



SAQA BULLETIN

VOLUME 9 NUMBER 1

RECOGNISING LEARNING AND ITS OUTCOMES

MARCH 2006

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THE SAQA BULLETIN IS PUBLISHED AND DISTRIBUTED BY THE DIRECTORATE: STRATEGIC SUPPORT, SAQA,
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Acronyms and abbreviations

General

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
CARE	Centre for Applied Research in Education
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CCFO	Critical Cross-Field Outcome
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CERI	Centre for Educational Research and Innovation
CFI	Confederation of Finnish Industries
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DoE	Department of Education
DoL	Department of Labour
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
EU	European Union
FET	Further Education and Training
FETC	Further Education and Training Certificate
GET	General Education and Training
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
GSVQ	General Scottish Vocational Qualifications
HE	Higher Education
HEQF	Higher Education Qualifications Framework (draft, for discussion)
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
ICSA	The South Africa Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa
NATED	National Education Department Core Syllabus
NBFET	National Board for Further Education and Training
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification (England)
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
QC	Qualifications and Quality Assurance Council (proposed)
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
RDP	Reconstruction and Developmental Programme
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAUVCA	South African Vice Chancellors' Association (now Higher Education South Africa, HESA)
SCOTCAT	Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer
SCOTVEC	Scottish Vocational Education Council
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training UK United Kingdom
VET	Vocational Education and Training
SAQA	
CP	Consultative Panel
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance body
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SGB	Standards Generating Body

EDITORIAL COMMENT

This special edition of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Bulletin has been published to coincide with the fourth Annual SAQA Chairperson's Lecture held at the Protea Hotel, Midrand, on 15 March 2006.

This year SAQA has commissioned Prof. Tom Schuller, Head of the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris, to relate different understandings or interpretations of the outcomes of education/learning. In particular, Prof. Schuller will look at the relationships between qualifications as the formal recognition of what has been learnt, and broader outcomes or benefits, both social and economic.

Prof. Schuller is the former Dean of the Faculty of Continuing Education and Professor of Lifelong Learning at Birkbeck, University of London (1999 to 2003). Before that he worked at the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Warwick, at the Institute for Community Studies, and for four years at OECD in the 1970s. He has been an adviser to government on numerous issues, especially on lifelong learning. Recent publications include *The Benefits of Learning: The Impact of Education on Health, Family Life and Social Capital* (with John Preston et al., RoutledgeFalmer 2004); *International Perspectives on Lifelong Learning* (edited with David Istance and Hans Schuetze, Open University Press 2002); *Social Capital: Critical Perspectives* (edited with Stephen Baron and John Field, OUP 2000); *Part-time Higher Education in Scotland* (with David Raffé and others, Jessica Kingsley 1998); and *Life After Work* (with Michael Young, HarperCollins 1991).

Feedback

Readers are invited to contribute to the NQF discourse in the *SAQA Bulletin*. Comments and papers that contribute to the development of the NQF discourse will be considered for inclusion in future publications.

The status of articles in the *SAQA bulletin*

Only those parts of the text clearly flagged as decisions or summaries of decisions taken by the Authority should be seen as reflecting SAQA policy.

CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

As the Chairperson of SAQA, it is my privilege to be the patron of the 4th SAQA Chairperson's Lecture. Over the years this Lecture has come to symbolise SAQA's continued commitment to encouraging intellectual scrutiny of the development and implementation of the South African NQF. At these regular intervals SAQA has participated in, and often initiated, important strategic discussions:

The first Chairperson's Lecture first took place in 2001 and focused on the regionalisation of national qualifications frameworks. Today, when we look back, we see that significant progress has been made in this regard, as the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) will soon become an important lever in our region.

In 2003 the second Lecture focused on the Further Education and Training (FET) band. In the paper presented by HSRC researchers, it was then already evident that the Further Education and Training (FET) sector required significant attention and support. Subsequent development of FET Certificates by SAQA and the Department of Education and the significant increase in national funding confirmed that the research presented was appropriate and timely.

