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The teaching profession and teacher education: Trends and challenges in the twenty-first century

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Abstract

The paper sets out to show that teaching is among the five undeniably oldest and historically character-shaping professions in the world, the others being engineering-architecture, medicine, law, and accounting and each of these professions has a unique story in connection with its genesis and its influence on social organisation. The paper indicates, however, that while the other four have had a comparatively better advantage in terms of occupational status, social esteem, popular veneration or respect, teaching has not enjoyed a similar experience and treatment. An analysis is undertaken into the historical and contemporary factors of similarity and contrast among the professions in the varying levels of self-image building, status and public adulation that have made the teaching profession "an unequal among equals". Recommendations and propositions are then offered towards correcting the situation and making the teaching profession attractive to the younger generation of men and women of tomorrow and the future, particularly within the eastern and southern Africa region.

Introduction

Teaching is among the five oldest and historically character-shaping professions the world has ever seen. Each of these five professions ha s a unique story of its

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own in connection with its genesis and its influence on social organization. On account of their comparability in age and impact on society, it is worth taking a brief historical look at them, not only for the purpose of isolating factors of similarity and contrast in the varying levels of self-image building, status and public adulation they wield today, but also for the sake of some practical lessons that 'the teaching profession' might learn from the others in an ever-changing world environment.

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Four major professions, along with education

Within a historical context of their evolution, the five professions are engineering/architecture, medicine, law, teaching and accounting.

Engineering/architecture

Originally treated as one, engineering-and-architecture goes back to ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia (ancient Iraq) between 4000–2000 BCE, with accomplishment of works of great feat such as pyramids, the Sphinx, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and canals. It may thus, by logic of time, be said that it was from these locations (mid-East and Africa) that the practice of engineering spread to Europe, for example to Italy and England,[1] before it spread elsewhere and south to the rest of Africa.

Within the African continent – after Egypt – the home of engineering seems to have been South Africa, following an early colonial foundation of the Cape Colony in 1610 and thereafter maintaining close links with the various European colonial powers, traditions, technological advances, training programmes and occupational applications in building construction, mining and related scientific and industrial fields (Gericke, n.d). Although it took over seven decades (1890–1969[2]) of struggle for formal recognition and registration of the profession, a cadre of engineers of diverse orientations and specializations has steadily grown since those early years of colonial settlement. The number and diversity have grown over time such that they far exceed the number and diversity of engineers and allied scientists in many of the African countries. Essentially, it was after South Africa that the profession of engineers-and-architects and its associated regulatory bodies began to appear elsewhere in Africa, such as in Tanzania (the Engineers Registration Board [ERB], first founded in 1968), Nigeria (Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria [COREN], founded in 1970) and Botswana (Botswana Institution of Engineers, formed in 1983).

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Medicine

This profession can be traced back to ancient Egypt, in connection with Imhotep (third millennium BCE) as the first physician in history known by the title. Hippocrates of Greece became the 'Father of Medicine', who laid the foundation for a rational approach to medicine, categorizing illnesses into acute, chronic, endemic and epidemic, and introducing the Hippocratic Oath for physicians that endures to the present.

Within the African continent, medical education is reckoned to have been initiated first only in a handful of countries such as Senegal at the University of Dakar (present-day Cheikh Anta Diop University) in 1918; South Africa at the University of Cape Town (1919); East Africa at Makerere College (1923); Nigeria at Ibadan University (1948); and much later in several other countries including Cote d'Ivoire (1962), Madagascar (1962) Angola (1963), Rhodesia-Zimbabwe at Harare (1963), Rwanda (1963) and Zambia (1966). For medical training and practice in many of these countries, there was a stipulation for training and practice within the standards established by a federal or national regulatory body, or else by an international regulatory body often residing with the former ruling metropolitan country. For instance, a Medical Council for Tanganyika (MCT) was first established in during the colonial period to regulate the medical profession and handle all irregular cases in medical practice. Since 1964, its work was further supported by the Medical Association of Tanzania (MAT).

Law

While law (the legal practice) can be traced back to Athens, Greece, in the fifth century BCE, more formalized practice in advocacy and representation is traced back to Rome in the first century BCE, when a class of specialists gave judgements/opinions in consultation with 'juriconsults'. These had training in rhetoric and were bound by certain rules and etiquette to observe. In the thirteenth century ce, such distinguished specialists were in the lead at the formulation of Magna Carta, 'the Great Charter' in the UK. In more recent history, a Law Society was founded in the UK on 2 June 1825; and it obtained a royal charter in 1831. By 1907, the Society had been empowered to perform the following functions:

1. To investigate solicitors' accounts;
2. To issue annual practicing certificates. Subsequent to 1907:
3. To help consumers with complaints about solicitors;
4. To improve the status of the profession; and
5. To validate and monitor undergraduate and postgraduate education, training contracts and compulsory professional development.

Within the African continent, the legal profession and public judicial services are reckoned to have been adopted and institutionalized in the order of the evolution/incorporation of individual countries into the imperial system (e.g. Sierra Leone, after 1495), South Africa (1652), Ethiopia (1700s) and Liberia (1847), with several cases showing a combination of Western concepts with the country's cultural background traditions and/or Islamic sharia.

