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Assistant Editor: Dr Ruth Aluko

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION IN AFRICA – THE NEED FOR A 'NEW' TEACHER

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THE NEED FOR A 'NEW' TEACHER

Proceedings of the 3rd biannual International Conference on Distance Education and Teachers' Training in Africa (DETA) held at the University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana, August 2009

Editor:
Prof Johan Beckmann,
Faculty of Education,
University of Pretoria

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Unit for Distance Education,
University of Pretoria

The Distance Education and Teachers' Training in Africa (DETA) Conference strives to provide a platform for educationists in Africa to meet and deliberate on educational issues in Africa

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DETA CONFERENCE 2009 PROCEEDINGS

Foreword

The Distance Education and Teachers' Training in Africa (DETA) Conference is a biennial conference that was initiated to provide a platform for educationists in Africa to meet and deliberate on educational issues in Africa. Since its inception, it has enabled educationists to exchange knowledge and enhance their capacity to engage with opportunities and challenges in education on the continent. DETA's major objectives are to **contribute to the debate** on teacher training in Africa and to **build capacity for the delivery** of teacher training programmes in Africa. These objectives represent ways in which the conference can support NEPAD, various protocols on education and training in Africa, the Millennium Development Goals, and some of the recommendations of the All-Africa Education Ministers' Conference on Open Learning and Distance Education.

The conferences are co-hosted by the organisers and other educational institutions and organisations.

The 3rd conference, co-hosted by the University of Pretoria, the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, and the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana, was held at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, from 3 to 6 August 2009. The theme was **Issues and challenges in education in Africa – The need for a 'new' teacher**.

Subthemes included the following:

- Distance education in teacher education
- Teacher education, and curriculum studies and development
- Special needs education and education management, law and policies, and technology in education in Africa
- Mathematics and science education, language and literacy education, religious and moral education, and HIV and AIDS education

More than 200 delegates from 14 African countries (Botswana, the DRC, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and three other countries (Canada, the UK and the USA) attended the conference. Fifty papers were read.

Participants were requested to submit papers for possible inclusion in the first conference proceedings to be published, if they so wished, and they were given guidelines on the submission. Thirty-five drafts were submitted, which covered the conference subthemes. The drafts were subjected to double blind reviews. Of these 35 drafts, 12 were provisionally accepted and returned to the authors for improvements.

Nine contributions were finally accepted for inclusion in the proceedings, which DETA now proudly puts before the distance education and teacher training communities in Africa and elsewhere.

This is DETA's first volume of conference proceedings and is by no means perfect. However, the editorial team wishes to assert emphatically that academic robustness and merit were of paramount importance in the selection of contributions. DETA has a developmental dimension, and it hopes to put better and more voluminous proceedings before its readership in future.

We appreciate the hard work and input of the authors, the editorial team (Prof Johan Beckmann and Dr Ruth Aluko), the reviewers of the manuscripts, the speakers, the sponsors and the secretariats of the institutions that co-hosted the conference.

We wish you interesting reading and look forward to having your paper included in the next volume if you are a participant at the 2011 conference in Maputo.

Johan Hendrikz

University of Pretoria

South Africa

Albert Koomson

University of Cape Coast

Ghana

Co-chairpersons

DETA 2009

CONTENTS OF THE PROCEEDINGS

This volume consists of nine contributions. The contributions are from the papers presented at the DETA 2009 conference.

In the first contribution, **Clara Akuamoah-Boateng, Josephine Sam-Tagoe and Eddiebright Joseph Buadu** evaluate the changes in student teacher trainees' level of knowledge on the transmission, stigmatisation, symptoms, prevention and control of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS. They also consider students' sensitivity to impart knowledge on the pandemic. Although there was an increase in students' knowledge, it appears that not all of the changes were due to the programme, because they were exposed to other HIV/AIDS material and activities outside their modules for the programme.

Through a qualitative study, **Sharayi Chakanyuka** investigates the effectiveness of the mentoring strategy in the supervision of secondary teacher education students in a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) programme. He emphasises the importance of collegial relationships and the use of different strategies for successful mentoring.

Elias Chakwera addresses the student support system of cluster meetings and study circles in distance education as a critical element of improving students' retention and ensuring high completion rates. He argues that it provides unity among students of same-subject combinations in a cohort in the same way that classes provide a sense of belonging in a face-to-face programme. This further encourages peer support, which gives further impetus to achievement through increased collaboration in academic assignments.

As nations strive to improve their education systems through various strategies and plans, the primary concern for **Chukwu** and **Chukwu** is how school administrators handle the issue of the placement of pupils in classes. They found that most of the schools investigated adopted the random placement criterion, irrespective of their context. They highlight the value of having a heterogeneous rather than a homogeneous class grouping that offers both low and high achievers the opportunity to interact and learn from one another, with the less academically bright pupils benefiting from the brighter ones. This could aid the overall success of education.

The distinctions between codes of conduct and their purposes, and ethical principles and their place in the teaching profession, are controversial. **Sunday Dada and**

Fadokun James Banji's contribution addresses the challenges and constraints in the implementation of training and development programmes with regard to professional ethics in teaching in large education systems. The scope of the training and development challenge is revealed by posing a series of questions. Some of these questions go to the heart of the professional learning discourse. They advise that professionalism should be organised in such a way that the members have a sense of belonging because the services of teachers are indispensable to any nation.

Emmanuel Kofi Gyimah and Irene Vanderpuye examine the philosophy of inclusive education in the school system. They emphasise that there are changes that need to be made to effectively translate theory into practice to celebrate the outcomes of inclusivity. Borrowing cues from the United Kingdom's Special Education Needs Code of Practice and Toolkit (2001), they suggest the importance of every child, working with parents and planning to make provision for special educational needs as some levers that have to be critically considered to make inclusive education a reality.

Eunice Ivala investigates the inadequacy of many African universities to lead the process of integrating information and communication technologies (ICTs) into education. She emphasises that, for universities to lead in integrating ICTs in education, there is a need for total commitment to the initiative from management, a conducive environment, and technology support for faculty staff, among others.

In his contribution, **Jan Nieuwenhuis** argues that moral reasoning should be seen to be that which an individual regards as being morally right, based on a personal set of values. Teachers are also human, and this means they have the capacity to make choices and to act in accordance with the choices made. In this initial study, he explores students' thinking and argumentation regarding moral dilemmas with a view to understanding how students, who are all practising teachers, take moral decisions. Through a theoretical framework developed from the analysis of the findings, he stresses the importance of communalism in African culture as a possible lens through which the moral dilemma could be analysed.

In his contribution, **Anselm Chidi Njoku** argues that management challenges are drawbacks that have impacted greatly on the optimal development of the teacher. Some of these relate to the inconsistencies with regard to admission requirements for teachers' training, discrepancies in their recruitment and deployment, irregular career progression, inadequate provision of teaching and learning material, the non-inclusive nature of curriculum review, the reluctance of government to address teachers' genuine grievances, inadequate teacher incentives and others. The teacher should be equipped to cope with the modern practices that are required of the "new" teacher.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

In March 2009, DETA sent out a call for papers for the conference to be held in Ghana in August 2009. Approximately 36 paper proposals were received. They were subjected to peer review before nine papers were finally selected.

Persons who read papers were invited to submit drafts for publication in the conference proceedings. Editorial guidelines were provided to the conference speakers and 35 of them submitted drafts for consideration. The drafts were submitted to a double blind review and eventually nine of the original 35 drafts were selected for inclusion in this proceedings document.

Academic robustness was the primary criterion used in selecting contributions, but DETA also proudly espouses a developmental dimension in the African research and publication context. We are confident that the proceedings will comply with the standards of academically acceptable conference proceedings worldwide.

The editorial team wishes to thank the following peer reviewers for reviewing the drafts and providing the authors with valuable comments:

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AN IMPACT EVALUATION OF STUDENT TEACHER TRAINING IN HIV/AIDS EDUCATION:
THE CASE OF THE CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, GHANA

[1]Mrs Clara Akuamoah-Boateng, Mrs Josephine Sam-Tagoe and Eddiebright Joseph Buadu

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to evaluate changes in student teacher trainees at the Centre for Continuing Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana, after completing a course on the Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS). It particularly evaluated changes in relation to improving their level of knowledge on the transmission, stigmatisation, symptoms, prevention and control of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS. The study also considered stigmatisation, the attitudes of students towards people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and their sensitivity to impart knowledge on the pandemic.

A descriptive research design was used. The target population comprised all student teachers who had participated in the programme on reducing HIV/AIDS and stigmatisation through education. A sample size of 600 respondents randomly selected from 10 study centres throughout the country responded to a 32-item questionnaire. Section A of the questionnaire collected data on participants' age, sex, study centre and level or year group. Section B focused on five research questions. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the data.

Findings from the study revealed that there was an increase in the knowledge of student trainee teachers on STIs, HIV/AIDS and stigma prevention, and their ability to discuss reproductive health and sexual issues. However, as student teachers were exposed to other HIV/AIDS materials and activities outside their written modules for the programme, it appears that not all of the changes were due to the programme.

Keywords: teacher training, HIV/AIDS education

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ACRONYMS

AESOP	-	Annual Education Sector Operational Plans
AIDS	-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBE	-	community-based organisation
CCE	-	Centre for Continuing Education
CSW	-	commercial sex workers
DBE	-	Diploma in Basic Education
ESP	-	Education Sector Plan
FBO	-	faith-based organisation
GAC	-	Ghana AIDS Commission
GES	-	Ghana Education Service
GDHS	-	Ghana Demographic and Health Survey
GNAT	-	Ghana National Association of Teachers
HIV	-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MOESS	-	Ministry of Education Science and Sports
MOH	-	Ministry of Health
NACP	-	National AIDS Control Programme
NGO	-	non-governmental organisation
PLWHA	-	people living with HIV and AIDS
STD	-	sexually transmitted disease
STI	-	sexually transmitted infection
TAD	-	teachers as agents of dissemination and change
TEWU	-	Teachers and Education Workers Union
UCC	-	University of Cape Coast
UNAIDS	-	United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS
VCT	-	voluntary counselling and testing

INTRODUCTION

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) pandemic continues to be a major challenge to global health and the socioeconomic development of many countries both developed and developing. The pandemic is one of the world's most widespread infectious diseases. The extent of its devastation has raised global concern. The estimated number of persons living with HIV and AIDS worldwide in 2007 was 33.2 million (UNAIDS, 2007). Currently, around 40 million people worldwide are living with HIV and AIDS (Bakilana et al., 2005). Sub-Saharan Africa bears the greatest burden with more than two-thirds (68%) of all persons infected with HIV, although disparities exist in its distribution. An estimated 1.7 million adults and children became infected with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa and 1.6 million died of AIDS in 2007 (UNAIDS, 2007). Annually, an average of three million people dies of HIV-related illnesses, with about 80% of these deaths occurring in Sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, almost 72% of all new infections take place in Africa. There are currently an estimated 12 million AIDS orphans on the continent.

Although the highest rates of HIV infection occur in countries in eastern and southern Africa, the threat of the disease is not confined to these subregions. More than half of the countries in Sub-Saharan African countries are experiencing a generalised epidemic, with the adult HIV infection rate exceeding 5% at the end of 1999 (Kelly, 2001). The countries experiencing a generalised epidemic include those with large populations such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kelly, 2001).

The countries of West Africa are not among the worst hit, but the prevalence rate of the epidemic in these countries is nonetheless alarming. The general fragility of the economic, political and social systems of African nations has deprived the continent of any meaningful socioeconomic safety nets that could serve as a reliable bulwark against the ever-increasing menace of HIV and AIDS.

The first case of AIDS in Ghana was diagnosed in 1986. By 1990, the number was around 1 130. The figure rose steadily to 5 500 in 1994, 22 500 in 2000 and 36 000 in 2004 (National HIV/AIDS/STI Control Programme, 2004). Ghana had a median prevalence rate of 3.6% in 2003. This translates into 392 000 HIV/AIDS-infected persons as at the end of 2003. The 2007 national estimates and projections put the HIV and AIDS population at 249 145, which comprised 231 840 adults and 17 305 children, with a cumulative death rate of 2 027 (HIV Sentinel Survey, 2008).

HIV/AIDS prevalence rates are most pronounced among groups at high risk of infection. Among patients infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), the prevalence rate is estimated to be 76% and 82% among commercial sex workers (CSWs) in Accra and Kumasi respectively (Ghana AIDS Commission, 2001). Disaggregation of data by age, gender and region in both rural and urban surveillance sites reveals a high prevalence among the youth (15–30 years). However, the peak age of HIV/AIDS infection is 25–29 years for females and 30–34 years for males. Higher numbers of AIDS cases are reported in the urban centres than in the rural ones (National AIDS Control Programme [NACP], Ministry of Health, 2001).

The scale of the epidemic will result in considerable human suffering for infected and affected people at all levels of life, from the individual to the macroeconomy, especially the education sector, which has a workforce of over 240 000 in Ghana. Thus, the education sector is a major and critical area in which the HIV/AIDS menace can do most harm. If teachers, who have taken many years to train and on whom governments spend a rather large amount of scarce resources, should die prematurely in high numbers, the education of children and the youth would be greatly jeopardised.

Generally, HIV/AIDS impacts on the education sector in various ways, including the following:

- As more and more educators and other education workers become infected, more money will be spent on servicing medical bills and little or no money will be left for expansion and the training of the workforce.
- As administrators and managers fall sick, supervision and accountability will become difficult.
- More budgetary allocation to the health sector will be required at the expense of the education sector in order to cope with the high demand for health care from people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Decreased donor support to the education sector will occur in favour of the health sector.

As more and more families and pupils become infected with HIV/AIDS, the education system itself risks a reduced demand. This implies that there will be fewer children to be educated and fewer children who are able to afford education. The education system in general will be compelled to limit the supply of education because of teacher shortages and financial constraints. Furthermore, high absentee rates of infected and affected teachers will reduce the interaction between the student and the teacher, leading to a reduction in the quality of education provided. Eventually, the ability of the education sector to fulfil its function will be severely affected.

Ghana has made considerable strides in its response to the epidemic. Since 2001, the country has adopted a multisectoral response to HIV and AIDS. As part of this initiative, the Ministry of Education has developed and implemented a strategic sectoral plan for HIV and AIDS, focusing on the prevention of new infections, care, support and advocacy. This is reflected in the Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2003–2015 and the Annual Education Sector Operational Plans (AESOP).

Ghana's response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic was initially characterised by a medical approach, in which the disease was managed as a health rather than as a developmental issue and consequently directed by the Ministry of Health (MOH). The overall coordination of HIV/AIDS was not strong at all levels because of the lack of an institutional framework to mobilise support from various stakeholders (Ghana AIDS Commission, 2004).

The alarming spread of the pandemic at the time led to a realisation for the need for a strong political will and commitment, openness and a multisectoral and multipronged approach to control and manage HIV/AIDS in the country. As a result, a wide range of stakeholders, from governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs) to community-based organisations (CBOs), was targeted to launch preventive care and support measures that are expected to successfully raise awareness and promote behaviour change among the populace.

Against this backdrop, the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Cape Coast, the University of Education in Winneba and the University of Ghana in Legon, Ghana, collaborated with the Simon Frazier University in Vancouver, Canada, to launch a programme to reduce HIV/AIDS and stigmatisation through education in 2005. The main objective of the programme was to equip adult trainee teachers in distance education programmes with knowledge and skills that would enable them to take good care of themselves and to serve as agents of dissemination of knowledge and change in their schools and school communities.

Since its inception, the programme has trained three cohorts of student teachers, numbering about 6 000. This paper specifically evaluates the level of knowledge of

student teacher trainees at the Centre for Continuing Education on the transmission, symptoms, prevention and control of STIs and HIV/AIDS.

METHODOLOGY

The research was a descriptive survey and covered a total of 600 Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) student teachers at the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE). The students were conveniently sampled from 10 out of 22 study centres, covering five regional capitals and five district capitals. The 600 students represent about 10% of a total of 6 574 DBE student teachers who have completed the course on reducing HIV stigmatisation through education since its inception in 2006.

The instrument used for data collection was a 32-item questionnaire. Section A collected data on participants' age, sex, study centre and level or year group. Section B contained five research questions. The respondents were asked to tick their preferred option or fill in their responses in the spaces provided. The instrument was administered by CCE staff during one of their usual weekend face-to-face interactions with the student teachers. Any ten readily available student teachers of each year group (from the first to the third year) were provided with questionnaires and asked to complete and return them before the close of lectures. The return rate of the questionnaires was 96%. Data collected was compiled and analysed, using the simple percentage comparison method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Background information

Table 1: Sex distribution of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	316	54.67
Female	262	45.33
Total	**578**	**100.00**

Table 1 shows that more males (316) responded to the instrument than females (262). The method used to select the respondents was completely random. In addition, available statistics from the CCE students' database indicate that more males (3 408) have pursued the DBE programme than females (2 966) since its inception in 2006. These two factors may have accounted for the observed difference.

Table 2: Age distribution of respondents

Age range	Frequency	Percentage
Below 25 years	80	13.84
26–35	378	65.40
36–45	84	14.53
Above 45	63	6.23
Total	**578**	**100.00**

The age distribution of students, as shown in Table 2, indicates that the majority of the CCE student teachers are between 26 and 35 years. A total of 378 students, representing 65.4% of the respondents, belong to this age category. Conversely, those aged 45 and above form only 6.23% of the respondents. Students within the 26–35 age bracket form part of the reproductive age group that is often considered to be between the ages of 19 and 49.

In Ghana, most people start working before the age of 26. In order to protect their jobs, they enrol in distance education programmes. This may account for the large number of students between the ages of 26 and 35.

The 26–35 age group is the most vulnerable and forms the major workforce of the country, particularly in the education sector. Any negative effect of HIV/AIDS on this group will have dire consequences for the country. A study indicated that the education sector had an HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of 9.2%, which was higher than the national prevalence rate of 3% (Tumokong, 2004). The conclusion to be drawn is that the programme is directed at an appropriate category of students.

What is the level of knowledge of student teachers at the Centre for Continuing Education on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS?

A number of questions were posed to the students in order to evaluate their level of knowledge on issues of HIV and AIDS. Table 3 provides details of the responses given by the students.

Table 3: Level of knowledge of student teachers

Item	Positive response		Negative response	
	Fre-quency	%	Fre-quency	%
No difference between HIV and AIDS	16	2.77	562	97.23
Herbalists have a cure for HIV/AIDS transmission	36	6.23	542	93.77
Female genital mutilation can transmit HIV/AIDS	556	96.19	22	3.81
AIDS can be transmitted without sexual contact	544	94.12	34	5.88
Discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS	24	4.15	554	95.85
Stakeholder collaboration relevant to control	566	97.92	12	2.08

Generally, the students exhibited a great understanding of all the issues raised. As shown in Table 3, as many as 562 students (97.23%) out of a total of 578 knew that there is a difference between HIV and AIDS. On whether herbalists have a cure for AIDS, 542 students (93.77%) gave a negative response. Again, while as many as 544 respondents (94.12%) knew that AIDS can be transmitted even without sexual contact, 5.88% thought that sexual intercourse was the only channel through which the disease could be transmitted. The trend was the same for other related questions on HIV and AIDS.

When asked to comment on why, in spite of the many interventions, HIV and AIDS control has not been completely successful, students mentioned poverty, stigmatisation and ignorance as some of the factors militating against the struggle. Other factors identified were a high illiteracy rate, doubts about the existence of the disease, attribution of the disease to evil spirits and the difficulty that people have in changing their behaviour.

On what could be done to reverse the trend, the following suggestions were provided by the student teachers:

- Regulation of youth entertainment
- Use of information vans to show films on real-life situations
- Active involvement of religious bodies in the campaign
- Elimination of stigmatisation
- Intensification of television and radio programmes on HIV/AIDS
- Establishment of more guidance and counselling centres to provide HIV/AIDS education
- More education on HIV/AIDS to be provided in local dialects
- More recreational centres to be established in the communities
- Education on HIV/AIDS to be made examinable

The high understanding of HIV and AIDS issues demonstrated by student teachers is consistent with the findings of the Ghana Statistical Service and Macro International (published in the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework II, 2006–2010), which states that there is near-universal awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This finding is an indication that the programme is making a positive impact on the trainee teachers. The broad knowledge base of the students on HIV and AIDS may also be attributed to other intervention activities by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS) and the Ghana Education Service (GES), such as the Teachers as Agents of Dissemination and Change (TAD) Programme, the HIV and AIDS alert model and HIV and AIDS manuals for basic and senior high schools.

Did the education on HIV/AIDS and stigmatisation course result in a change in the attitude of CCE trainee teachers towards the disease?

The following attitudes of student teachers were evident before taking the course on HIV/AIDS:

- They were afraid of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and hence avoided and discriminated against them.
- They saw PLWHA as immoral people receiving punishment from God.
- They did not respect PLWHA.
- They were pleasant towards PLWHA, but refused to interact with them.
- They were unfriendly or hostile towards PLWHA.

Table 4: Attitude of student teachers after the course on HIV and AIDS

Attitude	Positive response		Negative response	
	Fre-quency	%	Fre-quency	%
Talking to people suffering from HIV/AIDS	550	95.16	28	4.84
Shaking hands with PLWHA	518	89.62	60	10.38
Living in the same house as PLWHA	546	94.46	32	5.54

Attitude	Positive response		Negative response	
	Fre-quency	%	Fre-quency	%
Eating from the same bowl as PLWHA	484	83.74	114	16.26
Washing the bedding of PLWHA	468	80.97	110	19.03
Sharing an office with PLWHA	552	95.50	26	4.50
Walking with PLWHA	564	97.58	14	2.42
Respecting and loving PLWHA	544	94.12	34	5.88

A baseline survey conducted on the student teacher trainees prior to the course on HIV and AIDS indicated that they did not respect PLWHA because they saw them as immoral people receiving punishment from God. Students therefore discriminated against PLWHA and avoided them. It could, however, be seen from Table 4 that there has been a reversal of the trend since the CCE HIV/AIDS programme was introduced. The study, however, shows that students still shun activities that bring them into direct contact with PLWHA. Table 4 shows comparatively lower numbers of responses for shaking hands with PLWHA, eating from the same bowl as them and washing their bedding in comparison to the responses for activities that keep people at reasonable distances from PLWHA. Some students probably feel that having direct contact with PLWHA could be risky, as it may result in the transmission of the AIDS virus or other opportunistic diseases if one is not careful.

To what extent are student teacher trainees at the CCE involved in the dissemination of information on HIV/AIDS?

Table 5: Students' involvement in public education on HIV/AIDS

Item	Positive response		Negative response	
	Fre-quency	%	Fre-quency	%
Taking part in radio/FM discussions on HIV and AIDS	56	9.69	522	90.31
Organising workshops, seminars, etc.	260	44.98	318	55.02
Sharing knowledge on HIV/AIDS with people I come across	576	99.65	2	0.35

Positive results to national issues are achieved when the populace is adequately informed. On the dissemination of information on HIV and AIDS by student teacher trainees, Table 5 shows that out of the 578 respondents used for the study, 56 (9.69%) were involved in radio/FM discussions on HIV and AIDS, even though it may be unfair to expect such activity from all students. The remaining 522 (90.31%) were not involved in any radio/FM programmes on HIV and AIDS. Regarding workshops, seminars and conferences, as well as being used as resources, 260 respondents (44.98%) said they had been involved in such programmes, while the remaining 318 (55.02%) replied in the negative. On sharing knowledge on HIV and AIDS with people, 99.65% of trainee teachers said they shared their knowledge with people they came across, while 0.35% said they did not. This may have contributed to the current high awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the country.

A question asked on HIV and AIDS lessons taught in class revealed that 96.54% of trainee teachers teach such lessons very often or sometimes (Table 6). The remaining 3.46% indicated that they had never taught HIV/AIDS lessons in class. From the data analysed so far, it can be concluded that, to a very appreciable extent, student trainee teachers are involved in the dissemination of information on HIV and AIDS. When people are well informed, it is easy to share information.

Table 6: Rate at which HIV/AIDS lessons are taught

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	164	28.37
Sometimes	394	68.17
Not at all	20	3.46
Total	**578**	**100.00**

How do student teachers in the Centre for Continuing Education distance programme protect themselves from contracting HIV/AIDS?

This research question sought to find out how student teachers protect themselves from contracting HIV and AIDS.

Table 7: Student teachers who have gone through voluntary counselling and testing

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	188	32.53
No	390	67.47
Total	578	100.00

As can be seen from Table 7, 32.53% of a total of 578 student teachers who responded to the instrument have gone through voluntary counseling and testing (VCT), while the remaining 67.47% have not. It is obvious from the results that people are not translating their broad knowledge on HIV/AIDS to the importance of VCT. This may partly be attributable to the fear of discrimination and the stigma society attached to HIV. This finding is consistent with the survey report of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and Teachers and Education Workers Union (TEWU) in 2008, which indicated that many people in Ghana still hold the view that when it comes to HIV, ignorance is bliss. The low rate of VCT among respondents could also be due to the lack of VCT centres in a number of communities.

In Ghana, informal conversations reveal that most people are afraid to go for voluntary testing. They think that the psychological trauma they might suffer if they are declared positive will speed up their death even faster than the disease itself.

Knowing your HIV status serves as a control measure. It enables those who are negative to protect themselves from infection and provides the infected ones the opportunity to take good care of themselves with respect to medication and nutrition. There is therefore a need to intensify education on VCT.

Other responses obtained in reaction to this research question include abstinence and condom use during sexual intercourse, not sharing sharp or piercing objects, and refusing blood transfusion. This finding is similar to the results of the Ghana Demographic and Health Surveys (GDHS) of 1998 and 2003, which showed that 88% of men and 81% of women knew that condoms could be used to avoid HIV/AIDS infection (Ghana Statistical Service and Macro International, 2004). Other measures identified by the students included using gloves to handle accident victims, avoiding deep kissing and blood covenants, not engaging in prostitution, as well as being faithful to one's partner. The conclusion is that student teachers protect themselves through a number of means.

