of development and improvement through efficiency and transparency for the good of the citizenry, but operates to create external control and ultimate profits for some, because plasma screens and pre-recorded media lessons are expensive and need the involvement of World Bank loans, while still local government revenues are paid for teachers who are reduced to plasma television operators and who are today nicknamed as DJs (disc-jockeys) by students. And most importantly, plasma teachers reduced the whole exercise of the teaching and learning process from critical thinking to delivery of packages to qualify students for certain grades. The lessons from the Ethiopian scenario clearly show that education purely is a commodity available on the global market for students (including the worldwide web) be it in South Africa where the lessons are developed or anywhere in the world, as in Ethiopia.

### ***A neo-liberal agenda meeting its counterforce***

When our masters course for teacher educators had been presented to teacher educators in Ethiopia, been thoroughly discussed, and teacher educators from all types of teacher education institutions in Ethiopia had been selected to the course, we were informed about the Higher Diploma Program for Teacher Educators (HDPTE) that the

Ministry of Education had decided upon as mandatory for all teacher educators in the country. An attempt was made to look at the two courses to avoid overlap and to create possible accreditations only to find that the two courses were based on totally different educational premises and difficult to combine. The orientation of the HDPTE course had its roots in a consumerist and neo-liberal view of students with learning tasks that encouraged memorisation and imitation (Hussein,2006; Tessema, 2006), while the Masters course, Critical Practitioner Inquiry (CPI) for Teacher Educators, provided a way to “empower all participants in whatever their educational circumstances to act upon their situations on the basis of critical societal and educational analysis in dialogue with the community” (Callewaert, 2006: 128). As a consequence of this situation we were told by the Ministry of Education that we were only allowed to recruit university lecturers as students on the course to the disappointment of ourselves but foremost to the dismay of teacher educators from other teacher education institutions who had already been promised a place on the course.

The CPI Masters course was based on a number of tentative postulates that had been developed collectively amongst a group of critical scholars during a number of years to alter teacher education in both core and peripheral countries and were presented in the position paper of the course (Dahlström, 2003) as follows:

- Conventional academic perspectives have a tendency to view practical knowledge (knowledge of practice) as an application of academic knowledge and not as a form of knowledge in its own right. Hence the needs for situational knowledge as an alternative form of knowledge. The concept situational knowledge is used to describe a combination of knowledge of practice and contextual knowledge that is developed through Critical Practitioner Inquiry. Knowledge of practice is a type of embodied knowledge that often has been adapted to the academic paradigm. This adaptation has given it a theoretical dress that has been delivered back to practitioners as educational recipe books. Critical Practitioner Inquiry is an attempt to break this cycle of academic and technical adaptation. Hence the needs to combine the embodied knowledge of practice with critical knowledge about the conditions for practice in the form of situational knowledge, without allowing a conservative academic turn.
- In order to cope with social situations in a realistic way, educators as well as other practitioners have to integrate into their perspective the view that both practical and academic knowledge are social constructions in pluralistic and difficult terrains of power. The ensuing conclusion is that a constant struggle is staged over which knowledge is legitimate and who are the legitimate carriers as well as learners of that knowledge. Hence the importance of a view that looks at curriculum as a social construction and a field for the struggle over the preferential right of interpretation.
- A basic problem is that education tends to be seen as a system of delivery that does not take into account critical thinking, previous experiences, or learning in society as a whole because delivery systems are based on taken for granted knowledge (common sense). Hence the importance of a pedagogy that

includes critical, historical, and experiential perspectives that avoid reducing education to a simplistic and linear relation between teaching and learning.

- Education has to take a drastic turn to invent a new humane practice out of the destructive confrontation between tradition and mainstream westernisation that is taking place in peripheral countries. A new direction shall acknowledge and institutionalise practical and contextual knowledge and the social construction of meaning. It shall involve community and bring back in an accessible way to community the knowledge and skills that education generates to enhance social justice. Hence the importance of a radical pedagogy that acknowledges culture and civil society as integrated fields of educational endeavours.

Hussein (2006:b) has given a full account of his and some of his colleagues experiences from the CPI Masters course from a student perspective and claims that it has accomplished perspective transformation amongst its students. Some of the course participants said the following when they were asked to reflect on the course journey (Dahlström, 2006):

Previously we received things as is and we may not challenge it. As to me being a participant of the CPI gave me the confidence and the critical eyes to look at things around me.

Another student said:

Since I started the programme I have changed a lot. I have developed a consciousness about schooling in general and how schooling affects the life of people. Also the way we get involved in our inquiries is changing us a lot – we did not have this kind of culture before. This kind of education I think is the most important thing that is missing from the conventional type of education in this country.

Further information on Critical Practitioner Inquiry as an emancipative educational approach towards social justice is available at the website of the Global South Network: <http://alfa.ped.umu.se/projekt/globalsouthnetwork/>

### **A tentative reflection**

Teacher education and education in general is transformed worldwide following the neo-liberal technical rationality. Teachers are reduced to technical caretakers and teacher educators are expected to act as stooges, to stop thinking by themselves and to act collectively, and only to implement whatever the centrally directed changes call them to do. However, as Gramsci (1971) once said and history has taught us since then, hegemonies are not absolute and for ever. Even in a situation like the one in Ethiopia there is room for counter-hegemonic forces to act and to allow eagles to fly!

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## **Clinging to the managerial approach in implementing teacher education 'reform' tasks in ethiopia**

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### **Abstract**

In this paper, the author argues that the pre-service secondary teacher education 'paradigm shift' or 'system overhaul' that has been implemented during the 2003-2005 time period in Ethiopia reflects the pursuit of pathways which the author refers to as a managerial approach. Grounded mainly on personal narratives of a key self-narrator and views of other faculty reform performers, the author brings to surface the ideology upheld by central reform planners and administrators. The author identifies four reform tasks to demonstrate the consistency in the paths pursued to effect policies of central priorities. These reform tasks which mainly concern changes in curriculum and instruction were planned and have been effected in managerial spaces and tools. The author further argues that, in effect, if not in intent, the managerial approach has had a sidelining effect because the larger practitioners, professional associations, communities, student teachers, and private popular media have been given little or no opportunities for participation. According to the author, the approach has also reduced pedagogical concerns and values to an adjunct or secondary position.

**Key words:** managerial approach, reform, teacher education, practicum

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## Introduction

Education has recently become a terrain of insurmountable and perplexing discourse and practice. Both popular and professional media seem to have given discussions of educational issues a significant degree of attention in recent years. In particular, the times leading to May 2005 election in Ethiopia, education apparently remained a crucial and top agenda of election campaigns and debates. Moreover, the reform movement that was launched formally in 1994 has recently attracted professional discussions in various symposia. In this paper, I assess this same educational 'reform' movement in Ethiopia which has apparently 'reshaped' the discourse and practice of education in Ethiopia. My particular concern is, however, to examine the pre-service secondary teacher education *reform tasks* that have been commissioned by the Ministry of Education since 2003.

Lived stories of a reform participant in the form of episodic narratives [1] and views of other practitioners constitute the main part of the evidence in my analysis of the reform tasks. The focus on lived stories [2] of a participant whose concern for and intimacy with the teacher education profession has a methodological significance. My reform analysis begins with a brief background of the educational reform movements in Ethiopia which spans over half a century. The background is hoped to put my analysis in a historical context.

Then I describe four teacher education reform tasks that have been carried out since 2003. I finally discuss the reform tasks with the notions of human capital and institutional control which are reflective of the agendas of the reform administrators. By doing so, I wish to surface the dominance of the managerial approach.

### Historical Background of Educational 'Reforms' in Ethiopia

Since formal education took a modern Western style schooling structure at about 1908 in Ethiopia (Tekeste, 1990; Marew, et al., 2000), state actors have self-adjusted in various historical moments to make formal education as appealing as possible so that they would win the hearts and minds of those target groups intended to please. In other words, in various times in history of formal education in Ethiopia, large scale reforming activities have been undertaken to change and modernize formal education. The reform movements might be better presented in terms of the distinctive political and historical contexts they occurred. These reform movements encompass a period roughly spanning from 1950s to present. During this half a century, three state structures have succeeded. Therefore, the reform movements roughly correspond with the periods of the three distinctive governments. Historical and political analyses (e.g. Tekeste, 1990) largely emphasize the impetus of public frustration and discontent on formal education to forceful changes in state structures.

The first period of reform movement or campaign is traced back to 1950s during which the intervention of USA through its Education Advisory Group impacted hugely the Ministry of Education to pursue a policy of rapid expansion in primary schooling. Moreover, the Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa which was held in Addis Ababa in 1961 was an impetus for the reform activities followed in subsequent years. In particular, targets set by the conference to reach Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 1980 were influential in

pushing the then imperial government to pushing towards a policy of massification (Tekeste, 1990). With the added impact of the USA's advisory team, the conference led the state to restructure the schooling system and increase enrollments. One of the noticeable changes during this time was the emergence of the Faculty of Education in Addis Ababa University in 1961.

However, in early 1970s it became evident that the policy and reform campaigns proved far from success. Tekeste (1990) contends that dissatisfaction with Ethiopia's performance with regard to expanding primary education as set by the 1961 Addis Ababa conference was expressed by UNESCO and other international organizations. Intimidated by the disapproving rhetoric, the imperial state launched another campaign to review the activities of the educational sector. To this effect, the Education Sector Review (ESR) was entrusted with the task of evaluating the educational sector and to coming up with better alternatives. Accordingly, the ESR recommended alternative courses of action to hasten primary education to reach UPE by 1980. However, the domestic discontent had already reached a revolting climax in which the middleclass and university students spearheaded a campaign of government change. Therefore, it was too late for the government to appease the disenchanted with a shift of policy. Even before the proposal of the ESR began to be digested, the imperial government was overthrown through coupdetat in 1974[3].

The second period of reform movement began two years after the coup. A policy direction was highlighted in the document titled the National Democratic Revolution in 1976. In 1980, the Ministry of Education published the General Directives of Ethiopian Education in which a detailed framework was outlined. Mekwanint (2000) explains:

Following the 1974 revolution, the military government believed that the educational system as a whole needed a major overhaul based on... Marxist-Leninist values. The solution to the fundamental problems of Ethiopian education was conceived to be what came to be known as the General Polytechnic Education. (pp. 30-31).

Very much similar to its predecessor, the new government decided a time target to reach Universal Primary Education by 2000. To this aim, teacher preparation activities were scaled up a certain degree by opening additional training centers called Teacher Training Institute (TTI) and Teacher Training College (TTC). Following this, thousands of teachers were prepared, resulting in increased primary school enrollments. However, the target set to reach to all school age children with primary school provision was once again far from what had been projected. As a result, the government, like its predecessor, called for a comprehensive review of the education sector in 1983. The official call for the national educational review was also partly motivated by the apparent realization of the growing public discontent concerning the poor condition of schooling.

In response to the official call, the Ministry of Education mandated the Evaluative Research on the General Education System of Ethiopia a comprehensive study and possible recommendations. The review task force, following positivistic research method, which was partly flawed (see Tekeste, 1990), revealed several weaknesses and problematic situations and outlined 'remedial' actions. Although the

government had 'recipes' for a possible course of action, the heightened war in the northern part of the country and rebellious engagements by various groups elsewhere constrained resources and the morale of 'loyal' politicians. After seventeen years in power, the government was dismantled brutally with all its administrative and defensive structures 1991[4].