Beyond the older pioneering countries, professional associations and regulatory bodies have been established in many countries across the continent, such as in Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia, and mostly after their year of independence. For Tanzania, an association-cum-regulatory body for the legal profession – the Tanganyika Law Society (TLS) – was first set up during the colonial period in 1955. It has since the 1960s teamed up with the Tanzania Council of Legal Education to promote as well as regulate the conduct of the profession and of the lawyers practising in the country.

Teaching

Like the first three professions (engineering, medicine and law), teaching is one of the oldest professionalized vocations, dating back to four centuries BCE, associated with a first formal school (in the Western world) that was opened in 387 BC by the Greek aristocrat and thinker Plato, in the Academe gardens of the city of Athens.[3]

The teaching profession is perhaps the largest single vocation found in any country, in terms of the number and proportion of career-workers engaged in the occupation, as well as in terms of the quantitative proportion of clientele to the teachers as an occupational category. But it is also apparently the oldest of what may be defined as 'professionalized' vocations. Thus, just as the teaching vocation and teachers' tasks started much earlier than any professionalized community-sensitive service (whether medicine, law, architecture or accounting), so also was this large vocation handling the largest number of any clients (the community's children) for any category of professional groups. One may also take cue that whoever became a public functionary in the political service of Plato's *Republic* – whether as a medicine-man, a builder, a public notary or other – had passed through the hands of an instructor: broadly speaking, a teacher. If this is true, then, what vocation in history could have preceded a classroom teacher? Within this broad frame of mind, the teacher's task, the teacher's importance for the growth and shaping of the future citizens, and the implication – positive or negative – of the teacher's own awareness of his/her

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professional task and code of conduct for the future generations, cannot be overstated. But, in the long run of deliberate preparation of individuals for the vocation, purposeful training was imperative.

A first teacher training centre in the Western society for classroom instructors (teacher-trainees) is traced back to a 'teaching *seminary*' established in the seventeenth century in Germany, which was immediately thereafter adopted by Napoleon in France in 1684 but was termed *Ecole Normale*. From these early origins, the teaching profession spread to other European countries, notably in England, where, on account of scarcity of teachers, a 'Monitorial System' was introduced[4] after experience with it in Madras, India in 1796 (Lancaster, 1803; Adamson, 1964). It was this monitorial system that was introduced into the Gold Coast/Ghana in 1815. The next earliest African nations to adopt and use a teacher training system (first in the form of the monitorial method) were Kenya at Mombasa (in 1848) and subsequently Tanzania in Zanzibar (in 1866).

Accounting

Accounting as a professional subject is strongly connected with the inventions and successes of the Italian merchants of the Renaissance period, especially in connection with the system of 'double-entry accounting' among other innovative concepts and techniques. A first accounting textbook was first written by Luca Pacioli, recognized as 'the father of accounting' in 1494. The accounting profession was recognized in Britain as a legitimate profession in 1831. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Frederick Taylor the American civil engineer was among professionals who added a dimension in 'inventing' theories of scientific management not only for industrial relations but also for business success.

Within the African continent, the accounting profession was quickly adopted in South Africa, following a development path in the twentieth century that was linked to the profession of accountants in the UK and generally in the British Empire, and with professional associations developing initially in t he Transvaal Colony since 1904 and in the colonies of Natal, Orange River and Cape since 1907 (Davenport and Saunders 2000; Verhoef 2011). The accounting-auditing profession has thereafter gained popularity across Africa, although few countries seem to have evolved their own national regulatory bodies or accounting associations. One of these few is Nigeria (Association of National Accountants in Nigeria, 1960; Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, 1965; Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Nigeria, 1979; and Association of Accountancy Bodies in West Africa, 1982). In Tanzania, a National

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Board of Accountants and Auditors (NBAA) was instituted 1972 and a Tanzania Association of Accountants, 1983). It may be noted that most other countries rely for client services on the several international regulatory and professional bodies that exist for the accounting-auditing practice.

From the wide literature on the five professions related above, are several identified characteristics that seem to be common to them. These include: (1) a trained sense of personal responsibility; (2) translation of one's intellectual training and knowledge into practical application; (3) a deliberate effort to inculcate and cultivate a trait of self-organization and self-discipline; as well as (4) an increasing level of motivation and altruism to render service to others, as opposed to an egoistic drive for financial gains or material self-satisfaction (Flexner, 1915; Cogan 1953; Millerson, 1964). These are principal elements that account for professionalism in a vocation, something which becomes not only a paramount value and ideal to be striven for but also a target in preparation for a profession.[5] These defining characteristics of professionalism are complemented by; (5) possession of a particular knowledge-based competency; (6) a commitment to service for the public good; and (7) an abiding dedication to one's clients in the service in question.