If people know how to protect themselves against the disease, their chances of being infected will be reduced in the sense that they may make a conscious effort to refrain from certain negative behavioural tendencies. Ignorance about the disease can lead multitudes to their early graves.

What practical measures should be adopted to improve the HIV/AIDS course?

This research question sought to unravel some of the practical measures that could be adopted to improve the HIV/AIDS course offered by the Centre for Continuing Education. The majority of the respondents (95%) mentioned showing videos on HIV and AIDS as one of the strategies. Videos will reveal some of the symptoms, as well as the state of the individual at certain stages of the disease. This will make students aware of how devastating the disease can be and they could hence avoid being infected. Student teacher trainees also think that the course should be run for longer than a semester. This will enable students to get involved in various field trips that will enhance their perception of the disease and also help them to have first-hand information about the disease. Other respondents said that another practical measure that could be adopted would be to include more pictures and diagrams in the course module to make the study real, for "seeing is believing". Measures, such as using people suffering from HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) as resources, reducing the content of the module to ensure better understanding and organising in-service training programmes for course tutors, were also mentioned by students. In addition to the above, students recommended the use of condoms, piercing instruments (needles, knives, blades, etc.), gloves and artificial penises and vaginas for teaching. To them, this will enable teachers to demonstrate the correct way of using these items and lead to an overall control of HIV and AIDS.

CONCLUSION

This study was principally undertaken to evaluate the impact of HIV/AIDS education on student trainee teachers pursuing the DBE programme at the Centre for Continuing Education. Specifically, it considered transmission, symptoms, the prevention and control of STIs and HIV/AIDS. The study also looked at stigmatisation, the attitudes of students towards people living with HIV/AIDS and their readiness to impart knowledge on the pandemic. The results revealed a high level of understanding of CCE student teachers on issues of HIV/AIDS. Questions bordering on the relationship between HIV and AIDS, cure, transmission and control were correctly answered by over 90% of the sample population. It was discovered from the findings that students' relationships with PLWHA have been improving since the introduction of the HIV and AIDS education course. Some

students, however, still refuse to have direct contact with HIV/AIDS victims. More education is required to reverse this attitude.

The number of student teachers involved in the dissemination of information on HIV/AIDS depended on the medium used. It was found that numbers were comparatively high for those media that related directly to their profession, but were low for other media, such as engaging in radio discussions. Student teachers were found to adopt various measures to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS. Among those mentioned were abstinence, condom usage and refusal of blood transfusion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study have implications for the HIV and AIDS programme at the Centre for Continuing Education and other similar programmes being implemented in the education sector.

The following recommendations were made:

- The programme should focus attention and resources on the promotion and use of VCT services.
- The CCE should open VCT centres at least in the regional study centres as a means of encouraging student teachers to access this service.
- Face-to-face interaction attendance should be made compulsory for student teachers at least during HIV/AIDS lessons.
- Student teachers who wish to undertake specific programmes on HIV/AIDS should be given the needed support and motivation.
- The content of the HIV/AIDS Education and Stigmatisation course module should be made more interactive and updated to include current issues on the pandemic.
- More pictures and diagrams should be included in the course module to make meanings clearer.
- The module and other education material used by facilitators should be reviewed to address the lack of female empowerment in making decisions and negotiating for safer sex.

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MENTORING STRATEGY IN THE SUPERVISION OF SECONDARY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS IN THE POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION OF THE ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the effectiveness of the mentoring strategy in the supervision of secondary teacher education students in the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) programme. The study was qualitative in nature using a case study approach. Mentoring was the phenomenon studied in depth. A convenience sample of three students and their three mentors was used for the study. This sample was done from a total population of eight student teachers and their eight mentors in the Masvingo region of Zimbabwe. Data was collected through observation of lessons taught by each of the three students. Students and their mentors then produced autobiographical accounts of their experiences with the mentoring process. Data was also collected through document analysis of the students' teaching practice files, which contained their schemes of work, detailed lesson plans, pupil records and mentors' supervision reports.

The study found that all six participants had a clear understanding of what mentoring entailed. The students and their mentors had collegial relationships that facilitated the guidance the students needed. The mentors used different strategies to guide the students, such as joint planning of lessons, conducting demonstration lessons in areas of student difficulty and observing students' teaching in order to facilitate the students' acquisition of skills and knowledge in lesson delivery and interactive classroom management. Students indicated that, through being mentored, they had developed positively in teaching skills, reflective teaching and classroom management.

Keywords: mentoring strategy, supervision, teacher education, improved teaching skills

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INTRODUCTION

Distance education has played a significant role in education and has been viewed internationally as a viable option for improving access to and the equity and quality of basic education in various settings (McQuaide, 2009). It is a way to educate people who would not otherwise have access to education and is a tool to support and supplement conventional educational programmes (Perraton, 2000). One of the key characteristics of distance education according to Keegan (1996) is the physical and temporal distance between the learner and the tutor. Consequently, there are no lectures or classrooms and learners study at their own pace (Holmberg, 1995). Distance education institutions have to devise strategies to bridge the distance and offer tuition to learners. Instruction is offered by various means, such as print, audio, video, television and the internet.

In Zimbabwe, the higher education landscape was transformed with the establishment of the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) in 1993 – initially as the Centre for Distance Education of the University of Zimbabwe and, in 1999, as a fully fledged university with its own charter. The ZOU uses a combination of media to offer instruction to its students, such as print, face-to-face communication and the internet. It offers varied programmes in four faculties: Arts and Education, Commerce and Law, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences. One of the programmes offered in the Department of Education is the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), which is a teacher education programme. A component of this programme is supervised teaching practice.

The supervision of teacher education students engaged in teaching practice through distance education has provided logistical problems to many institutions. Ntuli (2008) states that one of the attractions of distance education is that students learn from their jobs and homes, but these attractions are often eroded by problems associated with classroom teaching, especially in situations where students are in schools located long distances from each other and from the distance education institution. Simpson (2008) argues that field experience is considered important as it "provides the testing and proving context for the theoretical and curriculum courses in the programme". Such exposure could be provided through block releases, microteaching and observations. Simpson (2008) goes on to argue that field experience should provide opportunities for students to learn to enquire and reflect on their teaching, as well as on the power and influence of relationships that operate in schools.

One challenge faced in organising meaningful school experience arises from the need to find suitably qualified teachers to work with students and for lecturers from the distance education institution to visit the schools to give the necessary support to the teacher education students. The distances between the institution and the schools where the students are working make it financially and logistically difficult to visit students regularly enough to ensure that students are developing professionally, as is expected by the institution (Simpson, 2008).

In view of the challenges of supervising teacher education students, the ZOU adopted mentoring as a strategy for supervising student teachers in its teacher education programmes. Mentoring was seen as a viable means of ensuring that student teachers could practise the theory they learnt in their courses in the schools in which they were already teaching. The ZOU intended to empower mentors in those schools for their roles through training.

Mentoring was first practised in business where it was used to induct new employees, and for career development and management training (Alleman, 1986, Daloz, 1983, Hawkey, 1998). Mentoring has since been adapted to teacher education programmes, where it is utilised mostly when student teachers are in schools to gain field experience. In distance education, this is the part of the programme where university lecturers deliberately visit the schools to support mentors and to assess student teacher performance. In many universities, such as Sussex University (Dart & Drake, 1993), teacher education is mostly school based, as it has been found that teachers learn more from the real school environment rather than in the higher education institutional environment where there are no classrooms or pupils. In Zimbabwe, teacher education institutions combine stints in the institutions with periods at schools where students put the theory learnt in the institutions into practice (Chakanyuka, 2002).

In teacher education, mentoring can be viewed as a process through which a newer person in an organisation is helped into the system by a more experienced person. Anderson and Shannon (1995) view it as a process "involving an ongoing, caring relationship". The American Heritage Dictionary (2006) defines a mentor as a wise and trusted counsellor or teacher. As a formal relationship, mentoring is assigned, deliberate and directed at employee development. As such, it has goals, schedules, the training of mentors and student teachers, and evaluation (Hawkey, 1998). Makoni (2006) views the process as facilitating the professional development of a student teacher in whom the mentor leaves footprints or a

legacy. Through mentoring, student teachers have the opportunity to link theory learnt in teacher education institutions with practice in real classrooms with real pupils. Pollick (2007) defines mentoring as a process in which the mentor guides a student teacher and offers spiritual, financial and emotional support. This ability to marry theory with practice is the reason why mentoring has become popular in school-based teacher training programmes.

The ZOU introduced the PGDE, a school-based teacher education programme, in 1999. The programme afforded students the chance to study for a professional qualification from the schools where they were teaching as untrained university graduates. As Simpson noted above, this was an advantage for them in that they did not have to find additional accommodation, meals, classrooms, scholarships or transport to a full-time conventional college (ZOU minutes, 17 June 1997). All they had to do was to attend two-week tutorials during school holidays and do assignments during term time. The programme was initially offered over four semesters until the period was reduced to three semesters in 2004. While students were teaching as they studied, they were monitored in teaching practice over two semesters, during which period they were assigned to a mentor, who was another teacher at the school. The mentor would regularly meet with the students, observe some lessons taught and give the student teacher a chance to observe the mentor teaching. The ZOU trained the mentors on how to carry out their mentoring responsibilities and, once in a while, visited the schools to supervise the students, offer support to the mentors and also to assess the students' performance.

In Masvingo, the mentor was selected by the school principal on the basis of his or her being a fully qualified teacher teaching the relevant subject to the student and having a minimum of five years' teaching experience (interview with ZOU lecturer in charge). The ZOU normally accepted the school's choices, but carried out initial training to orientate all the mentors to the ZOU's requirements and impart knowledge and skills in mentoring. The lecturer in charge of the programme organised the one-day training at the regional office. Through this training, all the mentors for the programme got acquainted with one another and shared their experiences. They would then go back to their schools and mentor students in those schools. This mode of training was considered to be more cost-effective than asking trainers to travel around the region to train mentors in their schools (interview with ZOU lecturer in charge).

In this case, the lecturer in charge was female and had been working with the ZOU for three years prior to the study. Before that, she had also worked as a lecturer in a teacher training college. This paper investigates the effectiveness of the mentoring strategy in the supervision of teacher education student teachers in open and distance learning.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The ZOU adopted the mentoring strategy for the supervision of PGDE students. From 1999 when the programme was launched, no research was carried out to find out how effective the strategy was in developing students' knowledge and skills. This study sought to investigate the extent to which the mentoring strategy contributed to the professional development of student teachers in the PGDE programme.

RESEARCH QUESTION

To what extent does the mentoring strategy of PGDE student teacher supervision contribute to students' professional development in open and distance learning?

SUBQUESTIONS

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

- What perceptions do mentors and student teachers hold of mentoring?
- What mentoring strategies do mentors use in supervising PGDE student teachers?
- What challenges does the ZOU meet in the supervision of student teachers?
- What benefits do mentors and student teachers derive from being involved in the mentoring process?

METHODOLOGY

For this study, qualitative research was used, which, according to Guba and Lincoln (1994), is "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world." The researcher investigates things in their natural environments. In addition, the researcher's aim is to try and make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people give to the phenomena under study. The mentoring of PGDE students in Masvingo

was studied from the point of view of the students and mentors who were involved on a daily basis (Yin, 1984, Kaplan & Duchon, 1988, Key, 1995). Qualitative research enabled me to obtain in-depth data from participants about their experiences and perceptions of mentoring and being mentored. Through qualitative research, I adopted an interpretive perspective that enabled me to understand the reality of mentoring from the perceptions of the mentors and student teachers who were involved in it on a daily basis (Kaplan & Duchon, 1988). I aimed to gain a deep understanding of mentoring as it was practised in the schools in Masvingo (Darke et al., 1998).

In line with qualitative research, I used a case study design, which, according to Yin (2003), is "an empirical inquiry which investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context". Kaplan (1985) defines case study research as research that studies a phenomenon in its natural setting, employing different methods of data collection. From these two definitions, we note that case study research focuses on one phenomenon in the setting in which it normally occurs. The case study was appropriate for this study because I was studying a contemporary phenomenon – mentoring – in its natural setting (Darke et al., 1998). Mentoring was a specific strategy deliberately selected for the supervision of student teachers. One advantage of the case study was that it enabled me to use different data collection methods (Kaplan, 1995, Tellis, 1997, Yin, 2003) so that I could establish how mentoring was used as a strategy of supervising secondary school teacher education students in an open and distance learning institution. Some of the data collection strategies used in case study research are direct observation, interviews and document analysis (Tellis, 1997, Yin, 2003). At the time of the study, I was working as a lecturer in the Department of Educational Management in Masvingo.

I used convenience sampling to select mentors and student teachers to participate in the study. Convenience sampling was suitable for this study because the students selected attended the supervision sessions that had been organised by the lecturer in charge of teacher education in Masvingo and were both accessible to me and were presumed to have adequate knowledge and experience of being mentored (Russell & Gregory, 2003, Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The students were also from three different districts of Masvingo (Chiredzi, Mwenezi and Bikita) and were willing to participate in the study. Their mentors automatically became participants.

DATA COLLECTION

There was a total of eight PGDE students in one intake in Masvingo. These students taught in different schools at least 100 km away from Masvingo in four different directions: Chiredzi to the southeast, Bikita to the east, Chivi to the southwest, and Zaka and Mwenezi to the south. With the limited financial resources available to the region at the time, it was impossible for ZOU lecturers to supervise the eight student teachers in the schools in which they were teaching. Students were invited to one central school in a district, where they taught pupils in that school in forms similar to those they regularly taught. ZOU lecturers supervised them in these schools. The student teachers had to bring to the venue the textbooks they needed for the lessons they had planned, as well as their teaching practice files, to ensure that they had adequate teaching and learning material for the arranged sessions. I took advantage of these arranged supervision sessions to collect data from the student teachers in my study. Consequently, I did not have the opportunity to visit student teachers in their normal classrooms, where they had established a rapport with pupils and were familiar with the school routines.

One of the data collection methods for case study research is observation (Yin, 2003). I used observation to obtain first-hand data on how the student teachers were operating in their classrooms. As a non-participant, I observed each of the three student teachers teaching a "new" class in a "new" environment to find out how they managed the lesson, the pupils and the subject content being taught. This strategy enabled me to observe the student teachers (Marshall, 1998) on three different days when the arranged supervision took place. It is possible that the results of my observation may not have been a true reflection of the teachers' performance, but it provided me with first-hand data, which demonstrated the skills and knowledge that the student teachers had mastered up to that point in their teaching practice. None of the other data collection strategies could provide this data.

I also collected data through autobiographical accounts written by both mentors and students (Thorne, 2000). Armstrong (1987) argues that autobiographical accounts are useful instruments for collecting data because they assign significance and value to a person's own story and the interpretations he or she places on his or her experiences. In addition, the accounts document the inner, subjective

reality as constructed by the individuals. The accounts in this study placed value on the students' and mentors' own perceptions of the process of mentoring and being mentored. I used this data collection method to minimise misconceptions that might arise from the fact that I could not observe students teaching in the schools in which they normally operated. I hoped that this method would generate data that gave a realistic representation of their experiences in schools.

Through personal accounts, the participants had the opportunity to express their views and perceptions of the mentoring process in their own language and expression. The responses received varied in length from one to three pages. Even though I had given the mentors and students the option of using phrases, they all chose to use full sentences. This was useful because it was easier to understand what they had written.

The participants were informed that their accounts could address any or all of the following mentoring issues:

- Understanding of the concept of mentoring
- Mentor-student relationships
- Mentor strategies
- Skills and knowledge that mentors focused on
- The benefits of mentoring
- Students' progress during the mentoring period

Ideally, the students and mentors should have been interviewed as well. However, this was not possible due to the long distances that the student teachers travelled and the very busy timetables they had to follow on these days. The detailed information in the autobiographical accounts and document analysis, taken together with observation data, helped to give as realistic a picture as possible of how mentoring could be used as a strategy to supervise teacher education students in open and distance learning institutions.

Finally, the lecturer in charge of the programme in Masvingo was interviewed to get the institution's perspective on the mentoring strategy.

ETHICAL ISSUES

The case study involves obtaining a great deal of personal and subjective data from participants. Scott (1996) recommends that participants must be consulted and must give their consent before taking part in the research. Simons (1984) identifies the rights of the research subjects as impartiality from the researcher, which enables representation of all viewpoints, and willing participation. The researcher also has to maintain the privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. In this study, I explained to the participants what my research entailed before observing them and asking them to write their accounts of the process of mentoring or being mentored. I explained that the data I was collecting was for the purposes of this study and would not be used officially by the ZOU. In addition, I did not use the names of my subjects or any information that might reveal the identity of the participants.

Each participant wrote his or her personal account privately and did not share it with either the mentor or fellow students. The participants were asked to keep their accounts anonymous. Because of this, I am confident that the perceptions I received on different aspects of the mentoring process were genuine representations of the participants' experiences.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis in qualitative research starts at the beginning of the study. I began to do tentative data analysis as I started to collect data and read about mentoring. From literature on mentoring, certain themes, such as a definition of mentoring, strategies for mentoring and relationships in mentoring, began to emerge and I used these in the guides on personal accounts (Watt, 2007). Genuine data analysis began after I had collected all the data. In analysing the data, I kept checking the accounts, document analysis and observation notes I had made to ensure that no useful information was overlooked. As qualitative data analysis is iterative (Holliday, 2007), I reflected on this data over and over again to ensure as thorough an understanding of the mentoring phenomenon as possible. As I did this, I made notes that I used to identify patterns, recurring themes and the general meanings mentors and students placed on their experience. I checked data from various

sources for convergence of information (Darke et al., 1998). These represented the themes that I then used to present the data.

To ensure that my results were credible, believable and trustworthy, I used data from different sources to capture the essence of mentoring from such different perspectives as documentary data from students' records, mentors' personal accounts, students' personal accounts and the observation notes that I had made. These sources taken together proved useful in generating the understanding of mentoring given below. I took this decision in line with Rossman and Rallis's (1998) assertion on the value of triangulation.

FINDINGS

Student supervision in Masvingo

The lecturers in Masvingo have to supervise widely dispersed teacher education students. Because of logistical and financial problems, ZOU lecturers were unable to supervise the students adequately in the schools in which they were teaching. As a way of dealing with the problem, the lecturer in charge of the PGDE in Masvingo decided to cluster the schools according to districts and their close proximity to each other. Student teachers in one cluster would be asked to report to a school central to the cluster and be supervised by a team of ZOU lecturers. Such visits were not conducted regularly. The clustering of schools for supervision purposes served their purpose during a period of financial hardship for the university.

Background information on participants

All student teachers and mentors were male. This was a reflection of the overall gender profile in this programme, where only two of the eight student teachers in the intake were female. Only one of the three mentors held a university degree or a graduate certificate in education. Two mentors held diplomas in education (secondary). The shortage of certificated graduates in rural secondary schools accounted for this situation. Ideally, a teacher mentoring a student teacher on the PGDE programme should have been a university graduate. Chakanyuka (2002) reports that some students found it difficult to take advice and guidance from someone they considered to be less qualified than they were.

The mentors' teaching experience ranged from eight to 17 years. Their ages were 30, 40 and 44 years. The three students were 30, 34 and 30 years of age. Two mentors were older than the students they were mentoring. From this perspective, the mentors were old enough to be respected by the student teachers they were mentoring. In one study, Chakanyuka (2002) discovered that one mentor had a problem mentoring a student who would not respect her because they were of the same age.

Definition of mentoring

All six participants in the study had a reasonable understanding of the concept of mentoring. The definitions they gave covered key issues of mentoring such as "giving guidance to someone less qualified", "helping teacher training students with techniques that could make them good teachers" and "offering advice by a practitioner who is above you in terms of professional qualification". From these definitions, it is noted that mentors and students identified the key issue of mentoring, namely the pairing of a qualified person with a less qualified one to ensure that the qualified person guides the professional development of the student. In this case, a teacher with higher qualifications and more experience is paired with a student teacher who is undergoing pre-service training. These aspects of mentoring are similar to the definitions given by Maynard and Furlong (1995) and Anderson and Shannon (1995).

Maynard and Furlong (1995) view the role of the mentor as a complex one in which the mentor supports the trainee teacher to acquire concepts, schema and skills about practical teaching and learning in the process of professional development. Tomlinson (1995) refers to mentoring as active assistance given to student teachers who have to acquire the complex skills of teaching and learning, which he identifies as "acquisition of awareness and strategies relevant to teaching", "engagement in teaching activity", "monitoring teaching activities and their effects", "adapting teaching strategy in response to reflection" and "motivate student teachers to harness their personal strengths through relevant interpersonal strategies" (Tomlinson: 1995). In a Welsh programme (Estyn, 2001), mentors provide well-targeted support and guidance to trainee teachers in order to meet their needs and help them to solve the problems they come across in the classroom.

Relationship between the mentor and the student teacher

The three pairs viewed their relationships positively, describing them as "sound, learning from each other", "very good and sound", "good two-way communication",

"favourable – the mentor has a strong desire to assist the student teacher" and "good and working cooperatively".

From the above excerpts from personal accounts, we note that the relationship verged on being open, which allowed communication to flow freely from mentor to student teacher and vice versa. The relationships enabled the mentors to guide the student teachers' professional development. Chakanyuka (2002) found that relationships tended to determine the level of assistance and support mentors gave student teachers. Where relationships were positive, mentors gave maximum support and guidance to student teachers. Both the mentor and student teacher had a responsibility to ensure that the relationships between them enabled mentors to adequately guide the student teacher.

As a result of the positive relationships between the mentors and the students, all pairs indicated that they learned from each other. The discussions were productive. One student wrote that "at the end of lesson observations we all come to an agreement". The mentors are seen as being prepared and ready to assist the students in their professional development. One mentor indicated that he and his student worked cooperatively for the benefit of the student. In such situations, the mentor's guidance was accepted without question by the student teacher. The issue of mentors without university degrees was not raised in this study. Students viewed them as qualified enough to assist them to become qualified and professional teachers.

Mentor strategies

Mentors in the study used a variety of strategies to assist student teacher development. One mentor indicated that he planned lessons with the student teacher and proceeded to observe such lessons. All mentors observed some of the lessons taught by the student teachers and gave feedback in post-lesson discussions. One mentor offered demonstration lessons to guide the student in difficult areas. One student viewed the supervision by his mentor as "supervision and not fault-finding to guide and help me where I went wrong". These activities are similar to mentor activities reported by Kiely and McClelland (undated). In their study, mentors guided, coached, challenged student teachers and offered advice on planning, classroom management and reflection. These strategies are similar to those identified by Tomlinson (1995), the purposes of which were to help students acquire the skills of teaching and learning.

In carrying out these strategies, mentors focused on teaching methods, lesson delivery, interactive classroom management skills and teaching methods. Mentors, therefore, focused on knowledge and teaching skills. Teaching methods focused on the acquisition of knowledge, while lesson delivery and teaching skills focused on the skills necessary for successful and effective teaching, both of which are similar to the knowledge and skills that Tomlinson (1995) suggested trainee teachers should acquire. Some skills cited by both groups were lesson introduction, classroom management, the maintenance of discipline, teacher-pupil interaction, pupil-pupil interaction, marking skills, lesson evaluation and planning skills. In the skills domain, the mentors focused on all aspects of lesson delivery from planning to lesson introduction and lesson evaluation.

A study of the supervision reports the mentors had produced on the students' teaching also confirmed this. In general, the mentors gave constructive comments that helped the students to develop in their teaching practice. From the reports written in the early stages of the teaching practice to the later reports, there was evidence of growth in the student teachers' teaching performance. In the early stages of teaching practice, one mentor wrote: "The student has to plan his lessons more effectively." Another mentor wrote: "The student teacher's lesson evaluation is shallow." In the supervision reports just before the observation lessons, the two mentors wrote: "His lesson plans are now more meaningful for his lessons" and "Lesson evaluation points out genuine areas of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and necessary remediation is being undertaken". These reports point to the fact that mentors had definite areas of professional development on which they focused. In one case, the student teacher was weak in lesson planning and in another the student teacher was weak in lesson evaluation. The two mentors gave advice on these areas and recorded progress on them in the supervision reports. It would appear that student teachers heeded the mentors' advice and feedback to improve their classroom performance.

Student learning

From the nature of the relationships between mentors and student teachers, it was clear that there would be positive learning on the part of the student teachers. The students indicated that they had gained a lot through being mentored, as the following excerpts show: "teaching skills as well as reflective teaching", "the value of the teacher as a facilitator of learning, child-centred learning and reflective teaching", "how to deliver lessons through different methods and different learning aids" and "group dynamics are more effective than lecture method".

The student teachers identified the area of their professional development as teaching skills, reflective teaching, the teacher as a facilitator of learning and the use of group work rather than lecturing. From these gains, we note that the student teachers' gains were on the critical aspects of teaching and learning. As teachers without certificates, these were areas posing problems to them.

The mentors helped the students to critically evaluate their lessons and teaching approaches. This strategy helped the students to develop into reflexive teachers who would experiment with different teaching approaches and not be replicas of their mentors. One weakness of mentoring is that some mentors discourage students from experimenting with new ideas, thereby limiting the professional development of the students. Through being mentored, the student teachers had the opportunity to enquire and reflect on their teaching, as Simpson (2008) argues.

On the other hand, mentors viewed the student teachers' gains in more or less the same fashion, as the following excerpts from the mentors' personal accounts show: "students started to practise strategies suggested by the mentor", "improved remarkably in presentation of lessons – from lesson preparation to lesson evaluation", "improved in the control of classes", "counselling pupils and offering individual help or remedial work", "remarkable progress in teaching, formulating objectives and lesson evaluation" and "student developed from chalk-and-talk and lecturing strategies to pupil-centred strategies".