The third educational reform movement began as soon as the succeeding government established its grip on power. Although a shift in policy and direction was officialized in 1994 with the Training and Education Policy, the regional administrations had already taken certain actions to restructure schooling, such as the introduction of mother tongue as medium of instruction in primary schools found in certain regions, and its follow up measure mainly the removal of primary threshold national examination. Following the formalization of the 'reforming' education policy in 1994, the government has taken several readjustment and restructuring measures, such as the apparent decentralization of primary schools, secondary schools, and teacher education colleges; the introduction of a grade ten leaving national examination that determines whether students should go to vocational or academic studies; the reduction of undergraduate studies by one year; the introduction of liberal policies which include the private school and college licensure; the large-scale expansion of undergraduate and graduate programs supported by World Bank/UNDP funding to constructing several public universities and recruiting of expatriate (mostly Indians) instructors having higher degrees [5]. As it always is, the impact of USA (e.g. through USAID, particularly BESO) and European Union (e.g. with its trendy self-naming as "donor countries") seem to be actively influencing the direction of Ethiopian education through the financial resources and expertise they offer to the country.

The third reform movement includes the setting of UPE [6] target. The target has been set for 2015, possibly in line with the Millennium Development Goals. To this effect, the government has been much more expansive than its predecessors in building primary schools, especially in rural areas. According to the latest restructure, a two-tier arrangement has been introduced as First Cycle Primary (1-4) and Second Cycle Primary (5-8). To speed up enrollments, the government has introduced free promotions from one grade level to another as well as a policy of self-contained teaching in First Cycle Primary. Moreover, to prepare as many teachers as possible to cater for the growing number of students, teacher preparation system has been restructured [7].

To conclude this brief review of major reform movements in Ethiopia, I would point out an important and cross-cutting feature. The history of large scale and comprehensive educational reform tasks indicate that each new government largely appeared to use formal education as a tool to mobilize the populace towards its political agendas. The reform history reveals significant parallels among the three alternating state: the manipulation of formal education to consolidate the control of public services and perpetuate the *status quo*. Moreover, the influence of international institutions and Western donors is always strong that the change agendas and directions are generally influenced, at times, engineered by them. However, outsider's direct influence in the formal education of Ethiopia in the past, as well as, at present, which has often been prescriptive and ideological imposition largely have had little impacts in improving education. The prescriptive change advice is often fruitless

because they often disregard local (Ethiopia's peculiar and diverse) contexts. Public officials at times bow down to donors'/lenders' policy imposition though they would realize the adverse effects or minimal impacts (see Samoff, 1999; Banal, 2002).

### **Narratives of Four Reform Tasks: Characterizing the Pre-service Secondary Teacher Education Reform**

I use the term 'managerial approach' to characterize the nature of reforming pathways center-staged in the latest teacher education. The term, though not common in the literature, refers to methods, routes, etc. that give precedence to administrability rather than pedagogical values (knowledge (co)-constructions, justice, collaboration, inclusiveness in co-joint decision making and opportunities). The term also emphasizes the concept of involving mainly people in the management to accomplish a teacher education reform task, whether the activity calls for the involvement of managers or not. The term is deliberately selected to emphasize the hierarchical, top-down, and centrally-controlled enactment of reform task. It also reflects the systematic sidelining of teacher educators in the form of deprofessionalization, deskilling, and intensification. Researchers who have studied educational reforms (e.g. Fullan, 1993; Goodlad, 1991; Sarson, 1990; Taylor & Teddlie, 1992; Schlechty, 1990; Ball, 1994; Liston & Zeichner, 1991) contend that educational reforms fail largely because reform planners and implementers ignore the fundamental characteristics of instructional and curricular changes. Educational reform management is often equated with industrial or corporate reform management. Consequently, under girding educational reform worldwide is the corporate style restructuring model that focuses on efficiency and administrability. The ideology of economic rationalism and the implicit intent to tighten control over institutions and practitioners are overriding other national agendas such as access and equity. Economic rationalism is the basis for educational reforms not only in developing countries but also in industrialized states. After the emergence of the concept of the *human capital* in 1960s and 1970s, the importance of education to accumulate wealth became popular. Blackmore (1997) explains:

'Human capital' theory has tended to dominate the official view of the school-work link during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It presumes an instrumental view of the relationship between school and work. At macro level, human capital theory assumes an essentially structuralist-functionalist view of the education-society relationship. It presumes direct, linear and positive correlation between education and technology, education and individual productivity, education and national economic productivity. At the micro level, the model can be summarized thus: education is an investment which benefits both the individual (and the nation) in that education proportionally increases the potential for individual effort (productive work) and the economic rewards gained from this effort (p. 226).

Although the human capital model has increasingly informed educational policy, it has often been criticized for its claims of universality and determinism (see Blackmore, 1997; Vallas, 1990). The link between education and wealth has often been presented as a basis for reform and improvement. The rationale for reform is increasingly couched in economic needs (Ball, 1994). When education reform is couched in the ideology of economic rationalism, the focus of the change is usually

on efficiency, cost reduction, competitiveness, privatization, managerialism, and corporate culture. According to Smyth (2001), restructuring takes place along lines that "... reinstitute hierarchies, diminish co-operation, foster competitive individualism... requiring them (schools) to be entrepreneurial and more like business" (p. 32). Fuller (1991) also elaborates:

Political elites draw on sacred Western beliefs or faith that the school contributes to individual development which, in turns, spurs economic expansion. Dipping into the symbolic scriptures of materials secularism, the state projects its obligations, commitments, and builds *trust with the polity* that it can deliver (p.71).

In some of the official discourses, various forms of arguments have been put forward to show the direct relationship between education and economic development. For example, courses that focus on entrepreneurship have been suggested. The need to introduce cost-sharing and cost-reduction has also been surfaced in various documents. Perhaps the cut in the duration of undergraduate course relate to such an argument (see MoE, 1999).

Gewirtz and Ball (2000, p.256) also state that policies are stuffed towards "new managerialism" with its customer-oriented ethos, concern for efficiency, cost-effectiveness and competition, and emphasis on individual relations. Economic rationalism, as often argued (e.g. Blackmore, 1997; Ashton & Green, 1996), is often couched in "skilling" concepts which include "multi-skilling", "reskilling", and "deskilling". Education is taken as a preparation for the free market.

The impacts of economic rationalism in educational reform are profound. Gewirtz and Ball (2000, p. 253) argue that such reforms have consequences "not only for work practices, organizational methods and social relationships but also for values of schooling." In a similar vein, Robertson (2000, p.28) describes the shift in values as a "transformation of cultural assets: from trusteeship to entrepreneurship, procedural to marked bureaucracy, and collective to individual association." Sinclair (1996, p. 234), too, states the emergence of a new managerial discourse with "new icons such as outcomes and missions, new rituals to enshrine them including corporate planning, performance evaluation, and new fiscal accountability arrangements."

The economic rationalism results in the emphasis of instrumental purposes of schooling such as scaling up standards, student achievements (which must be corroborated by conventional testing), levels of attendance and school leaver destinations. Such instrumental pursuits are frequently articulated within a lexicon of enterprise, excellence, quality and effectiveness (Gewirtz and Ball, 2000). Such pathways also have a damaging consequence on the lives and work of teachers (Smyth, 2001). According to Gee et al (1996,) educational institutions adopt a kind of socio-technical engineering such as a new set of tools and procedures, designed to change social relations in the work place. Smyth (2001, p. 10) elaborates the effects of such a rationality by identifying three relays: (1) the culture and character of teaching corrupts because there is a tendency to individual responsibility for delivering out comes; 2) school administration focuses on pursuing corporate visions

rather than supporting the work of teaching; and (3) teachers have to lead divided lives owing to the dislocation of their pedagogic and professional identities.

Giroux (2000, p. 85) succinctly argues that central to such a reform agenda is the attempt to “transform public education from a public good, benefiting all students, to a private good designed to expand the profits of investors, educate students as consumers and train young people for the low paying jobs of the new global marketplace.” Summing it all, Sinclair (1996, p.229) states, “The debate about the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of education is superseded by a fixation on the ‘how’.”

The second explanation to the pursuit of the managerial approach derives from the behaviour of the state apparatus and the state actors. When the Ideology of state administration is propelled by the desire to secure an uncontested political control, education becomes an important means to such an end. As a result, the reform planners and implementers would be those who must be trusted ideologically and managerially. In the process, those whose pedagogical interest supersedes that of political control would be sidelined. The state then trusts the managers who are at varying administration roles because of their apparent loyalty to the state ideology. Because of this, according to Fuller (1991, p.68), “when educational reforms are attempted, they are embedded in...traditional bureaucratic structure. So, changes are translated into a Weberian sequence of reducing complex tasks into revitalized steps which are then sanctioned through hierarchical regulation.” Fuller also argues that state officials exert control over the content of the curriculum by subscribing to a uniform national curriculum, standard materials and tests. Instructional means invented by the state often reinforce the social rules and form of activities enacted by the teacher. By doing so, they signal and legitimate certain form of authority and human interaction that come to be seen as normal in a modern organization.

I would try to illustrate the dominance of pathways typically associated with this approach by identifying four ‘important’ *reform tasks* commissioned by the Ministry of Education [8]. The reform tasks include: 1) designing a reforming framework; 2) reframing curriculum; 3) planning or writing modules; and 4) managing practicum crisis.

### ***‘Designing’ a reforming framework***

The emergence of the discourse of TESO [9] was an important element of the reform tasks. The discourse of TESO appeared in November 2002 with a document titled “A National Framework for Teacher Education System Overhaul”. With this document, the Ministry of Education formally embarked on the rhetoric of ‘system overhaul’ and ‘paradigm shift’ in the national teacher education. The document outlines, what I here refer to as a ‘reforming framework’: the rationale, the mission, the vision, and the objectives of the sought teacher education in Ethiopia. The document reflects a strategic planning and management model in its approach. For instance, the committee-based curriculum planning put forward prominently in the document is atypical feature of the strategic planning and management model. I quote an illustrative paragraph from the document:

Members will be drawn from TEIs [Teacher Education Institutes], MOE [Ministry of Education], VSO [Voluntary Service Overseas] and the steering

committee. The members will be divided into three groups: first cycle primary, second cycle primary and secondary teacher education. For the initial work a core group will be formed consisting of the steering committee (1), VSO (2), TEIs (3), and MOE (4). Education professionals from the MOE, TEIs and REBs [Regional Education Bureaus] will work with the sub-committee (MoE, 2002, p.23).

The document also suggests that participants from NGO partners such as DfID, Ireland Aid and BESO [10] be included in the process. It is evident in the above excerpt that the need for reform, the type of the reform, and the pathways of the reform were conceived in managerial spaces rather than in the actual setting where teacher education takes place. By following a top-down approach the Ministry of Education through this official document decided the composition of the 'reforming' task force or committee. The committee-based work plan was deliberately intended to involve individuals who would likely come from managerial positions, for example, deans, department heads, and program coordinators. Furthermore, if by chance teacher educators or curriculum specialists happen to be among the committee members, given the committee composition suggested, the contribution such people make would be quite minimal or insignificant for their power to influence those participants from the management is small. By making rare references to the actual practitioners (e.g. teacher educators), the document also reduced important reform performers to an adjunct position.

