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1. CONTEXT

Namibia gained her independence in 1990 and the major educational reform programme was launched in Namibia. The Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, embarked on new programmes in the areas of primary, secondary and teacher education that had been introduced in schools and teacher training institutions after Independence (MEC, 1993). The main idea for the reform process was and still remains education for all (Kristensen, 2001). This has brought about changes from the conventional way of teaching called “teacher-centred”, which Kristensen referred to as “rote learning of facts” with a learner-centred approach that promotes understanding and conceptual development of each individual learner. It is evident in the educational policy, *Towards Education for All* (MBEC, 1993) which echoes:

As we make the transition from educating an elite to education for all we are also making another shift, from teacher centred to learner centred education... Teacher centred instruction is insufficient and frustrating to most learners, and certainly is not consistent with education for all. (p.10)

The BETD programme was developed for pre-service training to address the different entry requirements, scope, duration, organisation and focus of the previous programme. It is a unified programme, in general preparing all teachers in Basic Education. It aims to strike a balance between professional insight and skills on the one hand, and subject knowledge on the other. Swarts (1993) pointed out that it also strives for consistency in terms of aims, objectives, competencies, structure, and assessment procedures. As the aim of BETD is to produce good teachers, this demands not only theoretical knowledge, but also practical experience of how to put theory into practice. Therefore, teacher education requires two types of practices, namely: brief visits to observe and explore in practice concepts taught at college (Reimers, 1998). Taking this into account the Ministry of Higher Education went one step further emphasises “it requires, longer visits, teaching practice, designed to give student teachers exposure to the total experience of teaching” (MHEVTST, 1998:5).

ETP is a core subject in the BETD programme, preparing all student teachers irrespective of subject or orientation to teach in Namibian schools by developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will form the basis of continual professional

development during their college course and subsequently, through their career as qualified teachers. It must be noted that, although the sequencing of the topics throughout the syllabus is predetermined based on a developmental sequence, there is some degree of flexibility at the implementation level. This is due to the fact that at the colleges there are variations in the scheduling of the College Based-Studies (CBS) and the School-Based Studies (SBS). Having said that, however, it is also important to examine the rationale of ETP within the BETD programme that has underpinned the philosophy of the reform process.

According to the ETP Syllabus the rationale of the ETP has a central role within the BETD programme, cementing together all other elements of the curriculum and linking subject knowledge, pedagogical theory and praxis. Further to this, ETP teacher educators work closely with other departments in course planning and delivery.

As an educator at the Rundu College of Education, teaching Education Theory and Practice (ETP), I have seen in many cases how our student teachers struggle with the learning of ETP. ETP is taught in an integrated way assuming that all options, for example Mathematics, Social Sciences, LP etc., situations, methodology and criteria for the various mentioned options are the same. Although the ETP syllabus and the Broad Curriculum are very clear and explicit about the way ETP should be taught, however there are many different interpretations from both teacher educators and student teachers. ETP falls short in the sense that it is not subject-oriented although it needs to be taught in an integrated way. This is the main reason that has prompted me to choose integration from among other areas, learner-centred education, interactive methodology, critical inquiry etc., in the ETP syllabus.

The issue of the integration of knowledge is emphasised in the revised ETP syllabus (2001) that is based in the constructivist view that knowledge should not be viewed as compartmentalised into subjects but rather be based on the reality of the real world. According to the syllabus, integration of knowledge forms an integrated perspective recognising the needs of the student teachers, the Namibian school system and of the reform programme. Language taught in context as well as skills incorporated in each

lesson is not done as ETP teacher educators are not trained in the rationale of the language teacher.

A project (the Rundu Initiative) was launched in 1998 at the college by NIED to teach according to EnviroTeach, which emphasises the thematic approach (*EnviroTeach, Phase Two*, 1998). This project failed, however, because teacher educators were not trained to understand the full integrated relationship between the subjects that were combined. Thus, the compartmentalisation of the curriculum could also have contributed to the fact that teacher educators are not used to integrating subjects. If one uses the theme water in an LP class for examples, then you go on to show how ETP can use this theme to integrate subjects, and content knowledge of the subject in an integrated way. ETP emphasises the demonstration method used in Environmental Studies for the student teachers to teach learners the way water eroding soil. This applies for other subjects.

