

Teacher Education Reforms in Ghana: A Policy and Empirical Synthesis

Eadjei-Boateng, K Damponsah, Priscorn

Abstract

In the last ten years, Ghana has enacted extensive reforms in teacher education to professionalise the teaching profession, improve teacher quality, and synchronise pre-service training with national development objectives and global commitments, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4. The reforms, designed as a policy response to persistent fragmentation, inadequate practice integration, and variable standards, implemented structural, curricular, and regulatory changes across the teacher education system. Essential policy measures encompass elevating Colleges of Education (CoEs) to tertiary status, replacing the Diploma in Education with a four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) program including specified specialisations, and the formal establishment of mentorship frameworks between universities and CoEs. The implementation is fundamentally anchored on the enhanced Supported Teaching in School (STS), which integrates student teachers into basic schools for continuous, mentored, and progressively structured practice. Synchronised national frameworks strengthen policy coherence—the National Teachers' Standards (NTS), National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF), and National Teacher Education Assessment Policy (NTEAP)—that regulate curriculum, assessment, and

professional expectations. This paper examines the design logic, implementation processes, and initial outcomes of Ghana's teacher education reforms, utilising policy documents and empirical literature, while emphasising improvements in coherence and practical orientation, as well as ongoing challenges concerning capacity, sustainability, and equity. The analysis provides pertinent insights for improving teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Keywords: Teacher education reform, Colleges of Education, B.Ed programme, mentorship, Ghana

1. Introduction

Teacher education is widely acknowledged as a vital mechanism for enhancing educational quality, bolstering instructional efficacy, and improving student learning outcomes within educational systems (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Avalos, 2011). Global studies repeatedly demonstrate that well-prepared educators—equipped with robust subject-matter expertise, pedagogical skills, and professional ethics—are essential for achieving equitable, high-quality education (OECD, 2019). Consequently, numerous nations have implemented changes to professionalise teaching, lengthen pre-

service training, and enhance the integration of theory and practice.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, reform of teacher education has become imperative due to the rapid increase in access to basic and secondary education, concerns about teacher quality, and enduring learning disparities (Akyeampong et al., 2017). Research in the region identifies issues such as limited practicum opportunities, inadequate institutional capacity, disjointed policy frameworks, and insufficient professional development for teacher educators (Lewin & Stuart, 2003; Moon, 2016). These problems have elicited renewed focus on systemic reforms encompassing not only curricular content but also institutional frameworks, professional standards, and support systems for educators and teacher trainers.

In Ghana, persistent apprehensions over the sufficiency of teacher preparation, inadequate alignment between theoretical knowledge and practical application, and disparities in quality among training institutions catalysed extensive reforms in teacher education (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2018). Before the reforms, teacher education was provided by diploma-granting Colleges of Education, which exhibited restricted autonomy and inconsistent quality assurance (Akyeampong, 2011). The Government of Ghana, via the Ministry of Education and the National Teaching Council, implemented reforms to elevate Colleges of Education to tertiary institutions,

professionalise teaching, enhance practice-based learning, and align teacher training with national curriculum reforms at the basic and secondary education levels (NTC, 2018a).

This document presents a comprehensive analysis of Ghana's teacher education reforms, emphasising institutional development, curriculum reform, mentorship frameworks, support for student teachers, professional development, and policy coherence. This article contextualises Ghana's changes within wider discussions on teacher professionalisation, practice-oriented teacher education, and comprehensive system reform by synthesising national policy papers with empirical and theoretical literature. This contributes to the scholarship on teacher education reform in Sub-Saharan Africa and provides insights applicable to other contexts seeking to enhance teacher preparation through coherent, sustainable reform initiatives.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative research design, focusing on document analysis and a critical assessment of empirical literature to investigate the motivation, design, and implementation of teacher education reforms in Ghana. Key policy documents integral to the reforms—namely, the National Teachers' Standards (NTS), the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF), and the National Teacher Education

Assessment Policy (NTEAP)—were deliberately selected and examined to identify the primary reform objectives, frameworks, and foundational assumptions. Document analysis was deemed suitable since it facilitates a systematic evaluation of official texts to comprehend policy aims, coherence, and alignment within a reform agenda (Bowen, 2009). To enhance analytical rigour, the documents were examined iteratively and thematically coded, concentrating on professionalisation, practice-based preparation, mentorship, assessment coherence, and quality assurance.

The study synthesised peer-reviewed journal papers, evaluation reports, and research projects regarding Ghana's teacher education reforms and analogous changes in Sub-Saharan Africa. The material was identified using focused searches employing key terms such as teacher education reform, practice-based teacher preparation, Supported Teaching in School, and Ghana. Thematic synthesis was utilised to amalgamate information from several studies, facilitating comparisons between policy aims and empirical evidence on implementation outcomes, successes, and obstacles (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Integrating policy analysis with empirical literature augmented the credibility and reliability of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This qualitative, interpretive study offers a coherent, contextually grounded analysis of Ghana's teacher education reforms, situating them

within the broader discourse on teacher preparation and educational transformation in Africa.

3. Upgrading of Colleges of Education to Tertiary Institutions

The elevation of Colleges of Education (CoEs) to postsecondary schools signifies a significant structural transformation within Ghana's teacher education system. Before the reforms, CoEs operated primarily as diploma-granting entities with restricted academic independence, a feeble research focus, and inconsistent quality assurance mechanisms. This institutional setting limited the extent of pedagogical and subject-matter preparation, so reinforcing the notion of teaching as a semi-professional career rather than a graduate-level profession (Akyeampong, 2011). Concerns about declining teacher quality, limited advancement opportunities for educators, and the discord between teacher training and national educational objectives have heightened demands for structural reform.

