

# CURRICULUM: SYSTEMIC LINKAGES

---

HUGO LABATE / TALENT WORKSHOP / DAR ES SALAAM 2018



# DRIVERS OF CHANGE IN EDUCATION

---

Job markets are changing fast, demanding less “school knowledge”, more “generic skills” and adaptability for longlife learning

ICTs make access to knowledge easy, unpredictable and almost trivial.

School is not anymore the place where knowledge provision can be managed

Tensions to agree on how, what and why educate) are increasing

**So, what does “curriculum” mean today?**

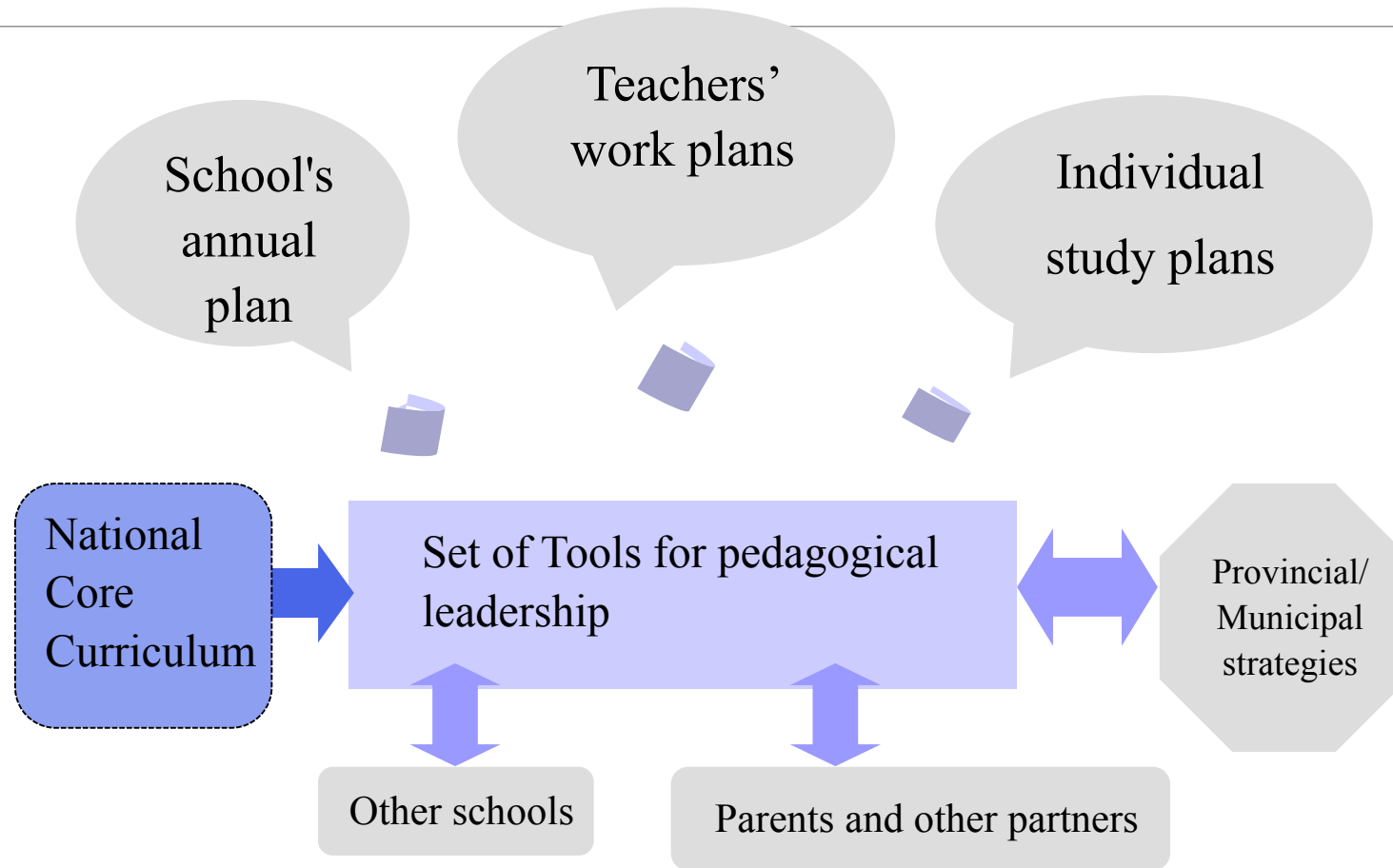
**What does “quality learning” mean today?**