The researcher proposal shows that teaching in an integrated way is indeed a very important component in the teaching and learning situation. At college level, learner-centred education is considered equally important, even though many teacher educators are confined in their areas of specialisation and do not think of integrating their subject content with that of others. For example, teacher educators in Social Sciences are not aware what is happening in ETP department and vice versa and resulting in student teachers finding contradictions from the two parties. Therefore, this study will attempt, at college level to answer the following questions;

1. To what extent is ETP perceived and practiced the way it was developed or meant to develop?
2. Why are teacher educators not teaching in an integrated way?

2. GOALS

The purpose of this study is to investigate the contradiction between the teaching of integration in ETP and the actual practice of compartmentalisation within ETP at the Rundu College of Education. The second part of this study is to explore and examine the way teacher educators could integrate subjects into their specialisation areas at college level. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the following:

- The reason (s) why there is a contradiction between the teaching in ETP and the actual practice of compartmentalisation within the ETP.
- Examining and investigating factors that have contributed to the teaching in a compartmentalised way.

3. METHODS

The purpose of the methodology is to provide a review and description of the methods and procedures that the researcher will employ in conducting this study. The purpose of this study will dictate the methods and procedures to be used, which is to investigate the contradiction between the teaching of integration in ETP and the actual practice of compartmentalisation within ETP. The research design, population and sample selection, data collection procedures, and data analysis will be addressed in this study.

Research Design

A qualitative research approach will be used in this study. It is anticipated, due to time limits and lack of funds, that two student teachers per option will be selected; one male and one female. The options will be selected by using reputational-case sampling strategy. Six teacher educators will be selected based on their knowledge and experience in their areas of specialisation. A qualitative research approach will be chosen in this study because the understanding of the information will be of essential concern to the researcher. In this study, an interpretive paradigm will be employed.

Cohen & Manion (1994) claim that the interpretive paradigm, in contrast to its normative counterpart, is characterised by a concern for the individual. Whereas the normative studies are positivist, all theories constructed within the context of the interpretive paradigm tend to be anti-positivist. Similarly, Hammersley (1994) draws a contrast between interpretative research and action research. Like the action research, Hammersley say that the interpretive researcher aims to reclaim the meaning and significant of acts by interpretation, but the interpretive researcher rests content once these significances have been reclaimed. Contrary to this, the action researcher uses such understanding as a basis for transforming the social world, for praxis (Hammersley: 1994:236). Thus, the interpretive researcher, “the problem-source is the

opacity of the past to understanding; the end is understanding; the method is interpretive reconstruction of the past in terms which make it comprehensible to the present..." (Ibid. 236).

Furthermore, the positivist researcher will be more interested in reaching at universal statements of general social processes. My study will not be concerned with the question of generalizability. Trustworthiness and transferability however are of major concerns for the researcher. By choosing a qualitative research approach, I will attempt to objectively study the subjective perspective of the participants.

For this study, I will use four research tools namely, interviews and questionnaires, document analysis and observations. Best (1991:153) argues that researchers have become preoccupied with one method of inquiry, leading to a neglect of the potentials of others: "Because each data gathering procedure or device probably has its own particular weaknesses or bias, there may be merit in using interviews, observations and questionnaires." Interview as a method of gathering data will be chosen because, it will allow me to critically analyse the interviewee's view on the questions raised. Structured and semi-structured interviews will be the principle tools to be used. A questionnaire will be chosen as the most appropriate instrument for this study due to the number of questions, and the diversity of the population to be questioned.

Document analysis will enhance the overall understanding of the situation under study. This method will be adopted to enable me to analyse information already recorded. Cohen et al (1994:233) emphasises the importance of using more than one tool when saying: "Triangulation attempts to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint". To me the triangulation will help me to overcome the problem that Nyango (1999:28) refer to as "problem of methodboundness".