Arguably, the reforming framework signaled from the start the approach or direction. For instance, references to the role of school teachers, faculty teacher educators, students, and parents are made in the document only passingly. Therefore, the document was a rhetoric signal concerning the decision making direction intended.

### ***'Reframing' curriculum***

Teacher education curriculum framework was further detailed in the National Curriculum Guideline for Pre-service Teacher Education Programmes which was issued in 2003. The document, in a rather prescriptive style, identifies teacher education duration, amount of course work and practicum in credit hours, sequence of courses (including titles of several courses), and practicum schedules. Having circulated the document sometime ahead, the Ministry of Education summoned representatives of six university faculties in Addis Ababa. Below, I describe the meeting partly by focusing on the critical encounter/scene with an episodic narrative of my key self narrator:

As I was chair of the Department of English Language, I received a call from the dean of the Faculty of Education, where I had a fulltime faculty position, to travel to Addis Ababa with my colleagues (all chairs of academic departments in the faculty) for a national meeting. The dean didn't have the details about the meeting. Without knowing the reason for the meeting, we all went for the meeting. At the meeting, we were briefed about the meeting and instructed to work in subject groups. I sat among six chairs representing six Departments of English Language of six universities in the country. After a few minutes of self-introduction by each, we worked out titles of courses and

amount of work required in each in credit hours. We preferred a simplistic approach in that we recalled the courses we used to offer and made modifications in them in ways that they fit into the framework we were instructed to follow. Then we divided the courses among us and wrote course objectives, contents, methods, and assessment procedures (Excerpt 1: personal story).

This personal story, too, demonstrably points to the managerial approach at the centre of reframing curriculum. It is highly likely and as it might well be, the Ministry of Education had called for department chairs' meeting because of their managerial proxy positionality. The person, whose story was quoted above, was invited to the meeting as a leader of an academic department; it was not with his teacher educator identity. Therefore, the meeting was part of the 'managerial politics' played out by state officials for their publicity tent. It was a managerial trick to 'demonstrate' to international lenders and the skeptical public that the reform was participatory.

That the 'consultative' meeting was a mere publicity trick might possibly be illustrated with the way the reform administrators behaved:

More troubling was the rigidity of the reform planners and administrators who were delegated from the center. We, participants who were delegated from the peripheries, were not allowed to make any changes whatsoever on the curriculum framework handed out to us. As a consequence, we didn't have the motivation and synergy to making expected contributions. Like my fellow colleagues and participants, I repeatedly self-withdrew from the tasks through withholding relevant information, reluctance to speak up my mind, and sometimes by being absent. In the closing ceremony, delegates expressed their positions and opinions disapprovingly. Among the disapproving comments expressed by participants, the length i.e. the three-year pre-service teacher education, the amount of credit hours allocated (i.e. 25 credits out of the total 108) for practicum were in the forefront (Excerpt 2: personal story).

### ***Module 'planning' or 'writing'***

A few months after writing course titles, objectives, codes, credits, methods, and assessment procedures, the Ministry of Education ( through its sub-committee ) recalled faculty delegates most of whom were participants in the previous meeting. I describe the meeting and its consequence with another critical encounter/scene episodic narrative of my key self narrator:

I arrived for the meeting with the usual uncertainty. The vice minister, escorted by Ministry of Education officers and overseas volunteers, explained why the 'consultative meeting' was needed and what was expected of us. Small groups were formed bringing together individuals having the same specialization. Unlike the previous meeting, during the second one, a lecture was given by overseas volunteers who worked at the Ministry of Education on methods of giving students active-learning experiences and written guidelines on module writing. Day one meeting was characterized by angry questions, dismissive comments and total withdrawals because we were asked to write

course texts or materials which would require intensive cognitive, emotional and physical involvements. In spite of a strong resistance, we were forced into the business. If force and imposition bore fruits, our work on subsequent days would be fruitful. On the closing ceremony, the vice minister appeared and spoke on the success of the meeting. Delighted by the ‘work’ we accomplished, he presented further instructions that we must engage our teaching staff who work under us to produce course books for all courses (Excerpt 3: personal story).

Top-down management is so deceptive that a superficial ‘acceptance’ of a certain course of action by line managers is taken as a ‘managerial success’.

At the meeting, we gave in to the pressure of the vice minister and the head of Teacher Education Department at the Ministry of Education. That was merely a self-protection move. We did not want to jeopardize the image senior officials had about us. During the time we were there, i.e. three days, in my group, we wrote a thirty-page lesson, largely by modifying available literature, in a modular structure we were instructed to adopt (Excerpt 4: personal story).

Contrary to the ministerial position, the majority of teacher education practitioners sanctioned the implementation of the reform through their agency. I cite a few examples which my key informant revealed to me: Teacher educators have refused to write modules without some financial rewards for almost two years; they have often remained reluctant to adopt the modified course syllabus sticking into the old; still a great number of teacher educators would prefer to involve their student teachers in school experience in the same old ways by ignoring the new components introduced as field experiences known as the **practicum**. Although the practicum has been designed as a major component of teacher education with 20% of the entire teacher education work and action research requirements, I have not yet seen teacher educators’ commitment that signal the involvement of student teachers in such a degree.

### *‘Managing’ practicum crisis*

The initial core discourse vocabulary such as ‘teacher education system overhaul’ and ‘paradigm shift’ introduced by TESO towards effecting student-centered and democratic education which have been formalized in various documents (e.g. MoE, 2002, 2003) have resulted in several intractable situations. The most noticeable was, and still is, the enormity of the challenges and the overwhelming condition created following the introduction of the new practicum. In the place of student-centered and school-based educative opportunities sought by TESO, faculties all over Ethiopia have found the practicum insurmountable and, in some cases, totally “unmanageable”. It was widely felt the situation reached crisis. Then, the Ministry of Education commissioned a national workshop of six teacher education faculties in Ethiopia which was held at Alemaya University from October 27-28, 2005. Although the workshop was intended as a forum where faculties would present each well researched proposals, the workshop was dominated by a purely administrability and manageability matters.

Moreover, the managerial approach was evident in this workshop. To illustrate with examples, I begin by mentioning the participants present in the workshop. Each university was represented by vice presidents, deans, and practicum coordinators. Besides, the host university, namely Alemaya University, invited all its heads of each department and administrative units. From the Ministry of Education, a vice minister and head of the Teacher Education Department were present.

The objective of the workshop was stated as follows:

Upon completion of the workshop activities the participating teacher education institutions (TEIs) shall develop a common understanding ... All TEIs shall operate in unison following uniform working guidelines. Significant changes shall be recommended towards improvement in the structure and content of the existing curricula (Faculty Archive, 2005, p.7).

The two-day workshop was dominated by managerial issues that have ramifications for the practicum, which included student teacher transportation to partner schools, their subsistence and accommodation, the amount of credits/hours regarding the practicum, inconsistency among instructors concerning student teachers grading on their practicum activities, and assignment of advisors to student teachers. Each institution recommended a significant cut in the credit given to practicum by the Ministry of Education experts. The quantitatively focused recommendations never raised substantive matters that have pedagogical justifications. Reflective of the quantitatively-oriented arguments during the meeting was the final agreement reached to cut practicum credits, i.e., practicum activities all together have been suggested to be limited to 13 credits. The Ministry of Education had strictly been sticking to 25 credits because practicum is one of the priorities in its reform process. Both in the proceeding as well as in the discussions during the two day workshop, there was nothing that amounted to debates or deliberations on pedagogical matters.

Another routinized practice which is worth-surfacing here as a managerial approach is the faculty-based problem solving meetings. According to my key self-narrator, the Academic Commission of the Faculty of Education, which mainly consists of chairs, often meets to deliberate on various academic issues. In the last two years, the most recurrent and dominant issue has been the practicum. Very often, the Commission has met to decide on school placement, assignment of faculty advisors, sizing up of activities for practicum, assessment procedures and financial support to student teachers. Oddly, such issues have never been considered as pedagogical agendas needing pedagogical deliberations. To date, I have not seen any significant and recognizably impacting faculty scheme that carries out research and dialogical inquiry to inform the faculty on issues spanning from curriculum to the practicum.

I was able to get other participants' reflected their views on the reform tasks. Seven of the current acting chairs of the departments at the Faculty of Education, Alemaya University, who participated in the four reform tasks partially or wholly, expressed largely consistent views with the stories of the key self-narrator when they responded to the explanatory statements I handed out to them (see Appendix).

*Table 1.*

Responses of seven chairs of departments at the Faculty of Education, Alemaya University (Instead of actual names, pseudonyms are used).

<b>Response category</b>	<b>Textual evidence</b>
Non-participatory Reform Tasks	<p>The reform process is largely orchestrated by the central government through the Ministry of Education. It is a top down approach, and the invitation of heads of departments on several occasions to Addis Ababa for consultative meetings is not genuinely intended to listen to what they would say. It is simply a publicity strategy to convince the public and donors that the reform is participatory. (Ibsa, Wasihun, and Moges)</p> <p>In addition to this [The above], stakeholders like teacher association, the community, the students, experts in the area were not participated/involved. (Alebachew)</p> <p>...the way the reform addressed was top to down. (Tesfaye)</p> <p>The reform process of Education in Ethiopia simply seems participatory on paper. But, it is not indeed. Rather it is a forced reform process by the central government through the Ministry of Education. (Hunegnaw)</p>
Participatory but Constrained Reform Tasks	<p>...the reform was conducted after carrying out several workshops or meetings. Therefore, it was participatory....I disagree with this statement [the quote in the above category], the Ministry's role was simply to give directions. Most of the reform was done by conducting consultative meetings. But this doesn't mean that the ideas forwarded by staff are accepted. Sometimes there was rigidity. (Abdulsemed)</p>

Two possible categories have emerged from the response the seven chairs accorded: non-participatory and constrained participatory. While most of the participant respondents hold unambiguous position that the reform tasks were non-participatory, one person signaled a somewhat cautious approval of the Ministry's methodology. As far as the consequence of the reform tasks are concerned, one participant chair stated:

...the output of this reform process is just putting millions of school children in confusion. (Hunegnaw )

Two respondents, however, indicated practice has improved following the reform tasks. One of them directly accorded statements 3 as it is which is in the open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix):

The current teacher education program is better because it has moved forward by addressing teacher education problems such as classroom teacher authoritarianism, monocultural curriculum, assessment that encourages fact learning rather than critical reflection, centralized academic leadership, and lack of inquiry & research to improve instruction. (Tefsaye)

This respondent though seemed not totally happy with the reform approach when he added the statement: “However, the way the reform addressed was top to down.” The second respondent, who observed improvements, stated his view as follows:

...the current teacher education program is better. It brought several changes. But it needs some improvements. (Abdulsemad)

The above categories and quotes signal in general how the participants of the reform view about the ‘opportunities’ the Ministry of Education created to involve the faculty leadership staff in the major reform tasks. Despite their presence in various consultative meetings and implementational activities, they feel they did not involve, at least genuinely, in the process. Their assessment at large is in harmony of the specific cases and experiences presented earlier.

