



African Continental
Qualifications Framework

Session 17: Articulation

The Accra Workshop, 7-
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Articulation

Speaker: Eduarda Castel-Branco



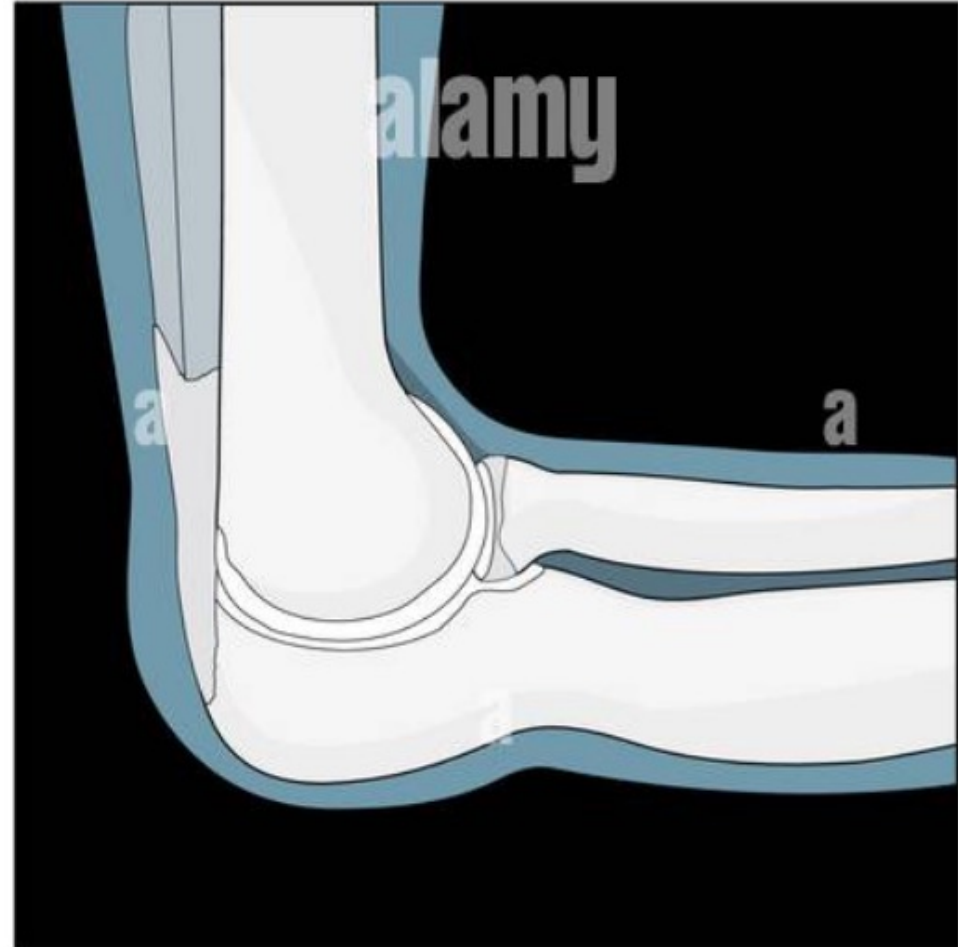
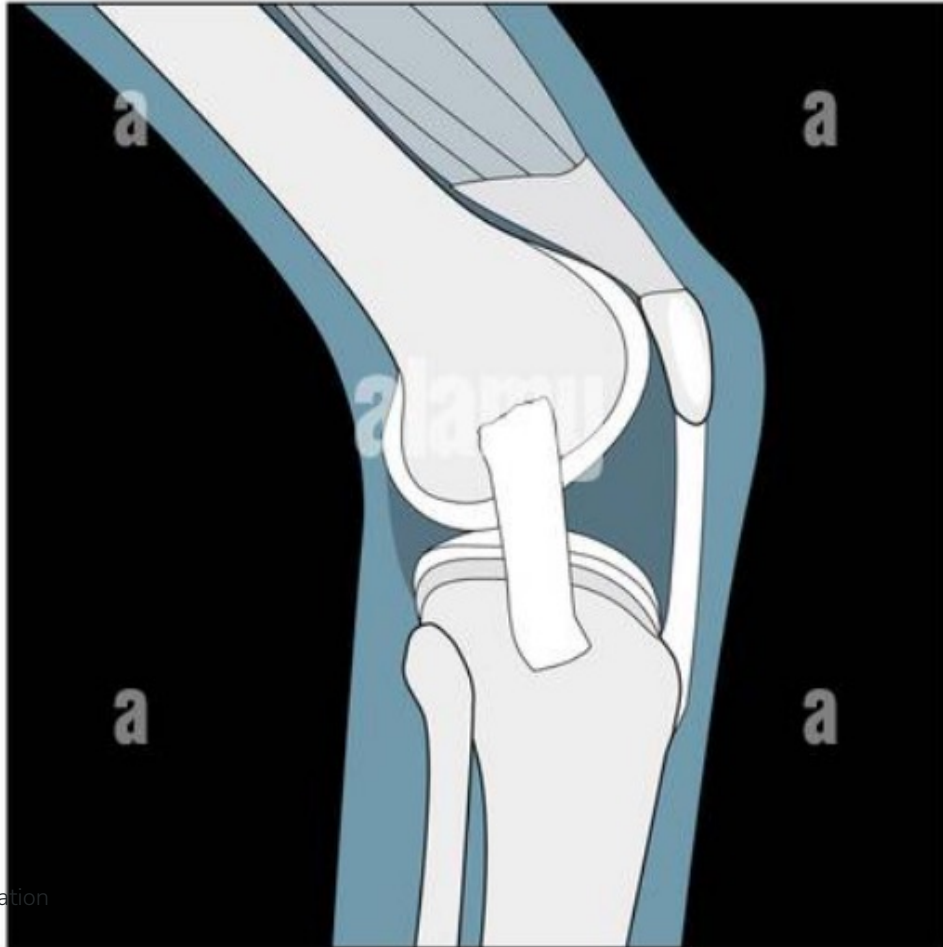
Topics of the presentation