The Government of Ghana reclassified Colleges of Education (CoEs) as tertiary institutions. It subjected them to the regulatory authority of national tertiary organisations, specifically the National Council for Tertiary Education, currently known as the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC). Collaborative agreements were formed between Centres of Excellence (CoEs) and public institutions to

provide mentorship, curriculum validation, and assessment moderation (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2018). These modifications aimed to more securely include teacher education into the national higher education framework, improve accountability, and standardise program quality across institutions. The reform aimed to address the persistent fragmentation in governance and quality assurance that marked the pre-reform period.

The enhancement of CoEs aimed to bolster academic rigour and institutional competence. As higher education institutions, CoEs were mandated to adhere to national quality assurance standards, implement enhanced governance and administrative frameworks, and match their academic programs with university-level criteria. This transition enhanced consistency in curriculum design, evaluation methodologies, and academic governance, especially via increased collaboration with mentoring universities (T-TEL, 2020). The reform also provided opportunities for tutors to pursue advanced degrees and participate in academic endeavours, thereby reinforcing the intellectual underpinnings of teacher education.

An essential result of the enhancement process has been its role in the professionalisation of teaching. Situating initial teacher education within the higher education sector solidified the perception of teaching as a knowledge-driven, research-

informed, and ethically founded vocation. This institutional reform enabled the implementation of the four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) curriculum and enhanced alignment with the National Teachers' Standards (National Teaching Council [NTC], 2018a). The reforms aimed to reframe teacher identity and elevate public expectations of teachers' duties and responsibilities by emphasising subject mastery, pedagogical skill, and professional values.

Notwithstanding these advancements, the enhancement of CoEs has also exposed considerable transitional and capacity-related difficulties. Numerous schools have faced challenges due to inadequate infrastructure, a deficient research culture, excessive teaching responsibilities, and insufficient administrative assistance to fulfil tertiary-level requirements. Tutors are anticipated to enhance research productivity and publication while experiencing no corresponding decrease in effort or ongoing professional development opportunities (Akyeampong et al., 2017). These issues underscore the need for ongoing investment, incremental implementation, and focused capacity-building programs to guarantee that institutional enhancement results in enduring advancements in teacher quality and learning outcomes, rather than mere symbolic conformity (MoE, 2018).

4. Conversion of the Diploma in Education to a Four-Year B.Ed Programme

The transformation of the Diploma in Education into a four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree signifies a significant curricular reform in Ghana's teacher education sector. The diploma track has been historically criticised for its brevity, inadequate depth of subject-matter expertise, and poor integration of theory with practical application (Akyeampong, 2011). In response to heightened teaching demands stemming from curricular reforms, learner diversity, and accountability constraints, it became clear that an extended, more academically rigorous program was necessary to adequately prepare instructors for modern classrooms (MoE, 2018).

The four-year B.Ed. The program was intentionally designed to enhance student teachers' subject-matter expertise, pedagogical content knowledge, and professional skills. Based on worldwide data, the reform posits that prolonged pre-service preparation facilitates progressive learning, reflective practice, and the cultivation of professional identity (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Avalos, 2011). In the Ghanaian setting, the supplementary year facilitates foundational education studies, topic specialisation, inclusive education, evaluation literacy, and ongoing school-based experiences.

A key aspect of the B.Ed. Reform involves establishing several specialisations, such as Early Grade Education, Upper Primary Education, and Junior High School (JHS) Education. This differentiated strategy addresses the findings that effective instruction necessitates specialised pedagogical methods tailored to learners' developmental phases and curriculum requirements (Akyeampong et al., 2017). The B.Ed programme improves relevance, instructional efficacy, and learner-centred pedagogy across basic education levels by departing from a uniform preparatory approach.

Notwithstanding its advantages, the execution of the four-year B.Ed curriculum has encountered obstacles. Divergences in institutional capability, personnel levels, and availability of teaching and learning resources among Colleges of Education have influenced the uniformity of program delivery (MoE, 2018; T-TEL, 2020). The heightened academic and practicum requirements affect tutor workload and student support services. Preliminary assessments indicate that the B.Ed reform has markedly enhanced the coherence, depth, and professional focus of pre-service teacher education in Ghana.

5. Development of the Four-Year B.Ed Curriculum for CoEs and Mentoring Universities

The establishment of the four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) curriculum signifies a planned transition towards a cohesive, standards-driven, and practice-focused teacher preparation framework in Ghana. The curriculum, based on the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF), conveys a unified national vision that highlights professional principles, inclusive practices, and assessment for learning (National Teaching Council [NTC], 2018a). It seeks to close the enduring divide between theory and practice and to improve coherence with the national basic and secondary education curriculum (MoE, 2018).

A fundamental tenet of the B.Ed. The program is characterised by horizontal and vertical coherence throughout courses, practicum, and exams. The curriculum organises content to systematically enhance knowledge of topics, pedagogical content understanding, and inclusive teaching skills. Supported Teaching in School (STS) is combined with campus-based learning, allowing student teachers to apply theoretical knowledge in actual classroom settings, engage in reflective practice, and progressively assume teaching duties (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Zeichner, 2010). This integration guarantees that the curriculum fosters both proficiency and professional identity.

Mentoring universities engaged in close collaboration with Centres of Excellence during the design and implementation phases. Universities provided assistance with curriculum interpretation, course outline formulation, and assessment moderation, ensuring that CoE programs complied with national and university requirements while maintaining a practice-oriented emphasis. These relationships align with global research demonstrating the efficacy of university-college collaboration in improving the quality of teacher preparation (Zeichner, 2010; Avalos, 2011).

Notwithstanding its advantages, the B.Ed program faces challenges related to institutional capacity and resource access. Divergences in instructor qualifications, digital infrastructure, accessibility to educational resources, and the quality of school placements influence the implementation of programs across Centres of Excellence (CoEs). To maintain adherence to the NTECF vision, ongoing professional development for tutors, mentoring assistance, and systematic evaluation are crucial, facilitating student teachers in attaining the desired learning outcomes and aligning effectively with the revised basic and secondary school curriculum (T-TEL, 2020; MoE, 2018).