Nevertheless, it is dangerous to ignore the minority view that lends some approval of the process. For example, the two participant respondents who stated above improvements in the teacher education seem to be approving the new practices and changes which the state also boasts of. These state self-claimed changes include the implementation of on-the-job methodology course for all educators(HDP), the faculty wide module writing activities, student teachers deployment to secondary schools for an extended period of time for ‘school experience’, unprecedented enrollment increase and physical expansions of universities, etc. Such specifics are quite observable pieces of evidence that I could hardly deny. Part of the conceptual challenge, as far as assessing reform is concerned, the presence of changes which are concrete and appear to be positive. The views held by the two respondents, for example, though it is a minority view, often make me reconceptualize my reform assessment methodology. This is part of the reason why the views of seven chairs have become an element of the data for this paper. It is therefore possible to imagine the tension and harmony among various views of reform

### **Discussion**

The foregoing analysis of the four reform tasks and relevant matters with self-narrations and views of faculty chairs has surfaced a remarkable degree of indicators of the managerial approach which might possibly be identified with seven key *manifestations* and *characteristics*:

1. There is a focus on *instrumentality*—a narrow focus on the accomplishment of quantitative goals above all else (e.g. enrollment increase).

2. Activities are *manipulatively* directed by the will of individuals rather than by institutionalized pedagogical values (e.g. TESO task forces).
3. Decisions are usually made on the grounds of *administrability* (e.g. the decision by the Teacher Education National Workshop deliberations and faculty regular Academic Commission meetings).
4. Planning is remarkably carried out by a *centrally controlled* agents and disseminated downwards for implementation through *formalistic documents* and rhetoric (e.g. the curriculum guideline prepared by the MoE task forces and sent down for implementation).
5. There is a greater tendency to *act on the immediate* rather than on the long-term (e.g. the routinized activities in relation to the practicum at faculties).
6. Curricular and instructional changes are made without taking into account *multiple voices* through *top-down, linear, and hierarchical* routes and means (e.g. the homogeneity of the participants who participated in various meetings commissioned by the Ministry of Education).
7. The motivation for increased *control* from the center is often justified by *standardization* and *uniformity* (e.g. the insistence of the Ministry of Education on making all faculties of education in the country to adopt a uniform curriculum and schedule).

The managerial approach has vividly signaled the position of the reform planners and administrators concerning the often challenging dilemmas many countries encounter. Lessons from educational reforms carried out worldwide indicate that there are always dilemmas with regard to priority setting. On the one hand, there are global and national agendas such as access and equity. On the other hand, there are local needs and interests such as relevance, empowerment, and decision-making. So, issues of decentralization versus centralization as well as bureaucracy versus professionalism are always intractable to politicians who design educational policies. According to Hargreaves (1997), there are four equally important dilemmas of structuring: vision vs. voice, mandates vs. menus, trust in people vs. trust in processes, and structure vs. culture.

The reform movement I am assessing has apparently signaled so far in effect, if not in intent, clinging to more of the central visions rather than the voices of various groups; more of trust in loyal reform planners and administrators rather than trust in processes; more of strengthening managerial structure rather than fostering an empowering culture of teacher education.

I intend to develop the vision vs. voice dilemma the state faced with and its position a bit further. Despite rhetorical improvements concerning the need to recognize those voices which were previously not heard, neglected, and rejected, the managerial approach has helped the system maintain the *status quo*. One of such voices is women's voice. Women are significantly and implicitly excluded from the change process. This is evident in the meeting stories and national workshop described earlier. In both the meetings and the workshop, women were rarely

delegated. It was possibly so in the subcommittees nominated by the Ministry of Education. Their glaring absences were mainly due to the fact that there were (and still are) few women assuming managerial positions in the educational sector. Therefore, the managerial approach strengthens the traditional male and elite ownership, in which power is exercised over women. Moreover, other minorities and majorities whose voices were suppressed in the past, remain to be unrepresented in the change process. Managers are often individuals who were mostly part of the mainstream culture and structure. Therefore, the curriculum that comes out from such a process often lack pluri-voice and authenticity. The curriculum is usually of monocultural which reflects the culture and interests of dominant groups and participants. According to Hargreaves (1997), in such cases, management becomes manipulation. Curriculum helps maintain the “monopoly of wisdom”.

The values and the ethical standards teacher education is encapsulated in are not recognized if the reform actors are only managers. If classroom teaching and pedagogical activities are not recognized as the primary agenda of the reform, everything boils down to cosmetic and structural reformulation. ‘Paradigm shift’ becomes a move to maintain *status quo*. The traditional conception of “knowledge” and “knowledge sharing” remains intact as the dictatorship of technical rationality is the ideology of the managers who are orchestrating the reform discourse. Any reform initiative, whether it is focused on the district, the nation, or the classroom it conveys certain values and world views (see Fullan, 1991; Hargreaves, 1994). Reform communicates a vision of what it means to be an educated person. It is based on a vision of what teachers (and other actors) are supposed to be doing. According to Little (1993), powerful reform ideas engage teachers in a broader consideration of the cultural foundations of the educational enterprise both in and outside of the classroom. The notion of “classroom activism” (see Anderson et al., 1994; Waff, 1994; Bell, 1996) is needed if change is really genuinely in the mind and heart of the reform administrators.

I now turn to explaining what I feel to be important components of a teacher education reform. My argument is that there must be a rethink of the current managerial approach. State actors must realize the immense professionalism teacher education entails, and involve those who live in it, feel it better and have a close experience of it. Therefore, I would suggest the need to be inclusive and radical by focusing on teacher development, curriculum, assessment, school-faculty collaboration, system and administration, and interdisciplinary inquiry and research. Teacher development or professionalization of teacher educators is key to teacher education reform. One pathway to develop the confidence and ethical mission of teacher educators is teacher development schemes. Current schemes such as Higher Diploma Program simply maintain the status quo by consolidating the dictatorship of technical rationality and imposition. There is a need for a more participatory and relevant and owned schemes.

Another element of reform in teacher education is, by and large, the improvement of instruction. Because of the managerial trend in action, the Ministry of Education has sought to improve instruction only through the hegemonic on-the-job skills training model by designing a one-year Higher Diploma Program. It appears from such teaching conception that knowledge of predetermined technical

procedures is all what teachers need to deliver meaningful lessons. However, Darling-Hammond (1997) argues that teaching is not routine implementation:

Such an approach[top-down determination of instructional components] can work when tasks are predictable and unvaried....teaching decisions are many; teaching strategies must be continually adapted to different subject areas, learning goals, and student approaches and needs. To teach successfully, teachers must have both the knowledge about teaching and learning needed to manage the complex process of getting diverse students to learn well and the discretion to practice variably rather than routinely (p. 334).

This is not the conception of teaching that has informed the reform movement I am assessing. Furthermore, a shift towards a more inquiry and research based activities is crucial to improve the pedagogy of teacher preparation. Improving teacher education needs both institution building as well as pedagogical improvements. Fullan (1993) states that change agency—being self-conscious about the nature of reform and the change process—is necessary to make change continual and institutionalized. He identifies four requirements to develop a “generative change capacity”. These are “personal vision building, inquiry, mastery, and collaboration” (p.12). Of these, I would see inquiry as the most important element in the process of change. According to Pascal (1990), “the essential activity for keeping our paradigm current is persistent questioning....Inquiry is the engine of vitality and self-renewal” (p.14). Inquiry is “internalizing norms, habits and techniques for continuous learning” (Fullan, 1993, p. 15). With regard to system reform, an ethical leadership and administration tends to be inclusive, and such a system must be institutionalized. The leadership structure must focus on the process of preparing teachers who have the knowledge base to self-educate and improve continually. One of the elements is the building of an ethical institution that fosters a developmental and democratic leadership process. An ethical and institutionalized leadership is based on key educational values, and such is trust-building. Hargreaves (1997) argues that the centre piece to reforming education is the establishment of trust. He elaborates:

Processes to be trusted...are ones that maximize the organization’s collective expertise and improve its problem solving capacities. These include improved communication, shared decision-making, creation of opportunities for collegial learning, networking with outside environment, commitment to continuous inquiry and so on. Trust in people remains important, but trust in expertise and processes supersedes it. Trust in processes is open-ended and risky. But it is probably essential to learning and improvement (p. 349).

The Ministry develops a process that fosters a process of trust-building that operates with a spirit of collaboration and partnership with universities to create a sense of ownership by all participants. The central and the periphery can develop a sense of partnership and ownership in which the central acts as a facilitator and the periphery as a reform activist. The periphery sets reform priorities with the central in which the former’s peculiarities and localities are respected in the process of accomplishing the reform tasks.

Sarson(1990) argues that if educational reform elements are addressed in isolation, while some are changed and others not, the success of the reform is almost

undermined. He further states that, first, significant changes in curriculum, assessment or any other domain is unlikely to be successful unless serious attention is also paid to teacher development and the principles of professional judgment and discretion contained within it. Second, teacher development and enhanced professionalism must also be undertaken in conjunction with developments in curriculum, assessment, leadership and school organization (Cited in Hargreaves, 1997, p. 340)

### Conclusion

In Ethiopia, formal education began in a western-style schooling structure in 1908. It was only in 1950s and afterwards that national official reforming movements were initiated by the influence of western and modernizing forces. Three noticeable reform initiatives seemed to have taken place in three successive governments. It seems that each reform movement takes about ten years for a full cycle reform activities which results in some saturation and provoke a national evaluation. In fact, the third reform movement is yet to be evaluated since the pressure for a rethink has not gained momentum. I hope this study, and possibly other papers, might contribute towards building a power base of a meaningful influence on policy makers to consider the inevitable rethink of the reform movement.

I have argued in this paper that the managerial approach has been pursued predominantly to 'reform' teacher education in Ethiopia. The pursuit of the managerial pathways has emanated partly from the behaviour of state actors and the influence of external forces. Political figures tend to largely prioritize the maintenance of the status quo. They usually seem to be more concerned with power and control. To this effect, loyal and obedient managers are given the task of reforming education by sidelining professional and non-professional practitioners. They tend to always operate on the principles of economic rationalism and ultimate full control of practitioners. As they also face and disentangle with various perplexing agendas and dilemmas, reform becomes intractable. Very often, they fail to reform beyond a mere massification or numerical increase that is seemingly resulting in little or no meaningful impacts on the life conditions of poverty stricken peoples of the country. Therefore, for a relevant and meaningful reform tasks to be planned and implemented, policy makers and implementers at various levels must engage in ways that foster ownership and partnership. Besides, there must be a rethink of the nature and route of educational reform in Ethiopia which conceptualizes improvement as discursive and continually needed.

### Notes

[1] Part of the narratives was included in my article titled The Teacher Education Reform Process in Ethiopia: The consequence on educators and its implications. *Teaching Education* (Volume 18, Number 1, pp. 29-48, 2007).

The key self-narrator was a teacher educator and chair of the Department of English Language at Alemaya University. As chair of a department he has participated in various reform tasks commissioned by the Ministry of Education. At Alemaya University, a higher learning institution which celebrated its jubilee (50<sup>th</sup> year) just one year ago, too, he has taken part in similar activities. Chairs of departments were often called to the Ministry of Education, in Addis Ababa, the capital, to prepare the syllabus, write modules, standardize, etc on the basis of pre-formulated criteria.

