"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Nelson Mandela

THE FUTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

From the inception of time, teaching and learning have always been part of human existence, either consciously or unconsciously. Teaching and learning are important processes in human life, linked to the acquisition of knowledge, values, traditions, skills, and behavior. In differentiating both concepts for proper understanding, teaching is the process of attending to people’s needs, experiences and feelings, and intervening so that they learn particular things, and go beyond the given (Infed,), while Robert Gayne defines the concept of learning as ‘a change in human disposition or capacity that persists over a period of time and is not simply ascribable to processes of growth’ (Gayne, 1982). In higher education both concepts, teaching and learning, have undergone significant changes and challenges over the years, consequently leading to the scrutiny of the quality of teaching and learning in this changing world. In this paper I argue that the future of teaching and learning in higher education demands a holistic innovative change; one that will mesh the constantly evolving students’ needs and that of employers - since the goal of higher education is workforce readiness. The holistic innovation I espouse includes the: development of technology in disseminating information, knowledge and evaluation of course content (reviewing learning outcomes from time to time) to help build
educational progress, process of globalization and the quality of teaching and learning that is fit to stand the tests and demands of the evolving world and workforce needs.

**Innovation in Higher Education**

Both society and the world in which we live have changed drastically since the industrial era and continue to change exponentially. Yet, changes within the educational system are proceeding at a much slower rate. According to Davidson’s book, *The Future of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education,*” The forces of change in higher education are diverse and significant. Experts believe these forces range from technology and globalization to shifting student and employer expectations. The impact of any one of these drivers is significant and in total, is transformative”. This transformation in higher education has been referred to by Mayberry 2011, as the ‘perfect storm’ which makes postsecondary education affordable, accessible and desirable.

In order for colleges to move along with the evolving world and adopt the necessary changes, higher education institutions must look internally by taking a holistic approach. This holistic approach of change is necessary in eradicating the fear that innovation teachers have, specifically, regarding the use of technology; most educators still perceive technology as threat to their teaching method. Also, extending it to the way student perceive the relevance of the curriculum of the institution to real life situation. Education should be forward facing transforming the society as it evolves and develop. However, this process will require institutions to let student explore by sharing knowledge and experiences of themselves and that of the world they live in. Focus needs to be placed on critical thinking and deep listening,
with the intent of learning from the experiences of others. Giving student the classroom where they could explore themselves and their environment, will consequently empower students to relate with learning experience as well as understand; these graduates will also be better equipped to handle the mounting challenges humanity presently faces (Bodinet in the article, pedagogies for the future: shifting the educational paradigm). The future of learning and teaching in higher education should be centered on the student-instructor relationship. Where the instructor takes the time to understand how the student perceive its socioeconomic position and how this interrelationship with people and society forms their reality. This would grant instructors the knowledge and understanding of students from different sociocultural and economic backgrounds.

Freire argues that in teaching students, teachers should adduce materials in generating themes by minding the emerging knowledge of the student and their sociocultural background, understanding the ways students 'perceive themselves and their interrelationships with other people and their social reality.'

Knowing and understanding the student sociocultural background, helps instructors to better understand the way and manner students make sense of school and the world; and in turn give a better sense on how to best introduce learning to each student; since people motivation and learning is activated by different factors.

**Technology Innovation**
The innovative changes in higher education can not be complete without the use of technology. Technology in higher education has enhanced the accessibility of education to made it seamless, case in point going paperless another way that technology has influence in academic is by way of communication exchanges and feedback. Its usage and impact will continue to grow exponential since the world continue to evolve and develop. Technological advancements in teaching and learning has greatly aided with the dissemination of knowledge and basic information. The avenue to communicate in the case of student performance, report and other course evaluation has been enhanced by technology. Technology has made higher education more efficient and cost-effective than ever before; impacting student-teacher relationships is noticeable. A research by to the Economic Intelligence Unit Survey, stated that,

... nearly two-thirds (63%) of survey respondents from both the public and private sectors say that technological innovation will have a major influence on teaching methodologies over the next five years. In fact, technology will become a core differentiator in attracting students and corporate partners. (CITE)

Furthermore, this sweep of innovation in technology gives room to online learning (massive open online learning), which is gaining a firm ground in universities around the world. in the survey report,

more than two-thirds of respondents from academia say that their institutions offer online courses. Many of them, especially those with a public-service mandate, consider online learning key to advancing their mission, placing advanced education within reach of people who might otherwise not be able to access it. (the Economic Intelligence Unit).