It can be seen that the gains were genuine, as mentors and students identified similar gains in teaching skills, reflection (from lesson preparation to lesson evaluation) and class control. The student teachers also took the advice of their mentors seriously, which led to the progress they made in their teaching. This development was also evident in the mentors' supervision reports, as indicated above. The mentor helped to instil new ideas and values in the student teachers, such as pupil-centred methodologies and the teacher as a facilitator and not a dispenser of learning. The working relationships between the mentors and the student teachers in this study encouraged enquiry and experimentation, which led to greater development on the part of the student teachers.

While the mentors in this study did not identify the benefits they derived from the mentoring experience, Chakanyuka (2002) and Estyn (2001) point out that mentors have an opportunity to reflect on their own practice and thereby improve their teaching skills. Mentors also improve their management skills. It can be argued that mentors in this study also benefited from the process in similar ways.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study indicate that the participants understood what mentoring was and what it entailed. The definitions they gave and the activities they carried out were clear indications of their understanding.

It would appear that for the PGDE programme in Masvingo, mentoring was an effective strategy for managing the field experience of secondary teacher education students. While ZOU lecturers could not supervise student teachers in their regular schools, the mentors provided the guidance necessary for the student teachers' professional development. A telephone interview with the lecturer in charge of the programme in Masvingo suggested that very little or no training of mentors took place. The mentors relied on their extensive teaching experience to guide the student teachers.

The mentors used a variety of strategies to ensure that the students in their care developed professionally. While they focused mostly on classroom teaching, they also helped the students understand the changing role of the teacher, in terms of which the teacher is not a dispenser of knowledge but a facilitator. Mentors encouraged students to use effective group work, which enabled pupils to learn both from each other and from the teacher.

All the students and mentors confirmed that there were definite gains for the student teachers in the mentoring process. Students were guided meaningfully and acquired the necessary teaching skills, knowledge and aptitudes in classroom teaching and the profession. Students also found the relationships with their mentors to be conducive to their positive professional development. It can be concluded that student teachers were able to practise the theory they learnt from the ZOU under the safe guidance of the mentors.

From the findings above, it can be concluded that mentoring was a strategy that contributed effectively to the professional development of the student teachers in Masvingo. With extensive training, using mentors is a strategy that can be used to manage students' field experience in open and distance teacher education programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While mentoring is an effective strategy for the supervision of student teachers, it needs to be supported by intensive training of the mentors to ensure that they

are imparting the knowledge and skills required by the relevant open and distance learning university. This would ensure that when, because of logistical and financial problems, ZOU lecturers cannot supervise the student teachers adequately, mentors have the necessary skills and knowledge to guide students effectively.

The clustering of schools for supervision purposes may be useful for a while, but a more sustained and effective method of supervising student teachers is required. The best method would be to supervise the student teachers in their regular classrooms where they have established routines with their classes, are familiar with the classes and are taken seriously. Students referred to the inconvenience of carrying piles of textbooks to these venues and the possible problems this posed if, for some reason, they lost some textbooks. In addition, pupils in the "new" schools took time to get accustomed to the student teacher and sometimes did not take them seriously.

There is a need for more research in the other regions of Zimbabwe to find out how the mentoring of student teachers is being practised. The ZOU needs to have a fuller understanding of the mentoring strategy of supervising teacher education student teachers in open and distance learning institutions.

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MAXIMISING STUDENT SUPPORT THROUGH CLUSTER MEETINGS IN A DISTANCE TEACHER UPGRADING PROGRAMME

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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to improve students' retention and ensure high per cohort completion rates, a student support system of cluster meetings was introduced for the upgrading of teachers from primary teacher certificate to secondary teacher diploma in Malawi. The programme targeted teachers who were teaching in community day secondary schools (CDSSs), despite being qualified for primary school teaching. The distance education upgrading programme was aimed at improving knowledge and skills to enable students to improve their competency in teaching the secondary school syllabuses. As part of the student support system, cluster meetings and study circles were meant to enhance student-to-student support and instil a sense of belonging to a cohort. Both cluster meetings and study circles have continued to be well supported by subsequent cohorts many years after their introduction in the support system. The study investigated how cluster meetings and study circles contributed to the success of students in the programme. Data for the study was collected through individual interviews with programme managers, focus group discussions with cluster leaders, and questionnaires for students and field supervisors. The study found that study circles and cluster meetings united students of same subject combinations in a cohort in the same way that classes provided a sense of belonging in a face-to-face programme. It was, therefore, concluded that cluster meetings provided peer support, which gave further impetus to achievement through increased collaboration in academic assignments.

Keywords: open and distance learning (ODL), field supervisor, learner support system, teacher upgrading, cluster meeting, study circle

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INTRODUCTION

An appropriate support system is necessary to help students in a distance education programme achieve the goals they set individually prior to enrolling in the programme. This is especially true of a teacher upgrading programme, which aims at increasing knowledge and updating the skills of teachers who learn and teach at the same time. Teacher upgrading through the distance mode ensures that the teacher shortfall and quality in deprived schools are addressed at the same time without additional costs to replace teachers who would otherwise upgrade their skills through full-time tuition (UNESCO, 2002). Because teacher upgrading programmes are usually linked to career progression, such as salary increments and promotions, they tend to enjoy high patronage of teachers in service. The candidates that enter such programmes tend to have the greatest desire to succeed and increase their chances of promotion and better salaries in their careers. It is, therefore, important to ensure that the learner support system provided in an open and distance learning (ODL) teacher training programme maximises the number of students who successfully complete the training.

In Malawi, a certificate is a qualification for primary school teachers, while a diploma offered by a university or a college of higher learning is the minimum qualification for secondary school teachers. Due to critical shortages at various levels, teachers trained for primary schools are sometimes deployed to teach in secondary schools. In such a deployment, the teachers are considered underqualified because they lack content and appropriate methodologies for the secondary level. The upgrading programme that was investigated targeted qualified primary school teachers who were teaching in community day secondary schools (CDSSs), but were enrolled to upgrade their qualifications to diploma-level through the distance mode. The CDSS is a secondary school that once operated as a distance education centre where primary school teachers were deployed as tutors to facilitate studies. The change of the status of the distance education centres to CDSSs also changed the role of teachers from facilitators to teachers, as was the case in conventional secondary schools. It was against this background that the distance teacher upgrading programme was introduced to help teachers acquire knowledge and skills while teaching in already deprived schools.

From the outset, the upgrading programme under investigation deployed a field support system that promoted student collaboration. The key components of the support system included a residential phase and a field support phase. During the first eight weeks of the academic year, students were provided with face-to-face instruction by college lecturers to introduce them to the year's work and assignments. The next ten months constituted the field support phase, in which cluster meetings and study circles characterised peer support, while field supervisors – as off-campus staff members of the college – gave administrative support. The field supervisors also gave on-the-spot academic support and encouragement to students to ensure timely attendance to and submission of assignments. By providing regular contact between students on the one hand and between students and their supervisors and lecturers on the other, the support system reduced the isolation experienced by students, which could otherwise have affected their progress (Maroba, 2004, Craig, Kraft & Du Plessis, 1998).

This study examined the contribution of study circles and cluster meetings to learner success in the upgrading programme. Both the cluster and study circle meetings provided face-to-face support, which added a human voice to the learner support system (Modesto & Tau, 2009).

The question under investigation was the following: To what extent did study circles and cluster meetings influence student performance in the upgrading programme?

The cluster meetings were held once a month to deal with administrative matters, which included issues of communication from the college or to the college through field supervisors. Study circles, on the contrary, were subject combination-specific and enabled students to discuss academic matters, including assignments and problems related to their profession. In both meetings, the students enjoyed the feeling of not being alone in their study programme.

The inclusion of study circles and cluster meetings was important to provide students with peer support, which is critical for professional growth. Peer discussions engaged students deeply in new knowledge and skills that, in turn, helped them to meaningfully internalise what they learnt. It is against this background that the study aimed to examine the extent to which cluster meetings and study circles provided students with opportunities to learn and succeed in the programme.

METHODS

The study used mixed methods of data collection, despite using a largely descriptive qualitative design. The purpose of the design was to create meaning of the practice, which has been maintained for a period of ten years since its introduction.

The design depended on drawing from participants their constructed meaning of what they considered to be the value of the study circles and cluster meetings in the learner support system. It was of interest to draw from the participants their perceptions or feelings of the support system in ensuring that the design helped to answer the question of interest (Richards, no year). The qualitative data was supported by quantitative data drawn from closed-type items, which were included in the questionnaires for students and field supervisors. It was of interest to quantify responses as frequencies or percentages to facilitate the interpretation of the data. For this reason, both qualitative and quantitative results have been reported in the findings of the research.

Several stakeholders were sampled to participate in the study as informants from whom data was collected. The key informants were the students who were the direct beneficiaries of the learner support system. The students were divided into two categories, cluster leaders and ordinary students. One hundred students were randomly selected from existing lists to complete questionnaires that specifically focused on the perceived value and contribution of the cluster and study circle meetings. The questionnaires were distributed during the residential session when students came together to write the first semester examinations. This approach helped to increase the return rate of the questionnaires to 78%.

The cluster leaders who participated in focus group discussions were purposely selected by the programme managers who knew them well. They comprised both men and women, who could contribute freely in discussions as key informants, and were drawn from both humanities and science combinations. There were eight participants in each focus group discussion for humanities and science, which raised the number of teacher learner participants to 94. This number was considered representative enough, considering that using both questionnaires and interviews to collect data from the same target population ensures richness in the depth and quality of information drawn for purposes of research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). In addition, information was sourced from 16 field supervisors through questionnaires. Independent interviews were conducted with two key managers, who coordinated the activities of the programme. In all, there were 112 participants from whom data was drawn for the study.

The open questions in both the interviews and the questionnaires were analysed qualitatively by identifying themes and unique responses of a qualitative nature. Of interest was the need to establish whether the cluster meetings satisfied the academic or administrative needs of the students in the programme. Unique responses, which revealed the feelings of the students, were of interest to provide the qualitative aspects of the findings. The closed questions in the questionnaires were quantitatively analysed with the help of the SPSS computer software package. The data called for descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages to provide summaries of the most expressed opinions on which conclusions have been drawn. The two analytical approaches increased the accountability of the wealth of the data collected in the study. This, in fact, facilitated the triangulation of the information, which guaranteed the study's depth in dealing with the problem that would otherwise have been missed had only a single method of data collection and analysis been used. Extracts from open questions in the interviews and questionnaires have been reported as evidence of qualitative responses and tables have been used to report quantitative findings. The inclusion of quantitative analysis made comparison between groups possible, as each could be tabulated with their frequencies and percentages.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Qualitative and quantitative findings have been presented together and not separately to emphasise the fact that mixed methods were used to triangulate the data and provide deeper meaning of what was observed. Data triangulation is a way of strengthening the evidence that had been unearthed in support of the arguments presented in the discussion of the findings.

Creation of environments that sustain learning

The study circle and cluster meetings provided learners with consistent contact with supervisors and fellow learners, which created safe learning environments in which they could ask questions, reveal their uncertainties and explore new dimensions in their studies (O'Rourke, 2003). Both students and field supervisors indicated that study circle and cluster meetings fulfilled different, but complementary purposes in support of student learning. The former mostly facilitated academic discussions with groups of different subject combinations and the latter allowed for the participation of all teacher learners in the affairs of the cluster members and also dealt with administrative matters led by a field supervisor. The field supervisors promoted less formal interaction with the students through attendance and spot checking on study circle meetings. The study circles were conducted more frequently (at least every fortnight), while cluster meetings were conducted once a month.

It was reported that, in study circles, students tended to meet in groups of subject combinations to conduct academic discussions. The agenda was guided by content topics and assignments prescribed for each semester. From the interviews with programme managers and cluster leaders, it emerged that students used the interactions to share resources and skills in teaching the various topics they were assigned to teach in their classes. It was clear from the responses that the study circles were seen as anchors of the programme to which the success and sustainability of learners could be attributed. By putting emphasis on subject combinations, the study circles were conducted with a specific agenda that helped learners to discuss problems that were specific to their subjects. This ensured a detailed analysis of the academic problem and possible solutions that could be collectively generated. It is not surprising that all participants felt that the study circle meetings greatly helped clarify issues that would otherwise have been difficult for individual learners to do. In responding to the question of what would happen if study circles were taken out of the support system, one student said: "There would be total disaster because students are not confident to tackle assignments on their own before they check with their colleagues. I am sure some would withdraw from the programme before submitting the first assignment in which much peer assurance is required."

Table 1 provides a summary of how teacher learners felt about the usefulness of the study circle meetings in supporting their learning in the ODL programme.

Table 1: Teacher learner perceptions of the usefulness of study circle meetings

Reasons for maintaining study circle meetings in ODL	Percentage
Helping each other in assignments	92
Helping each other in clarifying difficult areas	78
Helping each other to improve the teaching of difficult areas	11.5
Others	44.9

For the students, the major reason for maintaining study circles was to enable them to help each other with assignments. This reasoning is consistent with their response to the question of how they benefited individually from the study circles. The majority of the participants attributed their success or high performance to the support they received from their peers in the study circles. These results confirm what other authors have indicated about the value of discussion groups in ODL programmes, such as providing opportunities for tutoring (Moon, Leach & Stevens, 2005, Maroba, 2004, Thuteotsile, 2004), reducing isolation, which undermines efforts to study in rural settings (Craig, Kraft & du Plessis, 1998), and promoting the spirit of sharing learning resources, which are often scarce (Jenkins, 2004). Resource-sharing is evident in the manner in which teacher learners of the same subject combinations cite similar references in assignments. One of the managers interviewed in the study stated: "Students use study circles to share resources. I see assignments in my subject are often completed using the same sources per cluster, which is an indication that study circles enable students access the same sources."

Providing socialisation opportunities and a sense of belonging

In the category 'Others' in Table 1 were a variety of reasons that showed some unique responses regarding the benefits of the programme to individuals. Among the reasons were welfare matters that demonstrated opportunities for socialisation. Apart from reducing isolation and affording the individual members a sense of belonging to a group, the study circles offered opportunities for developing trust among group members, which became the basis of sharing resources. This was important in a country where resource scarcity has been exacerbated by unwarranted competition among teachers in various schools. It is common to see neighbouring schools reporting serious disparity in terms of human and material resources, despite being funded from the same budget. Another important factor that demonstrates lessons from study circle groupings is the opportunity for students to express or learn organisational skills. This was particularly noticeable when the college coordinated field activities through cluster leaders in the absence of hired field supervisors for two years. At the time, the initial contracts of the field supervisors had expired and the college used cluster leaders to coordinate administrative activities in the field. The students performed their roles satisfactorily, except for those matters that were purely academic in nature. For example, it was ethically challenging to allow one student to collect assignments from others and send them to the college as field supervisors do.

Providing administrative links with the training institution

The teacher learners also saw the attendance of the cluster meetings as obligatory and as a means of sustaining themselves in the programme. For both meetings, no-one reported never attending the meetings. The majority indicated that they frequently attended the meetings, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of frequency of teacher learner attendance of cluster and study circle meetings

Frequency of attendance	Study circle	Cluster
Most frequently	46.2	46.2
Often	44.9	41.
Rarely	9.0	12.8
Never	0.0	0.0

It was clear that students felt obliged to attend both meetings. The results were not specific to gender or subject combinations, as all respondents showed that they attended the meetings regularly. The few that selected "rarely" as a response also indicated distance or lack of partners with similar combinations as their reasons for not attending the meetings frequently. The students' responses regarding their attendance of the meetings were consistent with the expectations of the programme managers who felt that the attendance was obligatory for all students. The managers emphasised that the meetings were the only reason for which the students could be allowed some time off from their schools to attend to academic work in their course. The college management had, from the onset of the programmes, negotiated with Ministry of Education officials to allow the students time off on a school day once a week or fortnightly for the purpose of attending such meetings. The managers also felt that the support that the students gave each other through the meetings contributed substantially to the high success rates and minimal dropout rates registered in the programme.

With regard to cluster meetings, it was generally observed that the majority of the respondents regarded them as administrative in nature. The meetings were held in the presence of a field supervisor to share information about the programme and to afford learners the opportunity to submit assignments or receive communication from the college, including marked assignments. Table 3 provides a summary of what teacher learners and supervisors felt were the contributions of cluster meetings to the whole learner support system of the programme.

Table 3: Summary of how cluster meetings provided learner support

Contributions of cluster meetings to learner support	Responses per group of participants (percentage)	
	Field supervisors	Students
Facilitating important communication	62	88
Facilitating the submission and receipt of assignments	78	51
Discussing welfare matters concerning the cluster	47	25
Other	9	7.7

The results generally demonstrate agreement between learners and field supervisors on the factors that were first articulated in the interviews with cluster leaders and managers of the programme. The cluster meetings generally satisfied the administrative functions of the programme under the leadership of field supervisors. In supporting this, one of the students in a group discussion said: "You cannot miss cluster meetings because that is where you meet the supervisor to give marked assignments or submit assignments that are due. Sometimes you go to the venue of the meeting very early to get the assistance of others on the assignment before it is submitted."

It was, therefore, clear from the findings of the study that both cluster and study circle meetings provided learning environments to individuals and groups of students. Cluster meetings were considered to be important forums for the exchange of ideas and resources that were necessary in the programme. The findings were consistent with the original plans of the support system of the programme in the field phase.

Opportunity for professional growth

Although many students who completed questionnaires did not see the improvement of teaching as either the reason for or the benefit of the study circle meetings, it remains an important factor for the teacher programme delivered through the ODL mode. An upgrading programme for teachers would fail to enhance quality improvement if it only encouraged the acquisition of additional content without regard to how the teachers would improve the practice of teaching in their classrooms. Apart from understanding difficult areas covered in the course materials, students in the study wanted to make an immediate impact on their teaching as though they were already qualified. By enrolling in the programme, they felt that they could immediately do better in their teaching because they were exposed to both the materials and techniques of qualified secondary school teachers. This turned out to be the case because the major drive for them to enrol in the programme was to get the respect of a qualified teacher at the schools in which they taught. It is, therefore, not surprising that some of them reported

how the study circle discussions helped them to improve their teaching. This was consistent with the observation that adult learners typically want to be able to link what they are learning with their life and work (O'Rourke, 2003).

It was, therefore, inevitable for the students to expect the programme to offer them opportunities to practice teaching in the areas of their professional interests. It was reported that, at times, group discussions were diverted to deal with how to teach a topic that had direct relevance to the syllabus they were teaching. This was a necessary extension of the intellectual discussions to accommodate the professional needs of the most inquisitive students who saw opportunities for the immediate application of what they had learnt. In this way, the discussions in the study circles usually moved from mere intellectual interactions to professional enrichment through the horizontal process of consolidating individuals' support to ensure cross-fertilisation of ideas on resources and techniques of teaching that were relevant to specific topics. One student expressed this experience as follows: "Before I joined the programme, I experienced difficulties teaching some topics of the Biology syllabus. Through discussions and sharing ideas and examples in our study circle, I have gained some competency to teach the topics."

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Both learners and managers, including field supervisors, cited distance from the school to the venue of cluster or study circle meetings as a hindrance. This was particularly a problem because students used their own money to travel and attend such meetings. In a number of cases, modifications to the schedules have been made either to hold study circles fortnightly as opposed to weekly and/or to rotate the venues of the meetings to balance the financial demands of the meetings for different students. In areas where more than two students of the same subject combinations were present in one school or at the same locality, a study circle would be established to reduce transport costs. The supervisors were also advised to ensure the rotation of cluster meeting venues so that distance does not affect the same students in the same way all the time. The system was difficult to monitor because of distances to be covered and the financial limitations that were usually experienced. The programme managers depended on reports from field supervisors or cluster leaders in the absence of the supervisors. Usually such reports were about student attendance or absenteeism and not about the academic or professional discussions that took place. In some instances, learners followed up on those who failed to attend the meetings as a way of encouraging them.

An additional challenge was that of cash needed to buy food and refreshments for members whose meetings went beyond lunchtime. Both students and field supervisors reported this as a serious problem, especially because the project that started the programme made provision for refreshments every time students and supervisors met in cluster or study circle meetings. The college management was, on several occasions, petitioned for consideration of this aspect. The programme managers shared the view of the college management that such a service would not be possible in view of budgetary constraints. In addition, it would be difficult to monitor accountability of such a service, even if money was available for it. The concern was indeed genuine because it was reported that some groups resorted to taking monthly contributions for drinks and snacks during the meetings. There were also indications that some students were pressing their school heads to contribute towards transport and refreshment expenses during the meetings. There seemed to be no easy solution to this problem considering the fact that the programme was expanding. It would be appropriate for the training institution to recognise such expenses as additional costs of the programmes when reviewing students' fees.

It was also observed that some students abused the arrangement to embark on their own personal errands without attending the meetings, yet they were absent from teaching in their schools. This is a challenge because some head teachers saw the arrangement as an excuse for those teachers who just wanted to miss classes. It was, therefore, difficult for some head teachers to grant permission for students on the programme to be away from their duties to attend the meetings. Despite the once-off communication, which the Ministry of Education made regarding the arrangement at the beginning of the programme, the college management was asked to clarify the arrangements from time to time to sustain the cluster meetings and study circles. The demands of the head teachers were not unusual in the context of the serious teacher shortages experienced, especially in rural schools. Although the meetings ensured the success of the learners in one way or the other, it is necessary for the management of the programme to seriously monitor the meetings to curb abuse. It should be necessary to ensure that the meetings are carefully integrated into the resource demands of the schools so that the support system does not further deprive the schools of their teachers, as is the case in full-time programmes (UNESCO, 2002). There is also a need for the programme managers to deliberately regulate cluster and study circle meetings in such a way that they meaningfully meet the needs of all students, with their agendas being made available to school administrators for collective support.

The current setup of study circle meetings favours subject combination groupings based on the year of study. It was observed that the arrangement further isolated the learners of minority subjects, who could not usually have anyone of their year and subject combination in the same locality. There was evidence that the students continued to meet and discuss within the same cohorts and not across years. The system, therefore, denied those who had already gone through the course an opportunity to help those who came after them. This explains why some students felt isolated, even when they had seniors of the same combinations in their cluster. It is, therefore, recommended that programme managers plan assignments that are subject focused rather than syllabus prescribed to allow students of different years to engage in discussions across broader perspectives once in a while. Such an approach could promote collaboration between students based on the subject area rather than being specific to the year of study.

From the managers' point of view, the most serious challenge of cluster and study circle meetings was the enforcement of learner dependence on group work. It was observed that weak learners mostly depended on the contributions of others when responding to individual assignments. College lecturers were bothered with similarities in some responses to assignments by students from the same study circles, which could be a sign of a serious offence of plagiarism. Apart from demonstrating the learner abuse of study groups, the problem also challenged the way lecturers come up with assessment tasks, which failed to get unique responses based on the creativity of individual students. If students discuss factual questions exhaustively, it will be to the advantage of all to copy the points raised during discussion groups. While factual presentations would be expected to be similar, students get distinctions when they try to apply or provide examples and illustrations that demonstrate unique interactions with the material that has been fully understood. It could be necessary for the college lecturers to deal with the problem by improving on assessment tasks so that more challenging responses could be expected.

CONCLUSION

Both cluster and study circles provide the opportunity to sustain learners in the programme. This is particularly important in a country with serious resource limitations where learners do not have access to a computer, telephone and/or electricity connections and supplies in their homes, as well as a poor postal connection (Jenkins, 2004). The print material that the learners receive upon enrolling in the programme remains the most precious information, which must be fully understood in order for them to make progress in the programme. Therefore, the groups in the study circles have been used to achieve the maximum benefit from the course of study. The meetings accorded teacher learners with the opportunity to understand the coursework and improve their pedagogical skills to complete their teaching assignments better. The meetings reduced learner isolation and they also increased the learners' motivation to stay in the programme and successfully complete their training.

The use of cluster and study circle meetings helped the students to recognise fellow students as an important resource for their progress in the programme. They used the meetings to support each other both academically and professionally. In addition, the meetings provided opportunities for socialisation and practising organisational skills, which teachers need. An upgrading programme is essential when it focuses on teacher growth as a whole and not just on the academic side of the teacher. It was clear that the use of the cluster and study circle meetings helped the students to see the potential of their fellow students in facilitating their own academic and professional growth. It is not surprising that they all generally supported the continuation of the support system for the retention and success of the students in the programme.

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THE POLICY AND PRACTICE OF PLACEMENT OF PUPILS IN NIGERIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS:
A PARADIGM FOR EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

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ABSTRACT

Nations continue to strive to improve their education systems through various strategies and plans. Some of these are outcomes of research on various aspects of education; hence the need for continuous research on all aspects of education.

Based on this, the present study aims to assess how school administrators handle the issue of the placement of pupils in classes in Nigeria. The study, designed as a survey, used questionnaires and interviews to elicit responses from the sample. A total of 382 teachers, who participated in a workshop organised at the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration, constituted the sample. A contingency analysis, as well as a t-test, was used to analyse data.

Results showed that most schools adopted the random placement criterion, an observation that was not a chance phenomenon, but reflected the actual practice in the schools sampled (X2 computed = 520.76 > X2 table = 21.69, @ .05 level, 12df). Results also showed that older schools used this practice more than the relatively newer ones. A t-test showed that between the educationally advanced states of the south and the educationally backward states of the north, the practice was the same (F computed 1.3 < F critical 1.3 @ .05 level). The implication is that a heterogeneous rather than a homogeneous class grouping is created that offers both low and high achievers the opportunity to interact and learn from one another, with the less academically bright pupils benefiting from the brighter ones. The implication of this and other appropriate recommendations are discussed to aid overall education success in Nigeria.