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1. INTRODUCTION

As an educator at the Rundu College of Education, teaching Education Theory and Practice (ETP), I have seen in many cases how our student teachers struggle with the learning and teaching of ETP in an integrated way. The question that comes to my mind is; how do our students perceive the ETP course within the BETD programme and what influence this has on our practice, both teacher educators and student teachers. In order to provide answers to these questions, my paper will focus on the “why” question. The ‘why’ is centred on what I term the ideals, in other words what is written in the literature; secondly the practice, how it being is implemented and taught at the College and lastly, the perception, the way it is seen, understood and interpreted by the students as well as other teacher educators.

This is in line with the subject syllabus for Education Theory and Practice (ETP), which, by definition, suggests that the elements of both theory and practice are combined to form the basis of the course of BETD. I think it is from this basis that the ETP syllabus attempts to go further and make this link explicit at all stages of the programme. According to the ETP syllabus (2001:3), “every aspect of content and methodology which appears in the syllabus has a direct link with classroom practice and is drawn from the needs of the classroom practitioner as the implementor of the Namibian Educational Reform Programme”. Based on this premise I have decided to investigate the perception and practice of the ETP syllabus in the light of the above claim.

1.1 Significance of the Study

The purpose of this literature review is to present an in depth review of the previous work and literature which are related directly and indirectly to this study. The literature review includes references to several research studies. The selection further cites views and opinions of recognised institutions and individuals on this very important problem. Issues that will form part of the literature review are as follows: comprehensive information on perception and the practice of ETP in Namibian teacher education, and at the colleges of education in particular is difficult to obtain as there are hardly any documentation on the subject. Some studies related to teacher education, whose findings also apply to Rundu College of Education have however,

been conducted by various educational scholars, for example the evaluation by van Harmelen et al. (1999), the BETD evaluation done by Murangi and Andersson (1997). The following paragraph will focus on the background to the study.

1.2 Background to the study

Namibia gained her independence in 1990 and a major educational reform programme was launched in Namibia. The Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, embarked on new programmes in the area of primary, secondary and teacher education, which have been introduced in schools and teacher training institutions (MEC, 1993). The main idea for the reform process was and still remains education for all (Kristensen, 2001). This has brought about changes from the conventional way of teaching called “teacher-centred”, which Kristensen referred to as “its rote learning of facts” with the learner-centred approach that promotes understanding and conceptual development of each individual learner (p.63). It is evident in the educational policy document, (MBEC, 1993) which echoes:

“As we make the transition from educating an elite to education for all we are also making another shift, from teacher centred to learner centred education... Teacher centred instruction is inefficient and frustrating to most learners, and certainly is not consistent with education for all.”
(Towards Education for All, 1993:10)

From the statement above, it clearly demonstrates how important the Ministry sees the paradigm shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred education in Namibia.

The BETD programme was developed for pre-service teacher training to address the different entry requirements, scope, duration, organisation and focus of the previous programme. It is a unified programme, for the general preparation for all teachers in Basic Education. It aims to strike a balance between professional insight and skills on the one hand, and subject knowledge on the other. Swarts (1999) pointed out that it also strikes for consistency in terms of aims, objectives, competencies, structure, and assessment procedures. Thus, theory and practice are also integrated into all components of the study programme. As the aim of the BETD is to produce good teachers, this demands not only theoretical knowledge, but also practical experience of how to put theory into practice. Therefore, teacher education requires two types of

practice teaching, namely: brief visits to observe and explore in practice concepts taught at the college (Reimers, 1998). Taking this into consideration the Ministry of Higher Education went a step further and emphasises “it also requires, longer visits, teaching practice, designed to give student teachers exposure to the total experience of teaching” (MHEVTST, 1998:5).

It is important from the outset to give a conceptual framework of what is meant by perception and practice of the ETP course. My conceptual framework of perception and practice of ETP is in agreement with the early perception of the BETD and how the BETD makes contributions to these ideals.

1.3 Early Perception of the BETD

There has been some resistance to the BETD programme and the type of graduates it produced. The reaction against the BETD stemmed from some teacher educators who remained unconvinced of its merits and principals and teachers who do not fully understand the philosophy and practice of BETD (Presidential Commission, 1999; Nyambe, 1996). During the evaluation done, some rectors of the colleges indicated that most principals are unfamiliar with the new educational ideals and practices (TERP, 1998). There were some who accepted the idea and some felt that the programme is inferior. It is reported that some principals were waiting for the South African system to come back (Craig, Kraft, and du Plessis 1998).