6. Mentorship Arrangements and the Division of CoEs

A notable aspect of Ghana's teacher education reforms was the organised mentorship framework that associated Colleges of Education (CoEs) with designated public universities, such as the University of Ghana (UG), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), University of Cape Coast (UCC), University of Education, Winneba (UEW), University for Development Studies (UDS), and Akyea Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development (AMUSTED). This framework was established to enhance quality assurance, facilitate institutional capacity development, and guarantee academic integrity during the transfer of Centres of Excellence to postsecondary status (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2018).

Mentoring universities offered extensive assistance, encompassing curriculum analysis, course creation, assessment moderation, staff training, and advice on governance and institutional administration. These arrangements facilitated uniform execution of the B.Ed programme across CoEs, synchronising coursework, practicum, and assessment with the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF) and the National Teacher Education Assessment Policy (NTEAP) (T-TEL, 2020; NTC, 2018a).

Empirical evidence demonstrates that university mentorship augmented institutional capacity by enhancing instructional quality, facilitating tutor professional development, and fostering cohesive program delivery nationwide. Tutors in Centres of Excellence benefited from exposure to university-level academic practices, research involvement, and professional learning communities, while universities strengthened their connections to practice-oriented teacher education. Challenges included variability in engagement intensity, logistical constraints, and workload pressures on tutors and mentors, underscoring the necessity for ongoing support and monitoring mechanisms to optimise the long-term efficacy of these mentorship arrangements (T-TEL, 2020; Akyeampong et al., 2017).

7. Upgrading of CoE Tutors to University Lecturer Status

An essential, though frequently overlooked, aspect of Ghana's teacher education reforms is the elevation of Colleges of Education (CoEs) instructors through improved academic credentials and professional recognition. With the elevation of CoEs to tertiary institutions, tutors were required to fulfil standards akin to those of university lecturers, which included possessing master's and doctoral degrees, participating in scholarly research, and complying with higher education teaching and assessment standards (Ministry of Education [MoE],

2018; National Council for Tertiary Education [NCTE], 2020).

This strategy aims to enhance instructional quality, improve curriculum delivery, and link Centres of Excellence with the academic culture of higher education. Studies demonstrate that the qualifications and professional development of teacher educators substantially influence pre-service teacher training, especially in pedagogical content knowledge, evidence-based teaching, and reflective practice (Murray & Male, 2005; Loughran, 2014).

In Ghana, programs endorsed by T-TEL and mentoring universities facilitated teachers in undertaking postgraduate courses, engaging in professional learning communities, and enhancing research and publication competencies. These initiatives improved human capabilities and institutional preparedness, ensuring that CoEs could meet the academic and professional criteria expected of higher education institutions (T-TEL, 2020).

The reclassification of certified CoE tutors to the position of university lecturers held both symbolic and professional significance. It enhanced morale, fortified professional identity, and bolstered the impression of teaching as a graduate-level career (Akyeampong, 2011). However, obstacles persist, including inequitable access to PhD programs, excessive teaching and practicum oversight workloads, and the need for

ongoing institutional support for research and career advancement. Confronting these problems is crucial to solidifying the progress of the B.Ed reforms and ensuring the enduring credibility and effectiveness of CoEs as higher education institutions.

8. Student Teacher Allowances and Welfare Support

The allocation of stipends for student teachers in Colleges of Education (CoEs) has resolved enduring challenges of accessibility, equity, and retention in Ghana's teacher education framework. Historically, financial constraints have limited participation in teacher preparation programs, especially for students from underprivileged and rural backgrounds, thereby perpetuating disparities in access to professional training (Akyeampong & Lewin, 2002). The reinstatement of student teacher allowances through recent revisions has contributed to stabilising enrolment, decreasing dropout rates, and facilitating the effective completion of the four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) program.

In addition to enhancing access, student-teacher allowances have elevated the quality of teacher education by allowing trainees to focus more fully on academic pursuits and practical experiences in schools. The redesigned B.Ed programme entails rigorous academic requirements and extensive periods of Supported Teaching in Schools (STS), thereby limiting prospects for part-time

work. Financial assistance consequently reduces the need for student instructors to engage in income-generating endeavours that may jeopardise their commitment to coursework and professional practice. Thus, allowances facilitate the cultivation of graduates who are well-prepared, introspective, and professionally dedicated.

The allowance program has significantly advanced equity and social inclusion objectives. Targeted financial assistance has been especially advantageous for children from low-income families and marginalised rural communities, demographics that are disproportionately present in primary and secondary schools facing teacher shortages. The allowance policy facilitates a more socially diverse teaching workforce by reducing economic barriers to entry and completion, so aligning with national goals of equitable teacher distribution and inclusive education (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2018).

Notwithstanding these advantages, the student teacher allowance has been a focal point of persistent policy discourse. Critics contend that the payment imposes a significant financial strain on the state and raises concerns about its sustainability amid competing public-sector demands. Some argue that granting allowances to teacher trainees is unjust, as students in other higher education programs do not receive comparable support, and propose that teacher education should be funded through

conventional student loan systems (World Bank, 2019). These arguments characterise the exemption as a financial and equity issue rather than a strategic investment.

Advocates of the allowance argue that teacher education holds a distinctive role in national development policy because of its direct impact on educational quality and human capital development. In contrast to many tertiary programs, teacher training requires an extended, mandatory school-based practicum, which limits prospects for paid employment. Furthermore, the societal returns on investment in teacher education—evidenced by improved learning outcomes, reduced educational inequity, and strengthened national capacity—warrant targeted financial support (Akyeampong et al., 2017). From this viewpoint, the stipend transcends a conventional welfare initiative and serves as a strategic policy tool.

