Introduction

Education has long been defined as a vital instrument for development. It is seen as “a means to the sacred end of economic growth” (Hutchins, 1970). Education is also one of the basic human rights. Hence, any nation committed to economic growth and fair treatment of its citizens has to organize and provide an efficient educational system.

As Ethiopia's attention is increasingly focused on the outcomes of education, policymakers have undertaken a wide range of reforms to improve schools, ranging from new standards and tests to redesigned schools, new curricula, and new instructional strategies. One important lesson from these efforts has been the recurrent finding that teachers are the fulcrum that determines whether any school initiative tips toward success or failure. Every aspect of school reform such as the creation of more challenging curriculum, the use of ambitious assessments, the implementation of decentralized management, the invention of new model schools and programs depends on highly-skilled teachers.

Because of this, every educational system should strive to attract qualified people to the profession and to provide them with the best possible working conditions and material incentives that will satisfy their needs.

As policy makers in education systems across the world respond to these and other challenges that shape teachers policies, the major career track emerged in teaching is recruitment of less qualified or untrained teachers on short-term contract basis known as contract teachers, partly as a response to the teacher shortages in meeting Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015, or as a conditionality promoted by some financial lending institutions and mainly evident in Africa, South Asia and Latin America.

There is a precipitous decline in the status of the teaching profession, with less and less attention paid to the 1966 Recommendation of the UNESCO and International Labor Organization that calls for the education and recruitment of high-performing teachers, improved working conditions, and teachers’ participation in policymaking processes.

Across all nations, there is a consensus among education stakeholders that educational quality is indeed a critical component to securing a future in the 21st century for societies and in improving the physical and human environment. To reach this goal of social progress, researchers have pointed out that teacher quality is one of the most important school-related factors in student achievement and that a teacher’s mastery of the subject content and classroom practices strongly influence what students learn. However, this cannot work alone without adequate resources, supportive school climate, support for students coming from low socio-economic backgrounds and strong commitment to teachers’ continuous professional development, voice and leadership. All these aspects combined together can result in a better quality teaching.
In Ethiopia, in the past decade and half, significant efforts have been made to expand the access to education. However, the greater push given to increasing enrolment seems to have offset the efforts made to improve the quality of education (MOE, 2005b), which makes qualification of teachers a focal point.

**Objective**

In this paper, I reviewed the issues associated with various approaches to ascertaining teacher effectiveness, and suggested a framework for policy systems that might prove productive in both identifying and *developing* more effective teachers and teaching. I draw a distinction between effective teachers and effective teaching that is important to consider if improvement in student learning is the ultimate goal.

**Effective Teachers and Teaching**

Teaching effectiveness may be defined as how an instructor can best direct, facilitate, and support students toward certain academic ends such as achievement and satisfaction. Teaching effectiveness has been investigated extensively in traditional classrooms for more than seven decades (for a meta-analysis of empirical studies from 1995–2004 as stated in Seidel & Shavelson, 2007). Recently, research has become directed toward teaching effectiveness in online or virtual classes. As a preface to our study, the reviewer discusses findings and conclusions concerning teaching effectiveness in traditional classrooms. The reviewer do so for two reasons: practically, since all findings are relevant to online teaching, and theoretically, since current research has shown the theoretical equivalency of all kinds of instructional systems within the framework of a unified theory of instructional design.

It is important to distinguish between the related but distinct ideas of teacher quality and teaching quality. *Teacher quality* might be thought of as the bundle of personal traits, skills, and understandings an individual brings to teaching, including dispositions to behave in certain ways. The traits desired of a teacher may vary depending on conceptions of and goals for education; thus, it might be more productive to think of teacher *qualities* that seem associated with what teachers are expected to be and do.