A profession unequal among equals

If what has been said of *Teaching* is what it takes to make a vocation a profession, then the teaching vocation (the fourth in the list of five) is – and must rightly be claimed to be – a profession equal to the others in *stature* and *acclaim* on account of its pursuit of the values in the test for professionalism. In countries where these values have long been in existence, as in the case of Denmark and Norway (Hansen, 1954; Lauglo 1982), Russia (Utechin, 1958, 1961: 539), Scotland (Cruickshank, 1970; Lauglo, 1984: 92) and Canada (McCurdy, 1968; Gilliss, 2009), teacher professionalism has grown strong and has virtually been internalized within the fabric of society. It has been venerated and prized, and has as well been sought after by prospective trainees within the younger generations.[6]

Yet, the teaching profession has not always and everywhere enjoyed the same level of occupational status, social esteem, popular veneration or respect as the other four professions (engineering, medicine, law and accountancy) in the category, as Table 1 clearly demonstrates. The table summarizes the points at which teaching (and education in general) departs from – or fails to catch up with – the others, and it indicates the ultimate cumulative effect on the latter.

This remains a historical and unfortunate legacy for the teaching profession. For, from a wider analysis of many occupations, for instance by Hodge, Siegel

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Table 1: Cross-comparisons on socio-historical characteristics.

Characteristics	Engineering/ architecture	Medicine	Law	Teaching	Accounting
Formative period in History	4000–2000 bce in ancient Egypt and Iraq (Mesopotamia)	Third millennium bce in ancient Egypt (Imhotep)	Fourth century bce in Athens; more formalised in the first century bce in Rome	Third century bce	1494: first accounting textbook written by the Italian Luca Pacioli
Membership size of profession	Small	Small	Small	Large	Small
Gender preponderance	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male
Training duration and academic qualification	High	High	High	Median	High
Principal clientele	Adult	Adults and young adults	Adult	Children (pupils)	Adult
Age profile of the profession's clientele	Adult	Adult	Adult	Young; Minor	Adult
Social status of the clientele	Economically independent	Economically independent	Financially independent	Socially and economically dependent	Financially stable

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Table 1: (*Continued*)

Characteristics	Engineering/ architecture	Medicine	Law	Teaching	Accounting
Nature of entry into the profession	More closed/ stringent	More closed/ More stringent	More closed/ More stringent, with tests	More liberal/ More open	More closed/ stringent, with tests
Cumulative effect of status, prestige, and esteem	Higher → Elite	Higher → Elite	Higher → Elite	Lower → Mass	Higher → Elite

Sources: Counts, 1928: 20–21; Hoyle, 1985: 5081–5085; Rowan, 1994: 4–17, 21; Hoyle, 2001: 139–152.

and Rossi (1966), Sarapata (1966), Goldthorpe and Hope (1974) and Rowan (1994), one arrives at the observation that Hoyle made back in the mid-1980s:

> The best generalization which one can make about 'teaching' as a single category from these and other studies is that its modal position is in the fourth decile, below the elite professions of medicine and law, but above the other personal and public service semi-professions (Hoyle, 1985: 5074).

Quick examples come from interviews conducted with the youths, as late as the 2000s, which were reported to an East African working meeting on teacher education:

A cursory survey of youths in Tanzania over the last few years gives one a bit of discomfort. It has been noted that, even in homes where children report to be experiencing – or to have experienced – the most loving care of their teachers in primary or secondary school, the very children of the home express the view that they would not like to become teachers for a career. Asked why, they present a variety of reasons, live negative examples or references – the 'little public respect' their teachers are accorded; the little pay their teachers receive, compared to other public servants; a seemingly disorganized vocation, compared to other professions in the country; the poor conditions (of work) their teachers experience, such as poor housing, abrogated rights concerning salary, promotions, etc. All these remarks – on things seen by even young children – tell an unhappy story about conditions of service for teachers in the field, which, more often than not, assume a causal relationship with lop-sided outputs currently coming out of teacher-training programmes (Ishumi, 2010).

What factors do lie behind this inequality – and behind a diminutive view of the teaching vocation – relative to historical accidents, while others seem to be products or else ramifications of actions or inattention within the profession.

Historical factors

Size of the teaching force

In any country, teaching is, historically, the largest of the formal vocations that lay a claim to professional and/or quasi-professional status (Goldthorpe and Hope, 1974; Hoyle, 1985: 5073–5077; MoEC/MoEVT, 1982–2008). Apparently, the factor of size detracts from the status of teaching, making it look and be treated as 'a common as opposed to a rare profession' – a factor that has also depressed salary levels for such a profession in comparison with salary levels

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for the 'quantitatively rare, small and elite professions' or other professions? Some factors are what may be termed:

Feminization

Although today the argument about the proportion of women in a profession is no longer popular or credible in relation to the status of a profession, the traditionally depressed status of women in the decades of the past three centuries depressed also the status of the vocation in which they served. The more a vocation was feminized the less it commanded status that was often attendant on male-dominated employment and male-dominated professions. Today, the teaching profession is no longer female-dominated (at least in many countries), but the legacy still influences public perceptions, official decision-making mechanisms and judgements that go into disadvantaging the profession.

Academic qualifications for teachers

Given the wide range of the grading for teachers prepared for the various levels of teaching competence, the academic qualifications of teachers vary widely, with even the qualifications of the highest-trained teachers often submerged or else diluted by the relatively low qualifications for the bigger proportion of the membership in the category.[7] This factor, too, has tended to lower the status of the teaching profession, relative to certain and 'almost exclusive' professions that demand fixed or defined education levels as well as fixed and high qualification levels for entry. It is not uncommon that in many countries, particularly in developing countries, teaching has often been so permissive as to admit relatively under-qualified and even un-certificated teacher-applicants.