Empirical and policy-oriented evaluations indicate that eliminating or diminishing the allowance may jeopardise current advancements in teacher education reform. Decreased financial assistance may deter academically proficient individuals from pursuing teacher school, heighten attrition rates, and disproportionately impact students from underprivileged backgrounds. Such effects would undermine efforts to professionalise teaching, enhance teacher quality, and guarantee sufficient staffing in rural and underserved schools (MoE, 2018).

Preserving the student-teacher allowance is essential to sustaining the progress of Ghana's teacher education reforms. Although apprehensions regarding cost and efficiency merit consideration, these issues can be mitigated through enhanced targeting, transparent management, and alignment with comprehensive teacher deployment and retention strategies. The allowance is a crucial element of a cohesive teacher education policy framework that integrates access, equity, and quality; its continued presence is vital to enhancing teacher preparation and advancing education in Ghana.

9. Professional Development Support for B.Ed Implementation in CoEs

Recognising that curriculum reform requires ongoing capacity development, Ghana's teacher education reforms established professional development (PD) sessions for instructors at Colleges of Education (CoEs). The professional development activities emphasised learner-centred pedagogy, assessment in accordance with the National Teacher Education Assessment Policy (NTEAP), mentorship of student teachers, and the promotion of reflective practice (National Teaching Council [NTC], 2018b). By focusing on both campus-based instruction and school-based oversight, the professional development efforts enabled tutors to translate curriculum objectives into classroom practice proficiently.

Empirical research on teacher education reform underscores that ongoing professional development is essential to enhancing teaching quality and achieving intended educational outcomes (Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2006). In Ghana, professional development support has been recognised as a crucial facilitator of effective Bachelor of Education implementation, providing tutors with the requisite knowledge and abilities to execute the four-year program, exemplify best practices, and mentor student teachers during Supported Teaching in School experiences (T-TEL, 2020).

These professional development initiatives also included elements designed to bolster teachers' research and scholarly capabilities, thereby enhancing the overall academic atmosphere of Colleges of Education as postsecondary institutions. Postgraduate study opportunities, participation in professional learning communities, and mentorship in research and publication were essential for maintaining high-quality education and promoting reflective professional development.

Notwithstanding these advantages, problems persist, including disparities in training availability, task demands, and insufficient resources for the effective implementation of professional development. Mitigating these limits with sufficient resources, strategic institutional planning, and the incorporation of professional development into standard

expectations is crucial to solidify the advancements from the B.Ed reforms and guarantee ongoing enhancements in the quality of teacher education.

10. Revision of Key Teacher Education Policy Frameworks

The reforms were supported by extensive modifications to key policy frameworks, specifically the National Teachers' Standards (NTS), the National Teacher Education Assessment Policy (NTEAP), and the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF). Collectively, these texts establish a cohesive framework connecting teacher standards, curriculum development, assessment procedures, and professional accountability (NTC, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c). By explicitly defining standards for teacher knowledge, practice, and professional values, these frameworks establish a basis for uniform and superior pre-service teacher education across all Colleges of Education (CoEs) and mentoring universities.

The National Teachers' Standards (NTS) delineate the competencies, beliefs, and attitudes expected of educators across several professional phases. The incorporation of the NTS into the B.Ed curriculum and Supported Teaching in School (STS) programs guarantees that teacher training aligns with national priorities and worldwide best practices for effective instruction (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Akyeampong et al., 2017).

This alignment serves as a benchmark for curriculum design, assessment, and professional development, thereby improving the coherence and quality of teacher education.

The National Teacher Education Assessment Policy (NTEAP) instituted standardised assessment processes, including formative, summative, and practicum-based evaluations. The NTEAP fosters reflective practice, performance-based evaluation, and ongoing feedback by aligning assessment with both the NTS and curriculum objectives, so ensuring that student teachers are comprehensively prepared for classroom practice (NTC, 2018b). The standardisation of assessment techniques enhances quality assurance and enables nationwide comparability of teacher competency.

The National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF) delineates the comprehensive curricular structure that integrates content, pedagogy, assessment, and STS experiences. Through concurrent revisions to the NTECF alongside the NTS and NTEAP, Ghana ensured that the curriculum, practicum, and professional standards are mutually supportive, promoting systematic and integrated teacher preparation (MoE, 2018). Nonetheless, obstacles persist in the ongoing implementation of these frameworks, including the need for ongoing instructor development, oversight, and adequate resources to ensure adherence to policy objectives.

11. Development of the Four-Year B.Ed SHS/SHTS Teacher Education Programme

In addition to fundamental education, Ghana's teacher education reforms were expanded to include the training of educators for Senior High School (SHS) and Senior High Technical School (SHTS) with the implementation of a four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) program. This curriculum was created to address ongoing issues of insufficient academic understanding, inadequate pedagogical training, and limited practical skills among secondary school educators. Before the revisions, secondary teacher preparation faced criticism for being too theoretical, poorly connected with school curricula, and inadequately responsive to the changing requirements of secondary education (Anamuah-Mensah et al., 2018; Ministry of Education [MoE], 2018)—the revised B.Ed framework aimed to enhance both the academic and professional aspects of secondary teacher education.

A primary aim of the SHS/SHTS B.Ed programme is to enhance specialisation in topics while providing comprehensive pedagogical training. The extended pre-service training enables student teachers to develop in-depth subject-matter expertise in their selected disciplines while concurrently acquiring subject-specific instructional competencies. This equilibrium is especially vital at the secondary level, when the intricacy of the curriculum, abstract concepts,

and examination-focused learning environments necessitate elevated levels of instructor proficiency. The curriculum seeks to enhance the breadth and intensity of training to cultivate graduates who are better able to meet varied learner needs and achieve better educational outcomes (Akyeampong et al., 2017).