[2] Episodic narrative construction was carried to capture the key informant's encounters and experiences as representatively as possible. In order to increase the accuracy of the stories, I carried out a two-stage story authentication activities. In other words, the reconstruction of the self-narrator's lived stories was completed in two stages. The first stage involved a personal recalling and reconstituting of scattered records kept in various encounters deemed relevant. In the second stage, I circulated the reconstructed stories to individuals who had the same experiences in the encounters I was concerned with. My aim at this stage was to capture the scene as accurately as possible. My fascination with the focus on the personal stories as a basis of reform analysis emanates from methodological premises. It is the belief in the richness and authenticity of personal stories to understanding a situation. Stories are "pervasive in human and social experience" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p. 135). Stories offer insights that are replete with the language, values, prejudices and perceptions participants have about the situation. They provide a means of capturing the richness, intimacy and complexity of pedagogical improvement (Goodson, 1992).

[3] The last Ethiopian monarchy was headed by Haile Selassie. In 1974, students, workers, and soldiers began a series of strikes and demonstrations that culminated on September 12, 1974 with the deposition of Haile Selassie by members of the armed forces. Chief among the coup leader was Major Mengistu Hailemariam who stayed in power till 1991.

[4] The Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) were the two major forces which emerged from the northern part of Ethiopia and mounted an armed struggle against the 17-year authoritarian (1974-1991) regime. In May 1991, the EPLF took control of Eritrea and the EPRDF occupied fully the remaining part of the country. The EPRDF, led by Meles Zenawi, set up a transitional government of Ethiopia, where other opposition groups were also embraced, while the EPLF established a provisional government in Eritrea. After a "referendum" in 1993, the EPLF declared independence with the support by EPRDF. In 1994, a Constituent Assembly was formed EPRDF winning 484 seats out of 547.

[5] As higher education kept expanding remarkably, the shortage of educators and instructors has constrained instructional activities. As a result, public officials secured the support of international financial and development institutions to recruit faculty from abroad. In each university, at present, there are over 50 Indian instructors. The salary of the expatriate instructors is four times higher than that of Ethiopian national instructors.

[6] Ethiopia has pledged Universal Primary Education (UPE) three times. The first was in 1961 at "Addis Ababa Conference on African Education" in which UPE was pledged to be reached in 1980. The second was in 1972 in which UPE was projected to be achieved before 2000 (Tekeste, 1990). The third promise was by the current government, and as stated before, UPE has been sought to be reached before 2015. This latest pledge which grew out of the 1990 Jomeitan meeting, with the agenda of 'Education for All' has become one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Goal 2 of MDG states: "to ensure that, boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling" (UNESCO, 2003, p.242).

[7] Candidates for First Cycle Primary school, teacher trainees are selected from those who have completed grade ten, but who are unable to pass the national exam for undergraduate college education. The candidates, once they have been selected by regional education bureaus, enroll in teacher education institutes and study for one year. This kind of teacher education program is known as Ten Plus One (10+1). The same procedure

applies to train Second Cycle Primary school teachers, and this program is called Ten Plus Three (10+3).

[8] The Ministry of Education (MoE) is a government body that looks after federal educational functions. At present, there are ten functioning federal public universities that run under the auspices of the Ministry.

[9] TESO is Teacher Education System Overhaul. It consists of a set of reform tasks and various task forces enacted to carry out changes in teacher education activities. It has been more than two years since the modified national teacher education curriculum was officially launched. TESO has effected major changes such as the reduction of a secondary teacher education from four years to three years; a three-fold increase of enrollment every year, resulting in a total number of 3000 students at the Faculty of Education (the total number was less than 700 in 2002/03 academic year); the increase of field experience (the practicum--earlier it was simply Teaching Practice) from two credits to 25 credits, resulting in a deployment of thousands of teacher candidates to secondary schools every semester; and the parallel introduction of satellite educational television programs in every secondary classroom, almost replacing the school teacher by television lessons.

[10] The Department for International Development (DfID), Ireland Aid and Basic Education System Overhaul (BESO) are among the major international NGOs that play a significant role in Ethiopian education. In addition, Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) and Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) are acknowledged as "partners" by the Ministry of Education.

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**Appendix . Reform Opinion Inventory Framework**

You have participated in teacher education *reform tasks* (curriculum development, module writing, etc.) commissioned by the Ministry of Education since 2003. Which of the following match(es) your personal opinion of the way improvement is intended in teacher education in Ethiopia. You can assess the reform tasks in any way possible. For example, restatement of the given ones, addition of more details, and writing of a new paragraph that fully catches your feelings.

1. The reform process is largely participatory because department heads have been invited from early on to shape teacher education in ways that reflect the critical needs of the country. It is a bottom up approach for the ministry has been able to involve educators from faculties in universities.

2. The reform process is largely orchestrated by the central government through the Ministry of Education. It is a top down approach, and the invitation of heads of departments on several occasions to Addis Ababa for consultative meetings is not genuinely intended to listen to what they would say. It is simply a publicity strategy to convince the public and donors that the reform is participatory.

3. The current teacher education program is better because it has moved forward by addressing teacher education problems such as classroom teacher authoritarian, monocultural curriculum, assessment that encourages fact learning rather than critical reflection, centralized academic leadership, and lack of inquiry & research to improve instruction.

**IF YOU WANT TO WRITE ANOTHER PARAGRAPH, PLEASE USE REVERSE FACE.**

**A plea for a mentoring framework that promotes dialogic professional learning  
in the ELT teacher education context**

**Jeylan Wolyie Hussein\***  
**Haramaya University**

**Abstract**

The paper emerged out of my own and my colleagues' growing discontent with the traditional, ill-organized and unproductive way of evaluating the one-month-teaching practice of student teachers of English Language Teaching (ELT) at Haramaya University. It advances the argument that student teacher evaluation systems should be restructured to represent the voices and experiences of the student teachers. Towards this end, I proposed a mentoring framework that potentially encourages student teachers to become critical practitioners. The model I propose emphasizes the professional agency of the student teacher. The paper holds the position that to transform their views of teaching and learning, student teachers as well as their trainers should be empowered to seek justice and emancipation from the traditional model of evaluation. Finally, it attempts to leave readers with the impression that if we prefer our zone of comfort at the expense of our student teachers' growth, we must know that we are jeopardizing the fate of teacher education.

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## **Introduction**

Student teachers' learning in the field experience is an important component of the initial teacher education. If properly carried the experience enables student teachers to "acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with young children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives" (Day, 1999, p. 4). However, student teachers' opportunity to construct adequate content, procedural, curricular, pedagogical and context knowledge is usually hampered by ineffective teacher education practice. An ineffective teacher education practice is one which denies student teachers as well as their advisers the opportunity to engage in reflective and developmental practices systematically.

My own experience as a student teacher in Addis Ababa University 13 years ago is worth mentioning here. The supervisors were using checklist to assess my performance in the class. Although I was usually asked to show my lesson plans prior to using them, the supervisors did not give me the chance to discuss with them theories that underlie my lesson plans and the problems that I may face when I try to implement the lesson plans. The way the supervisors postured themselves in the classrooms and their manner of recording classroom events were threatening. Since I thought that the main aim of their observation is to dig out the weakness of my teaching, I did not accept their presence as a positive experience. This psychological disturbance which their presence caused to me eroded my confidence in the subject matter I was teaching and in the pedagogical activities I was carrying out. I was unable to execute what I planned in the way I planned. While I was attempting to adjust myself to the situation, one of my supervisors called me only to tell me that things went wrong. His comment exacerbated my feelings of insecurity and nervousness. I did not have even the chance to air my sense of defeat and frustration.

At the end of my lesson, the supervisors gave me a list of correction I would be required to make in an authoritative way. They did not encourage me to become reflective practitioner through expressing the theories and assumptions that underlie my pedagogical practice. They also failed to provide me with critical comments on what should be done to cope up with classroom dynamics. They were not willing also to point out to me what aspect of my practice they liked and disliked and why. I was not pretty sure why this was the case. I know very well, however, that I was denied a productive student teaching experience. Now I understand that productive student teaching experience occurs when mentoring derives and then nurtures the student teacher's construction and reconstruction of professional identity in an ongoing way. Today, in my teacher education faculty, I see that the same unproductive student teaching which I experienced a decade ago is still in place.

## **The Contextual Analysis Of Teacher Education In Ethiopia**

In Ethiopia, modern education (that is education based on Western curricular systems) was introduced when Menelik II's School was opened in Addis Ababa in 1908. It was in 1944 that the Haile Selassie government launched the primary teacher training program in the premise of Menelik II School. University-based teacher education program began in 1950s when the Faculty of Arts of Addis Ababa University was opened. The first Faculty of Education in the country was opened in

1962 at Addis Ababa University. The main reason for opening the Faculty of Education at the Addis Ababa University was to train secondary school teachers. Before this, the Arts Faculty of Addis Ababa University was producing teachers for primary schools. Addis Ababa University was the only source of secondary school teachers before other teacher training institutions were opened in the country (Zewdie et al. 2000). In 1972, the Haile Sellassie government opened Bahir Dar Teachers College to train teacher trainers, supervisors, educational leaders, adult education organizers and educational development agents. The Kotebe College of Teacher Education (KCTE) was founded in 1962. For a considerable number of years, the country's teacher education institutions were limited to the major cities of the country. But now, teacher education institutions are found through out the country.

My faculty of education was established in 1996, as one of the new faculties of Haramaya University. It has 9 different teacher education departments. It runs teacher education programs both through pre-service and in-service programs. Here, teacher education is carried out under precarious situations. Poor resources, teacher trainers' unpreparedness to engage their student teachers in productive professional learning, poor coordination between the faculty and the partner schools during the practicum programs and overall inconsistency in the curriculum of teacher training are among the major problems. The distance of the university from the partner schools also exerts serious impact. There is also lack of awareness among teacher educators and cooperating teachers in the partner schools on how to engage student teachers in productive teaching and reflective process. The other serious impact is the introduction of Plasma education through digital video broadcasting (DVB), mainly known as plasma display panels (PDPs), in secondary schools. This minimized and in some situations completely replaced the traditional role of teachers. Our teacher trainees take teacher education courses primarily designed to prepare them for the conventional classrooms. However, they go to schools only to be dictated by the plasma teacher. As the plasma broadcast takes the largest share of the available time of the lesson, the student teachers have only insignificant opportunity to gain hands-on experience (Hussein, 2006b).

Out of all these problems, the paper focuses only on one problem: lack of strongly organized and transformative mentorship during practicum. The aim of the paper is twofold. First it points out the major weaknesses of the traditional checklist-based evaluation format used to assess the performance of student teachers. Then it proposes a mentoring framework that encourages a progressive system of evaluation capable of building collaborative learning and nurturing dialogic professional learning between the mentor and the mentee. In other words, the framework attempts to inculcate the importance of stimulating student teachers as well as their professional supporters to reflect on dilemmas, doubts and uncertainties that are characteristics of novice teachers' practice.