Concepts

Models

Challenges

Types of joints



Articulation and SDGs

- Articulation is one of the fundamental principles of the UN SDGs, specifically Goal 4. The goal seeks to address inequalities between and within countries and to prioritise the most vulnerable to ensure that no one is left behind. The goal, furthermore, aims to provide equal access to affordable vocational training, to eliminate gender and wealth disparities, and achieve universal access to quality higher education.
- Dead ends pose significant barriers to the achievement of sustainable development.

Samuel Isaacs...

- *"The issue of no "dead-ends", you know, that persons can pick up learning later in life...(that) because you had a bad start somewhere, it doesn't mean that for the rest of your life you are going to be locked into a system that you can't move".*

SAQA

Articulation is the process of forming possibilities of connection between qualifications and/or part-qualifications to allow for vertical, lateral and diagonal movement of learners through the formal education and training system, not neglecting its linkages with the world of work. It is on this basis that qualifications are developed and designed with such articulation options (SAQA).

- **Systemic articulation** is a 'joined up' system including qualifications, professional designations, policies and various other official elements that support learning and work pathways;
- **Specific articulation** means aligning qualifications through inter- or intra-institutional agreements such as memoranda of understanding, credit accumulation and transfer and other mechanisms;
- **Individual articulation** refers to learners being supported in their learning and work pathways through flexible admission, curriculum, learning and teaching, and learner support systems such as the quality of qualifications and learning, career development services, and other mechanisms;

NQF

A policy and instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims at integrating and **coordinating national qualifications subsystems** and improve **the transparency, access, progression and quality** of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society. (EQF).

An instrument for the **development, classification and recognition of skills, knowledge and competencies** along a continuum of agreed levels.

It is a way of structuring existing and new qualifications, which are defined by learning outcomes – clear statements of what the learner must know or be able to do, whether learned in a classroom, on the job, or less formally.

The qualifications framework indicates the **comparability of different qualifications and how one can progress from one level to another, within and across occupations or industrial sectors** (and even across vocational and academic fields if the NQF is designed to include both vocational and academic qualifications in a single framework). (ILO)

Articulation explicitly mentioned among the goals / principles of NQFs in the following SADC MS: Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Seychelles, Angola, Zambia, South Africa.

Other definitions

- The progression of students from one course to another, or from one education and training sector to another. Articulation arrangements facilitate the movement from a completed qualification to another with admission and/or credit in a defined [qualification pathway](#). (NCVER, Australia)
- Refers to a process that allows students to make the smooth transition from one course, program, or education level to the next without experiencing duplication of learning. (TESDA, Philippines)

- **Digital articulation (New)...**

- Pioneering innovative hybrid articulation pathways is made possible through digital articulation, which allows students to begin university programmes while still studying in their home country. In conclusion, digital articulation is an innovative concept that is having a positive impact on higher education. By offering students greater flexibility, a more personalised learning experience, cost savings and access to a wider range of courses and universities, it is helping to make higher education more accessible and relevant for students from diverse backgrounds.