In 2004 the Lecture focused on the results of the first cycle of the NQF Impact Study. In the paper presented by the project leader, it was made clear that the NQF was starting to make an impact on the transformation of education and training in South Africa, but that much still needed to be done. In 2005 SAQA released the second cycle of the NQF Impact Study that confirmed the initial findings. Today the NQF Impact Study has become an important reference point for NQF-related research – a role that is expected to become more important as the subsequent cycles of this longitudinal comparative study provide us with more empirical evidence.

Throughout this period SAQA has provided leadership and expertise to ensure that high quality, nationally relevant, and internationally comparable unit standards and qualifications have been registered on the NQF. SAQA has remained committed to the development and implementation of a world-class NQF in South Africa. In particular, this has included a strong focus on the delivery of the benefits of the NQF in line with the national Human Resource Development Strategy and the wider educational and social goals of the country.

In the interests of furthering the NQF and its goals of personal, social and economic benefit to individuals and the nation as a whole, this year we wish to begin to reflect more systematically on the value of qualifications and the related learning to these wider goals. As part of this reflection, SAQA has requested Professor Tom Schuller from the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) at OECD to address these questions. His extensive experience in the world of adult education and lifelong learning made him the ideal candidate for this purpose. He will be addressing the question of recognition of learning and its outcomes. This lecture, we hope, will give impetus to the debates and the research that is needed to understand more deeply the relationships between qualifications, lifelong learning, and socio-economic development.

This lecture allows us to reflect more specifically on the fifth NQF objective:

The NQF will contribute to the personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large.

I wish to express my appreciation, on behalf of SAQA, to Professor Tom Schuller for accepting our invitation and for his substantial and thoughtful contribution.

Shirley Walters
Chairperson
South African Qualifications Authority
March 2006

RECOGNISING LEARNING AND ITS OUTCOMES

Tom Schuller

Head of the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI)

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris, France

It is an honour for me to give the SAQA lecture. I hope to share with you some insights from current work in the Education Directorate at OECD, but also from my previous work in several UK universities, working in and on the education of adults.

I want to address the topic of the lecture from three angles. Firstly, I want to place the lecture in the context of international comparative work on education. It is very easy to say that we all need to learn from each other. But why do we do this kind of work, whether we work as I do in an intergovernmental organisation whose specific function this is, or as many others do in a different role, for instance as a university researcher? Are there any dangers or disadvantages? What could we as providers of comparative analysis do more (or less) of, and what do those who use our work expect from it? These are genuine questions to you as an audience, as well as to myself.

Secondly, I want to locate the debate on qualifications within the context of lifelong learning. I have been fascinated to learn something – a very little so far – of the political nature of the debate on qualifications within South Africa. The issue of qualifications, and more generally the accrediting of skills, knowledge and competences, is of growing importance across OECD countries. Given SAQA's role you would expect me to say that, but I believe it to be true. The question for me is whether the qualifications issue is treated as a more or less technical one, or whether its wider implications are brought into the frame. You will gather that in my view they cannot be ignored.

Thirdly, and following very closely from this second point, I want to argue that the debate on qualifications needs to tackle the relationship between education and broad outcomes that are not usually measured in the actual certification process. This includes educational goals that are often honoured more in rhetoric than reality. I am talking especially about values and behaviour to do with social and personal well-being. I shall offer a framework for thinking about those issues, though I have no simple means of dealing with them.

The title of my lecture is deliberately a little ambiguous. In talking about 'recognition' I am not referring only to the kinds of recognition that are entailed in the award of qualifications. I mean firstly to raise the question of what we – collectively or individually – actually see as learning; and secondly how we value it. By valuing I mean not only giving it some kind of official recognition in the shape of certificates or credit points, but a much more fundamental sense of acknowledging that education has outcomes that shape the health of our societies, both literally (i.e. the physical and mental health of their citizens) and metaphorically, in the sense of the levels of civic engagement and participation.