**Teaching Quality** has to do with strong instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn. Such instruction meets the demands of the discipline, the goals of instruction, and the needs of students in a particular context. Teaching quality is in part a function of teacher quality – teachers’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions – and it is also strongly influenced by the context of instruction. Key to considerations of context are “fit” and teaching conditions. A “high-quality” teacher may not be able to offer high quality instruction in a context where there is a mismatch in terms of the demands of the situation and his or her knowledge and skills; for example, an able teacher asked to teach subject matter for which s/he is not prepared may teach poorly; a teacher who is trained and effective for high school level may be unable to teach small children; and a teacher who is able to teach high-ability students or affluent students well may be quite unable to teach students who struggle to learn or who do not have the resources at home that the teacher is accustomed to assuming are available. Thus, a high-quality teacher in one circumstance may not be a high-quality teacher in another.
Policies and Practices to Augment Teacher Effectiveness

Information alone is not enough to drive improvements in student learning. Strong evidence indicates that the teaching-learning process is one of the most important determinants of student achievement. Too often government policies such as those around teacher training have failed to change classroom teaching practices. Many education policies geared to improve pedagogy have focused more on curriculum reforms than teacher practice. Those directly addressed pedagogy, such as introducing mother tongue instruction, have often ignored the practical constraints on implementing these policies. Moreover, essential classroom practices are often not addressed in teacher training. For instance, in most countries teachers are not specifically trained in methods to teach children to read. The concept of “quality teaching” is complex and open to a range of definitions and interpretations. This review has therefore adopted a pragmatic approach, based on how institutions define quality in their own circumstances.

Those programs that have attempted to change teaching practice have generally failed to have broader impact on policy for two main reasons: (1) they have not been designed and implemented in a way that encourages and ensures broad uptake; and/or (2) they have not included efforts to rigorously analyze or document their impact on student learning. In regard to the first reason, most projects that aim to improve student learning by focusing on changes in the classroom are implemented in only a few schools. Hence, although successful, the project remains too small to have any effect on the larger system. Moreover, many projects are often too costly for long-term government adoption. Other projects, especially those financed by international donors and managed by international staff, have limited impact because the support base within the country is weak and they are usually run parallel to the government system.

The few projects that have focused both on student learning and on large-scale implementation in government schools have, by and large, lacked rigor in assessing student learning outcomes. For example, a 2006 report by the World Bank on its own education lending found that less than one in three projects ever aimed to improve learning outcomes, and that among those projects with a learning outcome objective, well under 50 percent had an evaluation with repeated measures of learning outcomes. There is the tendency to think that factors of teachers’ effectiveness could be defined in terms of teacher characteristics, his experiences, his cognitive and affective properties, the conditions to which he has to adjust and the characteristics of the school, classroom and student. Although each of these characteristics may contribute to teacher’s success, they are not the substance of effective teaching. A proper conceptualization of teaching and teacher’s effectiveness as a yardstick for quality assurance is necessary for a better understanding of what makes a teacher to be effective. It is believed that observational techniques as a strategy could go a long way in making teacher to be effective. This explains why this paper examined how to enhance quality assurance through teacher’s effectiveness.

Reforms to Improve Teacher’s Quality

For more than two decades, policymakers have undertaken many and varied reforms to improve schools, ranging from new standards and tests to redesigned schools, new curricula and new governance models. One important lesson from these efforts is the repeated finding that teachers are the fulcrum determining whether any school initiative tips toward success or
failure. Every aspect of school reform depends on highly skilled teachers for its success. This is especially true as educational standards rise and the diversity of the student body increases. Teachers need even more sophisticated abilities to teach more complex curriculum to the growing number of public school students who have fewer educational resources at home, those who are new English language learners, and those who have distinctive learning needs.

One of the few areas of consensus among education policymakers, practitioners, and the general public today is that improving teacher quality is one of the most direct and promising strategies for improving public education outcomes, especially for groups of children who have historically been taught by the least qualified teachers. Teachers can have large effects on student achievement.

In recent years, there has been growing interest in moving beyond traditional measures of teacher qualifications, such as completion of a preparation program, number of degrees, or years of experience, in order to evaluate teachers’ actual performance as the basis for making decisions about hiring, tenure, licensing, compensation, and selection for leadership roles. A key problem is that current measures for evaluating teachers are not often linked to their capacity to teach. Existing federal, state, and local policies for defining and measuring teacher quality either rely almost exclusively on classroom observations by principals who differentiate little among teachers and offer little useful feedback, or focus on teachers’ course-taking records and on paper-and-pencil tests of basic academic skills and subject matter knowledge that are poor predictors of later effectiveness in the classroom.