# AN EXTENDED CONCEPTION OF CURRICULUM

Traditional view	Today's view
<p>a stable set of syllabuses with teaching content organized by disciplines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a product of a process</li><li>• an explicit reflection of the kind of society to which we aspire</li><li>• the knowledge, skills and values most fundamental to prepare younger generations to live in the society we want to build</li><li>• Tools and process for pedagogical development (i.e. disciplinary content, learning strategies, assessment, learning outcomes) as well as administrative development (i.e. design, management and follow-up of the curriculum).</li></ul>

# CURRICULUM AS FLEXIBLE GUIDANCE

---



# CURRICULUM DISCOURSES

---

- Centralized vs decentralized curriculum (to include local contexts and contents)
- Active learning, learning by doing, competency-based
- Understanding and application over storing and memorizing
- Cognitive, emotional, practical, social and ethical dimensions interrelated
- Adapted to diverse learning styles and abilities
- Using full potential of ICT
- Including findings brought about by neuroscience and pedagogy

*...Towards universal design for learning*

# A CURRICULUM FOR UNIVERSAL LEARNING

## Recognition Networks

The "what" of learning



How we gather facts and categorize what we see, hear, and read. Identifying letters, words, or an author's style are recognition tasks.



Present information and content in different ways

**More ways to provide  
Multiple Means of  
Representation**

## Strategic Networks

The "how" of learning



Planning and performing tasks. How we organize and express our ideas. Writing an essay or solving a math problem are strategic tasks.



Differentiate the ways that students can express what they know

**More ways to provide  
Multiple Means of Action  
and Expression**

## Affective Networks

The "why" of learning



How learners get engaged and stay motivated. How they are challenged, excited, or interested. These are affective dimensions.



Stimulate interest and motivation for learning

**More ways to provide  
Multiple Means of  
Engagement**

# INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM: A VISION EMBRACING QUALITY + EQUITY

---

Lifelong learning opportunities for all, where equity and quality go hand in hand. An aspiration of a society towards equitable distribution of opportunities and the elimination of poverty and marginality.

Policy components (curriculum, teacher training, school administration, supervision and assessment) geared to the achievement of inclusiveness.

- inclusive *learning environments* which encourage the active role and the participation of learners, their families and their communities;
- flexible *frameworks* that accommodate local contexts and diversify pedagogical practices;
- *participation* and consultation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes;

# PAUSE FOR REFLECTION...

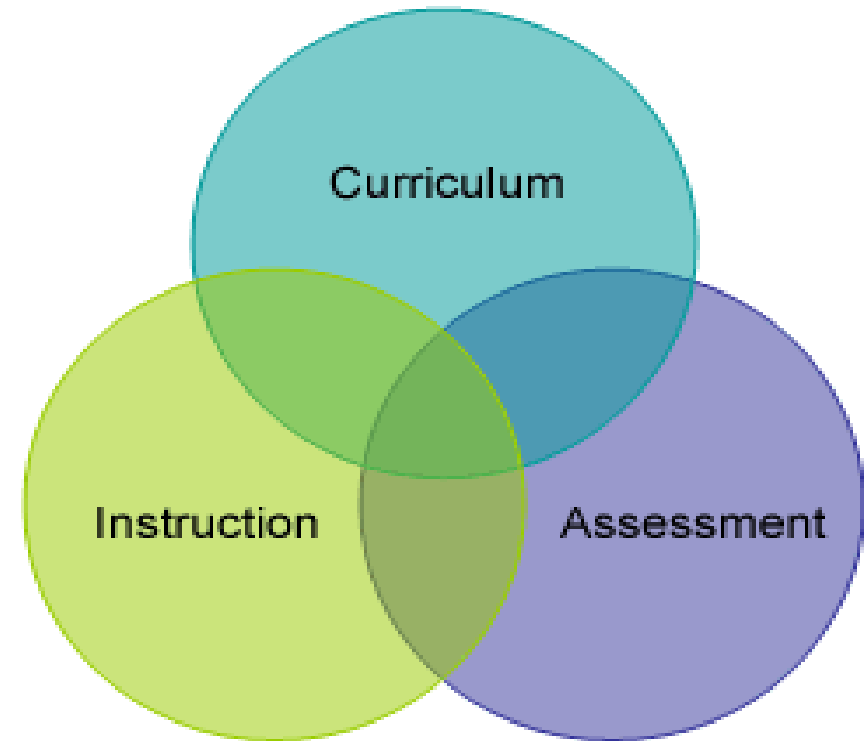
---

Where do we start building quality?