Why do we do comparative analysis, and what might you expect to learn from it? You will have your own answers to this. I speak here from the OECD perspective (though, I should add, in a personal capacity), but of course there are many others. I happen to believe that

South Africa has both much to gain from closer dialogue with a body such as OECD, and much to offer the other OECD Member countries. But in posing the question about the value and functions of international research, I am implicitly holding up a mirror to those of us who spend our time doing this kind of work, and asking what it is that we should, and should not, be doing. Before setting out a possible response let me briefly describe the work of the OECD on education. It is often unnecessarily portrayed as rather shadowy and mystique-shrouded, and even a simple account of its organisation may be useful context.

The Directorate for Education was created as a separate directorate in 2002. Education was previously part of a joint directorate with Labour and Social Affairs, but education was considered sufficiently significant to warrant a discrete directorate (one of nine within OECD). The principal units within the Directorate are the Education and Training Policy division (ETP), which deals mainly with national and thematic reviews; the Indicators and Analysis division, including the famous Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which is arguably OECD's highest profile activity; IMHE (Institutional Management in Higher Education); PEB (Programme on Educational Building), a programme building links with non-member countries such as China and Brazil; and CERI, the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, for which I am responsible.

The substantive components of CERI's title – 'research' and 'innovation' – have meaning within the OECD context. That is, CERI is concerned with original knowledge accumulation of different kinds, and pursues lines of investigation that are not wholly predetermined; and it is oriented towards innovation in the sense of identifying and analysing new trends and issues in education. The research may be primary, in the sense of commissioning or executing work involving new data gathering, or secondary and synthetic, bringing together results from existing research in member countries. In both cases, however, one of CERI's key characteristics is the aim of developing new tools, frameworks and indicators for the gathering and analysis of data, both quantitative and qualitative. There is an agenda-setting as well as a reporting role, and this extends to the setting of research as well as policy agendas.

Against that background, I offer the following as a list of the kinds of activity we engage in executing international policy analysis and research:

- Generating tables/rankings comparing the performances of individual countries or jurisdictions
- Constructing benchmarks, and helping countries apply these benchmarks
- Identifying and disseminating examples of good practice
- Developing and clarifying concepts that might be helpful in identifying and analysing issues
- Analysing trends, issues and innovations
- Evaluating policy impact (as distinct from programme impact)
- Setting an agenda, for research or policy-making.

These functions commonly overlap with each other and interact in ways that are sometimes obvious and sometimes not. It is a contestable list but, assuming for the moment that they are accepted as valid functions, the application in each case is also potentially contentious.

Anyone who is concerned about how knowledge is defined, generated and applied can select each of these functions and examine it in that context. The more they are scrutinised, individually and as a list, the better. It is important that each country, or research community, interprets these functions transparently and rigorously.

These functions all have their place in helping our understanding of the way education systems work, and how they might work better. They can also be misused. For example, league tables have a head start on the others because they are by far the most likely to attract media attention and, at least partly for that reason, to exercise political influence. Tables and rankings certainly have their place, as one means of getting a fix on performance and (more importantly in my view) of prompting internal debate on what the record is – and therefore of doing something sensible to improve it. But they can equally turn into totem poles around which rather weird and unattractive dances are performed.