Even worse, relative to the professions such as medicine, law and sometimes engineering which have always demanded a period of observation (probation) before certification into the profession, education authorities, out of no clear rationale, have tended to remove the condition of 'probation' during which critical time the 'teacher-candidate' can be 'tested' and judged so competent as to be certified and admitted into teaching or so below the mark as to be disqualified for entry into practice as a teacher.

No doubt, an initially low academic-entry qualification for teachers (for more than half of a country's teaching force as has been in the case of Tanzania) (Oluoch, 2006) has contributed to a low public regard for teaching as a vocation. Other factors to this include a complete absence or a relaxation of the teacher probationary period.

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Age profile/status of the profession's clientele

The teacher's principal client is the child, with whom the teacher spends almost all his/her eight to 12 hours of the working day, five to six days a week and three weeks a month (Jackson, 1968: 4). School is a place where tests are failed and passed, where amusing things happen, where new insights are stumbled upon, and skills acquired. But it is also a place where people sit, and listen, and wait, and raise their hands, and pass out paper, and stand in line, and sharpen pencils. School is where we encounter both friends and foes, where imagination is unleashed and misunderstanding brought to ground. But it is also a place in which yawns are stifled and initials scratched on desktops, where milk money is collected and recess lines are formed … [Indeed,] children are in school for a long time [and] the setting in which they perform is highly uniform, and they are there whether they want to be or not (Jackson, 1971: 77–78).

It is within this kind of human environment that teachers work with those that are termed 'minors', whose minds and actions are those a minor, juvenile, fragile or capricious as compared to professionals like lawyers in their law chambers, the surgeon in his doctor's room, or the public administrator somewhere at a ministerial head office, all dealing with adult and mature people, and who, in their one-to-one relationships with clients, also earn and boast of cumulative adoration, prestige and recognition.

Two observations can be made from a comparative analysis of these five professions. The first observation is that there is a close correspondence between the social origins of individuals in an occupational category on the one hand and the status or esteem of the occupation on the other (such that a high-status profession would tend to recruit members from higher social origins). Over the years, such professions tend to reproduce themselves, not only through family socialization but also through differentiated reward systems.

The second observation is that, over a long historical period of time, notwithstanding the traditionally generated community-based recognition and respect, teaching has lost out to the other professions such as medicine (surgeons, physicians, medical doctors) and lawyers, as well as to engineering-related and accounting professionals in terms of a generally more highly prized position before the public eye (Hodge, Siegel and Rossi, 1966; Sarapata, 1966; Goldthorpe and Hope, 1974; Hoyle, 1985: 5074; Rowan, 1994).

Systemic factors and problems

There are certain decisions and actions within the teaching professions that have been taken at various times within the historical evolution of the sector, often been spearheaded by the political and management authorities within the education system itself, which have added to the 'ambivalence' about the status of the teaching profession. A survey of practice in teacher education programmes across a number of African countries, for instance in Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia (Namubiru 2007: 143–148; Mulkeen and Chen 2008; Kagoda 2010; UNESCO Pōle de Dakar Team n.d.), indicates a number of systemic factors and decisions that have impinged negatively on the efficiency and efficacy of the education system. They have also affected the professional esteem of 'school practice' and of education as a profession. These are mentioned here below even though the magnitude and gravity of the factors will likely vary across countries.

Frequent changes and undue experimentalism with the teacher training programme

One of the most traumatic experiences any profession can suffer is frequent changes in the time duration and modality of initial pre-service training. With respect to the training of teachers, for instance in Tanzania, the profession has four times experienced drastic experimental changes within a period of 40 years of independence. The first time was in 1968, when the traditional two years of teacher training were suddenly reduced to one year for reasons including: (a) the dire need for greater numbers of teachers for supply into the school system, thus necessitating a crash course programme of one year; and (b) the purportedly exorbitant and 'wasteful' expense on a 'whole long' two-year period of teacher preparation. A second and more traumatic change was a further reduction of training duration from one year down to some eight or nine months of residential training, with the remaining three to four months spent by the teacher -trainees in *paramilitary* training in national youth service camps. The third change, following upon a critical evaluation of practice and the weaknesses of the two trial runs, came in the late 1980s. This was t o rehabilitate the training programme back to the old standard of two years. Of course, the train of erratic changes, from 1968 to 1990, was already such a long period of more than two decades of experiments in teacher preparation.