Working on curriculum?

Working on teachers?

Working on assessment?





# WHAT TO DEFUSE

---

## *Too much emphasis on academic content*

- narrow definition of learning and learning outcomes, as well as restricting teaching practices,
- over-burdening of academic content creating time pressures for teaching staff.
- 'Achievement' merely understood as test results

## *School knowledge unusable out of school:*

- skills and knowledge learned in school lacking relevance for the lives of many students, especially those that come from non-academically oriented socio-cultural backgrounds
- content areas with little relation to the skills sought by the job market due to rapid technical development, international competition, as well as demographic changes.

# COMPETENCIES AS CURRICULUM ORGANIZERS

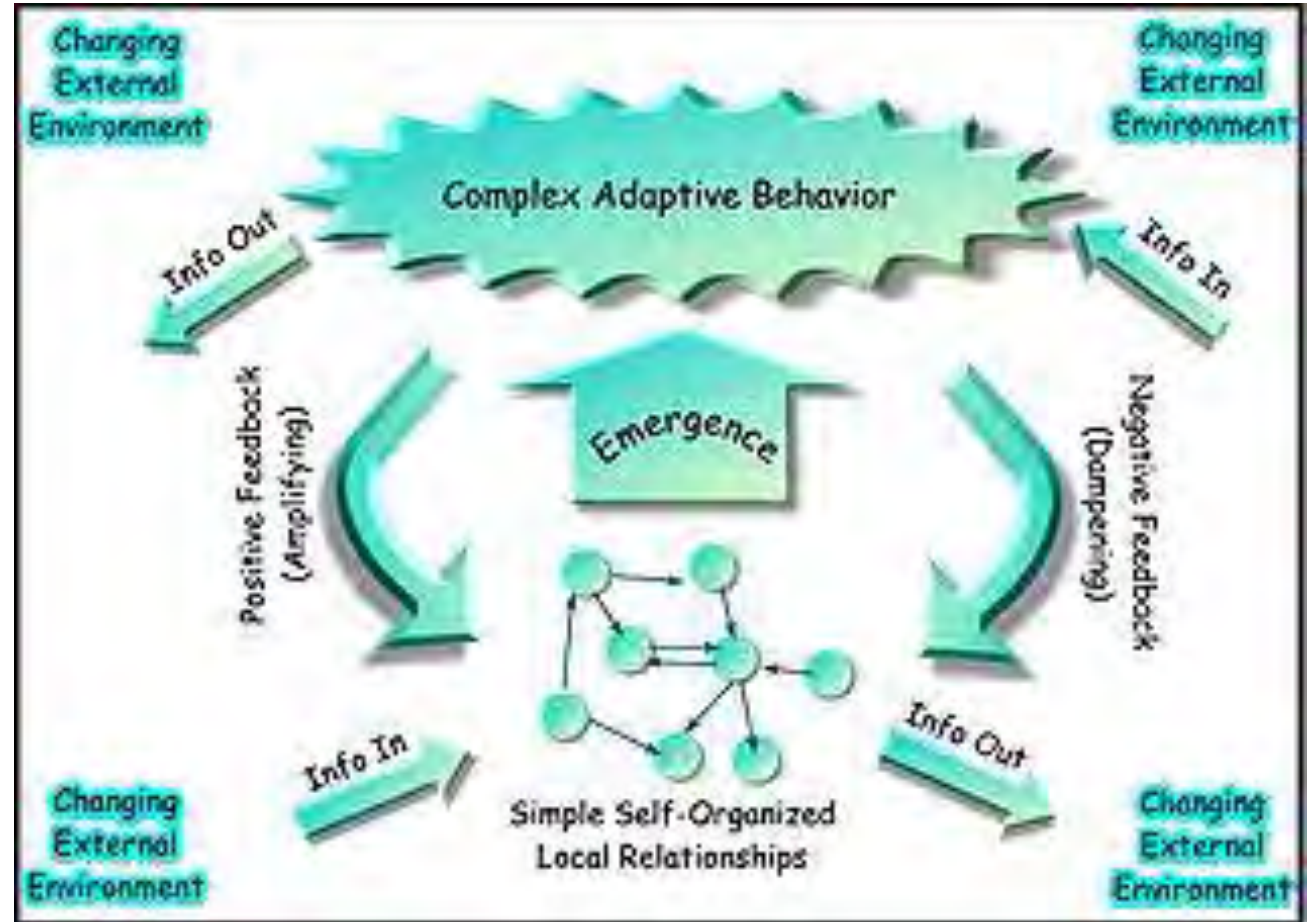
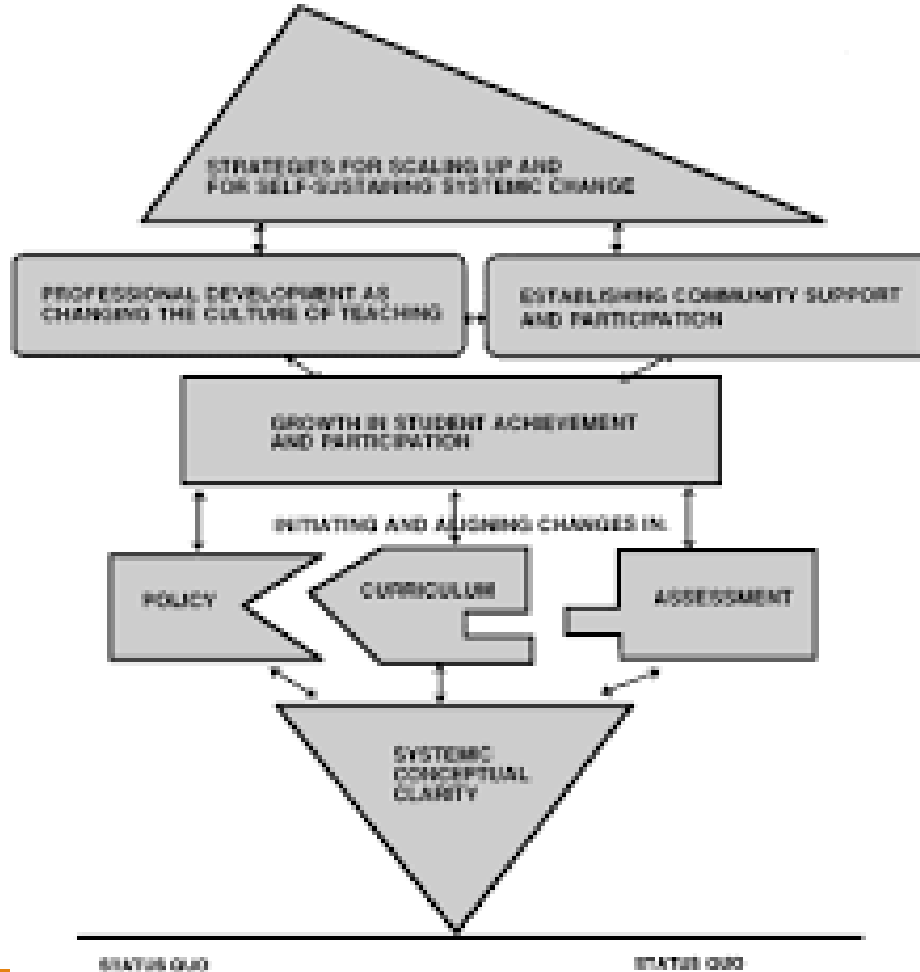
---