Despite pockets of resistance there is a sense among teacher educators, rectors, and NIED personnel that resistance is beginning to diminish against the concept of LCE. Because of the lack of qualified teachers in rural areas, BETD graduates are often required by principals to stretch outside their subject area and grade level of specialisation. Many cases were reported to the Ministry of Basic education where a Lower Primary graduate trained for teaching grades one through four in broad subject areas is assigned to teach a higher grade because she/he is the highest trained teacher and a diploma holder at a school is not uncommon (Nyambe, 1996; Craig et al., 1998). This reflects poorly on the objectives of the BETD programme because these teachers often struggle to teach the subjects for which they were not adequately prepared. Due to the misplacement of new teachers out of their areas of specialisation, some people in some areas feel the new BETD teachers are not adequately trained.

Contrary to the early perception, teacher educators, rectors and the evaluation team that looked at the thirty BETD teachers in the field in 1996, in general have noted some positive effects of the BETD graduates on schools and education. In their report, Murangi and Andersson (1997) describe that BETD teachers displayed positive attitudes toward learners, teaching approaches, and professional behaviour, content knowledge that could be seen as fundamentally learner-centred. It was revealed in this report that BETD teachers said that good teachers valued the learners, their contributions, and participation; that the learners should be the point of departure for all good teaching; and that good professional behaviour of teachers is characterised by preparation, punctuality, cooperation, dedication, and creativity. BETD teachers also acknowledge the need to be well prepared in their subject area to be good teachers, and that they should be willing to search for and develop their knowledge in various areas. The demand for BETD teachers, however, among principals is high in most areas, particular in the North of the country where there is a great demand for qualified teachers (Craig et al., 1998).

These early perceptions of the BETD are indicators of its problems and potential. This teacher education programme for post-apartheid independence has its foundation in an ideology of democracy, antiracism, and community building (Craig et al., 1998). The indicators from teachers colleges, schools and new graduates of the BETD programme are that the programme is making major contributions toward these ideals. It is revealed in the core subject Education Theory and Practice (ETP) within the BETD programme.

2. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT BETD PROGRAMME

2.1 The way International Teacher Education informs my Study

In establishing the available information on the research topic, the literature is drawn from the various spheres of life such as from international, regional and national sources. The international studies that are used in this paper form an integral part in the transformation, which Namibian education has undergone. Thus, international teacher education which this paper refers to is also relevant to the SADC region as well.

It is revealed in the study (HMI, 1991) done in the UK for the training of primary teachers that HMI judged the quality of each academic subject as well as aspects of professional skills and competence. This study also indicated that the English and Mathematics courses to be the most satisfactory, although there were weaknesses in the assessment and evaluation in English, and in progression and differentiation in Mathematics. The main complaints according to this study were that the science courses were too short to ensure that student teachers understand the progressive development of children's scientific knowledge skills and attitudes, or to develop knowledge based on which to work with confidence (Bennett, 1993). Furthermore according to Bennett (1993) time was of the essence in the humanities; time devoted to history and geography generally being insufficient. As a result the student teacher's knowledge base was poor, the matching of work to children's level of understanding was inadequate, and assessment of pupil's learning weak. As such, most of the humanities courses were left to require considerable review and modification in the light of the demands of the National Curriculum (Bennett, 1993). There is a strong belief to strengthen the links between the theoretical components of the courses and practical experiences with children.

On the content and quality of teacher education programmes, the US has also expressed a similar concern. Teacher education programmes have been criticised as brief, technologically impoverished, and lacking in conceptual clarity and programmatic consistency (Howey, 1983; Holmes Group, 1986). Goodlad argued that "The research we conducted points rather painfully to incoherent programmes not tied to a mission, with no basic principles of curriculum guiding them, no organising themes or elements... Teacher education, no less than schools, requires reconstruction" (Brandt, 1991). Lainer and Little (1986) were similarly scathing, characterising teacher educators as largely rigid, shallow, anti-intellectual and conforming and criticised research on student teaching as desultory in nature, poorly synthesised and weakly criticised (Bennett and Carre, 1993:3).