The effect on the performance of teachers trained during that period of erratic changes was already worrying:

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> One can only imagine what could have been happening in a classroom where an almost half-trained teacher was faced with challenging questions from brighter pupils to which she (or he) could not give immediate or appropriate answers. The embarrassed and genuinely inadequate teacher must have found escape either in forcing the children to cram formulas and half-mastered ways of doing things for reproduction on asking the next day, or in leaving the children to do their own things to fill up the time and the lesson period. (Ishumi, 1985: 26)

Unfortunately, the oft-oscillating decisions about professional teacher standards and admission requirements and acceptable pass levels for would-be teacher trainees have undermined the profession even in recent years. For instance, as late as the 2000s, in the face of teacher shortages for a greatly expanded secondary education sector, governments have taken political decisions – frequently disregarding professional and technical arguments and advice – to engage as teachers ex-Form 6 secondary students after only six months of training. The pressure of universal primary education (and for some also universal secondary education) has lately forced many countries into compromising teacher-training standards. It has led to reducing realistic training durations, to diluting training entry conditions and to immature teacher confirmations and licensing. These issues have been reported upon in connection with Lesotho, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda, among others (Mulkeen and Chen, 2008).

A wanting principle of probation and licensing

It takes time for a graduated/inducted teacher to become professional. This is because it requires a period of time and a process of occupational socialization and classroom practice before one can be confirmed as a 'practised' professional. According to Lacey (1977; 1985), the 'professionalization' of teachers refers to the process of change by which individuals become practised members of the teaching profession and continue to take up progressively more mature roles within teaching, school management and associated educational tasks. For example, in the UK qualified teacher status (QTS) is usually acquired after a period of a year of probationary teaching. It marks the starting point in the career of a teacher where substantial changes have taken place within the individual and these have been recognized as being appropriate to becoming a fully-fledged member of the profession by his or her training institution, his or her local authority, and senior teachers at his or her school. However, the process of individual change continues at a rapid pace as the beginning teacher consolidates his or her position within the school, reaches out for new responsibilities, and begins the climb for promotion (Lacey, 1985: 4073–4074).

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Yet, for a number of countries south of the Sahara, probation for newly-graduated teachers (i.e. from initial teacher education programmes) has been non-existent or else existent 'on paper' but unofficially abandoned (or postponed) in the last few decades. The reason given include a vastly expanded universal primary and secondary education programme that requires many and fast teacher inputs. Table 2 provides a sample of practices with respect to probationary periods for beginning teachers in sub-Saharan Africa, vis-à-vis Europe and North America where the principle and practice have been steadfast.

From consultation with a variety of sources, it has been noted that, while there is relatively wide variation between the north and south in the average period of probation for teachers, the period stated for the southern (African) countries has not always been expressly utilized in terms of dedicated supervisory guidance and assistance by senior teachers to the beginners. Nor is there evidence, for a number of African countries, of elaborate confidential reports filed on the performance and conduct of the 'beginning teachers' for reference in arriving at decisions on whether to vouch or not to vouch for the teacher candidate.

Yet the concept, principle and practice of probation and licensing after formal initial training and certification from a teachers college is extremely necessary. It has been shown that the longer the probationary period the more competent, more responsive and more responsible the teacher becomes within the education system. The experience in Europe and elsewhere has shown that the longer the probationary period taken, the more confident, more pedagogically reliable and more committed the 'younger teacher' becomes. The argument here is that a just-graduated teacher is *not yet professional* as such *unless and until* he/she has undergone a period of proven encounters and proven success in actual classroom teaching, in self-conduct, and in internalizing the code of professional conduct set for the teaching profession.

Limited practice-teaching time and experiences for pre-service teacher-trainees and an attenuated exposure of in-service teachers to professional self-development opportunities

With respect to limited pre-service teaching exposure, two areas of deficit have been observed:

1. **Perennially inadequate durations of practice-teaching exposure for** initial teacher-trainees in schools during their formal academic years at college, especially within contexts of inter-woven university academic programmes which tend to dominate the balance and give little space to

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Table 2: Probation in teacher practice after initial (pre-service) teacher training.

Country (Random choice)	**Probationary period where reported**	**Source(s)/Notes**
Europe and North America		
Wales (UK)	c.5 years	http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13502939485207591
Russia	c.3–5 years	Nick Clark, "Education Reform in the Former Soviet Union". Editor, *World Education News and Reviews* (WENR), 18(6), 2005. http://www.wes.org/ewenr/05dec/feature.htm.
Canada	2–3 years	http://educhatter.wordpress.com/2011/01/30/teachers-and-professionalism-why-do-unions-resist-teacher-excellence-initiatives/
Germany	3 years	http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/526/Germany-TEACHING-PROFESSION.html
USA	3 years	But may vary with different states
sub-Saharan Africa		
Madagascar	3 years	http://books.mongabay.com/labor/working_conditions/069.html
Mozambique	3 years	http://www.vsointernational.org/Images/listening-to-teachers-mozambique_en_tcm76-22696.pdf
Nigeria	2 years	P.G. Akintunde (n.d).
Lesotho	2 years	http://www.commonlii.org/ls/legis/num_act/tpa1994195.pdf
South Africa	2 years	http://www.inca.org.uk/south-africa-initial-special.html#a7552

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Table 2: (*Continued*)

Country (Random choice)	**Probationary period where reported**	**Source(s)/Notes**
Tanzania	2 years	http://216.15.191.173/ceo/schoolreg.html. • But untrained teachers (local and/or foreign) are also recruited, who don't undergo probation! • Probation not practised for secondary school teachers.
Zambia	c.2 years	http://anestit.unipa.it/mirror/asa2/newsletters/1996/11_96/Features.html
Botswana	1–2 years	Carnoy et al. (2009).
Ghana	1 year	Nyoagbe. See http://www.ajol.info/index.php/mc/article/view/61556 • But very little support is given to teachers under probation.
Somalia	1 year	http://www.mbali.info/doc137.htm
Uganda	1 year	Aigli Zafeirrakou (2007). See http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001555/155594e.pdf
Kenya	½ year	http://www.tsc.go.ke/circulars/Circular%20on%20Teacher%27s%20probation%20period%20and%20confirmation%20of%20appointment.pdf. • Recently reduced from 2 years (by pressure from ILO).
Malawi	n.a.	
Mauritius	n.a.	
Zimbabwe	n.a.	

