



## **Kenyatta University and Syracuse University\*: Africa-U.S. Higher Education Initiative Partnership**

### **Building Capacity Through Quality Teacher Preparation**

*Resource packet developed from*

**Workshop on Supporting All Learners  
Thursday, November 24, 2011  
1:00 am – 4:00 pm  
Kenyatta University Conference Centre**

**Resource Packet 11-02-KUSU**



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## **Kenyatta University Vision and Mission**

Kenyatta University's *vision* is "to be a dynamic, an inclusive and a competitive centre of excellence in teaching, learning, research and service to humanity." The University's *mission* is "to provide quality education and training, promote scholarship, service, innovation and creativity and inculcate moral values for sustainable individual and societal development."

## **Kenyatta University-Syracuse University Partnership**

The Kenyatta University-Syracuse University Partnership is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which through a grant to Higher Education for Development (HED), funded 11 innovative new partnerships in 2011 between 22 universities in Africa and the United States to address issues in the areas of (1) agriculture, environment and natural resources, (2) health, (3) science and technology, (4) engineering, (5) education and teacher training/preparation, and (6) business, management and economics in Africa. These resulted from the Africa-U.S. Higher Education Initiative, a collaborative effort started in 2007 by a number of higher education associations and other organizations and led by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (A·P·L·U) to advocate for increased engagement in African higher education capacity development.

The Schools of Education of Kenyatta University (KU) and Syracuse University (SU) have had an institutional linkage since the year 2000 and have collaborated in research projects, mentoring doctoral students, and hosting international conferences. Additionally, a number of students who graduated from Kenyatta University have earned graduate degrees (M.S. or Ph.D.) at Syracuse University in teacher education.

The overall objective of the Kenyatta University and Syracuse University partnership is to build capacity at the secondary school level through quality teacher preparation across the span of teacher education—from preservice teacher preparation, to novice teacher induction, to practicing teacher continual growth—through enhancing the capacity of Kenyatta University in its faculty, educational programs, research, and engagement with stakeholders that will result in improved secondary education in Kenya. Along with this objective, we have a long-term goal of developing and establishing a model for teacher preparation and education that we will share with other universities in Kenya and other East African countries.

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 [http://soeweb.syr.edu/centers\\_institutes/Kenya\\_partnership\\_projects/default.aspx](http://soeweb.syr.edu/centers_institutes/Kenya_partnership_projects/default.aspx)

 <http://cuseinkenya.syr.edu/>

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## ***Background for the Workshop***

As part of the KU-SU partnership activities, we conducted a survey of all of the Department of Educational Communication and Technology faculty members to gain baseline data on a variety of teaching and learning issues; included among these issues were class size, supporting all learners, and integrating technology into teaching. Twenty-one faculty members completed the survey and more than 70% of these respondents indicated that they would like professional development on how to support all learners and to be able to prepare teachers to support all learners.

Additionally, another one of our project activities was to collect data from Kenyatta University graduate teachers, both novice (0-3 years of teaching experience) and experienced (more than 3 years of teaching experience). We collected data from a national sample of 100 teachers, 50 novice and 50 experienced. Sizeable percentages—36% of novice teachers and 68% of experienced teachers—answered “No” to the question “Did the KU Teacher Education program prepare you adequately to teach learners with different needs (e.g., gifted, slow learners, visually challenged, physically challenged, mentally challenged, emotionally disturbed, difficult circumstances)?” Due to the response of faculty members and graduate teachers through the questionnaire data related to this issue, we chose to address supporting all learners for our second workshop sponsored through the Kenyatta University-Syracuse University partnership.

## ***Participants***

Ms. Hellen Amunga, Prof. Henry Ayot, Dr. Hamisi Babusa, Dr. Adelheid Bwire, Prof. Agnes Gathumbi, Dr. Ndichu Gitau, Mr. Patrick Jumba, Mr. Vincent Kawoya, Dr. David Khatete, Dr. John Kimenia, Mr. Robert Kimotho, Prof. Joanna Masingila, Dr. John Maundu, Ms. Florence Miima, Ms. Beatrice Murila, Dr. Sophie Ndethiu, Ms. Doris Njoka, Dr. Marguerite Miheso-O’Connor, Dr. Samson Ondigi, Dr. Karen Oyiengo, Dr. Simon Rukangu, Dr. Nicholas Twoli, Ms. Agnes Wanjau

## ***Report of Workshop Activities***

Dr. John Kimemia, Prof. Joanna Masingila and Dr. Nicholas Twoli planned and led the workshop, which consisted of five questions, each with brainstorming followed by group discussion and prepared input. The workshop ended with a discussion of the way forward.

### **Question 1: What contributes to differences in learners?**

For the first segment of the workshop, participants brainstormed about the question, “What contributes to differences in learners?”

Discussion on this question included the following factors that contribute to differences in learners: (a) environmental influence (urban—more technology, rural; socio-economic; school, home), (b) nature vs. nurture, (c) personality, (d) drive, motivation, (e) impairment in some way (visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech impairment, physical impairment, emotional), (f) attitude, (g) gender through socialization, (h) teacher competency, (i) background knowledge, (j) subject preference, and (k) level of giftedness.