### **The Drawbacks of the Traditional Student Teacher Evaluation Form**

The Faculty of Education at Haramaya University does not have the mechanism to ensure the proper assessment of student teachers. The traditional checklist-based student teacher evaluation format being used in the faculty (See Appendix A) is restrictive, authoritative, pre-determined and decontextualized. As one can see, it contains the names of the competencies, explanations of the examples

of actions that demonstrate proficiency in different competency areas and the five-point scale for rating the level of the student teachers' proficiency. Irrespective of the different perspectives of their student teachers or the training courses they offer, all of the departments in the faculty are required to use the same format. The format encourages supervisors to approach their student teachers with evaluative rather than educative mindsets. As I observed, the pedagogical, curricular and procedural issues included in the checklist are not only too general, but also are behavioristic as they propagate technical rationality rather than critical professional learning. The format has its roots in the competency-based teacher education that tends to treat the competencies of teaching in generic terms. In addition, the format tends to see teachers' performance in the classroom as the most essential evidence of the acquisition of the teaching competence and thus reduces educational activities into technical accounts of discrete behaviors. The most chronic weakness of the format viewed from the progressive teacher education point of view is that it ignores the dynamics of instructional engagements and the divergent ways teachers make instructional decision as they deal with their educational dilemmas. For example, it does not have the room for student teachers to learn how to cope with school climate and culture, to gain interpersonal and professional support from their supervisors and to reflect on their perspectives. In other words, the format denies both supervisors and their student teachers the opportunity to engage in critical reflection about the macro social and political factors that impact on the instructional practices. Last but not list, the format minimizes supervisors' role to the checking of student teachers' instructional behaviors against pre-determined checklist points and obliges student teachers to conform to decontextualised techniques and procedures (Hussein, 2006b). The question a critical teacher educator can ask is: What is the worth of a bunch of comments if it does not guide the student teachers "through a process of learning, reflection, and exploration to become more aware of their beliefs and behaviors" (Chamberlin, 2000, p. 654)? The behaviorist and reductionist view that the Haramaya University student teacher evaluation format is based on reinforces the agenda that human thought processes are accounted for through simple associations between stimuli and responses (Covey, 1992). However, such a view has now been rendered inadequate to explain the complex decision-making processes that are characteristic of instructional activities. The existing evaluation format denies the freedom of choice between the stimulus and the response, particularly the fact that the freedom of choice is constituted from individual differences in self-awareness, imagination, conscience and degree of independence.

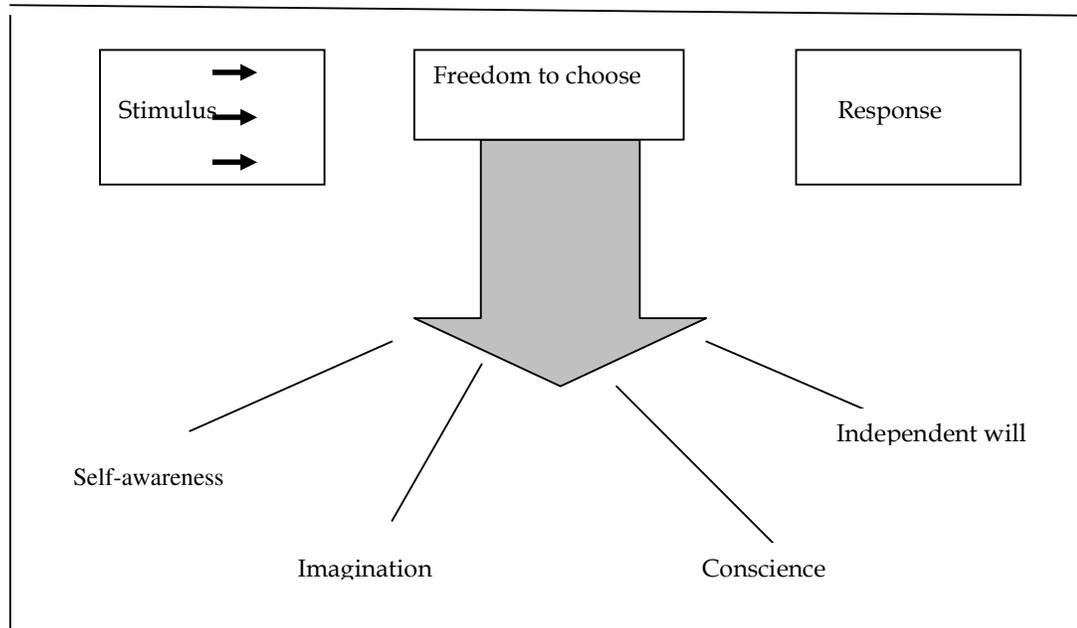


Fig 1. Proactive model taken from Covey (1992: 71)

Looked at from this proactive model, the old evaluation format we are using denies (1) dynamics of instructional engagements like individual teachers' diverse ways of carrying out their educational activities and (2) constant changes in way teachers make instructional decisions. Of course, the evaluation format has also political bearings as it exerts a centralized control over what teachers do, homogenizes the curricula into easily testable bits and legitimizes technical knowledge as the best possible form of knowledge (Fuller, 1991). It is difficult for student teachers to become reflective practitioners if they are not allowed to "think about what they want to accomplish, how they are going to accomplish it, why they want students to learn it and how they will know students have learned it" (Walkington *et al.*, 2001: 343). They can not redefine their thoughts and lay foundation for their future development as teachers if they are not offered constructive feedback on their pedagogical content knowledge, and if they do not reflect on their experiences through analyzing what worked well and what did not work well in particular instructional conditions (Ling, 2003)

I have been teaching English and training English teachers over the last 7 years in this university. What I learned from my experience is that our student teachers are unhappy about the way we observe their classrooms and comment on their practices. They have the feelings that the existing supervisory approach is not helping them:

- improve their professional learning;
- cope with school climate and culture;
- gain interpersonal and professional support that will encourage them to reflect on their school experience;
- increase their confidence and instructional effectiveness;

- learn from the knowledge and experience of their mentors, and
- reflect on and share their views about theories that inform their practice.

These problems evoked in me the desire to think of a quality mentoring framework that assumes student teachers as engaged learners and constructors of knowledge.

### **Principles That Underlie Progressive and Productive Mentoring of Student Teacher**

One principle that informs the current framework is the view that mentoring should promote student teachers' professional goals and autonomy, enrich their personal engagement in learning, and stimulate an ongoing commitment to teaching and learning. This is characteristic of mentoring that integrates the social, affective and cognitive learning goals of the student teacher. Learning how to teach is a developmental and reflective process and requires student teachers to take into account and reflect on dilemmas of learning how to teach. Thus, only a supportive environment helps student teachers make safe and productive transition (Housego & Grimmett, 1983; Williams, 1989). Without a system and procedure that offer student teachers "personal and professional self-development opportunities in a positive relationship" (Boudreau, 1999, p. 456), it is unlikely for a meaningful professional experience to occur.

Mentoring should also be reciprocal. Unlike its hierarchal counterpart, the reciprocal mentoring emphasizes the mutual and interdependent professional growth of the mentor and the mentee. In the reciprocal mentoring, the mentor is not someone positioned at the throne just to direct; he/she is rather a co-creator of meaning and an open-minded figure ready to be influenced, changed and tested in the mentoring process (Ballantyne & Green, 1999; Beattie, 2000; Rodrigues, 1995). Hanky gives us clear explanations about how the mentor and the mentee should work within the demanding process of mentoring

...the mentor is the critical friend and co-enquirer whose relationship with the trainee teacher will benefit both parties in enabling them to engage in debate, to formulate and articulate critical comparisons of personal ideologies in relation to teaching and learning, leading to mutually beneficial growth and new understandings. This is a process of engagement in 'professional discourse' referred to by Freeman, a process that involves making the tacit explicit, a process...which is not a linear one of revealing what is known, but rather 'a dialectical one in which familiar and tacit knowledge interacts with and is reshaped by newly explicit understandings' (2004: 391).

Not only the process, but also the institutional goals of mentoring should be principled. For example, mentoring programs should place at their centre student teachers' strong commitment to professional learning. Similarly, mentors should take up the mentoring role from a sense of commitment to their profession rather than to any other benefits (Cooper, 1995; Holloway, 2001); they should not, as is the case in my institution, supervise because they are forced to do so. The professional goal of mentoring should also extend beyond the induction of the novice teachers into the

procedures and mores of the school system (Stevens, 1995; Tellez, 1996; Tomlinson, 1995) to planting the seed for a life-long professional growth. Mentoring is not a haphazard and poorly conceptualized process. As Anderson & Shannon (1988) made clear, any productive mentoring

...must be grounded on a clear and strong conceptual foundation. Such a foundation includes a carefully articulated approach to mentoring which could include delineation of the mentoring relationship, the essential functions of the mentor role, the activities through which selected mentoring functions will be expressed, and the dispositions that mentors must exhibit if they are to carry out requisite mentoring functions and activities. p.38

If it is based on clear purpose and plan, mentoring benefits all parties: the mentor, the mentee, and the institution. The dialogues and questions raised during the mentoring sessions provide the parties in mentorship the opportunity to reevaluate their professional thoughts and practices (Ganser, 1996; Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998). Greene (1986, p. 440) pointed out: "To engage with our students is to affirm our own incompleteness, our consciousness of spaces still to be explored, desires still to be tapped, possibilities still to be opened and pursued." A quality mentoring is one that "allows both those supervising, and those being supervised to understand their own personal and collective histories, and to work collaboratively at a deeper understanding of the complexities of their work practices" (Yarrow & Millwater, 1997, p. 350).

Seeing mentoring as a transformative practice is the other important principle. By transformative mentoring I mean mentoring in which mentors and their protégées collaborate in on-going critical self-reflection about teaching practice and student learning with the intent to uncover personal assumptions, examine beliefs, and improve practice (Martin, 2004). Transformative mentoring arises from "a commitment to education, a hope for its future, and a respect for those who enter into its community" (Shadio, 1996, cited in Kokoi, 1997, p. 2). The following guidelines (adapted from Schapiro, 2003, p. 154) are meant to display a clearer representation of the principles emphasized above.

*Table 1*

**Principles Underlying the Proposed Mentoring Framework**

No	PRINCIPLES	EXPLANATIONS
1.	Mentee-centered than mentor-centered	Mentoring begins with mentees needs, purposes, and goals, not with mentors' agenda, ideas or methods.
2.	Problem-focused than subject-focused	Mentoring builds the learning process around situations and problems that mentees confront in their own lives, not around learning particular subject matter out of context and for its own sake.
3.	Inquiry-directed than answer-directed	Mentoring uses mentees' questions to derive the learning process rather than mentees' acquisition of other's pre-determined answers.
4.	Wholistic than purely cognitive and rational	Mentoring recognizes the emotional, kinesthetic, and spiritual dimensions of learning.
5.	Experiential than purely didactic	Mentoring helps mentees learn not only from books and lectures but also from experience and reflection on and in experience.
6.	Collaborative than competitive	Mentoring enables the mentor and the mentee to use one another as colleagues, resources and co-learners, not as the ruler and the subordinate.
7.	Integrated than discipline-based	Mentoring encourages mentors and mentees to approach problems and topics from a multi-disciplinary perspective.
8.	Constructivist than transmission-based	Mentoring enables the mentee to construct their own meaning and knowledge rather than consuming other's ideas of the truth.
9.	Person-centered than role-centered	Mentoring enables the mentee and mentors to engage one another as authentic persons who are colleagues in the learning process, each with their own wisdom and expertise, not solely as expert and protégé, fount of knowledge and vessel to be filled.