A reliable and valid system of performance assessments based on common standards would provide consistency in gauging teacher effectiveness, help track educational progress, flag areas of need, and anchor a continuum of performance throughout a teaching career. Such a system could also be used to establish standards for a National Teacher License that would allow mobility across states, ensure school districts that a new hire meets the requirements necessary to become an effective teacher who can advance student learning, and enable districts to identify and recruit the most able teachers to the neediest schools.

**Quality Teaching in Higher Education**

Higher education is becoming a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy. The imperative for countries to improve employment skills calls for quality teaching within educational institutions. National and transnational debates like the Bologna Process, direct state regulations or incentives, competition among private and state-owned institutions all prompt institutions to put quality teaching on their agenda. Moreover, national quality assurance agencies push for reflection on the subject, even if their influence is controversial.

As higher education systems grow and diversify, society is increasingly concerned about the quality of programmes. Much attention is given to public assessments and international rankings of higher education institutions. However these comparisons tend to overemphasize research, using research performance as a yardstick of institutional value. If these processes fail to address the quality of teaching, it is in part because measuring teaching quality is challenging.
Ensuring Effectiveness through Policy-Maker Support

There is growing evidence that some well-designed performance-based assessments of teaching detect aspects of teaching that are significantly related to teacher effectiveness, as measured by student achievement gains. The value of using such assessments is that they can both document broader aspects of teacher effectiveness and can be used to help teachers develop greater effectiveness, as participation in these assessments has been found to support learning both for teachers who are being evaluated and educators who are trained to serve as evaluators.

The services dedicated to quality teaching are often vulnerable; they can be subjected to criticism by a reluctant academic community and deemed bureaucratic, useless and non-relevant to the academic mission of the institution. They need permanence, so as to gain visibility, build up their activities and become responsive partners for academia.

Traditional decision-making bodies could also misunderstand the need to improve quality teaching in higher education. In traditional research-intensive universities, a majority of researchers serve on governing committees. They highlight scholarship while overlooking quality teaching aspects that are often considered as incidental to the mission of academia. Research is emphasized because research performance drives the most brilliant academics and doctoral students, allows commercialization and dissemination through patents and spin-offs, attracts extra funding and above all safeguards the distinctive feature of universities in the diverse arena of higher education. Some institutions of that type are discovering, however, that paying attention to quality teaching could be a way to reinforce and secure their institutional reputation.

Institution leaders who would like to expand a quality teaching strategy need to make quality teaching support explicit and legitimate. This could be done by constantly promoting activities and assigning a clear-cut role to the services in charge of quality teaching. Granting them official status in the organizational chart of the institution ensures legitimate interventions across departments and strengthens recognition of the service. Some of them have been officially appointed research centers in the institution. These are mostly services placed under the direct authority of the rector or the leader of academic affairs, hence their legitimacy and ability to operate closer to the academic community, despite the influence wielded by the heads of departments or other key actors. In some cases, academics serve on the governing body of the service dedicated to quality teaching, and conversely the staff in charge of quality teaching might have a voice in the traditional decision-making bodies. The reputation of the service can thus be enhanced, doing away with the negative image of a useless and bureaucratic bureau, as sometimes occurs.

Although every institution has set up a service dedicated to quality teaching and assigned it most of the development of quality teaching, it would require a lot of effort by the institution for a single body to symbolize the institutional effort to support quality teaching. Such a scheme works at Copenhagen Business School, but not every institution is able to provide so much investment (UNESCO, 2000).

However, the institutions point out that there is a risk of having an empty shell. Setting up a service or assigning a position in charge of quality teaching may not have a powerful impact
on teaching improvement in the academic community, unless it is underpinned by a strong
and widely accepted commitment to quality teaching. Technical aspects should be set apart
from a genuine political commitment from top leadership (e.g. rector or vice-rector of
academics affairs). The leaders must demonstrate that quality of teaching is at the pinnacle
of their priorities and not just one additional mission. Mission statements could feature the
concept of quality teaching in explicit terms. As an example, Alverno College posts a
combination of institutional support (reflecting the political commitment, setting up the
framework, providing support services, institutional research support, organizing time and
room for discussion) and of individual commitment by the departments and other divisions.
The office of academic affairs oversees reflection on quality teaching with the abilities
departments, the discipline departments and other sub-committees. The office of educational
research and evaluation is involved in teaching improvement to teachers. Other institutions
argue that some values underpin quality teaching, like excellence, adequacy of job market
demand or equal opportunity for all students.