Keywords: pupil placement, educational success, educational planning and administration

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the bedrock of and the catalyst for any economy's growth and development. Governments appropriate huge sums of money in national budgets to education as a result and adopt strategies to attempt to ensure their education systems do not fail. Such strategies include, but are not limited to offering free basic education, free tuition at tertiary levels, boosting teacher welfare, research and evaluation and improving teaching effectiveness by adopting various teaching methods to even such issues as the placement of pupils in classes. Primary-level education is the foundation of all other subsystems in education. This recognition may explain numerous researchers and scholars' interest in this area, as it is one of the ways countries sometimes attempt to provide optimal circumstances for learning for all pupils. The placement of pupils in classes is an emerging area which, if handled well by administrators and planners, could contribute to overall educational success.

PLACEMENT OF PUPILS IN CLASSES

This paper explores an international as well as a Nigerian perspective on the subject of the placement of pupils in classes, taking the USA as a case study because of advanced policies in this area. In the USA, class placement is taken so seriously that policies exist for placing pupils. This, at times, involves parents who may even make specific requests either for specific teachers or classes due to various considerations. Generally, factors that are considered in class placement include total enrolment, students' ability levels, gender, special education needs, learners' languages and other considerations that may benefit all students or pupils.

Edina (2009) reported that when using a team approach, the head teacher addresses the following when placing students in instructional groups: heterogeneous groups (a mixture of academic abilities, talents and personalities), students with special needs (students who are disabled, physically handicapped or have emotional and/or behavioural challenges) and special information (as identified by the parents and/or guardians). Others include organisational options (students may be considered for options that may include self-contained or team teaching) and class size. In some instances, for example, at Stillwater Elementary School in the USA, placement displays variations of the above. The placement team tries to create a balance in classes, using the following criteria: classroom configuration (ratio of boys to girls), the programme needs of individuals, a balance of achievement levels, the social needs of students and their leadership skills. Other criteria are compatibility of students with one another (such as separating students who have not worked well together in the past) and the recommendations of former teachers, head teachers, parents, the guidance team or related information from previous schools (Fierro, 2009).

Meeks (2009) adds that, in class placement, authorities should consider natural and man-made barriers, promote contiguous attendance boundaries (keeping neighbourhoods together), maximise the efficient use of space, staff and transportation resources, and strive for future placement stability, considering future population growth and development. Heumann (1994) argues that, with regard to the placement of a disabled child, authorities should consider special aids and facilities available in the class, such as appropriate teaching aids, specially designed walkways for the physically challenged who may need wheelchairs and the location of the class.

Underscoring the importance of careful placement of pupils in primary schools, especially twins, Wiki (2009) reported that twins and multiples are specially handled, arguing that experts recommend that, unless there is a compelling reason to separate twins or multiples, the benefit of keeping them together, especially at primary school level, outweighs the detriments. Furthermore, there is legal backing for twins not being separated in class. Some states in the USA have passed such laws or are in the process of passing them. For example, the Texas Twin Bill (80 R H.B. 314) was passed in Oklahoma and Illinois in 2007. Resolutions that have been passed date back as far as 1994. The State of New York introduced Senate Bill S. 2074 and State Assembly Bill on 21 August 2007. Other states that have passed such laws include the State of Pennsylvania (23 April 2007) and the State of Florida (June 2008). In addition, bills have been sponsored and introduced in New Jersey, Massachusetts, Alabama, Carolina, Georgia and Indiana (Fierro, 2004).

In addition to the matter of twins and multiples, there is also the issue of gifted children. Even the placement of a gifted child receives special consideration, granted that it is usually difficult to identify who is gifted and who would require a different type of school experience to succeed (Palmer, 2009). Overall class placement in the USA has received considerable legal and policy attention, which is not noticeable in Nigeria.

Nigeria has a well-articulated National Policy on Education (NPE), which specifies the philosophy, objectives and values derivable from education. It specifies these in broad terms and narrows them down to each type and level of education: pre-primary, primary and post-basic (secondary level and tertiary), stating clearly what each level should aim at achieving.

There is no doubt that every citizen desires and is also compelled to get some level of literacy. Hence the Federal Government has made education in the first nine years (six years at the primary level and the first three years at the junior secondary level) not only free, but also compulsory. The Nigerian education system at all levels recognises and emphasises the following positive educational values stated in the NPE (2004): respect for the worth and dignity of the individual, faith in man's ability to make rational decisions, and moral and spiritual principles in interpersonal and human relations. Other values include shared responsibility for the common good of society, the promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children, and the acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance. These values are defined in programmes of the primary education system because of the need to institute such values early in life as this level of education forms the bedrock of future levels of education. Unfortunately, there is no legislation yet from the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC), established by Decree 31 of 1988, or its successor, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), launched in 1999, on classroom placement, even though the NPEC (Adeboyeje, 2006) was established among others to prescribe minimum standards for primary education throughout the country to cater for the needs of the educationally disadvantaged states, and to establish Primary School Management Boards (PSMB) at the state and district levels throughout the country. The nearest the Commission got to legislation was the power statutorily given to the Local Government Education Authorities by Decree 3 of 1991, which, among others, was responsible for "full enrolment and attendance of pupils in all primary schools in its area of jurisdiction", without specifying how to place pupils so enrolled.

So, whatever value can be added to this level through research is a milestone in the right direction. Hence, this study deals with class placement in Nigerian primary schools. However, no policy exists in the NPE as to how pupils are to be placed in classes. There is, therefore, an assumption that the teacher knows how to place pupils or has the discretion to do so. There is no such policy at state or even local government level, hence the need to determine the policy and practice in Nigerian primary schools. Determining this has critical implications for educational success. This is why this study is about finding out what has been happening in the field, with a view to providing appropriate advice on how to streamline them.

Previous studies have addressed areas such as class enrolment, dropout, transition or how to group pupils in large primary school science classes (Ikitde, 2007). But, preceding these, is the issue of how pupils should be placed in classes. What criteria are used in Nigeria to place primary school pupils to enable them to derive the maximum benefits enunciated in the national objectives? Since no policy or legislation exists, determining this through this study is likely to have implications for contributing to educational success in Nigeria.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

If, by the present review, it is shown that class placement is as important to teachers as it is to parents and government, the study would have been of immense value in reawakening policy-makers' interest in this area even more so, considering that advanced countries have already passed legislation guiding class placement.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was a survey. Questionnaires and oral interviews were the instruments for data collection. The sample consisted of 382 head teachers, who were involved in a skills improvement workshop for primary school teachers in the country. The questionnaire was given to them as part of the registration formalities. Only a selected few of this number were interviewed in a panel of 10.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data was analysed using contingency analysis to test if the frequency of occurrence of the responses was by chance or whether there was a relationship with the actual observation in the field.

A t-test was also used to test the difference between the responses from the "educationally advanced states" and the "educationally backward states" – the former used to refer to states in the southern and the latter to states in the northern part of the country.

The qualitative data arising from the interview was used to enrich the observations from the questionnaire, as they were not subjected to a statistical analysis.

PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

Data collected using the questionnaire was analysed using Table 1.

Table 1: Placement criteria by age of institution

Placement criteria / Age of school	Homogeneous (by academic performance)	Discipline	Sex	Alphabetical (by surname)	Random*	Total
Under 10 years	(4.71) 18	(1.5) 6	(0.7) 3	(0.26) 1	(13.61) 52	(20.94) 80
10 years and more, but less than 20 years	(3.93) 15	(3.14) 12	(1.05) 4	(1.3) 5	(12.56) 48	(21.99) 84
20 years and more, but less than 30 years	(3.93) 15	(2.36) 9	(1.05) 4	(1.5) 6	(17.27) 66	(26.18) 100
30 years and more	(3.14) 12	(2.36) 9	(0.26) 1	(1.5) 6	(23.56) 90	(30.89) 118
Total	(15.71) 60	(9.43) 36	(3.14) 12	(4.71) 18	(67.01) 256	(100) 382

*P < .05
Figures in parenthesis in Table 1 are percentages.

Table 1 shows data on how respondents addressed the issue of class placement in their respective schools. The table showed that of the 382 respondents, 15.71% (N = 60) place pupils by academic performance criteria. That is to say, the most brilliant group are identified and placed in an "A" class, while the less brilliant are placed in the "B" class and so on. Some 9.43% (N = 36) adopt placement by "discipline", while 3.14% (N = 12) use "sex" as a criterion. In addition, 4.71% (N = 18) specified "alphabetically by surname", while 67.01% place pupils according to the "random" criterion. The latter indicates that as pupils arrive in a class from registration, they are just assigned to a class, irrespective of their academic ability, sex, surname or discipline.

In addition, the study was interested in establishing the influence of the age of the school on the variable – class placement. Data revealed that 20.94% of the schools were under 10 years old, 21.99% between 10 and 20, while 20.18% were between 20 and 30 years old, and 30.89% had been in existence for over 30 years. Results showed that most of the schools, irrespective of age, adopted the "random" criterion for placement more than any other criterion (13.61%, 12.56%, 17.27%, 23.56% and 67.01%). The study attempted to find out if this observation occurred by chance or had any significant relationship with the reality in the field. Table 2 explains this.

Table 2: Contingency table on placement criteria by age

Placement criteria / Age of school	Homogeneous (by academic performance)	Discipline	Sex	Alphabetical (by surname)	Random*	Total
Under 10 years	(4.71) A 18 12.6	(1.5) B 6 7.5	(0.7) C 3 2.5	(0.26) D 1 3.8	(13.61) E 52 53.6	(20.94) 80
10 years and more, but less than 20 years	(3.93) F 15 13.2	(3.14) G 12 7.9	(1.05) H 4 2.6	(1.3) I 5 3.9	(12.56) J 48 56.3	(21.99) 84
20 years and more, but less than 30 years	(3.93) K 15 1	(2.36) L 9 9.4	(1.05) M 4 31.6	(1.5) N 6 4.7	(17.27) O 66 6.7	(26.18) 100
30 years and more	(3.14) P 12 18.5	(2.36) Q 9 11.1	(0.26) R 1 3.7	(1.5) S 6 5.6	(23.56) T 90 79.0	(30.89) 118
Total	(15.71) 60	(9.43) 36	(3.14) 12	(4.71) 18	(67.01) 256	(100) 382

*P < .05 X2c= 520.76 > X2t = 21.69, .05, 12 df

NB – Figures to the right in the cell in parenthesis are percentages.

Figures down the left in the cell are the contingency observation scores of each cell.

Figures in the middle (centre) are frequencies.

A, B, C … T are cell identifiers.

CELLS	O	E	Σ (O – E)2 / E
A	12.6	20.56	3.08
B	7.5	20.56	8.3
C	2.5	20.56	15.85
D	3.8	20.56	13.66
E	53.6	20.56	53.09
F	13.2	20.56	2.63
G	7.9	20.56	7.79
H	2.6	20.56	15.68
I	3.9	20.56	13.50

CELLS	O	E	Σ (O – E)2 / E
J	56.3	20.56	62.12
K	15.7	20.56	1.15
L	9.4	20.56	6.05
M	31.6	20.56	5.30
N	4.7	20.56	12.23
O	67.0	20.56	104.89
P	18.5	20.56	0.20
Q	11.1	20.56	4.35
R	3.7	20.56	13.82
S	5.6	20.56	10.88
T	79.0	20.56	166.11
Σ	411.2		520.76

$\sum \left(\frac{O}{n} = \right) E = \frac{411.2}{20} = 20.56$

$X^2_c = 520.76 > X^2_t$ @ 12 df at .05 level

Table 2 shows the contingency table derived from the data in Table 1. Each of the 20 cells (A to T) has the "observed" data at the bottom left, while the data in parenthesis are percentages. The figure in the middle of each cell is the obtained frequency of responses. Following the calculations of the Chi-square statistic, using the formula **Σ (O – E)²**, a computed **E** X^2 of 520.76 was yielded. Compared with the table (critical) X2, which is 21.69, at 12 df at .05 level of significance, it was confirmed that the observations were not by chance and represent an actual relationship with what was obtained in the field. Therefore, most schools across the 25 states from which the sample was drawn adopted the random criterion in the placement of pupils in primary schools in Nigeria. This observation further confirmed the results of Table 2 regarding the differences between the educationally backward and educationally advanced states. These are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: The differences between the educationally backward states (EBS) and the educationally advanced states (EAS)

Criteria	N	X	SD	t	F
EAS	194	48.75	10.4	3.66	1.3
EBS	182	46.25	13.04		

F 193,181 F computed = 1.3 < F critical = 1.39 @ .05 level

Table 3 presents data testing if there was any observed difference in the respondents from educationally advanced states and educationally backward states. Since the table value (F = 1.39) is greater than the computed F value (1.3 at 0.5 level), the variances between the educationally advanced states and the educationally backward states do not differ, but are homogeneous, confirming that there was no difference in the observations of the educationally advanced states and the educationally backward states, as both made use of random placement as the major criterion.

FINDINGS

The findings of the study were that most Nigerian primary schools adopted the random criterion in the placement of pupils in primary schools. This means that pupils are placed in classes as they arrive, without much regard to criteria such as sex, alphabetically by surname and discipline. The next most adopted criterion is by academic performance – where pupils are grouped according to the best academic performers in the A class, the next best in the B class and so on, otherwise referred to as tracking. The primary schools in the educationally backward states of the north essentially adopted the same criteria as the schools in the educationally advanced states of the south, that is, by random selection and academic performance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings were consistent with the observations of the focus group who remarked that "if you don't place by random, you will not be encouraging slow learners to rub off on the experiences of the brighter students who otherwise could have been caged into an A class, making learning experiences lopsided". Another frequent remark was that such random placement afforded pupils the opportunity of sharing the experiences of people from different home backgrounds, ensuring equity in teaching and learning as teachers might wish to water down learning

in an academically inferior B class. These two critical remarks summarised the observations of the focus group discussions.

Overall, the data – as presented in Table 1 to Table 3 – showed that the random criterion that automatically creates heterogeneous rather than homogeneous classes was used most. Research evidence abounds, confirming that such heterogeneous groupings – as compared to homogeneous ones – offer better educational learning experiences, even though Anderson (2004) observed that comparing student achievement in homogeneous and heterogeneous classes is not as obvious as it appears at first glance, arguing that the disparity is more likely in the ways in which students with a low or a high ability are treated when placed in a homogeneous class rather than a heterogeneous class, than it is in relation to group membership per se. Hallinan in Anderson (2004) concluded that students with a lower ability in homogeneous classes tended to receive instruction at a slower pace, their teachers had more time off-task for administrative or managerial reasons and the pupils were often taught using material that was less interesting than that used to teach similar students in heterogeneous classes.

Osaki and Agu (2002), studying classroom interaction in primary schools, found that while segregating pupils on the basis of intelligence (tracking), when the boys and girls sat together, the girls in three rural schools in the districts of Musoma, Kisarawe and Zanzibar complained that sitting close to the boys led to their being harassed, but there was no such harassment in the urban schools where the boys and girls sat together. This is another reason why class placement is an issue.

The study has confirmed that most schools adopted academic performance (tracking) as a criterion for placement. It also showed that such a criterion created homogeneous classes, while random placement creates heterogeneous classes. The implication is that the placement of pupils by academic performance denied average pupils the opportunity of mixing with the bright pupils. Such interaction could have impacted positively on the average pupils. This system also reminded pupils so "tracked" in the B class that they were inferior to those in the A class and, as such, were likely to be affected emotionally, leading to some negative behaviour, such as being withdrawn, vexatious or delinquent. This may not be the best for low achievers or for equity, for the latter presupposes that the teacher of the B class may have a mental picture of the class being inferior and, as such, may tailor his or her teaching to suit the class. Rather than motivating such pupils, the teacher might perceive the low quality teaching and watering down of the content to be a factor of their perceived underachievement.

Even in terms of teacher quality and availability, the school management may be unconsciously conditioned to have fewer quality teachers posted to the B class on the presumption that the school was dependent on the A class for the quality of the school's academic performance. In a case of paucity of teachers in a stream, the A class got the needed attention rather than the B or C class and so on.

But does tracking make a positive contribution to universal basic education? Does it promote education for all? Probably not. Universal basic education is interested in promoting education for all, whereas the academic performance (tracking) criterion promotes education for a homogeneous group of learners: the so-called academically bright ones. Using the random criterion, on the other hand, offers every pupil an equal chance of being either in the A or the B class. As such, both the academically bright and the less academically bright or the low achievers are mixed up in a class to share experiences.

The apparently low achievers may, within some years, begin to perform better and, as such, promote healthy competition among the pupils.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has policy implications for school administrators, as well as planners and teachers, especially with regard to the advantages of heterogeneous versus homogeneous class groupings. Based on the above, the following recommendations are made:

- School administrators are encouraged to adopt the random criterion in class placement and reap the benefits of such heterogeneous class groupings.
- Planners are to ensure that this policy of classroom placement is reflected in the curriculum of teacher trainees so they know the benefits of creating heterogeneous classes through random placement.
- Following this, teachers who are the direct line managers in the system should recognise that a heterogeneous class grouping demands special recognition in classroom management, especially as it relates to the question of distribution and class control.
- A careful adoption of this policy increases the internal efficiency of the educational system, which means increasing the capacity to turn out its graduates maximally, thereby reducing educational wastage that results from repetitions, failures and dropouts/early leavers.

Legislation should be considered, as in the USA, to guide the policy of class placement, such as who takes final action, how to handle twins, the disabled and the physically challenged, etc., while adopting the random criterion for class placement.

CONCLUSION

The overall findings offer a number of explanations regarding how pupils should be placed in classes, recommending the random criterion as the most appropriate in a normal school setting devoid of pupils with special educational needs, especially handicapped or gifted pupils at the other extreme. In conclusion, the Nigerian experience that favours heterogeneity through the random criterion, though not legalised, offers a good opportunity for low achievers to obtain equity, teacher quality and availability, and by extension, will contribute to the overall success of universal basic education, hence its adoption is recommended as standard policy in Nigeria.

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PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN TEACHING: THE NEED FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT

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ABSTRACT

The term "ethical conduct" brings to the fore a debate about the distinctions between codes of conduct and their purposes, and ethical principles and their place in the teaching profession. Some would argue that codes of conduct mandate specific behaviour in particular situations, but do not promote individual adherence to ethical principles. The grey areas in decision-making which confront most teachers on a regular basis arise in the face of competing interests and values. Codes of conduct may assist, but not give clear definition to teachers' decision-making. In other words, the organisation or system can mandate what not to do in particular situations, but it is impossible to list all possible situations that may arise. This becomes the territory of ethical decision-making. The delivery of training related to codes of conduct may be possible. Training individuals to adhere to particular ethical principles when making decisions may not be possible. This paper addresses the challenges and constraints in the implementation of training and development programmes with regard to professional ethics in teaching in large education systems. The scope of the training and development challenge is revealed by posing a series of questions. Some of these questions go the heart of the professional learning discourse. The use of case studies as a professional learning strategy is explored and examples of cases are included.

Keywords: teacher education, teacher professionalism, professional ethics, teaching ethics, development and training

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INTRODUCTION

Ethical practice lies at the core of the teaching profession. The establishment of an agreed upon set of ethical principles by both the teaching profession and the public provides collective understanding and vision for the professional judgment and action of educators. There are, however, many challenges facing teachers in their profession in the area of professional ethics. It has been stressed by various authors that the challenge has to do with teacher in-service training programmes that hardly include issues of professional ethics (Jekayinfa, 2005, Hoyle & John, 1995). This paper is therefore intended to address the issue of teachers' professionalism and teacher ethics in Nigeria.

THE CONCEPT OF PROFESSIONALISM

According to Halliday (1999), attempts have been made to solve the problem of definition using different approaches, such as the functionalist approach, the interactionist approach, the Foucauldian approach and the division of labour approach.

The functionalist approach is premised on the concept of a professional knowledge base. The focus of this approach, according to Eraut (1994), is the social control of expertise. This approach was developed by Marshall (1963) and Goode (1969). Criteria such as collectivity orientation and altruism were emphasised. The functionalists view a profession in terms of its central social function, its length of training, body of knowledge, high level of skills, a code of ethical conduct, client centredness, autonomy, independent decision-making, adaptability and self-governance. What is paramount in this approach is what a profession needs to be like and how its members need to act. People who define a profession from a functionalist approach state that the approach spells out the privileges and position of professionals in terms of a rational solution to society's needs.

Eraut (1994) observes that providing a list of professional traits and assuming their integrative function has not removed or solved the problem of definition. This is because most of the criteria in the functionalist approach to the definition are culture-bound with greater significance in some countries – especially the developed countries – than in others. For instance, the approach assumes that there is a well-defined set of needs within society without working on the question about the nature of society. This means that the approach provides an understanding of the nature of the profession in terms of current practices that arise from the needs of societies, without considering the variations that exist within societies.

The interactionist approach is concerned with the everyday actions and interactions of professionals and how they define their social world as participants and construct their careers. This approach views professionalisation as a social and political project or mission that is designed to enhance the interest of an occupational group (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996). This is why the interactionist approach is also called the social constructivitist approach. To the interactionist, profession is a relative concept that can be subjected to different constructions according to the discursive disposition of its advocates and critics. In this approach, the driving force of professionalisation is striving for upward mobility, while the main strategy is social closure, which enables the groups with a common interest to act in a collective manner to protect their interests and membership.

The emphasis in this approach is on employment rewards for those who achieve professional status. Ukpo (2005) maintains that the materially and symbolically privileged position of professional workers is achieved by virtue of the protection and patronage of some elite segment of society. The problem with this approach to the definition of profession is that the group may willingly or unwillingly erect barriers that could, in turn, promote inequality in an attempt to close access to its occupation.

The Foucauldian approach, on the contrary, establishes the relationship between knowledge and power. It is observed that knowledge is a key component in the competition for power. To Foucauldians, knowledge and power are two sides of the same coin. Who decides what knowledge is and who knows what needs to be decided? The power and legitimacy of professions are acquired, in part, from their status as organisations, defined by their control over knowledge. If control over knowledge is lost, what happens to power? McDonald (1995) observes that this approach rejects any idea that the state is a purposeful actor; instead the state is considered as a collection of institutions, procedures and knowledge, which together form the particular direction that the state has chosen. The Foucauldian approach suggests that both the state and the professions are, in part, the emergent effects of the interplay between changing government policies and occupational strategies.

The concern of the division of labour approach is the competition between professions. Its focus is on the content of professional work among professions and

dispute over work areas, to which McDonald (1995) refers to as the jurisdictional dispute. This approach was made popular by Abbott (1988).

The different approaches provide useful understandings of professions and their professional activities, which have brought agreement on the criteria and characteristics of a profession. There is widespread agreement, according to Hoyle and John (1995), on the criteria of knowledge, autonomy and responsibility. The approaches have provided benchmarks with which the status and conduct of a profession or its erosion might be measured and also draw attention to the changing nature of professional status, definition, work and behaviour.

According to Stanley et al. (1956), a profession may perhaps be defined as an occupation based on specialised intellectual study and training, the purpose of which is to supply skilled service or advice to others for a definite fee or salary. With regards to teaching, the UNESCO Intergovernment Conference on the Status of Teachers (1966) states the following:

> *Teaching should be regarded as a profession. It is a form of public service which requires of teachers expert knowledge and specialised skills, acquired and maintained through rigorous and continuing study; it calls also for a sense of personal and corporate responsibility for the education and welfare of the pupils in their charge.*

TRAITS OF PROFESSIONALISM

The search for a set of criteria by which a profession can be recognised has been on for at least a century now. Yet, there are no universal lists of characteristics of professionalisation that are universally acceptable. However, there are areas of widespread consensus, including the following:

- **Performing an essential social service:** Teaching meets this criterion. The service that education performs is essential to the individual child who cannot be fully socialised into our modern society if he or she does not receive formal education. To society, it prepares individuals for various occupational roles.
- **Possessing a body of specialised knowledge:** There are some differences of opinion as to whether teaching meets this requirement. In teaching, both the subject matter knowledge and knowledge of education theory are essential in the preparation of teachers. What is not appreciated is the fact that education has a specific distinctive subject matter component. It could, therefore, be said that teaching meets this particular criterion.
- **Having a high degree of autonomy:** A profession must be self-regulating and self-governing. The autonomy to practice the profession relates to two main factors that are interdependent. The autonomy of the individual professional to perceive his or her role and responsibilities the way he or she feels best is in the interest of the profession and the autonomy of the profession as a whole. Teaching does not meet this criterion fully.
- **A code of ethics:** Professions usually have well-defined codes of ethics to regulate the conduct of their accredited practitioners. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) in Nigeria has a code of ethics that guides its relationship with students, parents, the community, employer and the profession. Unfortunately, it has little or no influence in matters of policies for auditing and registering professionally qualified persons in the profession. In addition, it lacks the control and legal backing to enforce the standards it sets.
- **Organisation into professional groups:** Every profession institutes and operates a professional association or organisation to which it ascribes certain functions and powers, such as the advancement of the professional competence and maintenance of prescribed standards. Every professional association has a self-concept that transcends that of a mere trade union. Unfortunately, the major obstacle preventing the NUT from becoming a professional body has been the lack of extended educational training for all members of the union. The implication is that the NUT has no control over its members when compared to other professions, such as medicine, law and engineering, among others.
- **Exalting service above personal gains:** Members of any profession are expected to regard their services to the public as altruistic, with public interest put above financial and other gains.
- **Recognition by the public:** Recognition by the public is closely linked to the nature of the service that the profession renders. It must be such that the service is regarded as being essential to humanity. Further still, the practitioners or the profession must have a high self-esteem. Coupled with this is the question of personal satisfaction demonstrated by members of the profession. This is not always true of the teaching profession.
- **Setting its own standards:** Standards are set and it is only when a new entrant satisfies the stipulated requirements that he or she can be registered

as a member of the profession. The medical and legal professions, for example, have laid down standards that new entrants must meet before they are admitted into the professions. This is not true of the teaching profession, where the NUT lacks the control and legal backing to enforce the standards it sets. Although the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) is being charged with that responsibility, it is too early to assess its effectiveness since it only came on board six years ago.