The SHS/SHTS B.Ed curriculum was intentionally synchronised with the redesigned senior high school curriculum to guarantee consistency between teacher training and classroom practices. Curriculum design prioritises understanding of topic content, curriculum interpretation, assessment literacy, and learner-centred pedagogies. The effective implementation of these pedagogical approaches is strongly dependent on access to quality teaching and learning resources, which have been shown to enhance integrated science instruction in Ghanaian senior high schools (Asano et al., 2021). Inquiry-based teaching methods, problem-solving techniques, and active learning tactics are integrated across courses to empower potential educators to cultivate critical thinking and advanced learning in secondary school students (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Empirical evidence from Ghana further shows that teachers' understanding of inquiry can either promote or constrain the enactment of inquiry-based science teaching in classrooms (Mohammed & Amponsah, 2020). This alignment embodies international best practices,

emphasising the need for coherence between teacher education courses and school-level instructional requirements.

Practical preparation is a fundamental component of the SHS/SHTS B.Ed degree, facilitated by organised school-based experiences grounded in the Supported Teaching in School (STS) framework. Student instructors engage in structured and guided practicum assignments that incrementally enhance their proficiency in lesson design, classroom administration, assessment methodologies, and the application of instructional resources suitable for secondary education.

These experiences aim to enhance theoretical knowledge while fostering reflective professional practice. Studies of students' scientific conceptions in related domains indicate that persistent misconceptions require structured pedagogical support and guided practice to achieve conceptual change, reinforcing the importance of sustained school-based experiences such as STS (Amponsah, 2024). Collaboration among Colleges of Education, mentoring universities, and partner Senior High Schools (SHSs) and Technical High Schools (THSs) is essential to maintaining the quality and relevance of practicum experiences (National Teaching Council [NTC], 2018a; T-TEL, 2020).

A notable strength of the SHS/SHTS B.Ed programme is its conformity with national

professional norms and assessment systems. Teaching practice, coursework, and assessment are governed by the National Teachers' Standards and the National Teacher Education Assessment Policy, which collectively establish a unified framework for professional expectations, performance evaluation, and quality assurance (NTC, 2018a). This standards-based methodology improves openness and uniformity among institutions while strengthening the professional identity of secondary school educators as reflective practitioners responsible for nationally established skills.

Notwithstanding these advancements, the implementation of the SHS/SHTS B.Ed course continues to face significant hurdles. Divergences in institutional capacity, deficiencies in subject-specialist mentors, and limited teaching and learning resources affect the uniformity and quality of program delivery across institutions. Moreover, overseeing practicum experiences in specialised topic areas can be challenging, especially in institutions with limited infrastructure or elevated teacher workloads. To address these challenges, sustained professional development for teacher educators and mentors, enhanced monitoring and support systems, and targeted investments are necessary to ensure that the SHS/SHTS B.Ed programme realises its potential to elevate teacher quality and improve secondary education outcomes. These improvements highlight Ghana's

systematic and cohesive strategy to enhance teacher education at both basic and secondary levels.

12. CPD Support Modules and Programmes for SHS/SHTS Teacher Education

To facilitate the proper execution of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) curriculum for Senior High School (SHS) and Senior High Technical School (SHTS) teacher education, a series of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) support modules was created for mentoring universities. The universities comprised the University of Ghana (UG), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), University of Cape Coast (UCC), University of Education, Winneba (UEW), University for Development Studies (UDS), and Akonte Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development (AMUSTED). The CPD modules concentrated on essential domains including curriculum interpretation, assessment alignment, practicum supervision, mentoring competencies, and reflective teaching practices, thereby equipping tutors and school-based mentors to effectively support student teachers in accordance with reform mandates (Transforming Teacher Education and Learning [T-TEL], 2020).

The design and execution of the SHS/SHTS CPD support modules were directly influenced by the effective professional

development strategies employed at Colleges of Education (CoEs) throughout the deployment of the B.Ed basic education curriculum. The CoE reform process demonstrated that persistent, practice-oriented, and collaborative continuing professional development effectively assisted tutors in adapting to the new curriculum, implementing learner-centred pedagogies, and aligning assessment methods with national standards (Akyeampong et al., 2017; T-TEL, 2020). Leveraging this success, the SHS/SHTS CPD model embraced the ideas of continuity, coherence, and practice-oriented professional development.

The CPD programs offered organised, continuous opportunities for professional development through workshops, seminars, communities of practice, and collaborative mentorship sessions with university academics, CoE instructors, and school-based mentors. These engagements highlighted learner-centred pedagogy, formative and standards-based assessment, inclusive teaching practices, and evidence-based instructional decision-making. The CPD activities enhanced collaborative learning and reflective conversation among teacher educators and mentors, thereby cultivating a shared comprehension of the SHS/SHTS B.Ed curriculum and reinforcing its consistent application across institutions (Avalos, 2011; Loughran, 2014).

A significant advantage of the CPD support modules was their emphasis on enhancing

practicum supervision and mentoring capabilities. Drawing on insights from the Supported Teaching in School (STS) paradigm in fundamental teacher education, the CPD programs provided mentors with tools for classroom observation, constructive feedback, and reflective conferencing. This alignment guaranteed that school-based experiences for SHS/SHTS student teachers were both evaluative and developmental, enhancing the integration of theory and practice. Structured mentorship methodologies are universally acknowledged as critical for effective teacher preparation and professional development (Loughran, 2014).

Notwithstanding these advantages, certain problems have hindered the effectiveness and influence of CPD support programs for SHS/SHTS teacher education. Restricted access to specialist subject-specific training, resource limitations, and disparities in institutional commitment and leadership have led to inconsistent participation and execution. In several instances, substantial workloads and conflicting institutional goals have limited ongoing participation in CPD activities, thereby diminishing their enduring influence on the quality of teaching and mentoring (MoE, 2018; T-TEL, 2020).