In other cases, quality teaching permeates every layer of institution-wide strategies, like the
Teaching and Learning Strategy at Teesside University that overarches specific strategies
such as that for e-learning. In France, the four-year agreement signed with the Ministry of
Education reflects the objectives of institutions regarding research, teaching and other
missions. Hence institutional support is needed for an ambitious quality teaching policy. The
institution must be knowledgeable about the aims of the teaching delivered and the means to
reach objectives, to take into account the level of the culture of quality and to fine-tune the
scope of quality support. Additionally the commitment should include inventing the right
structures to organize teamwork, ensure sensible functioning and fulfill the expectations of
such a service. This is a question of managing quality teaching at the institutional level.

Hence, academic affairs should not be set apart from the normal organization nor should they
be treated differently. The success of institutional quality teaching lies in the acceptance and
the involvement of every part of the institution. The more weight the concept of quality
teaching carries with the academic community, the more chances of success the institutional
policy will have. The Catholic University of Louvain for instance adopted a governing system
with cross-department pro-rectors rather than sector-wide positions, so they can design
institutional policies (Cheng, 1996a).

**Quality Teaching at Institutional Level and Synergy of Policies**

Many institutions have opted for a vision of quality teaching, considering that the unique
performance of individual instructors could not improve the overall quality of the teaching
delivered. Skelton recalls in Times Higher Education Supplement (16 November 2007) that
teaching excellence is generally considered to be achieved through individual effort. But
individual excellence masks crucial questions relating to basic material conditions of teaching
and learning (e.g. staff-to-student ratios, sufficient time to think seriously about teaching and
learning processes) which go beyond individual effectiveness.

**Information Technology Policies (IT)**

A vast majority of the institutions link their commitment to quality teaching with IT policies
(ranging from computer acquisition to in-depth technology-based learning strategies).
Intranets and discussion forums are seen as a powerful communication tool within the
academic community and with the students. There is a strong recognition by all the
institutions that communication has progressed and the level of information has never been that extensive. Even the largest multi-campus universities wishing to foster quality teaching could operate, proposing online courses, offering electronic kits for programme evaluations and hosting virtual good-teaching practices.

Technology provides convenient tools for collecting and consolidating qualitative information. Programme evaluations are computer-processed, and data collection is no longer frustrating for the administrative staff assigned to these burdensome tasks. They are used to filling in student and teacher portfolios, monitoring teacher performance and conducting online satisfaction surveys. The connection with human resources policies is a synergy that is often quoted by the participating institutions. Since quality teaching support aims at evaluating teacher performance, the services in charge of human resources are close partners in the definition and implementation of instruments. The emergence of a results-driven culture has often entailed a profound cultural shift for services that were routinely handling teachers’ recruitment process and career progress.

Although quality teaching improvement and assessment seem to pursue contradictory objectives (as echoed in the recurrent debates on quality assurance as a way of improving the programme vs. warranting that quality does exist), this divide happens to be irrelevant for institutions. When they debate curriculum contents, ways of teaching (e.g. lectures in auditorium, one-off seminars, practice-based pedagogy, collaborative working) and their expected relevance and effectiveness regarding the education’s and apprenticeship’s purpose, teachers and staff in charge of quality teaching have the opportunity to discuss both the kind of improvement and the thresholds to be attained. Then the next obvious step can be a collaborative definition of the criteria for benchmarks and ultimately for assessing commitment to quality (e.g. attending development training) and improvement (e.g. refining students’ assessment). Even though research-based performance measures are present in most national academic systems, the institutions tend to extend the metrics and to base career progression on quality teaching criteria.

**Implications for Institutional Actors of an Engagement in Quality Teaching**

**For Institution’s Leaders**

Institutional leadership and decision-making bodies have a fundamental role to play in shaping the institutional quality culture. They are often the initiators of quality teaching initiatives and their approach directly affects the outcome of these initiatives.