Table 1 suggests that mentoring is carried out within the context of evolving and caring relationship between the mentor and the mentee and that a successful mentoring takes into account hooks' (1994) notion of 'engaged pedagogy'. Collaborative relationship between the mentor and the mentee is essential to establish a meaningful mentoring. Research confirms that student teachers' receptivity to supervision increases if the supervisory relationships are transactional and reciprocal (Hussein, 2006a, 2007). For example, before they disclose their personal metaphors and beliefs about teaching, mentees must have trust in their mentors. The mentor can intervene using catalytic questions like: "When you put students in groups to work out the meanings of the words 'formidable' and 'fantastic' from the reading passage, I noticed that some students were engaged in off-task activities, like developing personal notes from friend's exercise book. What useful actions/measures could you

have taken to avoid such behaviors?” The purpose of such a question is to encourage student teachers to self-discover and then to open the room for discussion and critical thinking.

The complexity of mentoring can also be shown from the dimensional perspective of the roles mentors assume. Table 2. below shows the three main dimensions of the roles and responsibilities of mentors adapted from Samson & Yeomans (2002).

*Table 2*  
 Dimensions Of Mentors’ Role In The Proposed Mentoring Framework

The Structural dimension	The supportive dimension	The professional Dimension
<i>Planner:</i> The mentor, together with the student teacher, plans the process of the teaching practice.	<i>Friend:</i> The mentor becomes source of positive comments.	<i>Trainer:</i> The mentor provides professional support on content as well as pedagogy.
<i>Organizer:</i> The mentor, together with the student teacher, sets conditions that make possible professional practice.	<i>Host:</i> The mentor welcomes the mentee into the teaching profession. By doing this, he/she would build up the confidence and sense of the mentee.	<i>Educator:</i> The mentor helps the mentee become autonomous, self-referential teacher capable of objectively analyzing his/her own and others’ professional practice. In this context, the mentor is expected to take the role of a dialogical partner to help the mentee become concerned about their own long-term professional development rather than merely with the here and now issues
<i>Negotiator:</i> The mentor negotiates with the mentee about time, classroom practice and other essential variables.	<i>Counselor:</i> The mentor helps the mentee cope up with the difficult task of making educational judgments	<i>Assessor:</i> The mentor communicates to the mentee about his/her performance.
<i>Inductor:</i> The mentor offers the mentee insights about how one as a teacher should behave in and outside the classroom		

Adapted from: J. Samson & R. Yeomans (2002). Analyzing the role of mentors. In A. Pollard (ed) *Readings for Reflective Teaching*. London: Continuum.

Readers should know, however, that the role of a mentor is more divergent and complex than what is presented in the table. The overlapping key roles of mentors are *a counselor, teacher, challenger, coach, observer, facilitator, trainer, master, tour, guide, advocate, role model, reporter, and equal* (Provident, 2005).

### **Description of the Structural Flow of the Proposed Mentoring Framework**

The mentoring framework I am proposing promotes the reciprocal rather than the hierarchical process of mentoring that maintains a hegemonic relationship in which the mentor (master) hands out flotation devices to his/her apprentices until the latter develop a more definite teaching style (George, 1995; Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998; Murray & Owen, 1991; Rodrigues, 1995; Fischer, 2004; Holloway, 2001). It was designed primarily to help the professional and personal growth of student teachers within a collaborative and interactive climate. This is its major difference from the hierarchical mentoring process in which mentors are assumed in hallowed tones as people that “have successfully trod the profession’s highways and who now wait the novice journeyer with beacons to guide the way to a guaranteed successful career path. Etymological considerations have tended to elevate further the status of mentor to the realms of the ancient god” (Martinez, 2004: 102).

The framework is founded on the constructivist paradigm that learning in general and teacher learning in particular are “advanced by: (a) exposure to new input from others, creating an awareness of what is unknown and therefore leading to the expansion of cognitive structure; (b) exposure to new ideas that may contradict one’s own beliefs and cause a reexamination and reconstruction of beliefs; and (c) communication of one’s own beliefs to others which forces articulation and sharpens conceptualizations” (Montgomery, 2000, p. 2). Towards this end, it underscores a four-step process of teacher observation: *pre-observation conference*, *classroom observation*, *post-observation conference* and *follow-up analysis*. Together, the mentor and the mentee plan for learning, implement the planned learning activities and assess the outcome of their plans. In the framework, the mentee is represented as a person in the process of ‘becoming’ and as active agents in the construction of their own personal and professional growth. The mentoring framework expects mentors to allow their mentees:

to experience a shift from seeing knowledge as something that exists outside of themselves and that faculty will impart to them to seeing it as something that they, too, have the authority to construct for themselves; from thinking about their learning experience only in terms of meeting faculty expectations to thinking about it more in terms of what they want to know and learn; from thinking of themselves as passive recipients of others’ learning to thinking of themselves as active agents in their learning, and in working for personal, organizational, and social change (Schapiro, 2003: 162).

*The Pre-observation Conference:* Before he/she visits the classroom, the mentor communicates with the mentee to know in advance the latter’s instructional plans and goals, among other things. The mentor may need to receive copies of the lesson plan and other important materials and strategies that constitute the student teacher’s lesson. The pre-observation conference provides the mentor and the mentee the opportunity to clarify goals, address concerns, discuss on the lesson plans, instructional activities and the expected outcomes. During the pre-observation conference, the mentor and the student teacher would also agree on what aspects of the instructional practice and the students’ learning processes should be focused on during the formal observation.

Table 3 below contains sample questions which the mentor may pose to the mentee to get clearer information about the objectives, structure, presentation and assessment of the instructional practice:

*Table 3.*  
 Sample questions for pre-observation discussion

1). Let me know the general situation of your class and your students?	5). What assessment methods/tools will you use to check if your learning objectives were met? How do you go about this? (Please, attach tests or performance indicators together with marking/scoring systems. How do you provide feedback? Have you established the criteria for performance assessment? How do you plan to use the results of your assessment in the subsequent classes?
2). What are your major goals in the lesson? What do you want your students to know or be able to do as a result of this lesson? To what extent is your lesson suitable to the group of students in your class?	6). What materials and teaching strategies, if any, will you use to accomplish your lesson goals/objectives? Is there anything that you want me to focus on during my observation?
3). What did you do in the previous class(s)? How does your lesson relate to what students learned in the previous lessons? What have you planned to connect your students to their previous learning?	7). Is there anything else I should be aware of before I start observation?
4). How are you going to deal with differences among students in your class? What are the concerns, if any, about the activities you planned in your lesson?	

One should note that discussion during the pre-observation conference should not be reduced to just giving and receiving information. The mentor is not a passive recipient of information about student teacher's plans and intentions. He/she is expected to get clarifications and elaborations from the student teacher about theories that inform the latter's plans and intentions. For the mentor's question: *"Is there anything else I should be aware of before I start observation?"* the mentee may say: *"I want you to be aware of how the class size affects my attempt to assess learners' performance."*

*Classroom Observation:* During the observation, the mentor focuses basically on things that were agreed up on during the pre-observation conference. It is this perspective which distinguishes mentoring from the traditional system of evaluation. Of course, the mentor may also take note of other events in the classroom and consider them whenever he/she thinks they are important to discuss with the mentee.

The following table contains areas a mentor can focus on and the corresponding questions he/she can ask while observing.

*Table 4*  
 Areas to Focus on and Potential Questions during Observations

AREAS	Sample questions at the time of observation
1. <i>Presentation and development</i>	What has the student teacher done to make the aims and objectives of the lesson clear to the students? Is the lesson well placed?
	What strategies has he/she used to make the instructions brief and clear? What activities has he/she carried out to monitor and correct students' errors effectively? What has he/she done to make his/her instructional strategies appropriate to the lesson objectives?
2. <i>Interpersonal dynamics</i>	Which activities of the student teacher indicate his/her enthusiasm for the subject or his/her awareness of individual students' learning needs and strategies? What has the student teacher been doing engage all or the majority of the students in the learning process? In what ways did the teacher use the body language?
3. <i>Class management</i>	What has the student teacher done to get the attention of the students? What has he/she done to stop off-task behaviors? What strategies has he/she used to maintain a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to learning? How did the teacher manage group activities?
4. <i>Clarity of the overall lesson</i>	What has the student teacher done to clarify abstract ideas or concepts? How has he/she link the current lesson to the previous one?

As one can see, the way the mentor questions the activities and behaviours of the mentee is different from the traditional evaluation system based on fixing questions like: "Does the teacher involve students in the learning process?" , which merely implies that the evaluator has better knowledge and skills of teaching. Questions that begin with wh-questions, like *how*, *what*, *in what way* and *why* may stimulate the mentor to take the role of a vigilant and critical observer. For me the mentor who uses these questions assumes that teaching involves complex-decision making that cannot be reduced down to absolute routines.

*Post-observation Conference:* The post-observation conference is a time for both the mentor and the mentee to reflect on the collected data. During this time, before he/she presents the data he/she collected during observation, the mentor would allow the mentee the chance to express his/her overall impressions about the teaching

moment. When he/she offers suggestions, the mentor would refer to specific teaching and learning strategies, class structure, the use of materials, teacher-student interactions, questioning and assessment behaviors, etc. Unlike the traditional supervisory system in which the mentor is placed at the summit of the hierarchy and the mentee at its bottom, this framework assumes the mentor as reflective practitioner who sees his/her professional lives in developmental terms (Atkinson, 1996; Yarrow & Millwater, 1997).

In a democratic teacher education, the mentor is expected to bring his/her mentee to the edge of reflective dialogic. In the educational context, dialogue involves naming of one's own experience and reflecting on it. It is a kind of communication that awakens the consciousness of the mentor and the mentee. It is meant to enable transformational, democratic and respectful relationship between the parties. The mentor can engage the mentee in the dialogic communication in several ways. One way is making the mentee talk through the teaching he/she has done. The second way is making him/her relate the teaching practice to his/her own previous theoretical dispositions or understandings. Thirdly, the mentor can bring forward his/her own experience and understandings. Through such processes, he/she can encourage the mentee to reflect in a thoughtful and personally transformative ways. The mentor should thus demonstrate an unremitting commitment to facilitate the voicing of differences in attitudes and dispositions. There is no magic way of doing this. The mentor can use questions such as shown in Table 5 below and other situationally evoked questions to encourage his/her mentee to articulate his/her voice of difference. The feedback should emphasize the mentee's strengths and the potential areas for improvement. This session should also provide the mentee the opportunity to reflect on the mentoring process. Student teachers' reflection on the mentoring processes may help the mentoring team to make modifications or alterations in the future programs. In general, the debriefing session should encourage: (1) finding out what the student teacher feels about the lesson; (2) encouraging the student teacher to talk about the weaknesses and strengths of his/her teaching and the variables caused the perceived shortcomings, if any (3) eliciting the mentor's perception of the lesson's strength and mentee's reflection on how things could have been made qualitatively different (Hagger, Burn & McIntyre, 1995: 61).

*Table. 5.*  
 Sample Questions for the Post-observation Conference

1). In general, how do you feel about your lesson?	5). Is there any part of your lesson or pedagogical practice which you think was inadequate? Why?
2). Can you say something on your assessment? Remember what you did to check your learners' understanding.	6). How effective were your assessment methods? How will you use the assessment data to improve your future lessons?
3). Do you think the students have accomplished the learning objectives you had planned in this lesson?	7). If you are given another chance of teaching this lesson, what improvements do you want to make? Why?
4). What is it that you think worked well as a result of your lesson? What strategies did you find most effective in terms of student learning? What was least effective? Why?	8). Do you have any suggestions?

