

**ABSTRACT**  
**PARALLEL WORKING SESSION**

**TEACHING & LEARNING**

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**Rethinking the role of the University in teacher education: the Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) experience**

In most countries of the world the University plays a central role in the education and training of teachers. Teaching, however, like other professional groups (in health and medicine) is under acute pressure. In many countries, in the developed and developing world, teacher supply and retention is in crisis. Shortage of subject specialists in subjects such as mathematics and science are endemic everywhere. In those regions where the most effort has to be made to reach the Millennium Development Goal of providing universal primary education the lack of teachers is impeding progress. Millions of unqualified teachers are being recruited in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa and South West Asia.

This presentation will look at the context of the 'teacher crisis' and suggest the ways in which the University system can play a part in meeting the enormous challenges posed. The presentation will suggest that the traditional models of teacher education, built to meet the needs of the last century, will be inadequate for the new context of teachers and education systems in the twenty-first century. Drawing on a range of research and development experience, including the establishment of the Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) programme (see [www.tessafrica.net](http://www.tessafrica.net)) and a number of recent studies for UNESCO and The World Bank, a number of key areas for rethinking the role of the University will be set out. Particular attention will be given to:

- the relationships between the University and systems of schooling
- the importance of universities acquiring the capacity to work to scale
- the potential of new information and communication technologies to transform structure and modes of teaching and learning
- the significance of the emergent ideas about open education resources (OERs) to transformation.

In setting out this analysis, the presentation will show the relevance of teacher education reform for other types of professional education and training.