Competencies as bridges to pre-existing subjects:

- enhance the relevance of content by encouraging the application of knowledge to simulated life situations;
- facilitate the formulation of expected student outcomes in concrete and practical statements;
- integrate subject content that is traditionally separate in the curriculum; and
- provide a mechanism for gathering accurate and meaningful data on student performance and achievement for assessment". (Stabback, 2007)

The *competent handling of a situation* thus constitutes the principal criterion for assessing competencies. (Jonnaert, 2007) .

# PAUSE FOR REFLECTION



# SYSTEM ALIGNMENT

---

INTERACTION among elements of the education landscape

- General Legislation: constitution, Education Laws
- Social Public policies (e.g. diversity, health)
- Specific education policies
  - curriculum
  - school management, autonomy, supervision & decentralization,
  - Teachers (education, professionalization, social recognition, training, salary),
  - Assessment

An inclusive curriculum must be supported and empowered by the education system as a whole.

# Assurance for/of K-12 Education System Quality Standards & Trust Matrix



## Note Other Comparators:

- Time & Duration (short/long)
- BIG DATA vs small data
- Accountability (ability to count) vs Responsibility (ability to respond)
- Efficacy (confidence & competence)
- Public vs Private

(Low) Professional Autonomy (High)

(Low) Competence (High)

(Low) Equity (High)

## Note Other Layers:

- Gini Coefficient
- Hoover Index
- Pareto Priority Index

# CURRICULUM DILEMMAS

---

Society is demanding two contradictory things at the same time:

“Give me an education that I can understand, control, measure and relate to (classical, academical, graded), but also prepare children for the unpredictable future”.

# TENSION BETWEEN SOCIAL VALUES AND MINDSETS

---

Objectivity

Control

Social justice

Help all to achieve

Learning at own pace

Subjectivity

Accountability

Meritocracy

Survival of the fittest

Time-bound standards

# CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

---

Assessment must be used to support learning, not for penalising learners - especially those who are most disadvantaged. Black and Wiliam (2005)

Standardised tests measure best academic learning outcomes, while other types of knowledge (e.g. informal knowledge and skills) remain out of view

Tests are time-bound, creating pressures for both teachers and students, especially those for whom (because of dyslexia, intellectual disability, language proficiency), reading and writing take more time than for average students.

Success in summative assessment does not necessarily correlate with adult success in social, vocational or other indicators of quality of life. (Peters, 2005)

‘MEASURING WHAT WE VALUE’ instead of ‘VALUING WHAT WE CAN MEASURE’



# WHEN ASSESSMENT 'STEALS' THE PLACE OF CURRICULUM ...

---

...teaching is geared into preparing students for the examinations rather than guiding and supporting students to learn what is described in the curriculum.

...the standardised assessment given at the end of the year or a phase of schooling is used to evaluate the efficiency of the teaching in a school.

...students who face individual barriers to learning may become a risk factor for school performance, which may lead to the exclusion of such learners.

...learning outcomes are evaluated by centralized exams and very little room is left for adjusting curriculum goals locally.

# ALIGNMENT INDICATORS

---

- 1 – The design of the tests is in accordance with the curriculum
- 2 – Real learning opportunities of students are considered for establishing the testing domains
- 3 – Test results are useful to monitor precisely and un-biased the achievement of curriculum learning goals in the course of time.
  
- 4 – Performance levels are aligned with the curriculum
- 5 – Performance levels are defined considering real learning achievement of students
- 6 – Performance levels can describe qualitatively different stages in learning
  
- 7 – Performance levels balance between stability and change
- 8 – Results are communicated in effective ways
- 9 – There are formal mechanisms to use test results for learning improvement
- 10 – There are formal mechanisms to monitor the consequences of tests in the education system

# IMPROVING ALIGNMENT REQUIRES:

---

*Challenging theoretical and political perspectives:* Learning capacity of human beings is not in crisis; it is probably augmented by ICT's. Why do we use indicators to instill a sense of crisis? To what vision is linked the curriculum and the assessment policy? Who is setting the agenda? To satisfy what objectives?

*Challenging epistemic and pedagogic theories-in-action:* curriculum organized around old structures, privileging the storing of facts instead of understanding, the memorization of procedures instead of problem solving, and an evaluation system that reinforces this view.

*Redefining ends and means:* Competency orientation: What students need to be able to do, instead of knowing. Rethink: curriculum structure, learning experiences, teaching strategies, assessment systems. What does a person need to understand the complex world, adapt and act in a context that shifts permanently? How can we measure if we are achieving this

*Redefining the roles:* The teacher as a stakeholder, not an implementer. Discussing the teachers' theory-in-action.

# AVOID MAKING PEOPLE CRAZY OR ENGAGE IN SIMULATION

---

**Double bind:** an emotionally distressing dilemma in communication

An individual (or group) receives two or more conflicting messages, and one message negates the other.

E.g.: A person in a position of authority imposes two contradictory conditions but there exists an unspoken rule that one must never question authority: "I must do it, but I can't do it" is a typical description of the double-bind experience.

A successful response to one message results in a failed response to the other (and vice versa), so that the person will automatically be wrong regardless of response. (Gregory Bateson)

"The individual who 'adjusts' applies the two contradictory injunctions to two different domains of application to neutralize the *double bind*." (R. Girard)

# Thank you!

---

HUGO.LABATE@GMAIL.COM