- **Double certification qualifications?**

- Articulation TVET to HE

- **CATS?**

- Accumulation and transfer of credits – can enable articulation

- **RPL?**

- Can encourage further education and training – building on skills made visible via RPL

- **5 metaphors for articulation:**

1. **Articulation as a spiral:** education and training not to be dichotomised...but seen as expressions of learning along a continuum
2. **Articulation as a stairwell** (most examples from South Africa)
3. **Articulation as a cross-road** (the most commonly needed)
4. **Articulation is a spirit level**
5. **Articulation is a globaliser** – between education systems

Articulation spiral: continuum of learning

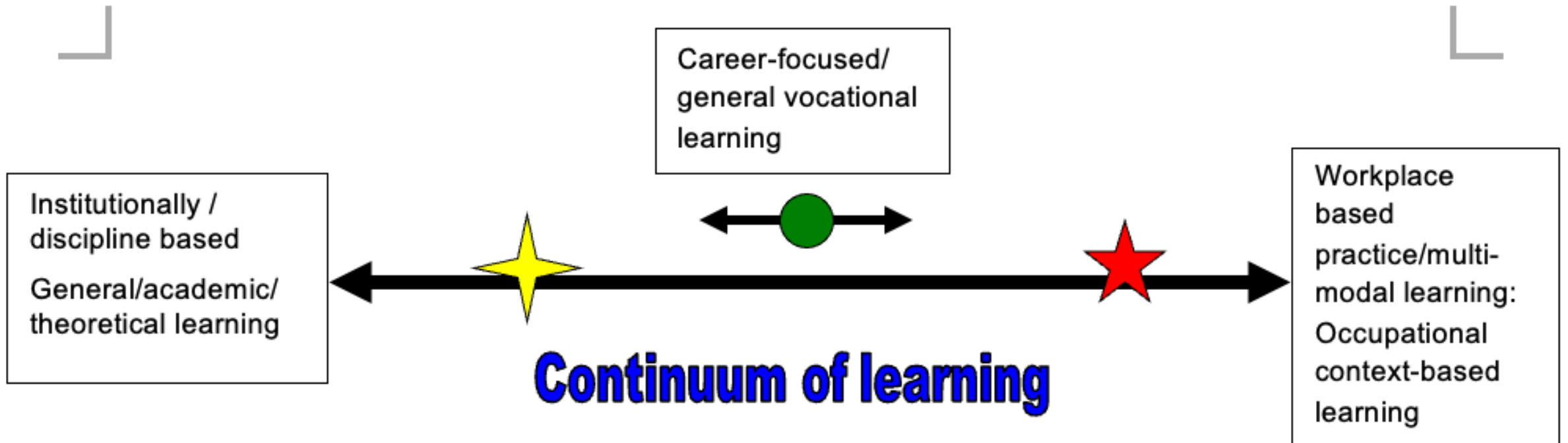
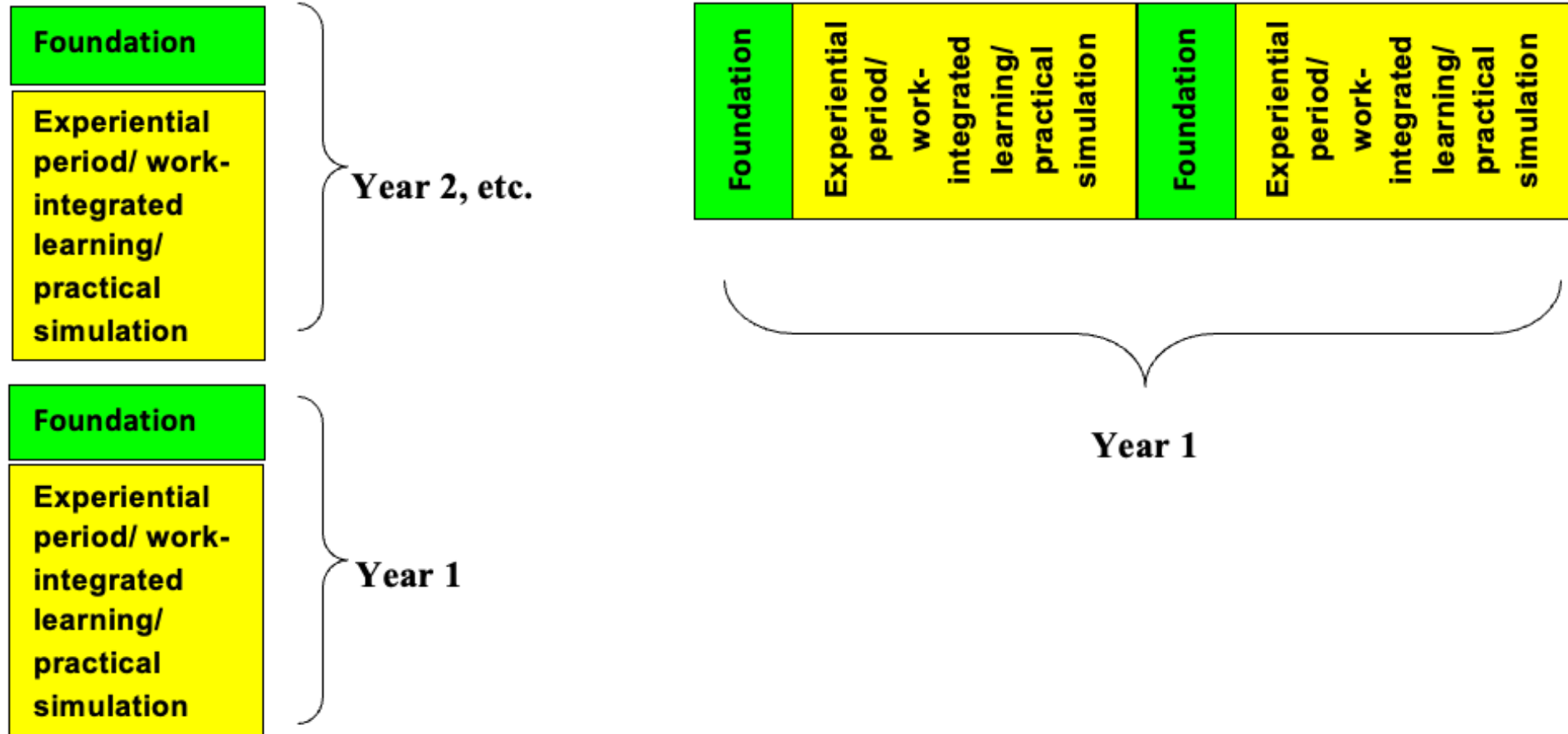


