

Revamping Early Childhood Teacher Education and Professional Development: Nuts and Bolts for Effective Literacy and Numeracy Instruction

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Abstract

This paper, using examples from innovative education projects in Eastern Africa, discusses key ingredients to consider in revamping early childhood teacher education and professional development for greater impact on 5-13 year old learners' literacy and numeracy outcomes. Specifically, the paper provides a rationale for cost-effective horizontal and vertical transformation to lay the ground work for literacy and numeracy instruction to flourish. The paper begins with a discussion on the role of government through Ministry of Education and attendant institutions such as teacher education colleges, institutes of curriculum development, and national examination councils in driving the process of transforming literacy and numeracy instruction. The paper then looks at the indispensable role of five **Ts: Teachers, Time-on-Task, Tongue, Texts and Technology**. It reiterates the need to equip both in-service and pre-service teachers with instructional approaches and strategies based on international best practices to help teacher think globally but act locally. The paper explores the need to maximize the use of instructional time and a tongue (language of instruction) most familiar to learners for greater learner participation and learning. The paper proposes use of high quality, locally available and culturally relevant texts that support learners' literacy and numeracy skills and how technology can be harnessed to support teachers face-to-face and at a distance. The paper concludes that a pedagogical shift in teacher education and professional development and full government ownership is a necessary pre-requisite. The revamping process **MUST** be driven from within: to create policy change and structures in favor of innovative literacy and numeracy instruction. All

teachers must feel supported by government, parents and communities. Literacy and numeracy interventions must start early. We should expect nothing less. Implications for future literacy and numeracy outcomes for ALL children are made.