A sustained commitment to quality teaching by senior management is necessary for leading the whole institution towards the common goal of enhancing the quality of teaching. Leaders should be attentive to motivating deans and heads of department. At the crossroads between the institution’s decision-making bodies and teachers on the job, they encourage the cross-fertilization of strategic approaches and nurture innovation in everyday practice. In addition, they discuss the means for implementing and operating, measuring progress and identifying problems.

Involving teachers in the definition of quality teaching initiatives ensures that the initiatives are responsive to needs and promotes a sense of ownership. Adequate time, human resources, funding and facilities must be dedicated to planning and implementation of an
initiative. There must be an effective vehicle for discussion and sharing experiences, and perhaps a specific unit or other means of focusing organizational support. Opportunities can also stem from external factors that encourage institutional reflection on quality: periodical institutional evaluations, international ratings, national reforms or transnational processes.

Leaders should convey the relevance of the whole community (including administrative staff and students) in the implementation of the quality culture. The students should be mobilized, putting emphasis on their opinions and their contribution to the definition of quality teaching and the design of specific initiatives.

For Teachers
Much of the success of quality teaching support depends on its acceptance by teachers and the use of the instruments at teachers disposal. Quality teaching initiatives provide an occasion for teachers to think about their own role in the enhancement of quality: these initiatives help them to teach better. Gaining teachers commitment to reflective practice and consequential adaptation is vital. Technology-based teaching (e.g. the e-learning platform), intranets and discussion forums are pedagogical tools that can improve student-to-teacher interaction and assess student progress. It is important to link practices and tools with the institutional quality teaching policy, and link teacher expectations to institution expectations in terms of learning outcomes.

Teachers are the central actors for a reflection on the evaluation criteria of quality teaching: Which aspects have to be addressed and which changes have to be put in practice? Collaboration with the quality units in the design and implementation of curricula can be a good starting point. The definition of quality teaching is related to each teacher’s values, aptitudes and attitudes: teaching is a dynamic activity, which has strongly subjective aspects that depend on personal and collective philosophy and values. Teachers career progression may be influenced by the fact that quality teaching issues are gaining importance, and institutions are seeking ways of rewarding teachers who are committed to quality teaching.

For Students
Students, the primary beneficiaries of quality teaching initiatives, are increasingly becoming a force promoting quality teaching. Students can collaborate with teachers and leaders in the definition of the initiative (and of the quality teaching concept itself), keeping the interaction alive and raising concerns about teaching, learning environments, quality of content and teacher attitudes. They can best contribute if invited to serve on governing bodies or used as evaluation experts on par with academic reviewers.

Student groups can bring new ideas and influence the institutional policy on quality teaching by launching discussions and raising problems

Conclusions and Implications for Institutions in Ethiopia
Most of the teachers engaged in higher education are non-trained on teaching methodologies. There is a need to give high priorities towards pedagogical training: training which brings a change in consciousness; raising the income level of teachers still further; providing training opportunities at all levels; re-emphasizing the importance of the teacher to society. Nowadays, training is highly linked with ones political outlook; improving learning
conditions; discourage political harassment of teachers (Chen, 1997). Since most of the teachers in our educational system are subject matter experts, priority must be given to develop their ability in methods of teaching.

High quality teaching can only be achieved through sound teacher policies. That means it is time to take a serious and sustained look at initiatives aiming at improving teaching quality, such as adequate learning and teaching conditions, professional autonomy, a supportive and coherent education system that is adequately financed and focused on improvement rather than control. The improvement of teachers’ qualifications is also an important consideration; one that requires investing in programs and procedures to ensure qualified teachers for every classroom.

Although all these efforts across the world point to the need for improvement in teaching quality, there is currently no international forum that transcends regional boundaries in which ideas and best practices can be shared on this topic. There is a great need now for nations to learn from each other practical ways to approach these issues. Through the use of technology, combined with the ease of international travel, it is now possible to come together in new and more dynamic ways to develop solutions.