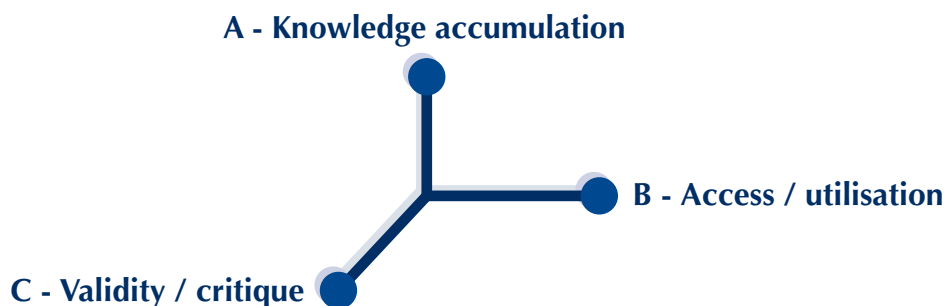
There is no one best form or mode of international comparison, and the same is broadly true for internal analysis within individual countries. My belief is that the value of our work depends very heavily on the attitudes, processes and mechanisms that exist nationally, or even locally. That is, if a country is self-confident enough to engage in democratic debate and honest enough to place proper information in the public domain, then comparison is likely to be highly beneficial. This does not mean it provides ready-made solutions, but (to mix a rather alarming metaphor) it will fertilise and illuminate the debate. I have no more time to go into this question, but I hope at least that the list above may help clarification of the benefits of comparison.

Having set this background let me turn directly to the qualifications issue, and its location in the context of lifelong learning. I propose to do this first by discussing some wider issues to do with the place of certification and authority in a knowledge society; and then more concretely by describing a major project on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning currently under way within the OECD, directed by my colleague Patrick Werquin.

Qualifications in knowledge societies

Part of the usual and very familiar rationale for lifelong learning is that we live in a world of incredibly rapid transmission of facts and ideas, and of changing demand for skills and competences. Rather less familiar but very much part of the same rationale is a more critical sense that this increased circulation of knowledge also includes factoids, doubtful judgements and sheer misinformation, which can spread equally rapidly. Much of this is circulated on the web, and is not subject to any authentication process – which is as it should be in open societies. But I suggest that we needed to think quite hard about how and by whom knowledge and, consequently, the skills need to handle knowledge, are authenticated and endorsed. The implications of this are political in the widest sense. That is to say, they involve questions about knowledge, authority and the nature of truth – political epistemology, if you like – as well as educational politics to do with the structure of our institutions and curricula. The links between the qualifications debate and these broader political issues should be obvious.

Figure 1: The knowledge society



The first dimension refers to the accumulation of information and skills. Taken on its own this represents the simplest, even crudest, interpretation of the knowledge society: a place where amassing information or skills in large volumes is what matters. Under this interpretation, in comparative analysis what counts is how many school or college graduates a system produces, how big the R&D expenditure is, how many patents are produced and so on. Such data may be useful, but we need more than this. The second axis refers to the distribution of access to knowledge. This refers to the extent to which different social groups have access to this growing mountain of information and to skills acquisition. It matters a great deal how broad this distribution is, and what shape it has. I am not saying there is any perfect distribution. But the rhetoric of the knowledge society sometimes disguises situations where low skills predominate, and where amongst large parts of the population there is not a lot of learning going on, either at work or outside. The 'long tail' of people with no or few qualifications is something which arguably disqualifies some societies from claiming to be a knowledge society, however high their graduate output or cutting edge their research.

It is the third axis that interests me most in the context of today's topic. It concerns the need we all have – as individuals and as members of systems – for trustworthy systems of validating knowledge. I deliberately use the word 'trustworthy' because it incorporates one of the key terms in the social capital debate, which has long interested me, and this third axis deals significantly with social capital. How are we to sort and sift good information from bad? How do we go about building up critical competences, so that our citizens have the capacity to scrutinise the sources of their information, and to distinguish reliable from dubious? Social capital refers to the networks, norms and values that help us to attain goals, individually and collectively (Baron et al. 2000; Halpern 2005). Here the application is to the validation of knowledge. Sometimes we rely on informal networks, of friends or colleagues, to help us with the task of sifting. For the most part this is done without any reference to the process of certification or qualifications. Trust is essential here: we rely on these network members to give us honest and, in the case of colleagues, professionally grounded judgements on the quality of the information. This informal process is, overall, both the most efficient and the most agreeable way of sifting reliable knowledge from the rest.