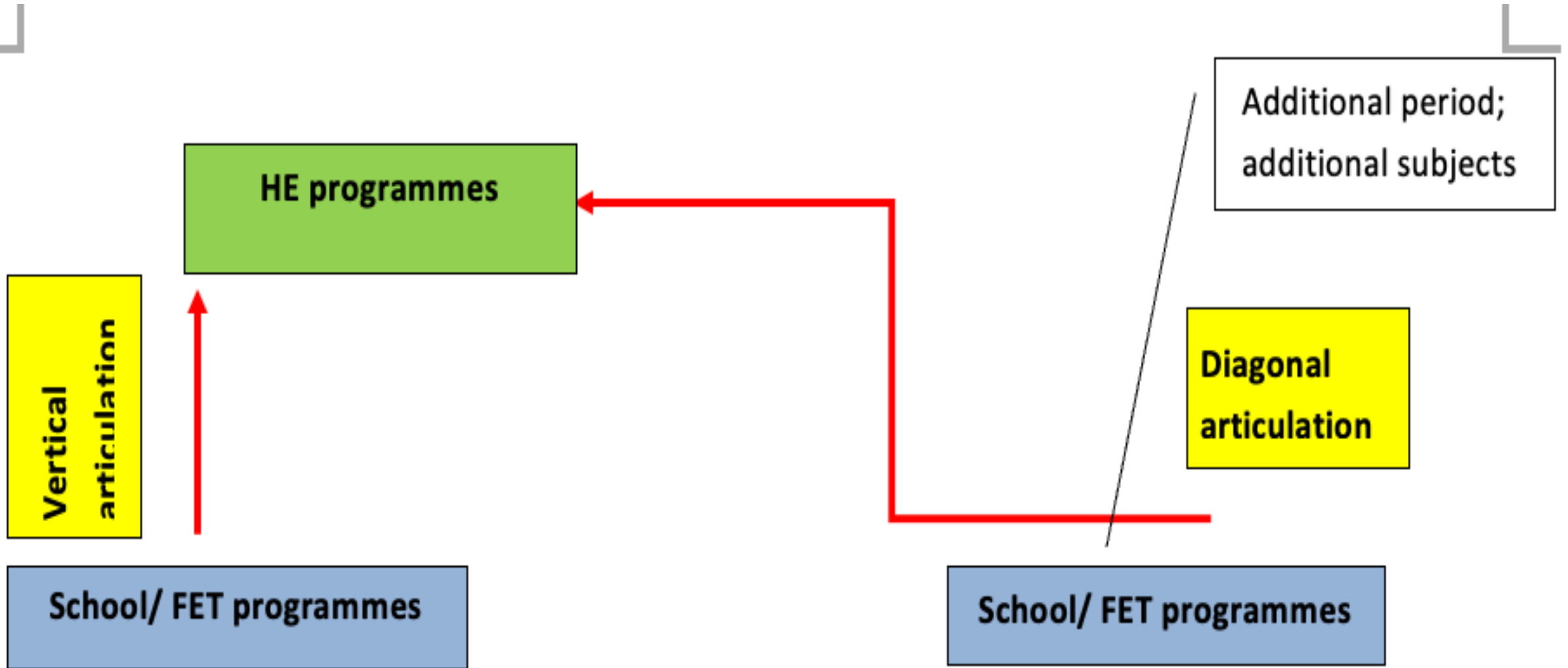
Figure 1: A continuum of learning (Blom, 2006)