Judged in the light of the above discussion, teaching in Nigeria doesn't meet all the characteristics of a profession in many countries of the world. In Nigeria, however, teaching is yet to achieve autonomy and teachers do not require a licence or certificate to practise. A decree setting up the TRCN was promulgated in 1993, but it is yet to be operational. Thus, it can be said that in Nigeria, teaching is progressing towards full professionalisation.

The TRCN partners with universities, state governments and other stakeholders in the education sector to organise training and retraining programmes in various parts of Nigeria for teachers, with the aim of professionalising the teaching career. It also aims at equipping teachers to become better professionals.

CONCEPTS RELATED TO TEACHER EDUCATION

Education is a very powerful instrument for social progress. It is the greatest power yet known to man for his own improvement. Broadly defined, it is the aggregate of all the processes by means of which a person develops abilities, skills and other forces of behaviour of positive (and sometimes negative) value in the society in which he lives (Fafunwa, 1982). Education is seen as a tool that is used for the integration of the individual into society so that he or she can achieve self-realisation, develop a national consciousness, promote unity and strive for social, economic, political, scientific, cultural and technological progress (Afe, 1995).

Training, on the other hand, differs from education. While the skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired in training are directed to improve performance in a specific vocation, those of education include a broad knowledge, skills and attitudes not directed to any particular job. Training does not take place in a vacuum. It involves people, money and material. However, there are five essential factors that affect training output, positively or otherwise: quality teachers and instruction, equipment or facilities and overall management capacity.

Teaching has existed for ages and it is sometimes difficult to trace its origin precisely. It is one of the oldest of human activities or occupations. As an activity, it consists of a body of "actions intended to induce learning, through the conscious and deliberate efforts by a matured or experienced person to impart knowledge, information, skills, attitudes, beliefs, etc. to an immature or less experienced person" (Afe, 1998).

A teacher refers to a person who instructs to provide the teaching and learning process. He or she assumes various capacities as an educator, instructor, tutor, lecturer, counsellor, professor, etc. He or she is the mainstay or prime mover of the educational system. According to Aghenta (1991), "as an input operator into the educational system, the teacher plays a big role in the conversion of raw materials (particularly students) into finished products i.e. graduates".

Teacher education is that component of any educational system that is charged with the education and training of teachers to acquire the competencies and skills of teaching to improve the quality of teachers for the school system (Afe, 1993). Having examined the basic concepts, let us now examine the history of teacher education in Nigeria.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The training and development of teachers vary according to the institutions where teacher training takes place. It is not logical to believe that ethics or codes of behaviour should be part of the curriculum, since there is no harmonised pattern that all institutions can follow to train teachers. Even some of the specialised colleges charged with the responsibility of training teachers do not conform to training with essential codes during the training period.

Perhaps we should ask the question whether it is possible to train teachers in ethical conduct. The term ethical conduct brings to the fore a debate about the difference between codes of conduct and their purposes, ethical principles and their place in the teaching profession. We can argue that codes of conduct mandate specific behaviour in particular situations, but do not promote individual adherence to ethical principles. The grey areas in decision-making that confront most teachers on a regular basis arise in the face of competing interests and values. This is a challenge to the professionalisation of the teaching profession in Nigeria.

We can ask this question: Do student teachers learn through mentors and supervisors after leaving the school? This is necessary since the training acquired may not have contained the necessary standards that can withstand the realities in the field. If the mentors and the supervisors are not ready to provide the mentorship, due to many protests of social inequity, the student teacher will be left stranded in the community school, not having any role models to follow. This will impact negatively on the learning performances of the students. The post-learning demands of the pupil teachers require experienced supervisors and mentors to be stationed to provide additional assistance to the village and community schools. This will make learning of the essential codes easier.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN NIGERIA

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the theory of values. The ethics of the teaching profession are the moral beliefs and rules about right and wrong that influence teachers' behaviour, attitude and ideals. The teacher is a crucial facilitator of knowledge acquisition, hence we take many cues from his or her behaviour in terms of dress, mannerisms in speech, attitude, and private and social life patterns. This is the basic rationale for the introduction of codified ethics to the teaching profession. The code of ethics is meant to guide teachers' behaviour and job performance. The task of education is mainly to guide the total growth and development of young people so that they will be functional, competent, well-adjusted and sociable citizens of their communities in Nigeria. There are some known, acceptable (social) norms that appear to be taken for granted as ethics in teaching. These acceptable (social) norms comprise two categories.

Firstly, moral ethics, such as honesty, loyalty, discipline, not smoking or drinking alcohol in the presence of students and in public places, dressing neatly and decently to school, sexual comportment and punctuality, is one of the hallmarks of teacher professionalism.

Secondly, work ethics, such as continuous learning, the regular preparation of lesson plans, serving *in loco parentis* for students, the regular assessment of learners, reporting on learners, being cooperative with other teachers at work and obedience to authority, is social norms that must be transmitted from generation to generation. The teacher, as a facilitator of learning, must not send inappropriate signals to students. It is to promote the actualisation of these critical attributes of a teacher that the Federal Government of Nigeria took steps towards the professionalisation of teaching and teacher registration to sift the "weeds from the tar".

Professional ethics in teaching, on the other hand, is a statement of the ethical commitments, practices and aspirations that reflect the ongoing articulation of the profession. The practical applications of codes of ethics are expressed in codes of conduct. Teachers in Nigeria are committed to the principles of dignity, respect, integrity, empathy and justice.

In the same vein, the TRCN prepared a code of conduct for teachers in 2004, which was widely circulated.

OBJECTIVES OF A COURSE IN PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

If we cannot teach people to be ethical, then what can we achieve with an ethics course and what should such a course include? The answers to this question vary (Wines, 2007). In an earlier co-authorship with Brinkman, Sims (2001) set out the following seven goals for a business ethics course:

- Know thyself, your own moral values and thresholds.
- Learn to see moral issues, conflicts and responsibilities.
- Learn to identify the specific moral aspects of a situation.
- Learn to share moral understanding.
- Learn how to handle moral issues and conflicts.
- Acquire moral courage.
- Acquire a critical attitude towards the business school curriculum and its disciplines.

They do not set strengthening moral behaviour as an objective. Corey and Callanan (2005) set the following nine course goals:

- Ensure students recognise and appreciate the unavoidable ambiguity in ethics, i.e. of multiple points of view or contradictory possibilities.
- Instil in students the idea that there are multiple pathways to addressing a single ethical dilemma.
- Improve students' self-knowledge.
- Improve ethical sensitivity.

- Improve moral cognition.
- Instil determination to act ethically.
- Teach students the profession's established code of ethics.
- Teach students their legal, ethical and professional responsibilities.
- Teach questioning of the ethical dimensions of their workplace.

In their paper, they ascribe students' determination to act ethically as a result of their courses. This result, which the authors say they achieve, is based on students' self-reporting of changes in their values; not on an empirical measure of changed behaviour.

Webber (2007) says ethics courses in industry should build ethical awareness and promote the company's moral values in order to broaden the criteria used by managers when making decisions with moral implications. He advocates stimulating managers to become more "other oriented" by exercises in which all stakeholders are treated as equals, in contrast to their level of influence on corporate performance. Other aims that Webber espouses are the following:

- To engender trust and confidence among stakeholders.
- To stimulate mutual moral development through self-discovery in peer group discussions of real ethical dilemmas.
- To develop a concrete plan for a career-long, ongoing moral enhancement of individual attitudes and planned business behaviour.

Webber acknowledges research (Ferrell et al., 2002) that shows how the ethical culture of an organisation has a strong influence on ethical business judgments. Therefore, ethics training should also make employees overtly aware of the ethical culture and values of the organisation.

We agree with most of these objectives, but believe that some are subsets of broader objectives; others are a natural outcome of an ethics course. We propose the following four principal objectives for a course in ethics:

- Building ethical sensitivity and moral cognition
- Providing a widened applied teaching content that covers all ethical practices
- Adopting teaching methods that maximise learning impact in relation to ethical knowledge and behaviour
- Developing negotiating and persuasive capabilities (oral and written skills for use in assessing and advocating an ethical position)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Courses in ethics with case problems and lectures on ethical theory increase students' ability to reason their way through moral issues. The following examples of the impact of ethics courses on ethical sensitivity and cognition are drawn from engineering. Self and Ellison (1998) used Rest's Defining Issues Test (DIT) to assess whether there was an increase in moral reasoning from students who took an ethics course. The researchers applied the test before and after the course and found a significant increase in reasoning capability.

Drake et al. (2005), using the DIT to assess capabilities in moral reasoning, also found a significant difference between the capabilities of students at the beginning of a course and those of the students at the end of the course, which manifested a significant increase in capabilities. The class size was 164 students and teaching assistants were employed. The discussion on moral practices and the teaching of ethical theory seemed to increase capabilities in moral reasoning. Whether this reasoning translates into higher levels of moral practice is a separate concern. Such an assessment is difficult to measure, as the Centre for Vocational Assessment and Research concluded after its study into the assessment of attitudes, ethics and behaviour at work (Mossop, 1997). Blasi (1980) reviewed 75 studies that assessed the relationship between moral judgment and behaviour. This classic meta-study found a positive, but strongly qualified relationship in a number of the studies.

The research, however, is almost 30 years old, with some of the original studies now almost 80 years old. We have not found recent studies that correlated courses on ethics with improved ethical behaviour. The most we can be confident about is that courses seem to increase ethical sensitivity and strengthen ability to tell right from wrong. This ability, in itself, may lead to improved practices, but such improvements have not, for the most part, been verified.

THE NEED FOR A COURSE ON ETHICS FOR TEACHERS

Two arguments can be developed that support a course being built around the ethical issues in a profession, discipline or organisation. Firstly, a new graduate entering a profession or organisation may encounter entrenched unethical practices that will be near to impossible for a new entrant without basic knowledge and skills to tackle alone. Continued acceptance of a practice where "everybody does it" can condition the new recruit to accept certain behaviour. Prior classroom encounters

with the issues they are most likely to face, however, will at least have helped clarify the new entrant's ethical assessment and may even provide a core of new graduates with the motivation and skills to resist entrenched unethical practices.

The second argument is that the ethical acceptability or unacceptability of some issues in a discipline can be unclear. A study by Bowden (2006) in the engineering profession identified a number of practices on which opinions were divided – reverse auctions being perhaps the most obvious, but bid-peddling and front-end loading were among some of the more contentious ethical issues. Every profession or industry has similar examples.

TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

There are institutions authorised to give professional training as enunciated by the Federal Government of Nigeria in the Revised National Policy on Education (2004). These include the following:

- **National Teacher Institute (NTI):** This is an institution established to formally train student teachers for primary education. The policy regarding teaching at primary school level now provides that the least qualified teachers for primary education should be holders of the National Certificate of Education. The NTI is now charged with the responsibility of upgrading holders of a Grade II Teacher's Certificate. It provides in-service training for teachers on the job in order to upgrade their skills.
- **National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE):** This commission was established for the specific purpose of prescribing minimum standards for colleges of education that train teachers for primary education in Nigeria. They are responsible for all the components of ethical conduct, while training teachers after secondary education.
- **Institute of Education:** It was established in universities for the training of teachers for the delivery of education at both secondary and tertiary level.
- **National Board for Technical Education (NBTE):** This board coordinates the activities of polytechnics and technical colleges and prescribes minimum standards for post-primary school level training. It also trains teachers for technical and vocational education in Nigeria.
- **National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA):** This institute has the mandate to develop a critical mass of education sector planners and managers for the effective and efficient planning and management of the education system through capacity building, continuous training, action research and information dissemination.
- **Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC):** It develops a curriculum for early childhood care and education, primary education, junior secondary schooling and senior secondary schooling. It also builds the capacity of teachers on the effective utilisation of the curriculums that have been developed.
- **International agencies:** These are united agencies that provide technical support, funding, equipment and services in all sectors of the economy, including the education sector.

Other professional bodies include the following:

- **National Union of Teachers (NUT):** This is a trade union for teachers, particularly at primary school level. It is not a professional organisation. It sees to the welfare of its members.
- **Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN):** This is a body established by law to make teaching a profession (professionalised teaching). The minimum qualification for registration is a National Certificate in Education (NCE). It provides support for the professionalisation of teachers, registering them and ensuring that only qualified teachers are in the education sector. The TRCN reports to the Federal Ministry of Education and provides technical foresight to teachers.

THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

The TRCN, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education and the NTI, initiated the Special Teacher Upgrading Programme (STUP) with the aim of freeing the school system of unqualified teachers. This programme commenced in 2007. The screening tests were jointly conducted by the TRCN and the NTI, which helped to select suitable Grade 2 teachers to benefit from the programme. A total of 40 000 candidates passed the screening and have since commenced with their studies. The programme is designed to run for two years in order to fast-track the upgrading of the Grade 2 teachers to the level of the NCE, which is the national minimum teaching qualification. The STUP is the final chance and hope for unqualified teachers as the National Council on Education had instructed the TRCN to deal with any unqualified teachers still in the school system after the programme.

The TRCN is the torch-bearer on ethics in the teaching profession. Every registered teacher takes the following oath of allegiance:

I, …, do solemnly affirm that I will be faithful, loyal and bear true allegiance to the teaching profession, that as a registered teacher, I will discharge my duties honestly, to the best of my ability and faithfully in accordance with the provision of the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria, Act 31 of 1993; that I will not allow my personal interest to influence my official conduct or any official decisions; that I will preserve, protect and defend the dignity of the teaching profession, so help me God.

THE DYSFUNCTIONALITIES OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Education, viewed from a social system perspective, comprises three main elements: students, teachers and a curriculum. The efficiency and effectiveness of any educational system depend on the cohesion between these three elements. If one of them has some deficiency or weakness in performing its role, reduced productivity may result in the educational process as a whole. However, it is clear that every one of the three elements has a significant effect on the other two. In this case, the teacher is the basic element that affects the educational process more than the other two. Consequently, we use the concept of dysfunctionality in teacher education against the background of the objectives of teacher education as spelled out in the National Policy on Education:

- To provide highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers
- To encourage further the spirit of inquiry and creativity in teachers
- To help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large
- To produce teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment
- To enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession

In assessing the achievement of these objectives, we find that our teacher education programmes have been deficient in providing teachers with an intellectual and professional background appropriate to their assignment in society.

We carried out an intensive study of student teachers' perceptions of teaching and why they have chosen the profession. Some of the results of my study were enlightening. The factors responsible for determining the attractiveness of the teaching profession were those relating to salary, fringe benefits and working conditions, while the converse was true for teachers' poor public image and lack of job satisfaction. These findings are consistent with other studies (Aghenta, 1971, Omoregie, 1994, Ossai, 1995, Awanbor, 1996). Other reasons usually advanced for not wanting to remain in the teaching profession are lack of retirement benefits, lack of regular promotions and the irregular payment of salaries.

THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF TEACHING

Professionalisation of teaching has been a topic of controversy and – in Nigeria – it has been an issue of concern among educators, teachers, administrators, organisations and the public at large. The question of whether teaching is an occupation, a vocation, a calling, a semi-profession or a profession has further complicated the situation to the extent that members of the public have accorded low status and recognition to teachers. As a result, no one is proud to identify or introduce himself or herself as a teacher in the manner a lawyer or a medical doctor would proudly and gladly do. Two examples are cited to illustrate the plight of teachers in Lagos, Delta, Edo, Ondo and probably many other states. Landlords will not lease their houses to teachers. From bitter experience, they know that teachers are sure to fall into arrears on their rent, not because they are congenital debtors, but because they are poorly paid and rarely get paid regularly. Parents do not hesitate to *disown* a daughter foolish enough to fall in love with a teacher. This situation led Legatt (1970) to say that teaching is a profession, but not a highly esteemed one and may never be so.

THE CASE STUDY OF ADEYEMI COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

This college is located in Ondo, in Ondo State, Nigeria. It is mandated to develop and train primary school teachers who will provide the required basic education for the first six grades in the primary school and the first three grades in the junior secondary school. The Head of Department in the primary phase cited the following code of conduct, which forms part of the curriculum for the training of pupil teachers:

Ethics is crucial as far as teacher education is concerned; teacher education involves more than just teaching in the classroom. A teacher is an individual who leads learners to learn using pedagogical methodology.

CONCLUSION

In this contribution, the centrality of the teacher in the education process was emphasised and buttressed with examples of various policies of government implemented to speed up national development. From a historical viewpoint, teacher education was presented as the pivot of the educational system, though constrained by both historical and social factors. We found that when teaching is examined as a profession in Nigeria against the defining characteristics of control of entry, conditions of service, maintenance of standards and autonomy, it does not satisfy all the criteria associated with a profession. To remedy the situation and make teaching a fully fledged profession, a number of recommendations were made, emphasising that a profession should be organised in such a way that the members have a sense of belonging to a particular body, which determines codes of conduct, regulates conditions for entry into the profession, plans for the welfare of members, organises the exchange of ideas and disciplines erring members.

As Hanson (1964) put it: "An important sign of the long-range health of a nation is the spirit and quality of its teachers… the future of the nation rests in the hands of its teachers, for the qualities they possess today will inevitably be reflected in the citizens of tomorrow."

The challenge for the 21st century is that the education and training of Nigerian teachers must top the list of priorities of government, because the services of teachers are indispensable to any nation and they, more than any other professionals, influence the lives of the nation's youths and the nation's future.

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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GHANA: WHAT ARE THE LEVERS FOR CHANGE?

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ABSTRACT

The philosophy of inclusive education necessitates rigorous changes in the school system for it to be effective. In order to respond to the challenge, countries are required to develop structures that make it possible for schools to adapt curricula and pedagogical strategies to meet the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs. Such changes must be ecosystemic, requiring the involvement of all stakeholders, including schools, the home and community, and voluntary organisations. What are the changes that need to be made to effectively translate theory into practice to celebrate the outcomes of inclusivity? On the basis of the experience of the United Kingdom, this paper explores certain levers that have to be critically considered to make inclusive education a reality in Ghana.

Keywords: inclusive education, special educational needs, regular schools

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INTRODUCTION

The policy guiding the principle and practice of inclusion was first adopted at the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, where delegates, representing 92 governments and 25 international organisations, met in Salamanca, Spain, in June 1994, under the sponsorship of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to deliberate on and sign a Framework for Action on Special Needs Education and a statement on the rights of the child. Now known as the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), the statement has drawn global attention to access and quality in the delivery of special needs education.

The Statement was later emphasised at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000. The forum committed itself to various goals, including expanding and improving early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. This, of course, included children with disabilities and special educational needs. The Dakar Framework for Action was attended by 1 100 participants. The forum reaffirmed its commitment to achieving education for all by the year 2015. In order to achieve the goals set, the forum entrusted UNESCO with the overall responsibility for coordinating all international players and sustaining the global momentum, supported by the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, proclaiming participation and equality for all (http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/wef_2000/).

The Salamanca Statement recommended that governments should, as a matter of urgency, do the following:

- Give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improving education services so that all children could be included, regardless of difficulties.
- Adopt, as a matter of law or policy, the principle of inclusive education and enrol all children in ordinary schools, unless there were compelling reasons for doing otherwise.
- Ensure that organisations of disabled people, along with parents and community bodies, are involved in planning and decision-making.
- Put greater effort into pre-school strategies, as well as the vocational aspects of inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994:ix).

Most importantly, paragraph 2 of the Salamanca Statement spelt out the following major provisions as key issues in inclusion:

- Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.
- Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.
- Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.
- Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools that should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy that is capable of meeting these needs.
- Regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. Moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

According to this statement, all children, including those with special educational needs, were to be educated in an ordinary school, where equal opportunities and access were to be guaranteed.

THE MEANING OF INCLUSION

The principle of inclusion is novel and laudable in developing the potential of persons with disabilities. However, there is no substantive definition for inclusive education (Pearson, 2005, Beveridge, 1999), nor is there any consistent government definition of inclusion, which makes the practice of inclusion difficult (Sheehy, Rix, Nind & Simmons, 2004). It was to overcome this difficulty that Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2004) and Mitchell (2005) proposed principal features to facilitate understanding. Ainscow et al. (2004) proposed the following:

- Inclusion is a process.
- Inclusion is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers.
- Inclusion is about the presence, participation and achievement of all students.
- Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement.

The principal features cited by Mitchell (2005) are the following:

- Entitlement to full membership in regular, age-appropriate classes in neighbourhood schools.
- Access to appropriate aids and support services, as well as individualised programmes with appropriately differentiated curriculum and assessment practices.

These features mean that inclusive education is developmental in nature and seeks for ways to make children with special educational needs participate actively in regular/ordinary/mainstream education. It is about "engendering a sense of community and belonging, and encouraging mainstream and special schools, and others, to come together to support each other and pupils with special educational needs" (Department for Education and Skills, 2001). It is about valuing diversity and individual differences, and assuring equality and access. It was in the light of this argument that Deiner (2005) pointed out that successful inclusion involves "placing children in an education setting that provides the support that meets children's emotional, social and educational needs". Inclusion may, therefore, be regarded as the process through which all children, including those with special educational needs, receive their education in the mainstream with structures in place to ensure participation and progress. These structures include collaboration with support personnel, professionals and parents (Kathryn, Daniel, Angelia & Norah, 2007, Department for Education and Skills, 2001). Collaboration occurs when people work together towards a common goal (Isichei, 2007) and is necessary. As Gyimah, Sugden and Pearson (2008) succinctly argue, it can reduce or eliminate the stress teachers experience in meeting the needs of children with disabilities and special educational needs in inclusive settings.

CHALLENGES TO INCLUSION

Inclusive education has not been without challenges. Lewis (2000) questioned what rationale is "behind getting same-aged groups of students to learn where the real achievements of the less able will never be recognised as they will always be below the artificial average of their peers and where their final efforts are bound to be degraded in the common exam system?" Lewis's (2000) fear is about the possibility of including persons with disabilities and not catering for their needs. The Council for Exceptional Children (1996) in the USA noted how challenging it becomes if time and resource allocations are poor. If time is efficiently managed, those who have to participate in the delivery of service for the child with special educational needs can do so reasonably easily. Resource availability can allow for curriculum access. The Audit Report (2002) expressed concerns about the possibility of children with special educational needs having a poor time as a result of schools not making a sustained investment in staff and school facilities in order to make inclusion work. It will therefore mean that for children with special educational needs to fully participate in the regular curriculum and achieve academic and social success, educational systems will have to make provision for appropriate aids and support services, with appropriately differentiated curriculum and assessment practices (UNESCO, 1994).

GHANA'S EXPERIENCE WITH INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Ghana's attempt to develop the potential of all children in the educational system, including those with special educational needs, dates back to the early 1960s soon after the attainment of independence (Okyere & Adams, 2003). The Education Act of 1961 provided for free and compulsory education for all children. The country was among the first countries to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan for Inclusion manifests the country's objective to fully implement inclusive education by 2015 by providing equitable educational opportunities. It aims to do this by integrating all children with non-severe special educational needs into mainstream schools and fully enrolling hard-to-reach and out-of-school children by 2015 (Ministry of Education, 2003). The Ministry of Education's Education Strategic Plan has now been revised to cover the period 2010–2020 (Ministry of Education, 2010).

The government has, through the promulgation of Act 2006, Act 715, made provision for the education of children with special educational needs. For instance, article 20(1) stresses that "a person responsible for admission into a school or other institution of learning shall not refuse to give admission to a person with a disability on account of the disability unless the person with a disability has been assessed by the ministry responsible for education in collaboration with the ministries responsible for health and social welfare to be a person who clearly requires to be in a special school for children or persons with disabilities". In terms of this, all schools are obliged to enrol children with disabilities, unless otherwise specified (UNESCO, 1994).

The National Disability Council was formed and inaugurated to oversee the implementation of provisions for the disabled. There is a National Assessment

and Resources Centre for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Achimota, Accra, as well as Speech and Hearing Services at the University of Education, Winneba, and units in major hospitals for the assessment of vision and hearing, for example, Korle-Bu Teaching and Okomfo Anokye hospitals in Accra and Kumasi, respectively.

In order to realise the vision of inclusion, the country, under the direction of the Special Education Division of the Ministry of Education, has embarked on pilot projects. Since 2003, the Special Education Division has targeted a number of regions in the country to pilot inclusive education programmes. The following are some of the regions and districts that have been targeted:

Greater Accra:

- Accra Metro (Tudu) (four schools)
- Dangbe East (Ada-Foah) (three schools)
- Ga West (Amasaman) (three schools)

Central Region:

- Cape Coast Metropolis (four schools)
- Ewutu/Afutu/Senya (Winneba) (four schools)
- Agona Swedru (three schools)

Eastern Region:

- New Juabeng (four schools)
- Birim South (Akim Oda) (four schools)
- Yilo Krobo (Somanya) (three schools)
- Manya Krobo (Odumase) (three schools)

GHANA'S CHALLENGE REGARDING INCLUSION

In spite of the attempts and provisions, Gyimah, Sugden and Pearson (2009), Akyeampong (2003), Avoke (2001), and Avoke and Hayford (2000) observe that the country is faced with a number of challenges in practising inclusive education.

These include the following:

- Insufficient health and paramedical personnel, for example, neurologists, audiologists, and speech and language therapists.
- Lack of comprehensive and multidisciplinary assessment practices.
- Seemingly negative social attitudes.
- Poor parental involvement and community participation.
- Inadequate central government and district assembly funding. It is common knowledge that the 2% District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF), which is meant to develop the capacities of persons with disabilities, is not made available to the disabled.
- Poor teacher competency in adapting the physical environment and curriculum to meet the needs of the disabled in educational settings.
- Inaccessible buildings that make it impossible for those using wheelchairs to gain access to facilities.
- The large class sizes and high pupil-teacher ratio (PTR). In some classrooms, especially in the urban school environment, class sizes range between 50 and 70 or more. This makes it difficult for teachers to give individualised attention to those likely to underachieve academically.