But qualifications also have a role here as part of the validation process, and an important one. A trustworthy, sound and effective system of qualifications is an essential component of the knowledge society because of the part it has to play in verifying knowledge and skills

in a public and articulated way. Where there is such an intensively competitive market in knowledge and skills, the reliability and independence of publicly authorised qualifications at all levels has a crucial role.

It is therefore significant that a recent European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) study introduces the notion of a 'zone of mutual trust' (ZMT) to further understanding of public policy on access and progression within agreed qualification frameworks. ZMTs refer to "agreements between individuals, enterprises and other organisations concerning the delivery, recognition and evaluation of vocational learning outcomes" (CEDEFOP 2005 p12, though I see no reason why they should be restricted to vocational outcomes). The model proposed gives trust a central place in developing effective linkages between qualifications frameworks, contextual conditions such as labour markets, and the levels of mutual understanding that exist between the different stakeholders within this system. The mechanisms for ZMTs include direct formal ones such as legislation or national accreditation agreements; indirect formal ones such as credit structures; and informal ones such as guidance processes and local validation systems.

In short, knowledge societies, however we define them, demand not only the capacity to access and handle information but the ability to evaluate it critically. For this to happen we need both networks of professional and personal contacts and trustworthy systems of assessment and qualification. The relationship between these two elements is a fascinating one, which I suggest should be looked at more closely.

Recognition

Let me now say something about qualifications frameworks and their relationship to learning, especially nonformal and informal learning. This is something in which OECD has taken a good deal of interest over the past years, again as part of its commitment to a strategy of lifelong learning (OECD 1996). How successful we have been in promoting lifelong learning, understood as the efficient and equitable distribution of learning opportunities over the life course, is another matter. It would require a long and politically quite sensitive analysis, which would take me too far from today's topic.

There are a number of broad headings under which we could consider the question of qualifications systems: economically, do they work effectively to give due recognition to learning where it occurs, and promote the fair and efficient allocation of human capital; socially, do they give equitable recognition and acknowledgement to learning of different kinds; educationally, do they mesh with the curriculum and pedagogy to make a coherent package; and psychologically, do they empower learners and encourage their steps to greater participation?

All these are important questions, which apply to qualification systems generally. We could even use them to give some kind of ranking to different systems. The current OECD work develops these with specific reference to nonformal and informal learning.

Why is this issue important? This audience hardly needs me to make the case. I make only two points. First, there is more and more evidence that informal modes of learning are often those that attract people who have been relatively unsuccessful previously in education. At least, they are more likely to be attractive than courses which are strictly formal, and which

have traditional modes of testing. Some of the evidence is quite contested, but the overall case is strong (Livingstone 2005, Unwin et al. 2005). So there are strong arguments to do with both equity and efficiency. Secondly, at a policy level there is a built-in drive or need to measure what is happening. I must stress that this is very far from saying that everything should be measured, and from saying that all measurement is appropriate. We could spend a long time on horror stories of inappropriate forms of measurement, both in education itself and of educational policy. The point is rather that if we believe that informal learning is important we need some systematic evidence to back this up.

The OECD framework focuses strongly on the institutional and technical arrangements governing the recognition of learning. First, there is a major descriptive job to be done in identifying existing arrangements. Doing this can itself be educational, since the arrangements turn out to be so complex or incoherent that the act of description is enough to bring out the case for change. There will be issues to do with the distribution of authority between different ministries, and how adequate the horizontal linkages are. There will be questions about the relationships between public authorities and industry, and how far responsibilities are shared. And then there is a series of questions to do with how formally these different responsibilities are defined.

Turning to the links to the qualifications framework itself, there is a cluster of questions to do with what types of qualification are more closely linked than others to the recognition of nonformal/informal learning; or what problems are encountered in developing such links, e.g. resistance from HE institutions or from employers. And there are questions to do with the forms of assessment employed: how are these carried out and by whom? Assessment, incidentally, is becoming more and more significant, especially in the respective roles of formative and summative assessment (OECD/CERI 2005). In a world where testing and qualifications become more and more dominant, the need for pedagogically suitable forms of assessment becomes particularly acute. This applies both in schools and colleges, and in respect of rather different groups such as adults with low basic skills, which is the theme of a current study (www.oecd.org/edu/whatworks).