Rising spirals of articulation

Vertical progression (*rising spirals*) OR Horizontal progression (*iterative spirals*)



Articulation as a stairwell



Articulation as a cross-road



Blockages and barriers to articulation

- Institutional blockages: zigzags and crooked paths
- Structural blockages: lack of links facilitated by systemic mechanisms such as joint planning, particularly learning and career pathway planning, budgeting and funding – inhibits articulation.
- Mapping of content between TVET and HE sectors is complex. In Australia, VET qualifications are structured by units of competence while the HE qualifications are structured according to knowledge units and outcomes.
- Administrative processes (such as credits), funding and policy barriers.
- Legislative and regulatory barriers, such as “credit for max. 50% of a qualifications from a sending institution.”
- Perceptual barriers: little parity of esteem between levels and sites of the system (disparities between types of HEIs, private and public, academic and workplace learning...)

Articulation remains a work in progress in higher education (South Africa)

- Article April 2023: <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20230530224921187>

The realisation of a fully articulated higher education system in South Africa remains elusive, due to many complexities and lack of policy implementation. This is according to a chapter titled, 'Articulation into and within the higher education system', by Mahlapahlapana Themane, Layane Mabasa and Dikeledi Mahlo, which was published in the Council on Higher Education's (CHE) *Review of Higher Education in South Africa Twenty-five Years into Democracy*.

Themane, Mabasa and Mahlo call on DHET to develop indicators and set targets that will enable universities to assess their progress regarding articulation as these do not exist.