2.2 Theory into Practice

Lawlor (1990) emphasises the practical competence in teaching that an assumption is that it is best achieved through school-based training, and questions the need for any kind of theoretical input into this. McIntyre (1992) is adamant that this is a

‘remarkably primitive view of teacher education’ and ‘frightening for serious educators’, but he also argues that it is time to reconsider the nature and place of theory in a training course. Alexander (1984) suggests that theory should ‘incorporate (i) speculative knowledge, (ii) the findings of empirical research, (iii) the craft knowledge of practising teachers’. He also noted that ‘none’ should be presented as having prescriptive implications for practice. McIntyre (1992) argues that this kind of notion of ‘theory as intellectual process’, which he states has informed an increasing number of British teacher education courses, is inadequate; what should be offered is theoretical knowledge which may be tentative and to be questioned, but which is also specifically believed ‘to be of practical value’ and usefully assimilated into the professional development of a student teacher.

Through discussions with teacher educator with a 40 years experiences in teaching it is obvious that more often than not lecturers become propagandists, promulgating particular theories, making these the end all and be all of the particular theory. In view of this, one would say that one cannot rigidly follow any one of the other theories and regard our own to be absolute correct. It is also obvious that if these propagated theories are followed and student teachers are not exposed to other valid theories (as demanded in a class situation) it would lend to inadequacy. It is therefore important to consider the view of adopting other theories as the circumstances or the learning environments and students, which determine which strategies, should be used.

2.3 General Beliefs about Teaching and Learning

Dunne (quoted in Bennett and Carre, 1993) has argued that teachers have implicit beliefs about teaching and learning which guide both their planning and their decision-making in the classroom. It has been suggested that teachers possess a ‘rich store of knowledge’ yielding theories, beliefs and values about their role and about the dynamics of teaching and learning (Clarke and Peterson, 1986). Clarke and Peterson, despite the likelihood that teachers’ beliefs provide a framework of reference for all interpretations and actions in the classroom, they are also likely to remain only partially articulated – if articulated at all. If the belief systems are as important as suggested above, if they retain a ‘presence, persistence and power’ (Grossman, Wilson and Shulman, 1989), and if they really do have an impact on classroom behaviour, then arguably, student teachers should be made aware of this relationship.

However, research on implicit beliefs is a relatively new and underdeveloped field; it is also difficult to achieve since beliefs themselves are unobservable until translated into practice, and yet practice does not, in itself, necessarily indicate beliefs, or 'theoretical orientations' (Harste & Burke, 1977) which underpin it. Some beliefs that impinge on teaching may belong to a belief system that is part of everyday philosophy of a teacher and which may have an impact on their lives outside the classroom Dunne (cited in Bennet & Carre, 1995:73).

3. PERCEPTION

The concept perception is drawn from Gregory (cited in Gross, 1996) who theorises and maintains that there is a difference between sensation and perception. According to Gregory (quoted in Gross 1996) defines that perception is not determined simply by stimulus patterns; rather it is a dynamic searching for the best interpretation of the available data ... perception involves going beyond the immediately given evidence of the sense. Coon (cited in Gross 1996:203:) points out that perception ...'is the process of assembling sensations into a usable mental representation of the world' and again, 'perception creates faces, melodies, works of art, illusions, etc. out of the raw material of sensation'. However a completely different understanding of perception is expressed by Greene (1990) indicates that perception seems so immediate and instantaneous that it is difficult to understand that there is anything to be explained. Perception according to Bootzin et al. (1976) is an active process, which means that we often must act in order to perceive. The modern approach to the learning of a language is purely through English communication skills. This result in communication, but the written language used in assignment for other discipline leaves to be desired as it is strewn with grammatical and spelling errors. With regard to ETP and other disciplines, teacher educators usually do not realise that they too have an active role to play in the students' understanding and usage of the correct syntax.