The above outline on recognition of learning is very much work still in progress. A South African perspective would, I'm sure, be very welcome to my OECD colleagues.

I move on now from the benefits of recognising learning to recognising the benefits of learning. The main thrust of my argument is that there is a constant struggle to have the wider outcomes of education acknowledged, in several senses of the term. I draw here on work carried out with my former colleagues at the Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning at the University of London (www.widerbenefits.net)¹, and which happily I have been able subsequently to take forward and integrate at international level into the CERI programme (www.oecd.org/edu/socialoutcomes).

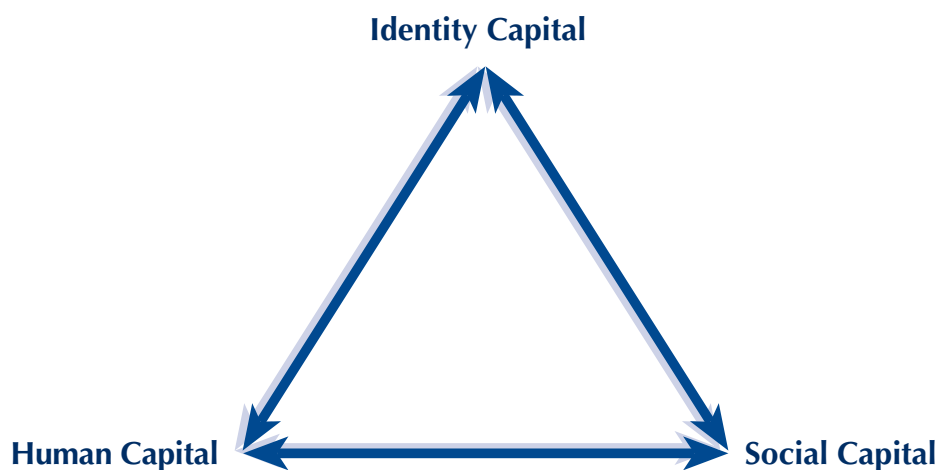
'Recognition' of the wider benefits has several senses. Firstly, there is the political acknowledgement that education does indeed have wider goals than the efficient production of qualified people for the economy. These wider goals usually include at least some version of citizenship, and the reproduction of national or regional culture, however that is interpreted. It is not necessarily cynical to ask how far the recognition of these goals goes beyond general

¹ *The WBL Centre was initially a joint venture between the Institute of Education and Birkbeck, both constituent parts of London University. It is now wholly part of the Institute.*

rhetoric. If politicians declare that they are committed to these goals, what are the actual policy initiatives that are put in place to achieve them? Secondly, though, there is the question of what mechanisms exist for assessing the success of schools and colleges, or of the system as a whole, in achieving these goals. This is a substantial political issue, which also brings with it extremely difficult technical or methodological questions. These questions fall broadly into two parts: how to assess whether or not individuals have acquired the skills, values and competences necessary to fulfil these goals; and secondly how we know what happens as a result. I am not going to deal here with the first of these, i.e. the issue of whether citizenship skills or other related outcomes should be assessed and certified, and if so how. I want instead to concentrate on the broader question of how we can go about recognising the impact of education on the wider goals.

Figure 2 is another simple one that I hope will help to illuminate the issue. It brings together three forms of 'capital'. I pass over definitional issues about whether it is legitimate to use the term capital in these senses. The key point is to show one approach that brings together the different forms of assets that education helps (or should help) us build up.

Figure 2: Three forms of capital



Human capital is very familiar, referring to knowledge, skills and qualifications, essentially as individual assets or attributes. We have already met social capital as comprising norms, networks and values, the essential focus being on the relationships that exist within and between these networks. Identity capital may be less familiar: it can be understood, very summarily, to refer to self-esteem, self-efficacy and a sense of purpose or direction in life (Côté and Levene 2002).