Since the main goal of mentoring is to foster the professional growth of the mentee, the mentor should help the mentee to reflect as freely as possible to learn both from their failures and successes. For example, the following questions reveal the challenger role of the mentor: *“You offered students 5 minutes to find answers for inferential questions in a paragraph. I observed that some of them finished the task quite earlier and wanted your attention while others were struggling with the problem. What useful measures could you have taken to react to the situation?”* *“When you put students in groups to work out the meanings of the words ‘formidable’ and ‘fantastic’ from the available contexts in the reading passage, I noticed that some students were engaged in off-task activities, like developing personal notes from friend’s exercise book. What other useful measures you could have taken to avoid such behaviors?”* In this question, the mentor sees the mentee as a developing practitioner rather than as a fixed one. In a mentoring process based on constructivist view of learning, the mentee must be given ample opportunity to raise similar questions whenever he/she feels doing so is important.

*FOLLOW-UP:* There is no specific purpose for which this stage is set. One thing, however, is clear. That is, the follow-up stage develops out of the discussions made with the student teacher mainly in the post-observation conference. As implied in the feedback procedure shown under the post-observation conference, the mentor and the mentee identify areas that need further intervention.

### **The Contribution of the Mentoring Framework for Teacher Educations in Ethiopia**

Other teacher education institutions in Ethiopia can use the model to make their student teachers take part in the construction and reconstruction of their own reality. The model can facilitate a situation both for mentors and mentees to scrutinize the social, political and institutional factors that affect the teaching profession. It calls for critical dialogue between the mentors and their mentees. Dialogue is a key element in the construction of emancipatory knowledge. The framework advocates that if they are dialogically engaged, student teachers can develop a thorough understanding of the reality (social, political, religious, cultural, economic or a combination of all) that shapes their lives and makes or breaks their capacity to transform that reality (Freire, 1970).

As I emphasized through out the paper, mentoring is a complex process. It requires (a) selecting and training individuals to serve as mentors; (b) matching mentors with protégés; (c) setting goals and expectations; and (d) establishing the mentor program. The current framework assumes that selection of mentors would consider not only expertise, but also commitment/willingness to work as mentors. Open-mindedness, flexibility, empathy, interdependent learning and reconstruction of knowledge are among the crucial social skills a dialogically-oriented mentor is expected to have. To benefit from the framework, the mentor should familiarize himself/herself also with facets of the program and needs training in communication and active listening techniques, relationship skills, effective teaching, supervisory techniques and coaching, conflict management, and problem solving. There are no strict criteria to follow to match mentors with protégés. The mentoring programmers can use different criteria depending on the social and educational needs of the mentee.

Setting goals is the most important component of the mentoring task. As I stated in Table 2, there is no specific goal a mentor is expected to play. However, mentors may seek the help of others to establish more informed goals and expectations regarding the process and the relationship. Mentoring must be specific to both the types of membership and the expected outcomes. Establishing mentoring program takes into consideration the following steps. The first step is to build a support structure that includes making physical arrangements and handling logistics. A second step is to create monitoring and supervisory mechanisms to assure a process of continual assessment of the relationship. A third step is to evaluate the staff developers' skills and abilities (Janas, 1996).

### **Colleagues' Reactions to The Proposed Mentoring Model**

The idea of developing an alternative framework for student teacher evaluation is basically informed and influenced by the principles of dialogic teacher learning for educational and social justice (Hoffman-Kipp, 2003). Therefore, in the framework I am pressing "for emancipatory education that frees both the student and the teacher from the oppressive grasp of positivist framework" (Gilstrap, 2007, 3). The mentoring framework attempts to promote libertarian education. According to Freire (1984: 124): "The important thing, from the point of view of libertarian education, is for the people to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their comrades." Implied in the model is the view of liberation as praxis, as an action and reflection whose aim is to transform our world (Freire, 1984: 79). The critical dialogue between the mentor and the mentee suggests that teacher evaluation is not about fixing the performance quality of the teacher. It is rather a process of encouraging the teacher to develop curiosity towards what he/she is doing and the complex factors that limit the functioning of one's educational plans and strategies.

Despite its potential advantages over the conventional form of student teacher evaluation, the new mentoring framework can be affected by various situational variables. The main shortcoming of this model is that it consumes time and resources. It requires teacher trainers to work over a long period of time closely with their student teachers. In teacher education institutions with few experienced and professionally committed teacher trainers, it is difficult to implement the model. The ever-increasing number of student enrollment in teacher education programs may also limit the usefulness of the model. Thus, after I developed the framework, I gave it to my colleagues at Haramaya University for comment and critical suggestions. The framework evaluators have good experience in critical analysis of teacher education policies and discourse in Ethiopia and have enriched knowledge of the institutional, social and personal factors that are detrimental to progressive teacher education reform. The evaluators appraised the relative value of the attempt I made to reverse the behaviorist and essentialist mode of evaluation in which the role and knowledge of the mentee is superimposed on that of the mentees. They also appreciated the theoretical grounding of the model, which is the humanistic, developmental and constructivist process of learning based on critical reflections and counter-reflections. They stressed that the new framework emphasizes social relationships founded on personal willingness, mutual trust and respect and negotiation of meaning.

However, they pointed out institutional and policy factors that limit the value of the framework. They have the view that the seed of change and development cannot grow if it is cast on a rocky ground. There should always be a climate that nurtures and sustains the seed of development (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992). According to my colleagues, one problem lies with teacher educators themselves. They argued that since they are the products of the training system that promotes the conventional, behavioristic practices, some teacher trainers may become inconvenient with the new model of student teacher evaluation. They have the view that there is always a tendency to question and resist change after one has been used to the old ways of doing things. Of course, the teacher educators which I have proposed the current mentoring framework for have long been using the centrally prepared evaluation format with predetermined agendas and perspectives of teaching and learning. My colleagues have generally the fear that teacher trainers who are unwilling to get involved in the demanding tasks of designing a developmentally oriented mentoring document may prefer to continue with the traditional evaluation system because although it is entirely counter-productive when measured on the scale of progressive and transformative teacher education, the readymade evaluation, paradoxically speaking, makes their evaluation process simpler.

The framework evaluators' other view is that the proposed mentoring framework becomes meaningful only if the curricula of the Ethiopian teacher education include aspects of managing the unique teaching and learning process which the plasma technology has brought about. I share my colleagues' fear. But one thing should be made clear here. In so far as student teachers' management of the plasma education is an inevitable challenge they are going to face when they go to school as full-time teachers, the supervisors should adjust their supervisory practices to suit the educational practice in the country. They do not have to go to the school to watch the artistic demonstration of the plasma teacher; they should not also wait for the government to announce for them what they have to do. The mentoring framework I have suggested can be adapted for the new styles of educational provision.

The other possible challenge, according to the evaluators, may come from student teachers themselves. Student teachers who think that their supervisors have better knowledge and experience than they do may tend to accept comments and suggestions uncritically and thus fail to interrogate the dissemination of established way of thinking and doing things (Egbo, 2005). This problem can, however, be minimized through negotiation of experiences, positions and expectations.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Dialogue is at the centre of teacher education as human life in general and professional life in particular holds meaning through communication and dialogical relations (Keesing-Styles, 2003). From communication and dialogue emerge consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality (Freire, 1984). If we believe in dialogic principles, we may easily leave the familiar shores of practice and start to practice our mentoring in different ways. This requires practicing what Megan Boler (1999) termed as "pedagogy of discomfort." It is a process of moving out of our comfort zones to productive places of discomfort, which offer opportunities to engage with our own practices of complicity and consumption, with our own "habits of

inattention." Pedagogy of discomfort also paves the way for us to learn how to see and hear differently (Waterstone, 2000). However, shifting the zone requires "serious commitment, persistence, courage, conscience and conviction" (Waters, 1998).

The framework I propose here calls for a pedagogy of discomfort. It claims that a meaningful and productive mentoring occurs when it is accepted with its complexity. Thus, the mentors are expected to take time and carry out a mentoring activity in agreement with their mentees with the hope to create student teachers who understand not only the broad principles of teaching and learning, but also the context-orientedness of teaching in general. This requires us to break with the hegemonic views and technical arrangements. The paper thus urges teacher educators to break with the idealist, antihistorical training based on inflexible formalism and relationships (Gadotti, 1996) by shifting to a quality mentoring that promotes self-consciousness and management can break with the suppressing tradition. In other words, it urges them to "redefine their role from servants of hegemonic power to public and "transformative intellectuals" that reject dominant forms of rationality or "regimes of truth," and commit themselves instead to furthering equality and democratic life" (Gair, 1998, p. 3). Only if we hang to this critical pedagogy principle that we can help others learn and grow and maintain a reasonable preferential right of interpretation over our practice (Dahlström, 2003a, 2003b).

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#### APPENDIX A: HARAMAYA UNIVERSITY GUIDELINE FOR EVALUATING A STUDENT TEACHER IN PRACTICE TEACHING

Assessment 1 to 5 is given. The highest is 5 and the lowest is 1. Indicate your assessment by circling one of the points against the student teacher's competence given below. Also write down your additional comments in the columns provided.

The keys to the points are going to be given as follows.

5=very satisfactory; 4=satisfactory; 3=Average; 2=Less satisfactory; 1=Unsatisfactory

Name of the student teacher \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grade and Section \_\_\_\_\_ Subject \_\_\_\_\_

1	Instructional Planning	Points	Comments
1.1	Are objectives specified in behavioral terms or action words?	1 2 3 4 5	
1.2	Does the lesson plan provide a range of teaching strategies, which are consistent with the objectives?	1 2 3 4 5	
1.3	Are home works and other activities integral parts of the lesson plan?	1 2 3 4 5	
1.4	Are contents sequentially and logically arranged?	1 2 3 4 5	
2	Teaching-learning process		
2.1	Does the student teacher arouse the interests of students towards the subject matter?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.2	Are the factual information of the subject matter presented accurately?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.3	Are examples, illustrations and demonstrations used to explain and clarify the subject matter?	1 2 3 4 5	

2.4	Is the subject matter presented in learnable pieces, and timed?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.5	Are students encouraged to respond to and ask questions about the subject matter?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.6	Does the student teacher utilize a variety of questioning techniques?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.7	Is meaningful verbal praise used to keep students actively participating in learning?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.8	Does the student teacher monitor seat work and frequently check progress of student during practices?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.9	Is feedback frequently provided in a non-evaluative atmosphere during practices?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.10	Does the student teacher use different classroom management techniques?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.11	Is the student teacher able to influence students' behaviors in his or her presentation of the subject matter?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.12	Is the student teacher able to maintain student involvement in classroom tasks?	1 2 3 4 5	
2.13	Does the student teacher use different teaching materials like real objects, specimen, modes, etc. while teaching?	1 2 3 4 5	
3	Assessment of teaching learning		
3.1	Is learning monitored and evaluated in order to improve teaching and learning?	1 2 3 4 5	
3.2	Does the student teacher interact with students to know about their learning behaviors?	1 2 3 4 5	
3.3	Are appropriate assessment tasks (such as oral questions, class work, homework, observation) used to monitor progress in learning?	1 2 3 4 5	
3.4	Total (out of 100 points)		

Evaluator's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## *Miscellany*

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