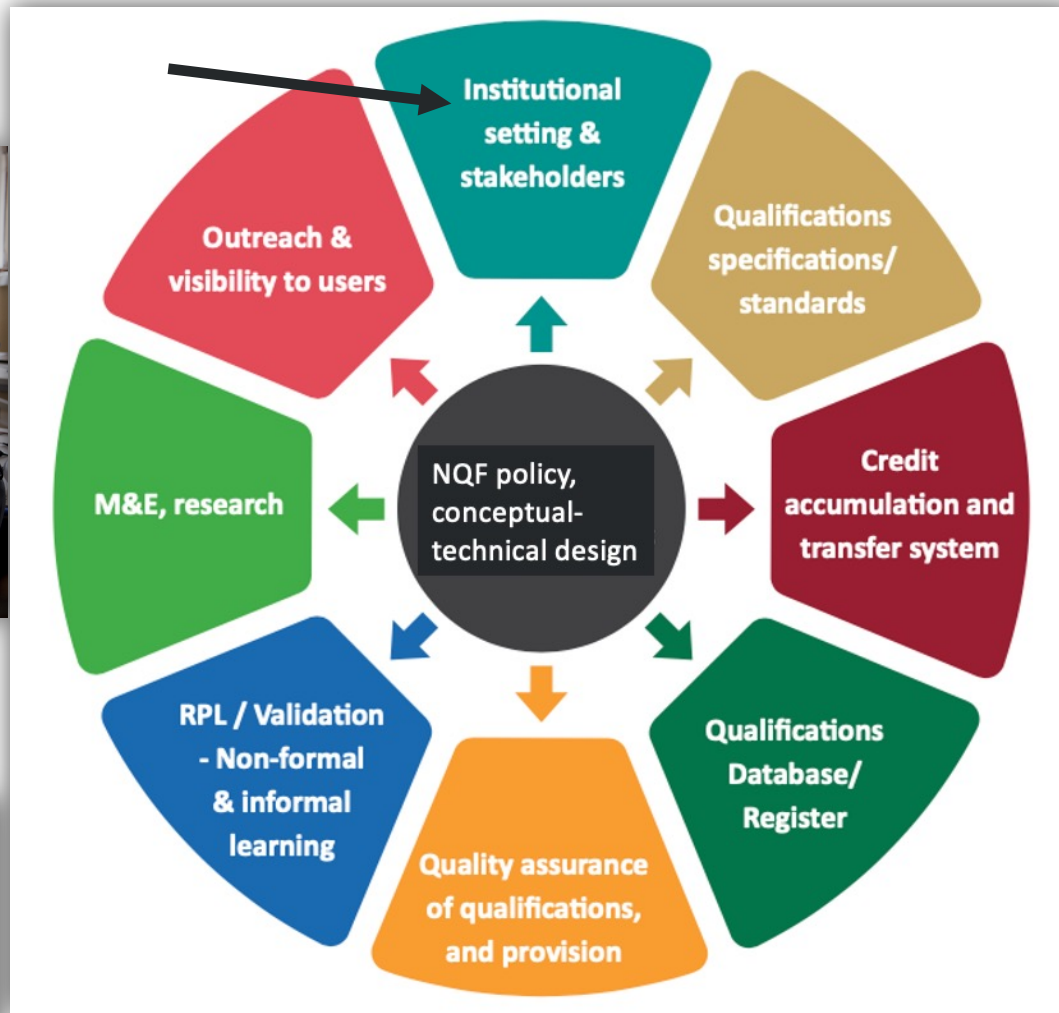
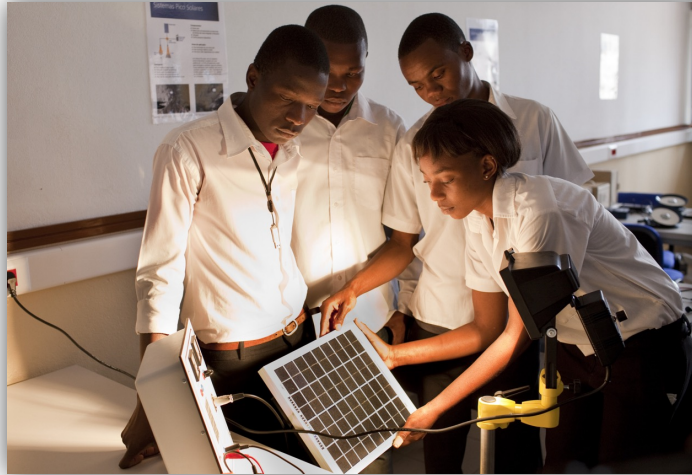
The setting of targets was omitted in the Education White Paper 3 and the NPHE as “the matter of articulation should be the business of individual institutions”.

“It is important that this position is changed and that, going forward, the government regulates it.”

They recommend that regulations developed and implemented by the government could provide guidelines that promote **transparency and accountability regarding progress**. This will also provide institutions with a framework within which they can operate and cooperate.

However, more work is still to be undertaken in terms of promoting articulation to increase the scale that it is being implemented. This requires strong leadership and the political will to see articulation succeed.

The policy and guidelines on articulation need to be further strengthened and upscaled throughout the entire system. This could help institutions to develop effective articulation mechanisms to enable student mobility between undergraduate-focused institutions and institutions offering postgraduate programmes.



The NQF is a major part of the wider eco-system of lifelong & lifewide learning and work. Governance of NQF needs to work in dialogue with education-employment-innovation stakeholders

Questions



Thank you

Eduarda Castel-Branco

ACQF expert team