We have used this framework to analyse some of the benefits of learning, especially in relation to health, family relations and aspects of social and civic life (Schuller et al. 2004). Here I want to make three points. The first is that it is the interaction of these different forms that is central to understanding the impact of education, for individuals and for society. Investing in human capital alone – i.e. in the accumulation of individuals' qualifications and competences – is far less likely to have results than if we understand its interaction with

social capital – the norms and networks which foster access to education, and to the opportunities to make use of qualifications once they have been obtained. The same is true for the kinds of personal self-esteem and self-efficacy which identity capital covers. Our education systems need to address all three points of the triangle. If we concentrate only on one form of capital, we are unlikely to get the best returns on our individual and collective investment in education. I use this economic language deliberately – on the one hand to challenge us to think rigorously about what kinds of outcomes we expect but, more importantly, to take the debate on social outcomes into the terrain best understood by policy-makers.

The implications for qualification systems are considerable. What do qualifications do to bolster (or subvert) the elements that make up identity capital? And how do they fit with the use students make of networks, actually or potentially? These are difficult questions that may appear rather abstract, but they are not hypothetical creations. A system that sees the accumulation of human capital in isolation from these other elements is, I suggest, less likely to fulfil its function.

Secondly, though, a note of warning. The more I have been involved in thinking about these issues, the more I have become aware of the limitations of the tools and data we have at our disposal for understanding the actual outcomes of education in this broader sense. Tracing causal effects – the extent to which a given quantum of education leads to a particular outcome – is incredibly difficult. There are two rather contrasting dangers or temptations. One is to look for simple numbers, to give a sense of the returns on learning. For example, we can be asked to define by how many percentage points crime will go down or health levels go up if we invest more in education. This is a natural policy-maker's aspiration, and it is to be respected – up to a point. But it can turn into an unreasonable request for precision about outcomes, when we are dealing with what everyone knows is a very complex set of interactions. The second temptation is to fall into a 'let's justify education' mode, looking only for quantitative or qualitative results that appear to tell us what a Good Thing education is, and how we should spend more on it. This is all very well, and can be necessary to maintain morale; but it does not necessarily help us to improve the service. I have to add, perhaps a little provocatively, that it sometimes stands in the way of the kinds of radical change that some of the professional providers say they aspire to.

Which takes me to my third and final point or, rather, final questions: what should be the role of qualification systems in fostering these wider goals? What contributions do we think they make at present, positive or negative? On the negative side, for example, the effect of examination-taking on health is probably a fairly strong negative; and the increasing pressure on curriculum time may squeeze out the kinds of civic activity which students might otherwise have engaged in. But the positive aspects are naturally the ones that call for our attention. We know that there are strong positive associations between education levels, as measured by qualification, on the one hand, and such things as good health and high levels of civic engagement on the other. We can also see similar linkages between education and attitudinal outcomes such as tolerance and intercultural sensitivity. These are not unimportant by-products of education systems. Quite apart from their intrinsic value, they are arguably central to economic success, which can only be achieved within societies with reasonable levels of personal and social well-being.

Let me finish with a quote from a long way away: from Finland, at the other end of the world, and from a body that may seem equally distant to the concerns of many SAQA stakeholders, the Confederation of Finnish Industries. Their report on Education Intelligence is a hardheaded assessment of the competences required for success in today's internationally competitive world. These include technical, scientific, business and design competences, all 'hard' skills. But the concluding sentence runs: "The ability to share visions with others is also needed, as is an open-minded positive attitude towards new ideas and people." (CFI 2005) This is 'bridging social capital', the collective capacity to communicate and build trusting relationships with people from diverse walks of life. Identifying what kinds of learning build this kind of competence, and then deciding how they should be recognised, is a challenge to all of us. I am sure that SAQA will play a significant part in meeting it.

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