Changes in student profiles and learning requirements over recent decades have had a decisive impact on curriculum contents and teaching methods. The quality of teaching must therefore be thought of dynamically, as a function of contextual shifts in the higher-education environment, such as the internationalization of studies and the additional missions that education is being asked to fulfill (innovation, civic and regional development), producing an appropriately skilled workforce to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

To introduce an effective institutional policy for the quality of teaching involves harnessing synergy between two groups of factors:
1. Factors external to institutions, at the national and in many cases international levels (e.g. the Bologna Process in Europe): they work as facilitators or catalysts, fostering a general climate conducive to the recognition of teaching quality as a priority.
2. Internal institutional factors: the institutional context (e.g. the development of an in-house quality culture, the participation of students in academic affairs) and specific circumstances (e.g. the appointment of a new chief executive) are likely to affect the pace of development of quality teaching initiatives. Across institutions there are overlapping layers (the institution, the departments, the disciplines, the programmes) which are more or less open to quality teaching initiatives and whose influence varies over time.

The vast majorities of the initiatives taken by institutions to enhance teaching quality (for example programme evaluation or teacher training) are empirical and address their particular needs at a given time. Initiatives inspired by academic literature and research on the subject are rare.

For a university to consolidate these initiatives coherently under an institutional policy remains a long-term effort subject to multiple constraints. There are no models to follow, but rather a host of conditions that must all be met. Institutions should be aware that it is a university’s local environment that primarily shapes the extent of its commitment to the quality
of teaching and that a sustainable commitment of the university’s top leadership is a necessary condition for success in quality teaching. Encouraging bottom-up initiatives from the faculty members, setting them in a propitious learning and teaching environment, providing effective support and stimulating reflection on the role of teaching in the learning process all contribute to the quality of teaching.

The institutions most advanced in initiatives to promote the quality of teaching have explicitly stipulated the educator’s role and missions in the learning process, and they know how to explain their conviction that the quality of teaching is an important area for development. Neither the size nor the specificity of an institution poses a major obstacle to the development of institutional policies as long as the involvement of the institution’s management is clear and permanent, and sufficient funding and adequate facilities are earmarked for the quality of teaching on a long-term basis.

Commitment on the part of all university stakeholders, and above all by the academic community, is crucial to the success of any policy to improve the quality of teaching. Participation bolsters the dedication and motivation of teachers when it begins at the very conception of an action or a policy in which their educational function is put forward and stated explicitly. The participation of faculty deans is also vital insofar as deans, at the crossroads between an institution’s decision-making bodies and teachers on the job, encourage the cross-fertilization of strategic approaches, build and support communities of practice, and nurture innovation in everyday practice in the classroom.

The deployment of policies for quality teaching also hinges on an institution’s capacity to strike a balance between technical aspects of quality support (e.g. development of course evaluation questionnaires) and the fundamental issues raised (e.g. assessing the added value of the teaching initiatives in achieving curriculum objectives). Clearly, goals related to the quality of teaching can be neither reduced to, nor achieved through, mere technical improvements or extensions of existing mechanisms. Conversely, these fundamental issues lose relevance if they are not backed up by specific actions deemed useful by the academic community. It is all a matter of balance, tailored specifically to the culture and modus operandi of each institution.

Quality teaching initiatives have emphasized the role of teaching in the educational transformative process, have refined the interaction between research and teaching, and have nurtured the culture of quality within the academic community.

However, institutions need to develop innovative evaluative approaches to measure the impact of their support on quality teaching. The higher education sector is still struggling to understand the causal link between engagement in teaching and the quality of learning outcomes. The reason for this lies in the difference in approaches between the teacher’s work and the learning activities, which makes any causal link between inputs and outcomes difficult to measure, although such links undoubtedly exist. Institutions tend to monitor their initiatives essentially through indicators of activities and resources (e.g. curriculum structure, use of educational technology and enrolment figures), whereas learning outcomes are shaped by numerous factors deriving from context-dependent variables (e.g. students and faculty characteristics), from the setting in which learning occurs (e.g. teaching delivery, pedagogy, learning facilities) and from the student’s prior learning experience. An exploration
of the correlation between inputs, processes and outcomes of higher education calls for pioneering and in-depth evaluation methods and instruments.

The support for quality teaching usually generates awareness of the responsibility of teachers in the learning process and justifies the institutional need for helping them to fulfill their mission.

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