LEVERS FOR CHANGE TO IMPROVE PRACTICE

Given that Ghana's attempt to implement inclusive education is fraught with certain challenges, certain levers to improve practice are worth considering. Senge (1990) regards levers as "actions that can be taken in order to change the behaviour of an organisation and those individuals within it". Measures need to be taken to help the country realise the vision, and improve the practice and expand the frontiers of inclusive education. Although a growing number of countries have legislation on inclusive education (Curcic, 2009) that can be considered, the authors are of the belief that Ghana can, in particular, take cues from some of the measures the United Kingdom has adopted to enhance inclusive practice (Department for Education and Skills, 2001). The United Kingdom's Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and Toolkit (2001) gives some guidance to local educational authorities, health and social services as to how children with special educational needs can be included in regular or ordinary settings.

LESSONS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

In practising inclusive education, the United Kingdom Government's Green Paper (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) addressed issues related to the following:

- Policies for excellence. In terms of the document "every child matters" (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) and all children are to be valued, irrespective of their location.
- Working with parents.
- Planning, among others, to make provision for special educational needs.

In terms of this green paper, every step had to be taken to ensure that the potential of every child is harnessed in order to make them contributing and independent members of society. Parents are recognised as key stakeholders who have to play an active and valued role in their children's education. They are encouraged to make their views known about how they want their children to be educated. In planning to make provision for special educational needs, parents are to be fully involved in the school-based response for their child and to understand the purpose of any intervention or programme of action.

Other measures to be taken include the following:

- Requiring all children to be registered on the roll of the mainstream school supported as appropriate by specialist provision.
- Targeting specific grants towards measures that will enhance mainstream schools' ability to include pupils with special educational needs. Grants could be earmarked for disability awareness training and special educational needs, as well as the specific training of teachers and others in mainstream schools.
- Seeking ways to celebrate the success of those schools that improve their ability to provide for a wide range of special needs.
- Giving some priority to capital support where possible to planned school reorganisation that would enhance provisions for special educational needs in mainstream schools (Department for Education and Skills, 1997).

The Government Strategy for Special Educational Needs (2004) promoted the idea of partnerships. Target participants were the local authorities, partnerships between schools, partnerships with health and social services, and partnerships with voluntary organisations.

In order to crystallise the vision, the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and Toolkit, which came into effect in January 2002 (Department for Education and Skills, 2001), envisaged specific roles for local educational authorities. Local educational authorities were to ensure that parents have access to essential services

that help them meet the needs of their children. They were to welcome their involvement and value the contributions they make to their children's development. They were also to ensure that information was available in a language parents can understand.

Best practices should be shared and spread among schools. In other words, practices that facilitate the inclusion of children with special educational needs should be shared. In this way, schools could learn from one another.

The role health and social services could play in the partnership was specified. For example, social services were required to liaise with the home to identify social factors that might make it impossible for the child to be fully included. Similarly, health personnel were to ensure that up-to-date medical and health records of the child were kept to facilitate service delivery.

Voluntary organisations had roles to play in assisting parents to obtain information. They could talk to parents and explain the types of services that were available. They could share the experiences of best practice and encourage schools and local educational authorities to adopt them. Although the documents did not explicitly define step by step how inclusive education should be practised, at least they set out certain structures that were worth considering.

WHAT GHANA CAN LEARN: WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED?

In Ghana's bid to implement inclusive education, there is a need to forge stronger cooperation between special education and mainstream education (Fletcher-Campbell, 1994). Mainstream education teachers can receive much help from special educational needs teachers when there is such cooperation. For example, it will be possible for special educational needs teachers to team up with their counterparts in mainstream education to successfully accommodate children with special educational needs in the regular classroom. Most importantly, there can be better understanding of issues pertaining to services for children with special educational needs. Barriers that may impede achievement can be collectively identified and removed.

Central government, metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies should make funding available to schools for logistical and support services. Schools need to

be adequately resourced if they can be successful in accommodating the needs of different ranges of children. Money is needed to purchase equipment such as Braille machines for visually impaired children and hearing aids for children with hearing impairments, and to engage the services of professionals. Without sufficient funding, access to the curriculum can be difficult for certain categories of children with special educational needs and – most importantly – for training resource persons to manage these children.

Furthermore, teachers should be trained on principles and methodologies to accommodate the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs. There may not be the need to have different curricula for different ranges of children, but some curricular adaptations are necessary if children with special educational needs are to have access to the regular school curriculum.

There is a need for the country to encourage the design and/or use of appropriate school curricula. If the school curriculum is flexible and friendly to the needs of all children, it facilitates adaptation. This suggests that the Curriculum Research and Development Division of the Ghana Education Service should include more information on special educational needs in the curriculum of schools and colleges of education. When prospective teachers are well informed, they will know the measures to adopt to accommodate persons with disabilities.

There is a need to train and involve more health personnel (including audiologists, and speech and language therapists), social workers, psychologists and counsellors to assist in meeting the needs of different ranges of children in regular schools. Health personnel can assess the health status of children, and also provide information to teachers on best practices. Social workers can liaise with the home, and support parents and professionals in service provision for children. Each of these professionals should be assigned specific roles or duties to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

Efforts should be made to encourage active parental involvement. Parents are key stakeholders and their involvement cannot be taken for granted. Gibb, Tunbridge, Chua and Norah (2007) suggest that "productive collaboration with parents" should be pursued. If parents are actively involved in the education of their children, the children "achieve more, stay in school longer and engage in school more completely" (Ferguson, 2008).

The assessment practices in the country should be seriously examined to allow for holistic assessment. The present situation, where individual assessors assess and recommend placement, is not suitable to meet the needs of children with special educational needs. The team approach, which involves professionals in health, social services and education (Gyimah, Sugden & Pearson, 2009) can be more helpful as it will reveal hidden difficulties.

Finally, the physical environment or architecture in most schools should be improved to facilitate access for people with handicaps (Pivic, McComas & LaFlamme, 2002).

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that a great deal of preparation, including a strong political will and community participation, is needed to successfully practise inclusive education. Inclusion draws much on the sharing of experiences for it is developmental in nature. While we recognise that the United Kingdom does not yet have all the answers, its legislation on the practice of inclusion can be studied and – where necessary – adapted to improve the education of children with special educational needs and enhance practice.

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IMPLEMENTING BLACKBOARD:
A CASE STUDY OF THE CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Universities, in general, form a critical component of a country's national system of innovation and are its intellectual backbone. However, the capacity of many African universities to lead the process of integrating information and communication technologies (ICTs) into education is woefully inadequate. This paper presents the experience of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in integrating Blackboard into teaching and learning. The paper discusses the implementation approaches, successes, challenges and lessons learnt. It also provides insights into how institutions can best support academic staff in mainstreaming technology into teaching and learning.

Keywords: learning management system, open source, Blackboard, e-learning, mainstreaming, diffusion, innovation, information and communication technologies, adoption process and approaches, integrating

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INTRODUCTION

A learning management system (LMS) is a software package used for delivering, tracking and managing training and education. There are two types of LMSs: commercial and open source. Blackboard and WebCT are examples of commercial LMSs (Blackboard acquired Web-CT in 2005), while some of the commonly used open-source LMSs are Sakai and Moodle. Educational institutions may adopt a commercial or an open-source LMS to enhance, supplement and support classroom teaching and to offer courses to large populations of learners across the globe. Universities have adopted these software packages on a wide scale. Despite their rapid adoption on the African continent, few studies have documented the implementation and use of these systems (Snowball & Mostert, 2010, Van der Merwe & Mouton, 2005) or the impact they have on lecturers' teaching.

This paper attempts to share the Cape Peninsula University of Technology's (CPUT) implementation processes, approaches, successes, challenges and lessons learnt in the implementation of Blackboard. It is hoped that ideas and insights generated through this institution's implementation process can provide useful lessons to other institutions that are planning to implement this LMS or are grappling with the implementation of learning management systems.

METHODOLOGY

The research methods used to gather data for this study included in-depth interviews and document reviews. In-depth interviews were carried out with key informants, who included staff of the Centre for e-Learning, staff who use Blackboard in their teaching (20 interviews) and staff who do not use Blackboard in their teaching (20 interviews). The key informants that were used in this study were chosen because they possess special knowledge, status or communicative skills and were willing to share such knowledge and skills with the researcher (Babbie, 1995, Zelditch, 1962). These individuals also contributed insights into the process variables that were not evident to the researcher. They sensitised the researcher to value dilemmas within the project and also the implications of specific findings (Goetz & Lecompte, 1984).

A literature review – based largely on sources from developed and developing countries – was conducted on adoption approaches and CPUT's documentation on ICTs in teaching and learning, which included its vision, strategic plans and policy documentation. The reason for carrying out this literature review was to provide the researcher with insights into what has or has not been done in the area under investigation. This helped the researcher to learn from and build on research conducted by others, to link the present research to what has been done by others, and to demonstrate relevance by making connections to the appropriate body of literature.

The researcher then analysed in-depth interview data using an analytical induction strategy that involved scanning the data for categories of phenomena and relationships between such categories, as well as developing working typologies and hypotheses upon an examination of initial cases, and then modifying and refining them on the basis of subsequent cases (Robinson, 1951, Znaniecki, 1934). It was the researcher's aim to prepare a report emerging from and supported by available evidence. Therefore, the researcher sought to identify evidence that was repeated by or common to several participants, while at the same time taking into account the ideas and perceptions that were different in the responses of several participants. Direct quotes were used, where necessary, to capture the intended meaning of the speaker as fairly and accurately as possible. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' identities.

INTRODUCTION OF BLACKBOARD

The idea of introducing Blackboard arose in 1998 when the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the former Cape Technikon at the time attended a conference where they were exposed to presentations on the use of LMSs for teaching and learning. They saw the benefits of Blackboard for teaching and learning, and in 1999 the implementation of Blackboard commenced at the Technikon, with the aim of improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

A few years later, the Cape Technikon merged with the Peninsula Technikon to form the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). This was in line with the Higher Education Amendment Act, Act No 63 of 2002 (Republic of South Africa, 2002), which dealt with the transformation of the South African higher education landscape in order to maximise integration and diversity, promote equity and increase access. The use of Blackboard was then introduced on all campuses of CPUT.

The use of technology in teaching and learning is embedded in:

- the University's vision: "…to be at the heart of technology education and innovation in Africa";
- the University's strategic plan;

- teaching and learning plans;
- the assessment policy; and
- many faculty and departmental plans.

The Director of the Centre for e-Learning indicated that the drawing up of an e-learning policy was still in progress as there were aspects that were not included in the abovementioned documents, as they still needed to be addressed.

Despite the existence of these documents in support of the use of technology in teaching and learning, most of the interviewees felt that the University management did not fully support the e-learning initiative. This was primarily due to the fact that the Computer and Telecommunications System (CTS) division, which was tasked with providing information technology support for e-learning at the University, had been unable to provide adequate support. Institutional systems were blamed for this problem not being attended to. Although most of the faculties and departments had included the integration of technology into teaching and learning in their plans, these plans were not being implemented in some of the departments. While the University had a student to computer ratio of 6:1, which could be considered fairly good, it was felt that the infrastructure did not fully support the use of technology in teaching and learning. The reasons for this were that it was underutilised, there was no open access to the computer laboratories and there was no system in place for lecturers to book laboratories for their classes. Sufficient technical support was not provided to the Centre for e-Learning. More often than not, e-learning staff had to either beg for assistance or log calls at the CTS help desk, where the calls were usually not prioritised. Despite the abovementioned challenges, implementation of Blackboard at CPUT is ongoing.

ADOPTION PROCESS AND APPROACHES

There are different theories on how information technology should be integrated into higher education teaching and learning, what the e-learning strategy should be, who should formulate the strategy and who should drive the integration process. Beller and Or (1998) state that the integration of information technology can either be an evolutionary process, which relies mainly on local initiatives and the personal motivation of individual faculty members, or it can be top management-driven. The results of this study indicate that both these approaches are employed at CPUT. Top management invested money in the purchase of Blackboard, ensured that the use of technology was embedded in its guiding documents and policies, and gave a directive that every subject should have a minimum web presence. This means that each subject should at least make use of the calendar tool, activate one of the communication tools, populate the Grade Book and have study guides on the LMS. Top management does not force lecturers to use Blackboard and therefore most of the lecturers using it are personally motivated to do so. They also went for training voluntarily and started using the LMS to support their teaching. This point has been expressed differently by most of the lecturers interviewed, and can be summed up in the following quotes: "The factor that encouraged me to use Blackboard in my teaching is my experience with electronics. I studied in the USA and I was able to access notes online at home. I know the advantages from the student's point of view" (Respondent A, personal interview, 16 May 2009). Respondent B had this to say: "What encouraged me to start using Blackboard in my teaching is the fact that I like new technology and feel modern students should use it and I like the idea of saving paper and time" (Respondent B, personal interview, 2 June 2009).

Everett Roger (1995) identifies the following three types of innovation adoption approaches:

- Optional innovation-decision approach: The choice to adopt or reject an innovation is made by an individual independent of the decisions by other members of a system.
- Collective innovation-decision approach: The choice to adopt or reject an innovation is made by consensus among the members of a system.
- Authority innovation-decision approach: The choice to adopt or reject an innovation is made by relatively few individuals (in a system) who possess power, status or technical expertise.

  At CPUT, the optional innovation-decision approach is commonly used since it provides maximum flexibility to users and accommodates individuality. This approach allows lecturers to use Blackboard according to their individual needs. The downside of this approach, however, is that it makes great demands on resources such as support services. The authority innovation-decision approach is also used at CPUT, but to a lesser extent. For example, management made the decision to use Blackboard and laid down the rule for every subject to have a minimum web presence. While this approach leads to rapid adoption, it often produces high resistance among particular individuals.

THE USE OF BLACKBOARD AT CPUT: LECTURERS' PERSPECTIVES

To explain the use of Blackboard at CPUT, Everett Roger's (1995) "diffusion of innovations" theory will be utilised. Roger (1995) explains the categories of innovation adopters as follows: Innovators are individuals who tend to be experimentalists and interested in technology itself. Early adopters are individuals who may be technically sophisticated and interested in technology for solving professional and academic problems. The early majority are those who are pragmatists and constitute the first part of the mainstream. The late majority are those who are less comfortable with technology and are the sceptical second half of the mainstream. The laggards are those who may never adopt technology and may be antagonistic and critical of its use by others. The implementation of Blackboard at CPUT caused the users of information technology in teaching and learning to change from being innovators to early adopters and part of the early majority. Findings of this study indicated that the users of Blackboard at CPUT are innovators, early adopters and a few are part of the early majority, since most of these adopters have stopped using Blackboard in their teaching due to their wariness of new technology (in this case due to network instability and lack of ongoing support after training). Roger (1995) explains the latter by indicating that, despite careful planning, there will always be unintended and unanticipated consequences when an innovation is diffused.

Factors that encouraged the interviewees to use Blackboard in their teaching varied from lecturer to lecturer. The following factors were identified:

- To be able to control large class sizes.
- To help students engage with coursework outside the classroom.
- To try and keep students interested in the subject.
- To ensure more transparency – the fact that one can upload assignments and notes and no student will say they have lost the handouts.
- The accessibility of a variety of features on Blackboard.
- The love of technology and the fact that they know the advantages of using Blackboard for teaching and learning from a student's point of view.

Blackboard is mostly used to supplement face-to-face instruction. Most of the lecturers who use Blackboard for teaching access it from both their homes and the campus, with a small number accessing it on campus only. The majority of the users have utilised Blackboard for their teaching for more than five years, while a few users utilised it for one to two years. Blackboard tools used for teaching and learning, and their use of these tools are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Blackboard tools used for teaching and learning, ranked from the most used to the least used

Blackboard tools	Use
Communication (mostly e-mail)	To send and receive e-mail to and from students in the course on course matters.
Assessment (mostly for quizzes and self-tests)	To create quizzes that students complete and submit for marks to assess their performance in the course. To create self-tests that students complete and submit for marks to assess their understanding of the course material.
Assignment	To create an inventory of assignments for the courses and for students to submit their assignments by attaching their own files.
Calendar	To post deadlines for course assignments.
Learning modules	To organise and deliver course content and extra reference material to students.
Grading Book	To enter, view and manage grades for all students and auditors.
Announcements	To create and post important information for students about upcoming assignments, tests and other events in their class.
Web links	To compile a list of internet addresses that serve as reference material for the course.

The most liked aspect of Blackboard is the communication tool, in particular e-mail, because it makes it easy to reach all the students from anywhere at any time. The following extract from Respondent C best supports this point: "You don't have to be on campus to interact with your students. You can do it from home. You can answer students' questions and distribute the information to all" (Respondent C, personal interview, 16 May 2009). Other aspects of the LMS that are equally liked by lecturers are the fact that it saves the University money on printing and photocopying, and it provides a rich learning environment. The following quotes from Respondent C and Respondent D confirm these points respectively. Respondent C had this to say: "What I like most about Blackboard is that you don't have to print or photocopy; you upload the material on the system and they [students] print it" (Respondent C,

personal interview, 16 May 2009). Respondent D stated: "What I like most about Blackboard is that it enables a rich learning environment. It is easy to collect a rich variety of resources and I like the diversity of learning activities it allows" (Respondent D, personal communication, 11 May 2009).

On the other hand, the most disliked aspect of Blackboard is the unreliability of the network. The following extract from Respondent E may speak for all: "Network failure is problematic. At one time the system went down for two days and I had to make a large number of copies" (Respondent E, personal interview, 24 June 2009). Other aspects that discourage the use of the LMS are slow internet connections and lack of time on the part of the lecturers to learn to use the different tools and to prepare teaching and learning materials to populate the system.

Interviewees cited varied benefits that they derived from using Blackboard in their teaching. Some of these benefits are that it enables communication between lecturers and students, assists with the submission of assignments, the marking of quizzes and self-tests (the feedback on which helps improve future lessons and addresses students problems), helps students (especially absentees) to access course content from anywhere and at any time, and acts as a portal for other resources. The Grading Book helps students to see their marks anywhere and offers them privacy. Blackboard also helps lecturers practise a student-centred approach to teaching. Most interviewees revealed that students taking courses through Blackboard are in favour of the system because they are able to access course materials and information online. This point is best illustrated by the following statement: "Students are quite positive about the subjects offered through Blackboard. They phone to ask why I haven't put what I promised on the system yet. There is pressure from the students to use the system" (Respondent F, personal interview, 19 June 2009). However, most of the lecturers pointed out that there was a lack of formal training for students to use Blackboard effectively for their learning. Lecturers revealed that subject matter lecturers using Blackboard for their teaching had to train students to use Blackboard and lecturers were not aware of any support offered to students in the Information Technology laboratories. Furthermore, most of the lecturers who were interviewed stated that although the Centre for e-Learning provided them with technical support, no educational support was forthcoming.

THE IMPACT OF BLACKBOARD ON THE WAY LECTURERS TEACH

On the question of whether using Blackboard had made any difference in their teaching and their students' performance, the majority of the interviewees reported

that it was too early to assess the impact on the students' performance and their teaching. However, a few lecturers believed that using Blackboard had influenced the way they teach. Some of the ideas raised in this regard are that it helped lecturers identify students who are at risk, it forced lecturers to plan thoroughly and to consider the link between what happens in the classroom and what happens on the Blackboard system, and it developed in lecturers an interest in research in order to provide students with up-to-date information.

PERSPECTIVES FROM NON-USERS OF BLACKBOARD

Eliciting non-users' points of view on the use of Blackboard is vital for CPUT because it is important to get to know the needs of these faculty members as well; not just the innovators and the early adopters. This is due to the fact that CPUT's "technology in teaching and learning" agenda is to accommodate all types of adopters. Data gathered from lecturers who do not use Blackboard in their teaching revealed that the majority of them were not aware of the institutional policy concerning the use of technology in teaching and learning.

Furthermore, most of the interviewees revealed that they were not using Blackboard in their teaching because of a heavy workload, resulting in a lack of time to prepare material to upload on Blackboard. Respondent G said: "I don't use Blackboard because I lecture five subjects, I am the coordinator for WIL (Work Integrated Learning) and I am trying to embrace research… " (Respondent G, personal interview, 20 May 2009). Lack of information regarding Blackboard and its usefulness, as well as a lack of skill to access and use Blackboard, were other reasons given by a good number of interviewees. The following extract from Respondent H could speak for them all: "I don't use Blackboard in my teaching because of a lack of information about it. I don't have the skills to use it and don't know how to access it" (Respondent H, personal interview, 20 May 2009). Network instability was also cited as one of the reasons for the non-use of Blackboard.

However, all the interviewees indicated their willingness to use Blackboard in their teaching. In this regard, the majority of the interviewees indicated that if they were provided with training on how to use Blackboard, information on the usefulness of Blackboard and time off to convert their teaching material into electronic format, they would start using Blackboard and use it effectively. This point is best illustrated by Respondent I: "To start using Blackboard and use it effectively, I need training. I need time to convert learning materials into e-format and I would like to see its

application and its advantages" (Respondent I, personal interview, 20 May 2009). The need to phone someone for help was another aspect highlighted by some of the interviewees.

SUCCESSES

Since the inception of the implementation of Blackboard, up to 240 lecturers have been trained on the use of Blackboard each year. About 25–30% of the lecturers who have received training are currently not using Blackboard to support their teaching and learning. This can partly be attributed to the fact that there is no real emphasis on the use of the LMS from management, and due to the network instability and the once-off training provided by the Centre for e-Learning without ongoing support at faculty level. The latter point is clearly highlighted by Respondent J: "The training offered is fine, but when lecturers go back to their offices, they don't know what to do. Continuous onsite training is needed" (Respondent J, personal interview, 15 May 2009).

In 2009, about 380 lecturers were actively using the LMS for teaching, which indicated a decline from 500 in 2008. There were 998 active subjects on Blackboard in 2008 and 390 in 2009. The decline in the number of active subjects and lecturers seems due mostly to network instability. Respondent J expressed this point clearly: "Blackboard is not useful for teaching and learning because of network problems. You can't access it at times, especially when we are writing a test" (Respondent J, personal interview, 12 May 2009). Approximately 50–60% of CPUT students take one or more classes through Blackboard.

In summary, it appears that there has been success, albeit limited, in the integration of Blackboard in teaching and learning, as evidenced in the data presented above. Additionally, there is some success in getting the support of the institutional systems and in the institution drawing up the necessary regulations to guide the use of technology at CPUT, as well as success in winning the support of the students regarding the use of Blackboard for teaching and learning. Success is also shown in the number of lecturers trained in the use of Blackboard each year, although some of these lecturers need ongoing support in order to embrace the use of Blackboard in their teaching.

CHALLENGES

During the implementation of Blackboard at CPUT, a number of challenges – or what Everett Roger (1995) calls "unanticipated/unintended consequences" – emerged. These are the following:

- A lack of total commitment from management to the integration of technology in teaching and learning. Although management stipulated that each subject should have a minimum web presence, there is no push for the lecturers to implement this rule. The University does not have an e-learning policy and, for many years, there was no committee tasked with the mainstreaming of technology in teaching and learning (this committee was only formed in March 2009). The lack of total commitment from management and the non-existence of a committee to look at issues of integrating technology into teaching and learning can partly explain why some of the departments do not implement the technology aspects in their teaching and learning plans.
- The information technology infrastructure does not fully support the use of technology in teaching and learning. This is because there is limited access to computer laboratories as most of them are locked for security reasons and those that are open normally close at 16:00, thus not allowing students to work after hours.
- Inadequate information technology support to the Centre for e-Learning. Staff indicated that they have to log a call at the CTS help desk whenever the Blackboard system has a problem and their calls are not prioritised.
- Network instability and slow internet connections. Most of the interviewees raised the fact that network instability and slow internet connections discourage them from using Blackboard.
- A lack of ongoing support at faculty level after lecturers have been trained in the use of Blackboard affects the diffusion of technology at the University. About 25–30% of all the trained lecturers do not use Blackboard, although everybody who is trained is expected to do so.
- A lack of formal training for students to enable them to use Blackboard effectively puts a burden on the lecturers as they have to hastily train students who, in some cases, are not fully equipped to learn to use Blackboard.
- A lack of information on Blackboard and its usefulness in teaching and learning. This point was raised by most of the lecturers who do not employ Blackboard in their teaching practices.

- A lack of pedagogical/educational support in the use of Blackboard impacted on the effectiveness of Blackboard in improving lecturers' teaching and students' performance.
- Heavy workloads have either completely discouraged lecturers from using Blackboard or have dissuaded them from using it as much as they would like to because they do not have the time to convert their teaching material into an electronic format.