Confronting these difficulties necessitates continuous investment and the integration of CPD into the planning frameworks of universities and colleges. Integrating Continuous Professional Development into

workload models, performance evaluation systems, and quality assurance processes helps improve engagement and responsibility. Moreover, comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems are essential for assessing the effects of CPD on instructional practices, practicum oversight, and student-teacher outcomes. By leveraging the proven efficacy of CPD frameworks in the CoEs and tailoring them to the SHS/SHTS context, Ghana's teacher education reforms can enhance teacher quality, ensure curriculum fidelity, and align with national secondary education priorities (MoE, 2018; Akyeampong et al., 2017).

13. Supported Teaching in School (STS) as a Core Component of the Reforms

Supported Teaching in School (STS) is a major pedagogical innovation in Ghana's recent teacher education reforms. Implemented as an essential element of the four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) curriculum, STS was developed to rectify persistent issues regarding the inadequate integration of theory and practice in initial teacher training. STS aims to provide student teachers with continuous, developmental, and authentic teaching experiences by integrating them into basic schools throughout all four years of their training, supported by structured mentorship (National Teaching Council [NTC], 2018a; Ministry of Education [MoE], 2018).

In contrast to the conventional short-term teaching practice paradigm, which typically restricts school experience to a shorter final placement, STS prioritises progressive, scaffolded school-based learning. Student teachers commence with structured classroom observation and reflective documentation, then engage in assisted teaching, co-teaching, and the progressive assumption of complete teaching duties. The levels are meticulously arranged to correspond with the evolving pedagogical understanding and confidence of student instructors. This approach aligns with global research indicating that prolonged, supervised practicum experiences improve professional competence, promote reflective practice, and facilitate the formation of teacher identity (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Zeichner, 2010).

A hallmark of STS is the pivotal function of mentorship. Student teachers receive assistance from professional school-based mentors, usually seasoned classroom educators, as well as College of Education tutors who provide instructional coaching and evaluative support. This dual-mentorship concept fosters greater coherence between collegiate learning and practical application in schools, while advocating for a collective accountability in teacher development. Studies on practice-based teacher education indicate that collaborative mentorship structures enhance professional learning communities and facilitate the application of

theoretical knowledge in classroom settings (Grossman et al., 2009).

In the context of Ghanaian reform, STS is expressly associated with the National Teachers' Standards (NTS), namely in the areas of professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional values and attitudes. Teaching and learning activities conducted during STS are directly aligned with these criteria, enhancing a collective comprehension of professional expectations among institutions. Assessment in STS is directed by the National Teacher Education Assessment Policy (NTEAP), which incorporates classroom observation, reflective journals, portfolios, and formative feedback into a unified assessment framework (NTC, 2018b). This alignment has enhanced the legitimacy and transparency of student-teacher evaluation.

Recent reviews of reforms suggest that STS has positively impacted student teachers' preparedness for the classroom, lesson planning abilities, classroom management, and adaptability to learner diversity. Assessments associated with the Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL) programme indicate that prolonged school immersion has enhanced student teachers' confidence and proficiency in using learner-centred pedagogies in actual classroom environments (T-TEL, 2020). These findings substantiate broader assertions that practice-oriented teacher education models are especially beneficial in

environments where conventional, theory-dominant approaches have led to inconsistent teaching quality.

Notwithstanding these advancements, the execution of STS has encountered several hurdles. The workload of mentors, insufficient incentives for school-based mentors, disparities in school resources, and logistical challenges—particularly in remote and inaccessible areas—persistently impact the consistency and quality of STS encounters. In several instances, elevated student-teacher ratios have strained mentoring resources, potentially compromising the quality of personalised assistance. Overcoming these challenges requires continuous investment, enhanced mentor training and motivation, and contextually relevant implementation strategies to ensure that STS remains a strong and equitable foundation for Ghana's practice-based teacher education model (MoE, 2018; Akyeampong et al., 2017).

14. Importance, Strengths, and Weaknesses of the Teacher Education Reforms

14.1 Importance of the Reforms

The innovations in teacher education in Ghana are noteworthy for multiple reasons. Initially, they signify a purposeful transition towards the professionalisation of teaching by connecting teacher training with higher education norms and globally acknowledged best practices (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

The reforms have improved the depth, coherence, and legitimacy of teacher preparation by upgrading Colleges of Education (CoEs), implementing a four-year B.Ed degree, and reinforcing practicum through Supported Teaching in School (STS).

Secondly, the reforms enhance coherence throughout the teacher development continuum—from pre-service preparation to induction and ongoing professional development—via aligned policy frameworks, including the National Teachers' Standards (NTS), the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF), and the National Teacher Education Assessment Policy (NTEAP) (NTC, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c). This convergence resolves persistent fragmentation in teacher education policy and practice in Ghana.

The reforms possess significant implications for equity and access. The reinstatement of student teacher allowances, along with decentralised teacher training through Colleges of Education, has facilitated the involvement of students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, thereby enhancing teacher availability, especially in underprivileged and rural regions (Akyeampong & Lewin, 2002).

14.2 Strengths of the Reforms

The principal advantage of Ghana's teacher education reforms is its systemic and cohesive structure. Instead of enacting

discrete legislative changes, Ghana adopted a cohesive reform strategy encompassing institutional strengthening, curriculum revision, mentorship frameworks, professional development, and national standards. This connection demonstrates that successful educational change necessitates coherence among institutions, policies, and practices, as evidenced internationally (Fullan, 2016).

A second strength is the robust policy coherence and clarity established by the National Teachers' Standards (NTS), the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF), and the National Teacher Education Assessment Policy (NTEAP). These frameworks explicitly delineate requirements for teacher knowledge, practice, and professional values, thereby assuring uniformity across Colleges of Education, mentoring universities, and partner schools. This clarity has diminished ambiguity in curriculum implementation and evaluation, a challenge that once typified teacher education in Ghana (MoE, 2018).