Note: n.a. = information not available/not confirmed.

practical application in schools. This has been well described by Namubiru in connection with an uneasy academic–professional balance at Makerere:

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> Makerere University has considerable autonomy … to regulate and shape the preparation of teachers in terms of structural organization, curriculum balance, disciplinary profile, distribution between disciplines, as well as the number of prospective teachers it trains according to available resources. … However, there are problems in the structural organization and curriculum of the teacher training programme. … At Makerere University, two-thirds of the three-year training takes place at the University while only a third happens in schools. [Yet, even] school practice is also under major influence from the University. The practicum where prospective teachers practically demonstrate in school what they have acquired during their training. School practice is done in two blocks at the end of the second and third year of their training, and, normally, each block lasts between 4 to 6 weeks (Namubiru 2007: 143–144).

2. **Limited opportunities for the initial teacher-trainee to practice extended teacher roles** (beyond classroom teaching) anticipatory of the real situation and environment after their graduation. For instance, it is rear to find a practice-teacher serving as 'duty master/teacher-on-duty', 'house master', 'class master', guidance-and-counsellor, etc and encountering the associated challenges and trying to solve them upfront. On the contrary, student teachers in schools seek to hide away from such role-plays and even keep away from the school when they have no classes to teach or to be observed teaching by a university teacher supervisor.

With regard to in-service teacher (INSET) professional development opportunities, it has been observed that teachers, once they have been posted in schools, find it difficult to get back to formal learning/refresher/training situations. Yet these are essential for interaction with new ideas, scientific innovations, changing technology and new ways of doing things since the time of graduating. A study in Tanzania (Ishumi 1998) noted that some eight to 15 years would pass by since the teacher's initial teacher education programme and that only few teachers would benefit from INSET opportunities.

Data on in-service training opportunities for already serving teachers reveal an extreme shortage of such opportunities, indeed a complete absence of the idea in as many as 52% of the schools in the public sector and 58% of the schools in the non-government sector. Overall, 6.4% of the total teaching force in government schools has had an in-service training opportunity in the last five years, while 10.% in non-government schools have had such an opportunity. The variation here may be explained by several factors, including the budgetary difficulties, especially in government schools, connected with the physical

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movement for staff to some centrally organized training programmes. Non-government schools, on the other hand, have valued such opportunities particularly for their less than qualified staff and for the critical improvement in performance in their otherwise academically less competitive schools. …. On the whole, for all the schools, in-service training for serving teachers is conspicuously deficient (Ishumi, 1998: 16–17) A similar situation still persists in Tanzania today in connection with some of the other East African countries (Kagoda, 2010: 13–14).

The problem with teacher ethics and professionalism.

In 2004, a study was carried out on the state of teacher ethics in Tanzania (Boimanda, 2004: 9–10). It produced results that indicated a decline in the professional code of conduct in a number of areas:

(1)	Absenteeism, absconding and refusal of transfers;	61%
(2)	Immoral relations with students [sexual relations, assaults, rape];	16%
(3)	Examination fraud/leakages;	6%
(4)	Alcoholism;	4%
(5)	'Ghost' teaching; and	3%
(6)	Others (insubordination, dishonesty, fighting, negligence, forgery).	10%

Similar observations have been made in two more studies (Anangisye and Barrett, 2005: 5–22; Anangisye, 2006). Although this article cannot hastily generalize this issue to all other African countries, problems of teacher ethics and misconduct have been mentioned sufficiently in connection with a few other countries as well (Teleki, 2002, in connection with South Africa; Ndlovu and Mboto, 2009, in connection with South Africa; and Kuecken and Valfort, 2012, in connection with 10 African countries – Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia).

What is to be done to reclaim the teaching profession?

In the light of the range of historical and current problems and challenges as discussed in the preceding sections, there is need to conduct a critical examination of what needs to be done with respect to revitalizing the lost glory of the teaching profession. There is a need to address issues such as the pre-requisite and mode teacher preparation, qualitatively feasible durations of

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teacher preparation, modalities for Teaching Practice and supervision, probationary conditions for professional teacher confirmation, and professional teacher support, motivation and retention. These are a few of the 'carrots' that would make the teaching profession worth pursuing and living. But professions have 'sticks' also, such as sanctions and penalties, to be meted against renegades. Such sanctions, as well as 'carrots', would have to be considered and administered in order to reclaim the teaching profession and to elevate it to a level beyond regret and reproach. In this section, a few ideas are suggested.