Input from the planning team noted that some issues concerning learner differences relate to (a) prior knowledge, (b) out-of-school experiences, (c) rate of learning, (d) style of learning, (e) level of motivation towards learning, (f) level of attitudes, values arising from culture, gender, etc., and (g) level of difference (physical, mental, emotional). Some challenges for learners with differences are (a) large classes, (b) shortage and use of materials and resources, (c) non-conducive environment, (d) attitudes of teacher, other students, self, (e) limited understanding of differences,

(f) lack of back-up support, (g) lack of experience with learners with differences, and (h) lack of role models.

**Question 2: What strategies could you use to identify learner needs?**

Participants then brainstormed about the question, “What strategies could use to identify learner needs?”

Discussion related to strategies for identifying learner needs generated the following strategies: (1) obtain background data stakeholders (2) identify students who can assist in class, (3) gather data from students in class through observation and their work, (4) use benchmarks to see assess students, (5) use diagnostic testing and (6) gather information about the students in our classes.

Input from the planning team noted that some strategies for identifying learner needs are to (1) obtain background information, (b) observe learner behaviour, (c) analyze learner work, and (d) consider learning environment/context (home, school, community).

**Question 3: What strategies could you use to support all learners?**

Participants next discussed the question, “What strategies could you use to support all learners?”

Discussion related to strategies for supporting all learners generated the following strategies: (1) use peer teaching, (2) use study groups, (3) use an open approach to learning so all learners can participate, (4) assign students assignments for things to report back on in class, (5) use a variety of assessments (including portfolio assessment), and (6) sensitize faculty members about how to support all learners.

The planning team provided input that included (1) question using a variety of questions for different learners, (2) scaffold (support) learners’ work, (3) use tasks with opportunity for engagement at different levels, (4) group learners (mixed ability, gender, culture), (5) use team teaching/collaboration, (6) allow for different approaches, (7) create a positive environment for all learners (caring approach, orderly climate, positive expectations), (8) use a variety of materials and resources, (9) support challenged learners out of class, extra time, (10) have a coherent plan, (11) differentiate instruction, (12) consider multiple learning styles when presenting information, (13) give students choices of content, assignments, responses, materials, (14) use ongoing assessment, (15) have interactive lectures, (16) include experiential learning activities, (17) use audio and visual aids, (18) use peer tutoring, (19) use alternative assessments, (20) use a continuum of pedagogical approaches (high to low intensity relative to applications as interventions), (21) adapt teaching strategies used in mainstream education to assist students with special needs, (22) reconceptualise difficulties in learning as dilemmas in teaching, and (23) view difficulties in learning as problems for teachers to solve instead of problems within learners.

The planning team also shared a quote from one of the articles that they used in preparing the workshop that discusses the concept that teaching strategies that support learners with special needs are good teaching strategies for all learners: “What we do for all doesn’t work for some, but what we do for some supports all” (Florian, 2006).

**Question 4: How can we prepare teachers to support all learners?**

For the fourth part of the workshop, participants brainstormed about the question, “How can we prepare teachers to support all learners?”

Participants discussed that we can prepare teachers to support all learners by (1) equipping teachers with practical skills, (2) having faculty members need to be sensitized on special learners and be trained in strategies for supporting all learners (e.g., training to support learners who are visually

impaired, hearing impaired), (3) providing preservice teachers experience with learners with diverse needs, (4) preparing teachers to teach all students, not only typical students, and (5) having a special unit (course) to prepare teachers to support all learners.

The planning team provided input with the following recommendations for preparing teachers to support all learners: (1) be purposeful; must have a plan, (2) have preservice teachers interact with and practice multiple teaching approaches, (3) have students create lesson plans with adaptations for different learners' needs, (4) teach preservice teachers how to differentiate instruction, and (5) have examples of lesson plans with differentiated instruction.

### **Question 5: In what units will we include content to prepare teachers to support all learners?**

For the final part of the workshop, participants discussed the question, "In what units will we include content to prepare teachers to support all learners?"

While at first the group suggested that (1) we should have a unit (course) to prepare teachers to support all learners and that this is ideal, we suggested that in the short term (2) each subject methods unit have a topic on how to support all learners and give teachers practice in planning lessons that differentiate instruction, (3) put some of the ECT 202 content in an online format, and (4) since the topic is already in the course outline for ECT 202, we can increase the amount of time spent on it and reduce time on other topics, such as chalkboard work.

### **Way Forward**

The following ideas were generated during the discussion of the way forward:

- Have students disclose their disability to lecturers at the beginning of the term.
- Have professional development for faculty members for them to become sensitized about strategies for supporting all learners.

### **References and Resources**

Allison, B. N., & Rehm, M. L. (2007). Teaching strategies for diverse learners in FCS classrooms. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, 99(2), 8-10.

Beyene, G., & Tizazu, Y. (2010). Attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education in Ethiopia. *Ethiopian Journal of Education and Science*, 6(1), 89-96.

Florian, L. (2006). Teaching strategies: For some or for all? *Kairaranga*, 7, 24-27.

Lynch, S. & Warner, L. (2008). Creating lesson plans for all learners. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 45(1), 10-15.

Smith, D. D., & Tyler, N. C. (2011). Effective inclusive education: Equipping education professionals with necessary skills and knowledge. *Prospects*, 41, 323-339.

An excellent source of free, online resources to use in preparing teachers to support all learners is available at the IRIS Center for Training Enhancements (<http://www.iriscenter.com>).