The reforms demonstrate a strong commitment to practice-oriented teacher preparation, particularly through the Supported Teaching in School (STS) paradigm. Prolonged, guided school placements have strengthened the integration of theory and practice, enhanced classroom preparedness, and enhanced reflective professional development among student teachers. Empirical evidence from reform

evaluations indicates that STS has enhanced confidence, classroom management abilities, and responsiveness to learner diversity (T-TEL, 2020).

The elevation of Colleges of Education to tertiary institutions and the professional advancement of CoE instructors to the rank of university lecturer signify a substantial step in the professionalisation of education. Elevated qualification standards, involvement in research, and conformity with higher education norms have improved teaching quality, institutional reputation, and employee morale. This advancement fortifies teaching as a graduate profession and enhances the academic underpinnings of teacher preparation (Akyeampong, 2011; Loughran, 2014).

The mentorship model using public universities is a novel capacity-building strategy. Ghana leveraged established expertise in curriculum design, assessment moderation, and staff development by placing Centres of Excellence (CoEs) under the academic tutelage of reputable universities. This method improved quality assurance while avoiding the costs and disruptions associated with the full integration of Centres of Excellence into conventional universities (T-TEL, 2020).

The changes exhibit a pronounced focus on equity, notably through the reinstatement of student teacher allowances and the geographically dispersed network of

Colleges of Education (CoEs). These initiatives have facilitated access to teacher education for students from underprivileged backgrounds and enhanced teacher availability in rural and underserved regions, thereby addressing persistent equity issues within Ghana's educational framework (Akyeampong & Lewin, 2002).

14.3 Weaknesses and Challenges of the Reforms

Notwithstanding their advantages, the reforms encounter numerous obstacles. Divergences in institutional capacity among CoEs have led to inconsistent execution of the B.Ed curriculum and STS paradigm. Disparities in infrastructure, staffing levels, and access to resources persistently affect program quality (MoE, 2018).

Funding sustainability is a significant issue, especially for professional development initiatives, mentorship programs, and student-teacher stipends. Excessive workloads for CoE instructors and school-based mentors present obstacles to effective monitoring and research involvement. Furthermore, restricted access to doctoral training hinders career advancement for certain instructors, thereby impacting long-term staff retention and morale.

Ultimately, although policy frameworks are clearly defined, continuous monitoring, empirical research, and feedback mechanisms are essential to evaluate their impact on classroom instruction and student

outcomes. In the absence of continuous assessment, implementation difficulties may jeopardise the transformative capacity of the reforms.

15. Conclusion

Collectively, Ghana's teacher education reforms represent a substantial advancement toward establishing a professional, standards-oriented teacher preparation system. The systematic upgrading of Colleges of Education to tertiary institutions, the implementation of a four-year B.Ed program with specified specialisations, the creation of structured mentorship systems, and the amendment of key policy frameworks collectively strengthen the professionalisation of teaching. These improvements have improved the coherence, depth, and credibility of pre-service teacher training, aligning Ghana's teacher education system with international best practices (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Avalos, 2011).

The innovation in the curriculum, including the incorporation of Supported Teaching in School (STS) and its alignment with the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF), has strengthened the connection between theory and practice. Mentorship collaborations with public institutions have enhanced quality assurance, fostered reflective practice, and facilitated professional development for CoE educators. The reinstatement of student teacher allowances and additional welfare support

systems has improved access, retention, and equity, ensuring that teacher preparation is accessible to students from varied socio-economic backgrounds (Akyeampong & Lewin, 2002; T-TEL, 2020).

Notwithstanding these accomplishments, obstacles persist. Differences in institutional capacity, inequities in access to doctoral training for educators, resource limitations, and workload demands persistently hinder the consistent implementation of the B.Ed curriculum and STS model. The sustainability of funding for professional development, mentorship programs, and student support is a significant concern. Confronting these problems requires sustained investment, targeted capacity development, and efficient monitoring systems to ensure that reforms lead to improved teaching methodologies and learner achievement (MoE, 2018; NTC, 2018a).

Ghana's experience highlights the need for comprehensive, systemic reforms encompassing institutional strengthening, curricular advancement, policy alignment, and professional development. Enduring political commitment, donor collaboration, and evidence-driven monitoring will be crucial for consolidating achievements, expanding good practices, and informing future teacher education programs. The Ghanaian example serves as an exemplary model for other Sub-Saharan African nations aiming to professionalise teacher training and

enhance educational quality through cohesive, adequately funded, and practice-focused reforms.

16. Lessons for Other African Countries

The teacher education reforms in Ghana offer significant insights for other African nations seeking to enhance their teacher preparation systems. The Ghanaian example illustrates the importance of a comprehensive and policy-coherent reform strategy. Instead of concentrating exclusively on curriculum modification or institutional reorganisation, Ghana integrated teacher standards, curricular frameworks, assessment procedures, institutional status, and professional development into a cohesive reform package. Other African nations can adopt this strategy to prevent disjointed reforms that fail to yield lasting results.

Secondly, Ghana exemplifies the significance of practice-oriented teacher education. The Supported Teaching in School (STS) approach demonstrates that prolonged, mentored school placements can substantially improve teacher preparedness and professional self-assurance. Countries facing inadequate connections between theoretical knowledge and classroom application may find it advantageous to implement or modify comparable school-based practicum models.

The reforms underscore the strategic importance of mentorship and partnerships in capacity development. Ghana enhanced

quality assurance and staff development by integrating Colleges of Education with established universities, while preserving existing institutions. This mentorship model is especially pertinent in situations when teacher education colleges possess inadequate academic resources, while complete integration with universities is not yet attainable.