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Formation and legislation of an independent regulatory body for the education profession

Each of the four professions that have been discussed and compared with teaching/education is associated with a specific regulatory body. Such a well-established body is active in different ways associated with the protection and nurture of the profession. It defines and refines standards and mechanisms for boosting and maintaining quality of work performance. It maintains systems for guiding, boosting and disciplining their members, along with providing them with opportunities for professional development in their careers. Such a body wields power and commands compliance and respect for the professional discharge of duties expected of the profession.

It is this professional regulatory instrument the teaching profession – in many countries – has missed. It stands to reason – and it is high time – that the teaching profession rises to the occasion for purposes of controlling and guiding its members; making cases for rewards accruable to teachers when they rightfully deserve them; representing and speaking for the profession; setting and protecting standards of performance, as well as arranging for professional development programmes to raise levels of performance. Such functions, when so well performed by such a body, do serve to raise the public regard for the teaching profession and its representatives – the teachers. While there is something to be gained from cross-comparative study tours of professional teacher regulatory bodies in countries where these have succeeded, it would be equally important for the leadership within the teaching profession to keep abreast of what other professions and their regulatory bodies (engineering, law, accountancy, etc.) do in order to keep themselves socially, academically, economically and professionally vital.

The need for revitalizing teacher education

Revitalizing teacher education means 'giving the act and process of preparing teachers a permanent thought and commitment to renewed thinking, creative

directions and intellectually productive strategies in and for the pedagogical enterprise'. It must be a sustainable and self-sustaining effort. It is for both the younger generation in the initial (pre-service) phase *and* for the already-serving professionals who must continue to cope with a changing world of information, knowledge and technology. This will always require at least two things:

- Frontal discussions, among educational and government leaders within individual countries as well as among regional blocs, on common ways of revitalizing not only the teaching profession but also the programme of teacher education (teacher preparation), and associated or necessary support programmes for the profession's internal efficiency and for its external image;

- A search for an agreement on complementary external (pan-East African/pan-southern-African, and eventually pan-African) quality-assurance mechanisms intended to strengthen the teaching profession – both at the level of pre-service training and at the level of post-training within the service.

Institution of teacher performance-based accountability

Among innovations that have been advocated for introducing into the teaching profession is the idea of 'a teacher performance-based accountability system', first developed in the US in the wake of an alarm that was raised in the 1980s by a committee of professional experts, at that time addressed to the American public, indicating the big risk the American nation was running in the field of education if things were going to continue as they were, namely: (1) too many prospective teacher trainees who were at the time being recruited from the bottom quarter of graduating high school and college students; (2) a teacher preparation programme/curriculum that was weighted heavily with courses in educational methods at the expense of courses in subjects to be taught; (3) half of the newly employed mathematics, science and English teachers being 'unqualified' to teach these subjects; and (4) conspicuously low teacher salaries that were causing many teachers to supplement their income with 'professionally unrelated' part-time employment outside teaching (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

The teacher performance-based accountability system introduced at national level (through a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in 1987) to address the four risks and motivate teacher performance towards excellence consisted in establishing high and rigorous standards for what teachers (at varying levels of certification) should know and be able to do in order to

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improve student learning; and certifying teachers who meet those standards. The process involves the following stages:

1. Standards setting – defining what accomplished Teaching Practice really is; and establishing what accomplished teachers must know and be able to do, for instance:
   - the teachers' commitment to students and their learning;
   - the teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students;
   - the teachers' sense of responsibility for managing and monitoring student learning;
   - teachers' systematic thinking about their practice and their learning from experience; and
   - teachers' passion and commitment as members of *learning* communities. (NBPTS, 1991: 13–15)

2. Assessment instruments – evaluating teaching with a variety of performance measures tailored to the standards of accomplishment, involving two modules:
   - One requiring data collected in a candidate's school setting (The school site module consists of portfolio documentation and on-site observation. The portfolio, developed by the candidate/teacher, might include curriculum guides, a reflective essay, student projects and essays, as well as attestation of teaching accomplishment from other teachers, students, and parents. Two methods of on-site observation usually include videotapes of classroom instruction and on-site classroom visits.); and
   - The second requiring data collected at an assessment centre (This module focuses on structured interviews, simulations and knowledge of subject matter and content matter pedagogy. While interviews could be developed from the materials in a teacher's portfolio, the simulations would centre on exercises measuring the teacher's skill in responding to student essays, mathematics or science problems, and laboratory reports).

3. Professional development – providing teachers with the opportunity to discuss the elements of excellent teaching and to incorporate such practice into their teaching/learning environment.

Further developments and improvements on the teacher performance-based accountability system have since continued to be experimented upon (Milken, 1999; Milken Family Foundation, 2000). A teacher performance-based

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accountability system is a concept worth reflecting upon and adopting for efficient and effective school practice.

Dedication to teacher professional development

In a thorough review of the wide literature on the subject, Eleneonora Villegas-Reimers portrays *teacher professional development* as…a life-long process which begins with the initial preparation that teachers receive (whether at an institute of teacher education or actually on the job) and continues until retirement (2003: 8).

