

Reports of Focus Group Discussions:

Group B – The Professional Teacher: Contexts, Capabilities and Competencies

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1. INTRODUCTION

Within many countries the issue of teachers' ICT competency is on the agenda of key decision makers. The focus group believed that a discussion about competencies with regard to the use of ICTs for teaching and learning, needs to be situated within a broader discussion about the teacher as a professional, the interactions between teachers and colleagues, their workplaces and the broad educational, social and technological contexts which influence their work. The focus group recognised that there are many other issues of importance, especially those relating to equity, but felt that in the time available, it could address only those reported below. Throughout their discussions, the focus group was influenced by the concept of 'collective competencies'. This concept was introduced to the conference in the initial keynote address by Bernard Cornu.

The original version of this chapter was revised: The copyright line was incorrect. This has been corrected. The Erratum to this chapter is available at DOI: [10.1007/978-0-387-35701-0_35](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-35701-0_35)

C. Dowling et al. (eds.), *Information and Communication Technology and the Teacher of the Future*

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2. THE TEACHER OF THE FUTURE AS A PROFESSIONAL

The focus group identified the following characteristics as essential for the professional of the future with regard to ICT use in education. A teacher as a professional should:

- take responsibility for his/her own personal professional learning and that of his/her learners, and contribute to the professional learning of peers;
- be accountable for the individual and collective decisions and interactions they have with students and other stakeholders in designing, implementing and evaluating teaching, learning and assessment activities and selecting resources for these activities;
- analyse and capitalise on the context of their work for the benefit of student learning, and address constraints, requirements and opportunities for change and innovation;
- reflect on and collect evidence with regard to policies and practices and other issues for the purposes of the continual improvement of student learning outcomes;
- be appropriately supported by professional associations and employers and colleagues in the workplace;
- be rewarded for excellence.

3. INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE COMPETENCIES

Individual and collective competencies for teachers need to address ICT use in relation to a range of broader teacher capabilities. These include the three areas of pedagogy and classroom practice professional literacies, as well as knowledge of curriculum (CURRIC) and a deep knowledge of the subject matter (DSK) underpinning the curriculum. A teacher's performance as a professional is the combined result of their capability in the three designated areas. Within each area, a teacher's capability with ICT is a subset of their professional capability in the wider context of each area. As professionals, teachers seek to expand their capability with ICT within each of the identified areas while recognising that the wider context of each area is simultaneously being extended by the profession as a whole. This process is itself impacted upon by the economic, social, cultural and technological changes that continue to transform society. Figure 1 illustrates this environment.

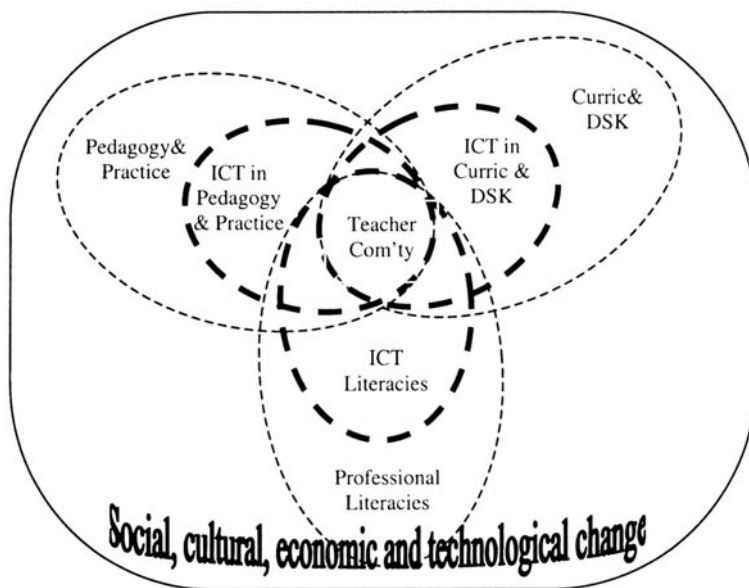


Figure 1. The capabilities that constitute competencies in ICT use in teaching and learning

4. INTERACTION OF CONTEXTS AND CAPABILITIES

It is important to note that teachers as professionals work within a context, the nature of which impacts significantly on their effectiveness. To effect sustainable change a teacher cannot work in isolation from their community of peers or from the context in which they work.

In particular, in the effective application of ICT in teaching and learning a number of factors need to be in evidence in addition to the personal capabilities of the individual teacher. Figure 2 illustrates these factors. At the school level a range of supporting capabilities need to be in place that include access to effective professional development programs, appropriate access to hardware and software, supportive school policies and practices that reflect and promote effective use of ICT, well articulated ICT rich student learning outcomes and quality curriculum resources. These capabilities are also necessary at the school system level. In order for change to be effective and sustainable such capabilities should be evident in all components of the teachers' professional community.

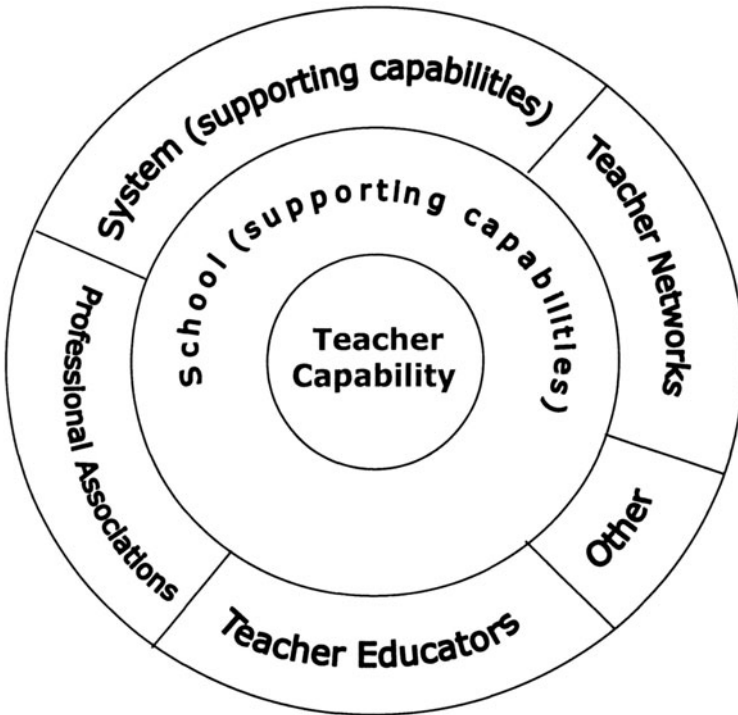


Figure 2. Factors that impact teacher competency

Teacher education is a key component of the teachers' professional community. Teacher education institutions need to develop genuine partnerships with teachers, schools and school districts so that teacher educators, classroom teachers and student teachers work together to develop collective competencies in the effective use of ICT in education. To support this development the assessment and certification practices of teacher education institutions need to be consistent with the goals and processes of any partnerships.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above discussion three significant recommendations follow:

- There should be a shift from over-emphasis on individual competency to a balance of individual and collective competencies. To achieve collective competency it is necessary to create communities of practice and support within schools, within and across districts and nations.

- Standards should be established such that they can guide the flexible creation of professional practice and development and working structures that address the context of work in full integration with the other objectives of education. Teachers should take account of the changing economic, social, cultural and technological society.
- The teacher as a professional must be supported by the school as learning organisation and a wide range of external support structures, comprising resources, policies, curriculum and people.

Section 3

Classroom Roles of the Teacher of the Future