Fourth, Ghana's focus on the professionalisation of teacher educators provides a significant insight. Enhancing the qualifications, position, and research involvement of teacher educators improves the overall quality of teacher training. Other African nations may prioritise specialised postgraduate training, career trajectories, and research assistance for teacher educators within their reform initiatives.

The Ghanaian changes highlight the need to reconcile quality enhancement with equity considerations. Financial support methods, such as student-teacher allowances and distributed training institutions, can sustain enrolment and ensure equal access to teacher education, especially for rural and underprivileged populations.

Ultimately, Ghana's experience underscores the significance of enduring political commitment, donor cooperation, and evidence-based evaluation. Long-term investment, robust governmental leadership, and ongoing assessment—bolstered by collaborators such as T-TEL—were essential

to implementation. Other African nations can derive insights from the focus on monitoring, learning, and adapting as reforms progress.

17. Way Forward

Informed by the successes of previous reforms, numerous strategic directions are essential for the forthcoming phase of teacher education advancement in Ghana. Initially, continuous investment is necessary to enhance institutional capability throughout all Colleges of Education, especially in infrastructure, digital resources, and personnel. Facilitating fair access to doctoral training and research assistance for CoE instructors will reinforce their position as university lecturers and strengthen the research-teaching connection.

The Supported Teaching in School (STS) paradigm should be augmented by improved incentives and acknowledgement of workload for school-based mentors, particularly in rural and underprivileged areas. Enhancing collaborations across Centres of Excellence, mentoring universities, and primary schools will be essential for preserving the quality and uniformity of school-based educational experiences.

Third, continuous professional development (CPD) must be institutionalised as a lifelong obligation for teacher educators and teachers, with clearer links to advancement, evaluation, and professional recognition. Consistent evaluation and enhancement of

the National Teachers' Standards (NTS), NTECF, and NTEAP will guarantee continual alignment with curriculum revisions and evolving educational priorities.

Systematic research, monitoring, and evaluation must be emphasised to produce empirical evidence regarding the effects of the reforms on teaching methods and student learning outcomes. This evidence will not only enhance policy development in Ghana but also advance global study on teacher education reform in low- and middle-income settings. The improvements in teacher education in Ghana represent a pivotal advancement in establishing a professional, standards-oriented teacher preparation framework. Ghana has established a robust basis for enhancing teacher quality and educational outcomes by upgrading CoEs, implementing four-year B.Ed courses with specialisations, fortifying mentorship and CPD systems, and updating essential regulatory frameworks. Ongoing policy dedication, resource allocation, and empirical investigation will be essential to maintaining and enhancing these improvements.

References

- Akyeampong, K. (2011). *Teacher education in Ghana: Does it count?* Centre for International Education, University of Sussex.
- Akyeampong, K., & Lewin, K. M. (2002). From student teachers to newly qualified teachers in Ghana: Insights into becoming a teacher. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 22(3–4), 339–352.
- Akyeampong, K., Pryor, J., Westbrook, J., & Lussier, K. (2017). Teacher preparation and continuing professional development in Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 57, 1–10.
- Akyeampong, K., Lussier, K., Pryor, J., & Westbrook, J. (2017). Improving teaching and learning of basic maths and reading in Africa: Does teacher preparation count? *International Journal of Educational Development*, 55, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2017.04.006>
- Amponsah, K. D. (2020). South African twelfth grade students' conceptions regarding electrochemistry. *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)*, 14(3), 363–369.
- Anamuah-Mensah, J., Asabere-Ameyaw, A., & Anamuah-Mensah, S. (2018). *Education reform in Ghana: A review*. Ministry of Education.
- Anamuah-Mensah, J., Asabere-Ameyaw, A., & Mereku, D. K. (2018). *Teacher education reforms in Ghana: Policy, practice and challenges*. Ministry of Education.

- Asano, R., Amponsah, K. D., Baah-Yanney, O., Quarcoo, F., & Azumah, D. A. (2021). Using quality teaching and learning resources for effective integrated science education among senior high schools in Ghana. *Education Quarterly Reviews*, 4(3), 51–63.
- Avalos, B. (2011). Teacher professional development in Teaching and Teacher Education over ten years. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(1), 10–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.007>
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Cobbold, C., & Boateng, P. (2016). Teacher preparation and teacher effectiveness in Ghanaian basic schools. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(12), 1–9.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Powerful teacher education: Lessons from exemplary programs*. Jossey-Bass.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher education around the world: What can we learn from international practice? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(3), 291–309.
- Grossman, P., Hammerness, K., & McDonald, M. (2009). Redefining teaching, re-imagining teacher education. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 15(2), 273–289. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600902875340>
- Loughran, J. (2014). *Developing a pedagogy of teacher education: Understanding teaching and learning about teaching*. Routledge.
- Ministry of Education (MoE). (2018). *Teacher education reform policy framework*. Ministry of Education.
- Mohammed, S. M., & Amponsah, K. D. (2020). Teachers’ and educational administrators’ conceptions of inquiry: Do they promote or constrain inquiry-based science teaching in junior high schools? *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching*, 10(3), 58–71.

- Murray, J., & Male, T. (2005). Becoming a teacher educator: Evidence from the field. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*(2), 125–142.
- National Council for Tertiary Education. (2020). *Guidelines for upgrading colleges of education to tertiary institutions*. NCTE.
- National Teaching Council. (2018a). *National teacher education curriculum framework (NTECF)*. NTC.
- National Teaching Council. (2018b). *National teacher education assessment policy (NTEAP)*. NTC.
- National Teaching Council. (2018c). *National teachers' standards (NTS)*. NTC.
- Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL). (2020). *Reforming teacher education in Ghana: Progress, challenges, and lessons learned*. T-TEL.
- World Bank. (2019). *Improving education outcomes in Ghana: Policy priorities and options*. World Bank Group.