

Researcher suggests major reappraisal of teaching methods for children in the developing world

April 10 2015

A University of York scholar has suggested that a major re-appraisal of teaching methods will help to transform the educational opportunities for millions of children in the developing world.

Professor Frank Hardman says more countries need to adopt the approach favoured by Kenya and Tanzania which have sought to make significant improvements to both pre-service (PRESET) and in-service (INSET) education and training of [teachers](#).

In a background paper prepared for the UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report published today, Professor Hardman supports the move to bring together PRESET and INSET to ensure coherence, consistency and quality of training so that all children, including the most marginalised, have access to competent teachers.

He says that in all high-performing education systems, teachers have a central role to play in improving educational outcomes as well as at the centre of the improvement efforts themselves. Such systems are driven by teachers embracing and leading on reform, taking responsibility as professionals, and so developing a wider repertoire of strategies for use in the classroom.

The growing body of research on effective professional development models for teachers from both high and [low income countries](#) provides

support for the general trend in developing countries towards school-based INSET.

Professor Hardman, of the Institute for Effective Education at York, says the approach offers the hope of improving learning for all children, particularly for the poorest and most marginalised.

The scale of the problem was illustrated by the 2014 Global Monitoring Report which estimated that out of a total world population of 650 million primary age children, 250 million were not achieving basic literacy and numeracy skills even though 130 million of them have spent at least four years in school.

A major challenge has been the availability and competence of teachers. It is estimated that 1.6 million additional teachers are needed to achieve universal primary education by 2015 and 5.1 million to achieve universal lower secondary education by 2030. Many serving teachers are also unqualified or under-qualified: in 34 of the 98 countries with data on trained teachers, less than 75 per cent of teachers are trained according to national standards.

Teacher training is often carried out by trainers who lack experience and expertise in primary education with minimal supervised practical teaching, creating a gap between theory and classroom practice

Professor Hardman suggested that the widespread introduction of more effective [teaching methods](#) taught through local languages would help to address the problem and equip teachers to deliver a curriculum that is relevant to the twenty-first century. Research suggests teachers need training in more interactive approaches to build on traditional rote (drilling, facts and routines through repetition), recitation (using short question/answer sequences to recall or test what is expected to be known), instruction (telling children what to do and how to do it) and

exposition (imparting information and explaining things). Teachers also need to include discussion (open exchange of views and information and problem solving) and dialogue (co-construction through open questions, probing pupils' responses and the thinking which lies behind them, and building on their contributions) in their teaching repertoire.

He said the systematic observation of classroom processes would enable both impact and process evaluations of teacher training interventions and help make the learning visible for both teachers and students to allow for effective monitoring and feedback.

All children and young people need to be educated as responsible global citizens as well as acquiring basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Their education should include issues such as environmental sustainability, peacebuilding and disaster risk reduction, and the development of core transferable skills such as critical thinking, communication, cooperation, problem-solving, conflict resolution, leadership and advocacy, along with core values such as tolerance, appreciation of diversity and civic responsibility.

Professor Hardman says: "It is also essential that teachers address these themes in a manner that is relevant to the lives of the [children](#), particularly those from the most marginalised and vulnerable communities."

Provided by University of York

Citation: Researcher suggests major reappraisal of teaching methods for children in the developing world (2015, April 10) retrieved 17 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-04-major-reappraisal-methods-children-world.html>

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