However, this report confirms the argument that higher education in the future would experience more expansion of technological innovation.
Technology enhances the online program (distance learning), bringing education home to students irrespective of distance. Many futurists agree that online learning is the disruptive innovation in higher education today (Christensen & Eyring, 2011). A disruptive innovation is one that allows a simple, affordable, and accessible product to replace a product that is complex, expensive, and inaccessible, even if the initial quality of the new product is inferior (R.I.T.'s). This transformation is expected since online learning is less expensive to deliver than classroom-based education because it does not require physical plant; accessible 24/7 to learners anywhere in the world (RIT’s). As the technology landscape of universities continues to evolve, students will increasingly look to institutions for learning support and help with the development of skills needed in a digital age rather than with the delivery of content.

Process of Globalization

Globalization a driver of change and innovation influencing higher education and will continue in multiple ways from a need to “internationalize” the curriculum and provide support services for non-native English speakers to supporting increasingly ethnically diverse classrooms. Globalization is often described as the reality shaped by an increasingly integrated world economy, new information and communications technology (ICT), the emergence of an international knowledge network, and the role of the English language. According to Goldstein (2006), “since 1970, the number of foreign-born persons in the US has tripled to 12 percent of the population; between 2000 and 2020, the non-Hispanic school-age population will decline slightly while the Hispanic school-age population will grow by 60 percent; and there is an increasingly older student body that pursues work and school simultaneously.” Globalization as
it pertains to the future of higher education will give room for more technological innovation to meet up with demand.

**Quality Teaching and Learning**

Doubtlessly, fostering quality teaching is a multi-level endeavor. Support for quality teaching takes place at three-interdependent levels.

Firstly, at the institution-wide level, including projects such as policy design, and support to the organization and internal quality assurance systems. Secondly, the program level comprising actions to measure and enhance the design, content, and delivery of the program within a department or a school. Thirdly, Individual-level which includes initiatives that help teachers achieve their mission, encouraging them to innovate and to support improvements to student learning and adopt a learner-oriented focus (Bourner and Flowers, 2008).

However, Bourner and Flowers argues that it is more important to support quality teaching at the program level, which fosters improvement in quality teaching at the discipline level and also throughout the institution impacting the future of learning and teaching progressively.

Notably, the world of employment has evolved just as colleges have over the years, however the former has evolved faster than the latter, demanding more nonroutine cognitive skills coupled with the need for interpersonal skills from students entering academia. Hénard and Roseveare, in the article Fostering Quality Teaching in Higher Education: Policies and Practice, states that graduates are,

entering a world of employment that is characterized by greater uncertainty, speed, risk, complexity, and interdisciplinary working.” Considering this, the university mode of teaching and its quality will need to equip students, preparing them with the skills and values required to thrive in the workforce environment. More importantly, "there is a strong drive to build and create knowledge
together with an understanding of working life, and reformulate the concept of knowledge in learning situations. Tighter connections with working life through different academic projects provide authentic opportunities to learn both generic and professional competencies as well as to build networks and pathways for employment after graduation. (Hénard and Roseveare, 2008).

The expansion of higher education providers, along with the diversification of the student body put the issue of equity at the very center of quality issue debate.

With this view of learning, the role of higher education instructors are therefore changing. In addition to being, first and foremost, a subject expert acquainted with ways to transmit knowledge, higher education instructors are now required to have effective pedagogical skills for delivering student learning outcomes. They also need to co-operate with students, colleagues from other departments, and with external stakeholders as members of a dynamic learning community.

**Conclusion**

The formidable innovation is a concept that is continuum, impacting every aspect of life. The future of Higher education will keep evolving holistically. This is evident in the innovation of change, case in point technological advancements. Colleges must provide models to meet up with the demand and expectations of the workforce; the impetus must be on preparing students (graduates) in acquiring skills in communication, problem solving, teamwork – soft skills that are vital.

Therefore future of teaching and learning in higher education should be geared towards knowledge dissemination, helping student to develop capability to use ideas and information
and teachers using quality teaching methods that are accessible in preparing graduates with relevant skills for the competitive evolving workforce.

Bibliography