LESSONS LEARNT AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

In the CPUT context, the processes of implementation have made it clear that the implementation of an innovation is not an event, but a process. CPUT views all the unanticipated/unintended consequences emerging from evidence on the implementation of Blackboard as learning moments that will inform the future diffusion of Blackboard. At this stage of the implementation of Blackboard in teaching and learning, CPUT has learnt the following:

- The total commitment of management is required in order to integrate technology into teaching and learning (Phillips, 2005). This is because efforts of a committed team of lecturers can be undermined by an unsupportive management or unsupportive heads of schools (Phillips, 2005). To ensure the future diffusion of technology in teaching and learning, CPUT's top management needs to formulate a vision and priority areas for mainstreaming technology into teaching and learning, as well as to establish a technology integration forum (formed in March 2009) to oversee the implementation of the University's policies concerning the use of technology in teaching and learning.
- To speed up the diffusion of Blackboard, departments need to embed technology in their normal teaching (Phillips, 2005). A needs analysis must be carried out to find out the kind of support that the departments require and the kind of support that should be provided.
- A stable information technology infrastructure is crucial and adequate technical support for faculty and Centre for e-Learning staff is needed (Phillips, 2005). The University is in the process of upgrading its servers to ensure a more stable technology environment.
- A high-speed internet connection is needed to enable Blackboard to be a useful portal for other learning technologies and for easy access by students and lecturers. The University plans to increase the bandwidth by using the low-cost bandwidth provided by the recently launched Seacom optic fibre cable.
- Adequate training in the use of Blackboard and ongoing on-site support for academics is vital. Literature proves that once-off training or workshops (as is the practice at CPUT) are adequate for introducing new ideas to trainees, but to enable trainees to implement those ideas in practice, regularly scheduled follow-up support is needed (Rude-Parkin & Hancock, 1990). This practice is necessary to enable lecturers to fully integrate the new ideas into their teaching repertoire and to ensure that the new approach will not be lost due to disuse (Butler, 1992). The best way to achieve widespread use of new technologies is to provide just-in-time support (that is, assistance and encouragement when needed – not tomorrow, but now!). Therefore, the Centre for e-Learning needs to look at its support strategy and ensure that lecturers are provided with ongoing support in their implementation of Blackboard. Perhaps the Centre for e-Learning should consider a mixed-mode method of training, that is, use the human resources route to offer training to an entire department (this is preferred by lecturers) and – should the need arise – offer one-to-one training to lecturers, especially those who are afraid of the technology and need to be trained at their own pace. The current practice is that training sessions are included in the University calendar and are advertised in the University newsflash (notice board). Those who need to attend the training apply through the Human Resources division.
- A rigorous awareness campaign about Blackboard and its usefulness for teaching and learning is required (Sherry, Billig, Tavalin & Gibson, 2000, Carr, 2006). The Centre for e-Learning needs to produce an awareness campaign on the use of Blackboard in teaching and learning if the conditions and activities that can promote adoption by the early and late majorities and laggards are to prevail.
- There is a need to provide both technical and pedagogical training on the effective integration of technology in teaching and learning (Ferrazzi, 2003). The Centre for e-Learning was praised by most of the users of Blackboard for its provision of technical support. However, most users of Blackboard indicated that there was a lack of educational/pedagogical support in the use of Blackboard in teaching and learning. Educational support should be provided to avoid what Phillips (2005) calls "the surface learning, teacher-centred, content-based approach", which is currently used in many universities where educational technology is widely adopted through the replication of traditional teaching techniques (Reeves, 2002).

- In order to encourage and sustain the use of technology in teaching and learning, a recognition and acknowledgement system of rewards, parallel and equal to that associated with "traditional" academic pursuits, needs to be in place. Such a system is not in place at CPUT, and management needs to encourage lecturers to use Blackboard. They could do this by offering formal Blackboard training for students, thus freeing up lecturers' time to train and support students. Additionally, there could be some recognition or reward for lecturers who use Blackboard appropriately.

CONCLUSION

Based on the implementation process and the challenges encountered, the inadequacy of CPUT in leading the process of integrating ICTs (in this case, Blackboard) in education is highlighted. As a result of the lessons learnt during the implementation of Blackboard in teaching and learning at CPUT, the researcher can conclude that, in order for universities to lead in integrating ICTs in education, there is a need for the following:

- Total commitment to the initiative from management.
- The provision of an environment that is conducive to the effective use of technology in teaching and learning.
- A stable information technology infrastructure.
- Adequate technical support for faculty staff and units providing e-learning services.
- Adequate training on the use of Blackboard or technology and ongoing on-site support for academics, and the provision of both technical and pedagogical training concerning the effective integration of technology in teaching and learning.
- Just-in-time support to faculties is suggested as a crucial requirement for the widespread diffusion of technology into teaching and learning.

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EXPLORING STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF VALUES AND MORAL REASONING

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses research conducted among distance education students at the University of Pretoria in 2009. The aim of the research was to explore moral reasoning and how it may be guided or influenced by what students regard as important values in their lives. The paper argues that being human means having the capacity to make choices and to act in accordance with the choices made. It is argued that the choices people make are based on their own personal and socially constructed values, assumptions and beliefs. This personal set of values, assumptions and beliefs informs a person's understanding of what is morally right and morally wrong, and of the type of conduct that would be just and ethical. Moral reasoning is therefore seen to be that which an individual regards as being morally right, based on a personal set of values.

In the research, an attempt was made to determine the priority given by students to certain values and how these value orientations may influence their reasoning when they are confronted with a moral dilemma. The aim of the research was to explore students' thinking and argumentation regarding moral dilemmas with a view to understanding how students – who are all practising teachers – take moral decisions. Although the study will run over a number of years, some preliminary findings of a survey undertaken in June 2009 are discussed, indicating some of the initial trends emerging from the data.

Keywords: moral reasoning, moral dilemmas, teachers, values, value education, value orientation

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INTRODUCTION

Why is it that, even though people know what is right, they continue to do what is wrong? Why is it that even though educators know that they should not have sexual relationships with learners, some still choose to have such relationships? This question has intrigued me for many years. In training school leaders, I learned two important lessons early on in my career: first, that theory and practice do not always agree; and secondly, that morally right and morally wrong may not be as fixed as what we often assume them to be. Let me illustrate this with an example.

In 2004, I conducted research using reflective journaling to analyse the daily work life and decisions taken by school managers (Nieuwenhuis, 2008). The data collected revealed a diverse range of challenges faced by rural school principals and illustrated how often principals acted differently to what common management theory would describe as being appropriate. Secondly, it revealed how morally right and morally wrong may differ, depending on one's own understanding of what people "ought to do".

In one case, the principal, in his reflective journal entry on the Monday, told the story of a learner in the school who had passed away that morning. For many African people, life – and life beyond the grave – dictates human behaviour (Mazrui, 1986). For a whole school week, the major part of the reflective journal entries talked about how the principal had devoted his time to arrange the memorial service and funeral for the deceased learner. This is not an isolated incident, but common practice in many of the more traditionally oriented rural schools in South Africa. According to custom, it is believed that the parents should be given the opportunity to grieve while the community or school steps in to make the arrangements for the funeral. On the Friday, the memorial service was held at the school. A big tent was put up on the school premises, as the school had no school hall, and all the chairs in the school were moved to the tent. On the Friday, the community came to the school to prepare food for the memorial service and for the funeral that was to be held on the Saturday. As a result, there was no schooling on the Friday or the Monday, when everything had to be returned to the classes.

Apart from anything else, this story raises the question whether the principal's conduct was morally right or whether it should be judged as being morally wrong, based on Western concepts of school management. From a management theory perspective, what the principal and the school did does not adhere to notions of best practice in terms of what one "ought to do".

Looking at the scenario from a traditional African perspective, however, the actions of the principal and the school met the requirements of the traditional things that one "ought to do". As stated earlier, for traditionally oriented African people, life – and life beyond the grave – determines human behaviour. Mazrui (1986) explains that for those in Africa who believe in the power of the ancestors, not paying the necessary respect to those who depart from this world will bring the anger of the ancestors over one. This link between the living and the ancestors is taken for granted in African communities, and it must be understood in terms of the notion of *ubuntu* – "I am human because you are human". Associated with this is the idea that a child is the child of the community and that the school should therefore step in, not only to make its facilities available, but also to help provide funds for the cost of a funeral.

Although such a line of argumentation may explain the example given, it does not present us with a finite answer. Does this line of reasoning, for example, propose that culture alone could act as the lens through which one could define what is morally right or morally wrong?

The film *A reasonable man* tells the story of a young man of 18 who stood accused of murder in the first degree. He had pick-axed a toddler of three to death. In the film, the advocate for the defence argued that the hut in which the murder took place was dark and the accused did not know that this little child was sleeping in the hut. When he saw the rug moving, he did not know that the child had pulled the rug over her and was trying to free herself. All he thought was that it must be a *tokoloshe* (an evil spirit) and he did the only brave thing a man could do and hit out at the spirit to kill it. Talking about the film, the producer, Gavin Hood (as quoted in *Daily Dispatch,* 1999), said: "One man's religion is another's superstition. It is easier to prove reasonable behaviour than reasonable belief, as it is such a personal concept." The film is based on the case R v Mbombela (1933 AD 269 at 272), which established the objective principle of a reasonable man. In this case, the judge argued that "[a] reasonable belief, in my opinion, is such as would be formed by a reasonable man in the circumstances in which the accused was placed in a given case". This principle has been followed repeatedly in numerous cases, as was the case in the Constitutional Court case of S v Manamela and Mdlalose (CCT 25/99). The Constitutional Court argued that in S v Van As, Rumpff CJ (1976 (2) SA 921 (A) at 928 C – E), the origin and application of the frequently invoked standard of the "careful head of a family", the *diligens paterfamilias,* was also explained. Rumpff CJ stated:

> *In our law since time immemorial we have used the* diligens paterfamilias *as someone who in specified circumstances would behave in a certain way. What he would do is regarded as reasonable. We do not use the* diligentissimus *[excessively careful]* paterfamilias, *and what the* diligens paterfamilias *would have done in a particular case must be determined by the judicial officer to the best of his ability. This* diligens paterfamilias *is, of course, a fiction and is also, all too often, not a* pater *[father]. In the application of the law, he is viewed 'objectively', but in essence he must apparently be viewed both 'objectively' and 'subjectively' because he represents a particular group or type of persons who are in the same circumstances as he is, with the same ability and knowledge. If a person therefore does not foresee what the other people in his group, in fact, could and would have foreseen, then that element of* culpa, *that is failure to foresee, is present.*

The court, therefore, argues that the test for reasonableness, of course, remains objective. What is reasonable will, however, be construed in the circumstances in which the accused in a particular case finds himself or herself. If this argument stands, then one could apply the same type of argument to social values and moral reasoning. Although it may offer some provisional acid test, it does not really fully resolve the dilemma in a diverse society where different cultural sets of morality operate. For this reason, the research that I will discuss in this paper looks at the values that students reported are important to them and how they argue about a moral dilemma.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Contrary to international experience, very little empirical research has been conducted on values and moral education in the South African context. For the most part, it has remained more of a philosophical debate at a conceptual level, often borrowing from research done abroad or based on anecdotal evidence. Given the emphasis placed on moral regeneration in South Africa and the urge for schools to assist in this regard, the Faculty of Education at the university where I work, in collaboration with the South African Department of Education, developed an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in Values and Human Rights in Education in 2003. This later developed into a BEd(Hons) module called Managing Values and Human Rights in Education. Much of the content of the ACE and the BEd(Hons) module is based on the *Manifesto on values, human rights and democracy in education* (2002), published by the South African Department of Education, as well as on international literature and empirical research data and trends. Although these served an invaluable purpose, they remained sterile in terms of locally produced research insights. For this reason, it is essential to conduct research into the values of students and how they argue about moral dilemmas so as to enhance our own understanding of the student population. Such an understanding would enable us to align our training during contact sessions to the unique understandings and value frameworks of students.

The research is premised on the assumption that people are not born with a complete set of values or morals. We may be born with the genetic potential to attach greater importance to certain values than to others, but in the end we learn and develop a value system based on our interaction with the natural world, with people, with thoughts, feelings and ideas. We are not passive recipients of the values of our ancestors, but **active creators** of our own set of values, which is related to that of our forbearers; yet our set of values is unique. As stated by McLean (1991), a person's values reflect his or her culture and heritage, as well as what he or she has done with the set of values handed down to him or her. Bull (1969) explains this point as follows:

> "The child is not born with a built-in moral conscience. But he is born with those natural, biologically purposive capacities that make him potentially a moral being."

As we grow older and mature, we begin to impart unique personal meaning to the values and principles that underpin the rules that we have learned to obey. As we impart meaning to different things, rules and behaviour, we organise the values into a specific abstract internalised structure called our value system and begin to develop the ability to take decisions that are congruent with our value system. Straughan (1992) argues that "what determines the level of moral development a person is at is not the particular action he judges to be right or wrong, but his reasons for so judging". This implies that in considering the actions of people, we must make allowance for social cognition and moral reasoning. Knowing right from wrong is more than a simple process of being aware of specific social rules, and doing the right thing is not a simple matter of putting those rules into practice.

The research therefore sets out to answer the following key research questions:

- What are the important values in the lives of our students?
- What content and understanding is given to these values?
- How do these values impact on their moral understanding and reasoning?

- What factors do they consider in solving moral dilemmas?
- To what extent are they willing to negotiate and/or sacrifice their moral standpoints?

THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDINGS THAT UNDERPIN THE STUDY

Being human means having the capacity to make choices and to act in accordance with the choices made. The choices we make are based on our own personal and socially constructed values, assumptions and beliefs. This personal set of values, assumptions and beliefs informs our understanding of what is morally right and morally wrong and of the type of conduct that would be just and ethical. It should be obvious from our earlier discussion that what is right and what is wrong are not absolute truths that are written into some convention or eternally valid declaration. Right and wrong are socially negotiated and mediated and therefore unstable. They have to be rediscovered, reinvented and redefined by each generation as it searches for a way to make living together more just and equitable. This does not mean that there are no normative principles on which right or wrong are based, but that the specific content imparted in these normative principles is relative to the specific spatio-temporality of the person or group. This makes any global notion of morally right or wrong highly problematic.

Secondly, I accept that all human beings are equally capable of doing what is right as they are of doing what is wrong. Nussbaum (1999) asserts the following:

> *…that all, just by being human, are of equal dignity and worth, no matter where they are situated in society, and that the primary source of this worth is a power of moral choice within them, a power that consists in the ability to plan a life in accordance with one's own evaluations of ends.*

Taking a decision is partly based on the education (enculturation) people receive at home, in school and in society, and partly on their inherited propensity towards certain kinds of behaviour; but mostly, it is based on their own personal experiences and the meanings they have attached to notions of right or wrong. In other words, decisions about right or wrong are socially constructed ideas of what they "ought to do" (the morally right). However, acting in accordance with that idea is not predetermined. Instead, it is actively chosen. Even the most morally corrupt person among us can at times do what is right, and even the most moral person can at times choose to do what is wrong.

Lickona (1991) points out the need to distinguish between moral knowing, moral feeling and moral behaviour, i.e. habits of the mind, habits of the heart and habits of action. Lickona claims that all three are necessary for leading a moral life, as all three make up moral maturity. Moral knowing is described as involving moral awareness, values, perspective taking, moral reasoning and decision-making. Moral feeling includes the conscience, self-esteem, empathy and humility. Finally, moral action is founded on moral competence (the ability to turn moral judgment and feeling into action), moral will (the desire to do what is right) and moral habit (an unconscious inclination to do what is right). Lickona (1991) views moral action as an "outcome" of both moral knowing and moral feeling. The moral environment in which individuals are situated is viewed as a key factor that determines whether people behave morally.

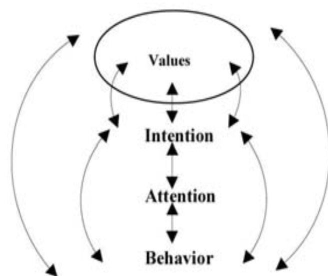
For Hale-Haniff and Pasztor (1999), values refer to the sense that something is or is not important (worth striving for or desirable). They contrast this to beliefs, which they define as assumptions, convictions, rules or expectations about life, people and ideas. Hale-Haniff and Pasztor (1999) claim that we only tend to hold beliefs about things that *matter* to us, i.e. we formulate beliefs in the light of that which we value. Viewed from this perspective, beliefs not only include philosophical assumptions or convictions about whether or not one's life has overall meaning or purpose, but also rules and expectations about life, people and ideas.

Accepting that a value is something worth living or striving for foregrounds two fundamental aspects of a value: cognition (what I think or believe) and feeling (what I feel/my emotions). Values are, however, not restricted to these two aspects, as they are mediated by a variety of other variables (place, circumstance, opportunity) so that the relation is not direct and certainly not isomorphic (Berkowitz, 1995). Certainly, a value entails cognition (knowing), for a value is centrally a belief in the desirability or lack of desirability of the focus of the value. It also includes emotion (feeling), as it is by its very nature affectively laden (Nieuwenhuis, 2005, 2007, Manual, 1994). Hale-Haniff and Pasztor (1999) state that our emotional responses provide cues that one or more of our (conscious or unconscious) expectations are being violated. For example, when someone else has violated an important belief or expectation, feelings of disappointment, anger or hurt often ensue. Because these emotions serve as signals of unmet expectations, they can serve as catalysts for identifying unconscious expectations or beliefs. In this regard, Rokeach (1973) claims that values guide, but do not necessarily predict behaviour. It is easy to reject drugs in the safe environment of the classroom, but it becomes a much more complex decision in the club when one's peers are using drugs.

Against this background, the study draws its theoretical conceptualisation from Satir's Growth Model and Csikszentmihaly's Model of Optimal Experience, as discussed by Hale-Haniff and Pasztor (1999), infusing these with the ideas of Lickona (1991).

Satir approaches the understanding of consciousness from a holistic perspective in which she translates the awareness of wholeness (which is largely a fixed, spatial metaphor) into temporal form, expressed through the infinite continuity or flowing movement of attention. Her concept of "congruence" (also see Kohlberg, 1975) refers to holistic patterns of consciousness in which attention flows freely and continuously (Hale-Haniff & Pasztor, 1999). When all bits of information in consciousness are congruent with each other, there is flow, and the quality of experience is optimal. When the bits of information conflict, the attention pattern becomes blocked or repetitive, and experience is painful. Satir attended to congruence or lack of congruence at multiple simultaneous levels: values, intention, attention and behaviour.

Diagram I: Relationships among the subsystems of congruent subjective experience (Hale-Haniff & Pasztor: 1999)



One could apply the notion of flow and congruence to the thinking of Csikszentimihaly. Csikszentimihaly (in Hale-Haniff & Pasztor, 1999) studied experience (or flow states) in hundreds of individuals as they engaged in many different activities. From the work of Satir and Csikszentimihaly, an isomorphic relationship between the pattern and structure of flow states, and Satir's description of congruence can be identified. Both refer to the interrelationships *among* the subsystems of values, goal-setting or intention, attention, emotion and behaviour. Diagram I summarises the relationships among these subsystems of subjective experience. The thinking underpinning Diagram 1 could also be linked to Lickona's idea of moral knowing, moral feeling and moral behaviour, i.e. habits of the mind, habits of the heart and habits of action, and to Kohlberg's idea of moral development.

Csikszentmihaly provides clear and useful descriptions of the relationship between values, intention, attention and emotion. **Values** are the major arbiter of choice. What we value is pervasively reflected across all aspects of consciousness: in our implicit and explicit choices, philosophical orientation and rules to live by, the nature of our expectations and assumptions, decision-making, means of motivation, prioritisation of goals, choices about what we attend to and how we behave. **Intention** or goal-setting is the force that keeps experience ordered. Goals or intentions, which may be immediate, short or long range, are assigned many levels of priority, ranging from trivial to vital. **Attention** refers to what will or will not appear in consciousness – what we notice internally and externally. At any given moment, we have at our disposal many individual units of attention, which may be usefully categorised as auditory, visual and kinaesthetic in nature. **Behaviour** is how we act (what we do, what we say, how we say it and our body language).

An unconflicted or unified intent presupposes clearly prioritised values, supported by compatible or unconflicted assumptions and in patterns of attention where people are predisposed to notice that which is congruent with their personal goals. This alignment of values, intention and attention supports those emotions and behaviours that are congruent with personal goals. On the other hand, conflicted or split intentions presuppose unprioritised values and/or conflicting beliefs, which result in patterns of attention that include both relevant and irrelevant stimuli, and are accompanied by mixed emotions and inconsistent or dissonant behaviours.

According to Csikszentmihaly (1990), "Flow helps to integrate the self because in that state of deep concentration consciousness is usually well ordered. Thoughts, intentions, feelings and all the senses are focused on the same goal". Negative emotions, like boredom, anxiety or fear, produce a state from which people are not able to use attention to effectively deal with external tasks. Instead, they must turn their attention inwards to restore order.

Based on the ideas of Satir, Csikszentmihaly, and Hale-Haniff and Pasztor, it is assumed that when people are confronted with a moral dilemma, the natural flow is interrupted and attention is focused on that which creates disequilibrium, thus requiring them to turn their attention inwards to resolve the incongruence experienced. In order to do this, they need to reflect on their held values, assumptions and beliefs to be able to formulate a stance that will help them restore congruence and flow. It is this process of inward reasoning that this study sets out to investigate and explore to gain greater insight and understanding about students' moral reasoning.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Methodology

The theoretical framework presented is aimed at understanding the interplay between values and moral reasoning by focusing on flow states (see Satir, Csikszentmihaly, Hale-Haniff & Pasztor and Lickona). Based on this, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data-gathering methods was used. A concurrent mixed method design using a single data-gathering instrument was employed. The aim was to establish the possible value orientations and personal value structure of individual students and, based on this, to explore how they reason about moral dilemmas. To do this, students were required to complete a section containing multiple-choice and ranking questions to provide us with an individualised value structure per student. A separate section of the questionnaire required students to complete open-ended questions in which they were confronted with a number of moral dilemmas. The purpose of the dilemmas was to create some form of incongruence in their flow state, which required some inward reflection and reasoning to restore flow. This reasoning process would be captured in text in the questionnaire and would be subjected to an empirical hermeneutic phenomenological analysis.

In order to verify the possible influence that group norming might have had, students were given the opportunity to discuss the moral dilemmas after they had completed the questionnaire. A moderator facilitated the flow of the discussion without pronouncing any moral judgment, but could ask questions for clarification and probing purposes. The moderator took field notes, which captured the main arguments raised and discussed. After discussion, students were given the opportunity to add to or change any aspect pertaining to a specific moral dilemma if they so wished. Space was provided on the questionnaire where these afterthoughts could be added.

Sampling

All students enrolled for the distance education module OWB 781 of the BEd (Honours) degree in Education Management who attended the July 2009 contact sessions were invited to participate. Approximately 900 students from all nine provinces usually attend these sessions, which increased the possible transferability of the findings. The existing contact teaching programme makes provision for a discussion of values and morals on the second day of the contact session and this study simply replaced that lecture. For the purpose of this contribution, the responses of only one group attending the session in Pretoria will be discussed. The participants were from the Gauteng province and could be regarded as coming from mainly urban settings.

Data analysis

Although the first section of the questionnaire was designed in such a way that item analysis might be undertaken to develop measures of reliability and validity, and so that inferential statistical methods might be employed to standardise each question, these advanced statistical procedures were not used in the preparation of this paper, as this will only be done after all the questionnaires have been returned. Based on the findings of the study, it is foreseen that the questionnaire will be refined and adjusted to allow for possible standardisation in the future. Such a process will greatly enhance the validity and reliability of the instrument, but may detract from the focus of the study vis-à-vis the moral reasoning of students. In terms of the data gathered in the quantitative section of the questionnaire, a basic statistical analysis was undertaken to determine individual student value preferences, from which a tentative value structure for the group could be inferred. This step in the research process was needed to establish a provisional framework of students' value orientations. The variables included in the biographical section of the questionnaire may be used in future for secondary data analysis to identify trends within subgroupings in the data set.

A total of 51 questionnaires were received from the first group. With the exception of one, they all claimed to be Christian in religious orientation and, with the exception of two, were all of African origin, speaking one of the nine African languages pronounced as official languages in South Africa. Two-thirds of the participants were female and a third were male (refer to Table 1), which is typical of the gender distribution of educators. More mature students generally enrol for postgraduate studies and this fact is reflected in the data, which indicates that more than 80% of the participants were middle-aged (refer to Table 2).

Table 1: Gender distribution

Gender	Number
Male	17
Female	34

Table 2: Age distribution

Age	Number
<30	2
31–40	16
41–50	25
>50	8

FINDINGS

VALUE STRUCTURE

Section A explored the value orientations of the students. The section consisted of two parts. In the first multiple-choice part, students were given a question with three possible choices from which they had to choose the one that corresponded best with their own preference. The three alternatives posed for each question represented a specific value. A values key index was developed that enabled weighting of the 12 values measured. Three opposites were formulated to check for consistency in the response pattern. In the second part, ten values were listed in alphabetical order, which participants had to rank in terms of personal preference. The results are reflected in Figure 1 and Diagram 2.

Figure 1: Distribution of participants according to weighted values

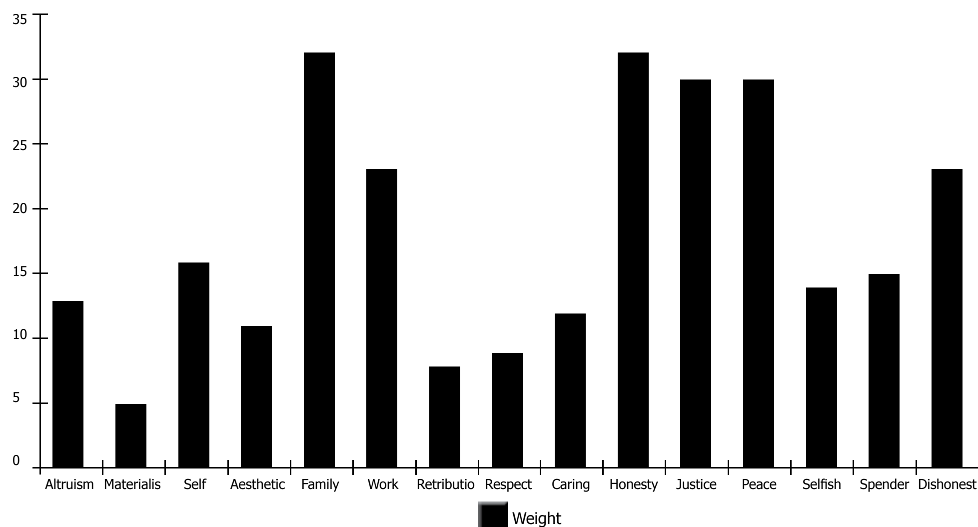
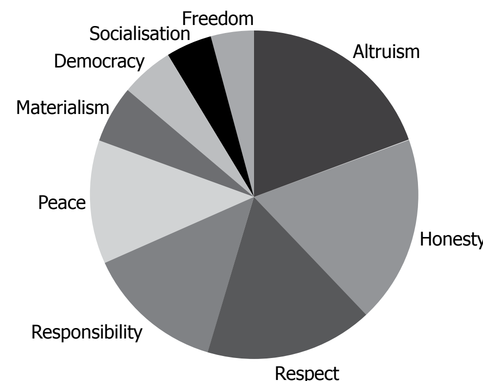


Diagram 2: Rank order of values



A clear pattern emerged from the data obtained (see Figure 1). Values regarding family (communalism), honesty, social justice and peace were identified as important. At the same time, dishonesty and self-interest were rejected. Communalism (altruism), honesty, respect, accountability and peace were also ranked high as values. This must be regarded as preliminary.