Glatthorn, in an even more incisive tone, defines the process as 'the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and [of] examining his or her [ways of] teaching systematically' (1995).

One could not agree with them more. The professional life of a teacher is, in an ideal situation, synonymous with their own duration of career. Such a career is supposed – and expected – to be a happy professional career of dedication not only to the young people in their charge, but equally well to the subject of their teaching career (i.e. teaching of history, teaching of geography, teaching of physics, teaching of civics, and so on) as well as to the world around them: of fellow teachers and educational colleagues in general. Teacher professional development is supposed to embrace all this in its objectives, design and actual conduct. Invariably, this is one area for which our schools/faculties/colleges/institutes of education will have to fight to impress upon authorities – in Government and elsewhere – on issues of durations of pre-service Teaching Practice blocks, probation and licensing of teachers, and on in-service career opportunities.

Teacher professional development constitutes a career life-line for the teaching profession whose various models are not static but rather dynamic, ranging from 'learning' activities in cooperation with schools and school districts (as in teacher resource centres), using certified senior school teachers ('master-teachers') as resources for teacher candidates in certain learning modules and preparing for various assessments, to collaboration with/among other organizations within individual discipline areas in order to coordinate identified urgent professional development activities, including planning, designing and developing teaching and learning materials.

Regional collaboration and initiatives

There are many areas and at different levels in which initiatives could be made towards collaboration among leaders within the teaching profession and their

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professional colleagues within the region. Perhaps the most immediate ones include the following:

- Collaborative research projects aimed at certain common issues for purposes of promoting best practices or of resolving current constraints that appear to be common in all the member countries;
- Conceptualizing and establishing an apex teacher education association that would not only provide support and additional inspiration towards establishing or strengthening national professional teacher regulatory bodies but also help to examine and debate common/comparable approaches and practices in teacher-training curricula, professional teacher development, standards-setting for the profession and aspiring teachers. These initiatives would need to be translated practically from just wishful thinking to action programmes.

Conclusion

Is the teaching vocation capable of becoming a strong and prudent profession of the vitality, esteem and reward comparable to or even beyond other professions? Is the old glory of the teaching profession reclaimable? The answer to these questions is 'yes'. It would need or take only deliberate policies and action – at both macro- and micro-levels – to address systemic factors in order to convince and change the silently negative or ambivalent public opinion about the teacher and the teacher's work and responsibilities. But it would also require strong commitment within our Ministries of Education in taking right decisions at the levels of policy and management towards teacher development for enduring school practice.

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Notes

1. The Italian Leonardo Da Vinci (1452–1519) is reckoned to have been one classical case of an engineer-architect of the Renaissance period. In England in the eighteenth century, the term civil engineer was coined to incorporate all things civilian as opposed to military engineering. In 1771, a group of leaders in the engineering practice organized themselves informally, as Smeaton Society of Civil Engineers informally under a self-proclaimed first civil engineer John Smeaton, for purposes of informal exchanges over dinner. In 1818 the Institution of Civil Engineers was founded in London, obtaining a Royal Charter in 1828.
2. The process culminated in the formation of the South Africa Council for Professional Engineers (SACPE) in 1969, which was in 2000 transformed into the statutory Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA).
3. The school, popularly known as the *Platonian Academy*, was set up by Plato in order to *instruct* young men as a breed of future leaders – a new ruling class, philosopher-kings, planners and decision-makers – into ways of wisdom and governance. This was followed, in 335 BCE, by another school in the same city by one of Plato's pupils, Aristotle, which formed the basis of the scientific method and provided the

world's first comprehensive study of human knowledge from the perspective of natural philosophy (Curtis and Boultwood, 1965; Rusk, 1965).

4. This was based on the use of some brighter boys in teaching the younger pupils to write the alphabet in sand, as was employed back in 1792 by Dr Bell in Madras, India, where it proved to be a most effectual strategy of extending popular instruction as well as solving the problem of shortage of regular trained teachers. Under this system, a master – the ordinary trained teacher – would give instruction to a number of older and brighter lads, called *monitors*. In turn, each of these monitors would take charge of a small group of their subordinates and seek to teach them in the manner he was taught in the first instance by the class master. That way, a single school master could, by proxy, give instructions to hundreds of pupils (Graham, 1971: 26–28), while reserving the most basic duties of a supervisor, examiner and disciplinarian.
5. The term 'professionalism' refers to a quality or state in which one seeks to exhibit and maintain a complex of features or behaviours that characterize the values and norms of the vocation one was prepared for and inducted into. The moral imperative to render service to the client, to maintain a level of integrity and to adhere to a code of conduct, does stand out as a major yardstick in the definition of professionalism
6. In Denmark and Norway, the societal view of and reference to the teacher as '*animateur*s', or community.
7. In Tanzania, until recently, teachers used to fall into several grades, with the majority categorized into Grade IIIC (with primary education attainment level) for elementary/primary school classes; IIIB (with primary education attainment but upgraded from IIIC after further training); and IIIA (with secondary education attainment but also by promotion from IIIB). Above these major categories would be Assistant Education Officer II - I (with a college diploma, teaching mainly lower classes of secondary school classes).

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