MORAL DILEMMAS

The main focus of the research was on the moral reasoning of students. This was contained in Section B of the questionnaire. Students were given five moral dilemmas in narrative form, followed by a number of open-ended questions. Only one of these dilemmas will be discussed in this contribution.

A similar approach to that of Blatt and Kohlberg (1975) served as the basis for these moral dilemma discussions. The Blatt-Kohlberg method of inducing cognitive conflict uses Piaget's equilibration model as a basis, but could also be aligned with the idea of *flow,* as discussed in Satir's Growth Model and Csikszentmihaly's Model of Optimal Experience (Hale-Haniff & Pasztor, 1999). The basic argument is that a person takes one view, becomes confused by discrepant information, and then resolves the confusion by forming a more advanced and comprehensive position. Asking thoughtful questions play an important role in inducing students' higher-level cognitive processes, such as self-reflection, revision, social negotiation and conceptual change of misconceptions, all of which are integral to critical thinking and moral reasoning.

Before presenting the moral dilemma and the emerging pattern of responses, it is important to make a number of observations regarding the importance of communalism in African culture (Nieuwenhuis & Goolam, 2009) as a possible lens through which the moral dilemma could be analysed.

Communalism could be linked to the African idea of humanism or *ubuntu* and its essence is to ensure the welfare and interests of each individual member of society. *Ubuntu* has been translated to denote a feeling of common humanity, a spirit of humaneness, social justice and fairness. It refers to the art of being a human being and includes a number of virtues, such as tolerance, compassion and forgiveness. It emphasises the value of human dignity and expresses the idea that a person's life is only meaningful if he or she lives with other people, nature, the divine spirits and the ancestors. *Ubuntu* advances the idea of individual human rights to include the concepts of community/communalism and the co-existence of rights and duties. *Ubuntu* should, in addition, be understood in terms of African ontology. The hierarchical nature of African ontology places the Supreme Being at the apex and the world of natural objects, and phenomena at the bottom. African ontology is essentially spiritualistic. In this regard, ancestors and their influence over and connectedness to the living is accepted (Mazrui, 1986). Religion permeates all areas of life and it is not possible to isolate it from the other areas. Morality is inextricably linked with religion, but the main determining force in morality is harmony. At a psychological level, this finds expression in a sense of a "reciprocal we-ness" and emotional care for others, and – at a volitional level – through helping others (Metz, 2008). The essential rationale of communalism is that it indicates the value of collective action, mutual aid and interdependence as necessary conditions for the successful achievement of even the most difficult undertakings. Communalism puts forward the idea that the good of all determines the good of each, or that the welfare of each is dependent on the welfare of all.

The moral dilemma presented to participants, which forms the basis of the further discussion and analysis, was the following:

> The Grade 10 class at your school wanted to go to Maropeng (Cradle of Humankind). The school principal promised them that they could go if they collected enough money to pay for the trip. The class worked very hard selling sweets and food at the school, and collecting money from the community. In the end they collected R4 000, which would pay for the trip, and a little more besides. But, a few days before the planned trip, one of the Grade 12 learners passed away. The school principal started to arrange the funeral and decided to use the money collected by the Grade 10s for the funeral. So, he told the Grade 10s that he would use the money for the funeral and that they would not be going to Maropeng any more. The Grade 10s were very disappointed, thinking of how hard they had to work to get the money.

The students were confronted by a moral dilemma and had to decide on three issues:

- Whether a sense of communalism should take precedence over their sense of social justice (communalism ⟷ individualism)
- Whether a person in authority may use his or her power to take a decision (authoritarianism ⟷ democracy)
- The moral principles of the relationship between the principal and the learners

Eight open-ended questions were posed to explore the three dimensions listed. From the responses, it was clear that students saw the scenario as a moral dilemma. The majority of responses (39 out of 51) gave strong indications of communalist thinking. Even in cases where they felt that the principal had no right to use the money, their sense of communalism was aroused. Typical responses included: "*Ubuntu* must take its part"; schoolchildren had to "sympathise with their principal and schoolmate"; they had to "...go to the funeral and show care and value for human life"; and "the important thing is to attend funeral" and "I will remind learners of things that we do not have control over".

Many felt that the funeral was a deserving cause and that even the unilateral decision of the principal to use the money for the funeral could be excused. Participants, for example, said: "The principal has no right, only the situation made him do that" and "[the] money is used for a good cause and they can raise more money, but the dead body cannot be kept any longer"; "the life of a person is more important than personal or social things"; "what matters now is the fact that, since there will be a funeral for one of the pupils, the money for the funeral is available"; and "[they can] postpone the trip and donate their money for the funeral because it is a good thing to do".

It is, of course, possible that urbanised people may have lost their traditional values and beliefs, and, through their exposure to Western cultural influences, have adopted a more individualistic or self-centred stance. If the latter is the case, then it was expected that participants would see the actions of the principal sketched

in the scenario as wrong and unjust. Examples of self-centred thinking were found on 25 occasions in the responses of participants. In essence, the argument was that "The money was not for the funeral"; "the school is not a burial society and the money was collected for the trip"; "it is not their responsibility to bury that learner"; and "the learners worked very hard to collect the money for that particular purpose (trip)".

From the responses received, it became evident that the use of the money for the funeral was not seen as such a moral dilemma, but what generated a lot of attention was the fact that the principal used the money without consulting the Grade 10 learners. This action of the principal challenged their sense of justice and democracy. Firstly, they viewed the money as belonging to the learners and, secondly, they felt that the learners must have a voice and a choice in the matter. Participants said: "...he should have asked the Grade 10s' opinion first before he made the final decision" and "the principal had no right, but needed to explain the situation and negotiate with learners and allow learners to take the decision", while other participants explained: "There must be a mutual understanding and equal sharing of ideas" and "the learners should make their choice about their money."

The fact that the principal used the money without consulting with the learners was seen as an act of disrespect. One participant explained: "He doesn't have the right to use it without the permission of the learners. He shows that he doesn't respect them" and "...their effort and commitment should be respected too". *Respect* emerged strongly as a common theme. Participants felt that the principal had to keep his promise, since being true to your promise ensures that people will respect you. One participant claimed that "they [the children] will recognise that their rights are being respected and behave well", while another said that "...[w] hen learners see that the principal respects them, they will in return respect him". Linked with the theme of respect is *trust* and *fidelity*. Trust and fidelity were closely associated with the importance of keeping a promise. This is illustrated by the following statements of participants:

- "A promise kept building a trust among people; it is therefore important to share the same feeling."
- "A good relationship takes time to be rebuilt when it is broken."
- "The learners should trust the principal and respect what he says."
- "That the learners trust him and have faith in him and that he/she should treat them well and respect them."

- "A promise is an obligation."
- "As a man in authority, you cannot go back on your word due to unforeseen circumstances."
- "It makes you to walk your talk and makes you trustworthy."

The high premium attached to fidelity and the importance of keeping a promise corresponds with the importance attached to honesty as a value (see Figure 1 and Diagram 2) and affirms the consistency of the response pattern in the respondent group.

CONCLUSION

South Africa is now in its second decade of democracy. For the generation now entering high school, *apartheid* and the liberation struggle are presumed to be a history lesson, but what they see around them is a society that has not yet transformed. They see adults caught in a cultural discontinuity of not being able to fully identify with traditional culture any more and who are not fully embracing a type of modernist or universalistic culture. In the words of the Afrikaans poet, WEG Louw, "*a halfway up the hill stand*". This tendency is corroborated in the moral dilemma discussed. The traditional way expects them to honour and respect the dead and to act in a way that will harmonise the group and ensure communalism. At the same time, they want to embrace the more self-centred and individualistic stance of having a fun day. Or they want to act in a way they see as being morally right, i.e. to be honest and to honour a promise made. In arguing through the moral dilemma, we see many of the participants move between these choices.

The Blatt-Kohlberg (1975) idea of inducing cognitive conflict or disturbing the flow (Hale-Haniff & Pasztor, 1999) was created through the moral dilemma posed. In arguing through the dilemma, it would appear as if Csikszentmihaly's notion of the relationship between values, intention, attention and emotion could serve as a basis for the interpretation of the reasoning. If we accept that **values** are the major arbiter of choice, then it is insightful to note the dominance attached to trust, respect and honesty when the participants considered the scenario sketched and how feelings of altruism (communalism) permeated their reasoning. It would thus appear that the theoretical framework developed for the study could be used to further explore and analyse the data obtained in the study.

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MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES AS DRAWBACKS TO TEACHER DEVELOPMENT:

THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE NIGERIAN TEACHER IN BASIC EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Teaching as a profession is deeply rooted in historical antecedents. Granted that its journey from the status of a voluntary service in the hands of Christian missionaries with no legal instruments and reliable conditions of service to the present one of its integration into the public service has been a giant stride, its management challenges have, in many instances, constituted drawbacks to the optimal development of the teacher. Some of the management challenges touch on the inconsistencies with regard to admission requirements for teachers' training, discrepancies in their recruitment and deployment, irregular career progression, inadequate provision of teaching and learning material, the non-inclusive nature of curriculum review, the reluctance of government to address teachers' genuine grievances, inadequate teacher incentives and others. As a remedy, the school should be recognised as a learning organisation that, among other things, should find expression in the Nigerian teacher being equipped to cope with the modern practices that are required of a new teacher.

Keywords: management challenges, teacher development, basic education

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INTRODUCTION

To prepare a new teacher requires a paradigm shift from what constitutes the old concept of a teacher to what should constitute the concept of a new teacher, given the knowledge explosion as a result of globalisation. Teaching generally – both in Nigeria and elsewhere – is regarded as a special profession, characterised by deeply rooted historical antecedents. It has its unique challenges, but there is compelling evidence of progression. It has been operating in terms of the incremental model of policy-making. It graduated from a level of voluntary service without any legal instruments to the present level of a pensionable profession in the public service.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Contextual clarification of two salient concepts is considered necessary (Okafor, 1984). These are basic education and teacher development.

Basic education

In section 3 of the National Policy on Education (NPE), the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) explains that basic education shall be of nine years' duration, comprising six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education. It shall be free and compulsory. It shall also include adult and non-formal education programmes at primary and junior secondary education levels for adults and out-of-school youth.

The goals of basic education include, among others, the inculcation of sustainable literacy and numeracy, and the ability to communicate effectively, laying a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking, offering citizenship education and opportunities for developing manipulative skills, character moulding and providing basic tools for further education.

Teacher development

Teacher development seeks to prepare teachers adequately to fit into what Obanya (2007) calls "the international framework for teacher education". For this, he emphasises two sides of the pedagogy inculcation principle, namely mastering the teaching model and modelling the master teacher. The former stresses excellent grasp of learning promotion principles, techniques and technologies, especially the capacity to inculcate these in learners. The latter stresses the internalisation of learning promotion principles, techniques and technologies, especially radiating these in classrooms, in school in general and in workplace interactions with students.

To achieve this would involve continuous updating of knowledge, making the teacher comfortable, as well as giving him or her a sense of belonging.

ANTECEDENTS OF BASIC EDUCATION AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Because the level and nature of education suggest the level and nature of teacher development, different levels and periods of educational development are identified in Nigeria.

Period of traditional pre-colonial education

This was the period of self-rule before the coming of colonial rule. During this period, every normal adult was regarded as a teacher with parents playing a major role in education, without having undergone any formal school learning. Every normal adult member of the extended family was a teacher, emphasising vocational skills, abilities, attitudes and acceptable behaviour patterns (Ukeje, 1992). During this period, the child learnt many cultural practices at home from his or her significant others, including parents, uncles, cousins, children in senior grades, members of peer groups and other adult members of the community. The method of learning was imitation or "do as I do". While the boys learned especially from their fathers and other adult male members of the community, the girls learned from their mothers and other adult female members of the community. Everything was done traditionally in the indigenous way.

Period of sole voluntary agency system and control (1842–1887)

This period witnessed the coming of voluntary education agencies. The voluntary agencies were the various missionary groups that came to Nigeria for their primary work of evangelisation but who used education as an instrument. The various missionary groups included the Wesleyan Methodist Mission, the Church Missionary Society, the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church and others.

This period witnessed the introduction of formal education in 1842 by the Wesleyan Methodist Mission and the opening of the first known Western form of school in Nigeria in 1843 (Fafunwa, 1974). Teaching was a voluntary occupation.

Ukeje (1992) notes that the Church Missionary Society "established perhaps the first teacher training institution in the country…" The teacher taught what the church wanted him to. Government had no hand in education, implying that there was no uniformity in the curriculums provided by the various churches or in teachers' conditions of service.

Period of dual control (1887–1953)

This was the period of control of education by both the missionaries and the colonial government. Essentially, while the missionaries had the upper hand in the provision of manpower (mainly teachers), the colonial government had the upper hand in the provision of administrative instruments for education.

This period provided for four classes of teachers: school masters, assistant school masters, pupil teachers and monitors. During this period, the first indigenous Nigerian Education Ordinance was introduced. It provided for a Board of Education and the appointment of an inspector. The different missions established more schools, including teacher training institutions, of which there were now three. Margery (1960) notes that there was a strengthening of government control of education.

Period of increased government control (1952–1970)

This was the period of emerging regional universal primary education with local education committees. Four inspectors of education were appointed, who were in charge of primary, secondary, teacher training and technical education respectively. Teachers were more or less policed.

Exceptional growth in private proprietary secondary schools, the use of common syllabuses by private and indigenous schools, and the same staff qualifications and registration characterised the period. The unsatisfactory state of affairs in curriculum and its delivery led to the National Curriculum Conference (NCC) of 1969 (Fafunwa, 1974).

Era of state takeover and national universal primary education (1970–1979)

This was the era during which educated and concerned Nigerians expressed dissatisfaction over the irrelevance of the curriculum in schools as the emphasis was on arts, and science and technology were neglected in a country that was agrarian in nature. Teachers' knowledge was very shallow and limited. The NCC paved the way for the first National Policy on Education in 1977 (Fafunwa, 1974).

The NCC was an impressive gathering of Nigerians from all walks of life – engineers, lawyers, farmers, teachers, businessmen and women, members of various trade unions, artisans and members of religious bodies. These Nigerians gathered and questioned the rationale behind the offering of such an arts-based foreign curriculum in a country that was naturally endowed with abundant mineral resources and prospects for scientific agriculture, given the vast area of arable land. The result of the NCC was the articulation of the first National Policy on Education, which has been reviewed several times subsequently.

Era of the knowledge explosion and globalisation (1980 to the present day)

The knowledge explosion and the burden of the teacher teaching a curriculum he or she never took part in developing, infrastructural decay, inappropriate teacher recruitment, the image of the teacher and the comparison syndrome were among the characteristics of the era, suggesting that a way forward had to be found.

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES OF TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

To prepare a "new teacher", it is necessary to identify the management challenges facing the present teacher.

Lack of interest in teacher education

There is a lack of interest in teacher education programmes, which can be attributed, among others, to the declining social status of the teaching profession. Data sourced from the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board's (JAMB) 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 Applications and Admissions into Tertiary Institutions shows that while universities and polytechnics are still highly competitive, with attrition rates of 81% and 72% respectively, it seems that colleges of education have to go out literally begging for students – a situation that has given rise to an increase in pre-Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) programmes, which seldom attract the most motivated students (Obanya, 2007).

The candidates in the pre-NCE programmes lack the basic requirements to pursue the NCE programme. Therefore, they are once more taken through the senior secondary school subjects on which they write qualifying internal examinations

conducted by the college of education. Candidates who pass the examination with the acceptable minimum requirements enrol for the NCE programme. So, the benefiting candidates are graduates of the remedial programme, who have now entered the regular NCE programme, whereas for the polytechnics and universities, the enrolled students are qualified graduates who enter the programme directly from the senior secondary school.

Teacher recruitment and deployment

Poor decisions have adversely affected the way the recruitment and deployment of teachers is handled. Normally, before government or any formal organisation recruits or deploys new employees, there are basic considerations that have to be heeded. The considerations would include collecting data on the number of vacancies, noting the various categories of staff required, the gender mix (especially with regard to teaching in mixed gender schools), the advertising of vacancies, shortlisting applicants, the establishment of a panel of interviewers, interviewing candidates, selecting and recruiting candidates, and the deployment of staff to areas of need. But, unfortunately, because of poor decisions, these guidelines for recruitment and deployment are hardly followed by some state governments.

The result is that most urban schools, especially those in the southern part of the country, have a preponderance of female teachers in basic education. The situation therefore shows gender insensitivity (Federal Ministry of Education, 2007), as most of the schools do not have enough male teachers to cater for the special needs of male learners. The worrying situation prejudices the realisation of the Dakar Education For All (EFA) goal of eliminating gender disparities among teachers, since there are not enough male teachers to cater for the male pupils in primary and secondary education in that area by 2005.

Unqualified teachers still teaching

The minimum teaching qualification approved by the Federal Government of Nigeria is the NCE. Regrettably, many states, especially those in the northern part of the country, record low percentages of qualified teachers. For instance, the Federal Ministry of Education's Basic and Secondary Education Statistics in Nigeria for 2004 and 2005 (2006) show the following low percentages of qualified teachers for four states, as reflected in Table 1.

Table 1: Percentage of qualified teachers in four northern states of Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2006)

States	Percentage of qualified teachers	
	Primary school	All schools
Zamfara	20.45	65.85
Yobe	20.70	57.64
Taraba	29.67	61.33
Sokoto	19.19	67.88

Irregular career progression

Once employed in most organisations, a career progression path is made available to the new employee for him or her to study and follow in order to achieve personal development. This is done with the assistance of the employing organisation. The organisation then provides the enabling environment for career progression. The enabling environment may include financial assistance, the identification of courses and recommending or nominating the individual to attend the courses. Furthermore, employees' organisations frequently sponsor members to attend workshops. This makes it possible for them to grow fast and perform more effectively.

Teaching is lacking in this respect: Many teachers need to pay for themselves from their meagre salaries to attend career development programmes, such as sandwich courses, evening study programmes and even workshops. Sometimes the teachers attend workshops without financial assistance from their employer to cover their transport and meals. Often, when they receive meals, it is of a poor quality and they receive shabby treatment. Sometimes, the stipend proposed for them to attend workshops is politicised. In the Nigerian context, when an issue is said to have been politicised, the general understanding is that it was not handled in the proper way. This implies that some people may have been favoured, while others may have gone without anything even when there are concerted efforts to convey the impression that the government cares for the teachers. Given this unpleasant situation, teaching at this level is seen as a "dead end" or an unattractive proposition.

Moreover, for many years, teachers who retired from government service in most of the states have not been paid their pension and gratuity. Many retirees have died without receiving their pensions and gratuities. This situation resembles what

the Nigerian author Njoku (2007), in his treatment of manipulating administrative principles, calls manipulative democracy or pseudo-democracy.

Inadequate provision of teaching and learning material

There is an acute shortage of teaching and learning materials in schools. Granted that a resourceful teacher should be able to improvise teaching and learning materials, it should be noted that there is a limit to improvisation by a teacher. The absence of such materials adversely affects the level of teachers' performance. It is obvious that teaching without the materials that would aid learning will not make learning adequate: not seeing the learning aid, not touching it, not smelling it in some cases, and even not hearing the sound would all constitute significant limitations to effective mastery of the subject matter.

Absence of teachers from curriculum review processes

A principle of curriculum review is that all those who are affected by a given curriculum should be involved in its review, at least through representatives. Much curriculum review and innovation done in Nigeria does not have the support and commitment of teachers. Edozie (2005), while examining constraints to curriculum innovations in developing countries, points out that most curriculum planners hardly involve teachers in curriculum innovations. Accordingly, "new learning experiences are quietly included in existing curricula and thrust upon unprepared teachers to implement". If teachers, as the real technicians in teaching, are not involved in the review of the curriculum they are operating, but are merely asked to implement what was reviewed without approving of the changes, they might view the implementation as an unfair imposition.

Government reluctance to address teachers' genuine grievances

Over the years, lip service has characterised attempts by government to resolve teachers' genuine grievances. Yet, what teachers are asking for is to be given reasonable remuneration that should take cognisance of ever-increasing inflation.

A typical instance of government reluctance in this regard is the recently approved teachers' salary structure (TSS).The issue of the TSS came up as a result of pressure exerted on the Federal Government of Nigeria by the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) because of teachers' dissatisfaction with their conditions of service. The implementation of the TSS is proving problematic after its approval by government.

The manner of implementation varies between states. While some states have implemented the new salary structure to some extent, others have not.

THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE NEW TEACHER

The old and present teachers have not satisfied the yearnings of the public in respect of service delivery in education. Therefore, there is a need for a teacher development programme for the new teacher.

National education sector development planning

Planning is a process whereby a direction is set forth and the way of following that direction is specified (UNESCO, 2006). Nigeria needs a National Education Sector Plan (NESP), a National Education Sector Operational Plan (NESOP) and similar plans for the states. It is interesting to note that some states have embarked on these plans. Among other things, the task of carrying out national educational sector development planning would require a business-type process and re-engineering that should start with carrying out a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (Obanya, 2007) to obtain reliable baseline data.

Treating schools as learning organisations

A learning organisation is one that works to facilitate the lifelong learning and personal development of all of its employees, while continually preparing to respond to changing demands and needs (Griffin, 1997). The teacher should be constantly exposed to learning portals – gateways or avenues of knowledge. These would include the provision of internet services, computers, newsletters, journals, training workshops and research to keep abreast of global trends.

Government readiness and preparedness to address teachers' genuine grievances

Government needs to provide a legal instrument that will address teachers' genuine grievances. This can be referred to and tendered as evidence in a court of law.

Constitutional provision for uniform teachers' salaries

In Nigeria, education is in the Concurrent Legislative List (Gazetted Amended Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011). This situation has given rise

to varying salary structures and conditions of service for teachers in the various states. To rectify the anomaly, the constitutional provision in respect of this should be amended to provide for uniform teachers' salaries across the states.

Involving teachers in curriculum innovation

Planning is involved in curriculum innovation. A recognised principle of planning is that those who will be affected by any plan should be involved in its development from its inception to its implementation. Curriculum innovation can only be confirmed as serving the purpose when professional teachers are involved in curriculum innovation at all levels. This will give teachers a sense of belonging and recognition in this profession and, eventually, emotional stability.

Making the study of education as a discipline more attractive

At the moment, the study of education is less attractive than that of other disciplines, such as the sciences and business subject areas. There is, therefore, a need to conduct an elaborate empirical study with a view to restructuring, repositioning and revamping the faculties of education at universities, colleges of education and other higher educational institutions where they exist. The empirical study envisaged should cover the curriculum, skills acquisition and job prospects, improved conditions of service, political will and the professional status of teaching, among other variables. The essence of the suggested study is to empirically identify the various areas of intervention in the discipline of education with a view to upgrading and making the discipline more attractive, so that new entrants will see it being as good as other disciplines in other tertiary institutions.

Adequate provision of teaching and learning materials

The teacher should have learning support material to work with. Teaching and learning materials concretise learning, making it more enduring and facilitating skills and knowledge acquisition. The Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Centre (CESAC) highlighted the production of actual curriculum material – pupils' texts, teachers' guides and workbooks – as indispensable, emphasising audiovisual aids to facilitate teaching and learning (Okeke, 1981).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper provides conceptual clarification of basic education and teacher development. A brief reference to historical antecedents of educational development, which suggests the nature of teacher development, is made. Education in Nigeria progressed from the level of the traditional pre-colonial era when every adult was regarded as a teacher, passing through a voluntary agency control era when the teacher volunteered to work as guided by missionaries, to the policing of the teacher, which started with the era of dual control of education when government started partnering with voluntary agencies. A somewhat uniform standard in education was ushered in by the era of state takeovers of national universal primary education up to the present era of globalisation. To be able to address the way forward, management challenges in the system were identified, such as a lack of interest in teacher education (Obanya, 2007), poor decisions and practices regarding teacher recruitment and deployment, unqualified teachers still teaching, irregular career progression, inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials, the non-inclusive nature of curriculum review and government's reluctance to address teachers' genuine issues.

As a way forward, the following suggestions are made: national education sector development planning, treating schools as learning organisations, government readiness to address teachers' grievances, constitutional provisions for uniform teachers' salaries, involving teachers in curriculum innovation, revamping facilities of education and adequate provision of teaching and learning materials. It is therefore concluded that if these recommendations are judiciously implemented, a good road map would have been charted for the development of a new teacher.

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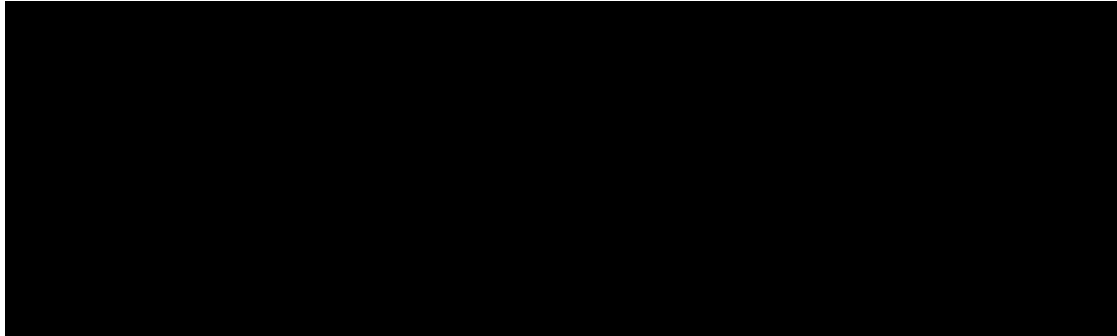

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