From the above statement, I can see how people see things differently and interpret them differently. For example, in a research carried out by the ELTDP in conjunction with the MBEC on the English Language Proficiency of Namibian Teachers it was found that 95% of the college students do not have sufficiently developed reading skills to cope effectively with the course they are following (*ELTDP/MBEC English*

Language Proficiency of Namibian Teachers' MBEC February 2000:59). One teacher educator showed her concern when she said: "My experience of teaching students across the whole range of specialisations certainly bears this out - students struggle to read even my most carefully and simply-worded worksheets - and find any academic reading I might be tempted to set largely incomprehensible". Her perception in this way was that the theory has clearly not managed to carry through into practice. It is also worthwhile to link the same perception of the way student teachers as well as other teacher educators experienced ETP. Kasokonya (quoted in Dahlström, 2000) points out that the way individuals perceive themselves is a major determinant of their subsequent behaviour governing both their relationships with other people and the motivation which the person bring to a particular task. The perception today is that another language, for example English needs only to be learnt through communication skills and this has been proven inadequate.

The Structure of the BETD

The BETD is a three-year programme for the training of teachers in Basic Education, i.e. Grades 1 – 10, which is offered on a full-time basis, to prepare student teachers in the approach well-known today as Learner-Centred Education (LCE). Learner-Centred Education is the central concept used to represent the new philosophy of education in Namibia. It is concerned with focussing attention on the background, interests and orientation of the students. According to this new philosophy, Dahlström, (2000) asserts that the learners should be involved in setting their own objectives and organising their own work. To this end, MBEC, (1993) expresses that:

What teachers do must be guided both by their knowledge of the concepts and skills to be mastered and by the experiences, interests, and learning strategies of their learners. Our challenge is to harness the curiosity of learners and the excitement of learning rather than stifling them. (Towards Education for All, 1993:10)

The aims of the BETD programme as expressed in the *Broad Curriculum* (MHETEC & MBEC 1998) that reflect critically and social outlook of the teaching profession, and also on the holistic view on human and professional development. The programme is structured into two phases. The two phases are the foundation block followed by seven terms for the specialisation block. ETP, English Communication

Skills, Human Movement Education, and Arts-in-Culture run through all nine terms (terms 1 to 9), whereas Basic Information Science runs for terms 1 through 3 and Handwork and Technology runs from terms 4 to 9. It is compulsory for all teachers to take these subjects. Equally, student teachers study the core subjects in the Foundation Block with the four content areas; such as Language Education, Social Science Education, Mathematics and Science Education to ensure that all student teachers understand what contribution those subject areas make to the learners' development (Broad Curriculum, 1993; MBEC, 1993).

The second year is crucial to the student teachers as they enter their areas of specialisation where they study a major and minor option. The specialisation studies are related to the three main phases of Basic Education: Lower Primary, Upper Primary and Junior Secondary. Student teachers take a major study in a particular area for one phase as well as a minor in a different subject area for another phase. Each student teacher is then prepared for teaching Basic Education Grades 1-7 with a weighting towards Grades 1-4 or 5-7, or 5-10 with a weighting towards Grades 8-10 (Reimers, 1998). Thus, the student teachers are empowered to function as agents of change and renewal in the educational system through the foundation, core and specialisation components being integrated into a coherent whole.

The ETP as a Core Subject.

Dahlström (1999:23) says: "Compared with the previous teacher education programmes in Namibia, the BETD gives the professional aspects of teacher education a prominent place". Thus, Education Theory and Practice (ETP) has a central position as a core subject running throughout the three years of study. In the introductory two terms of the first-year course, all student teachers attend to fundamental aspects, namely the principal areas of teaching and learning in Basic Education. The aim is to shift the student teachers' preconceived understanding of teaching and learning from their perspective as formal pupils, to that of a professional (ibid, 1999).

ETP as a core subject in the BETD programme, prepares all student teachers irrespective of subject or phase orientation to teach in Namibian schools by developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will form the basis of continual

professional development during their college course and subsequently, through their career as qualified teachers. It must also be noted that, although the sequencing of the topics throughout the syllabus is predetermined based on a developmental sequence, there is some degree of flexibility at the implementation level in each of the colleges and is accepted due to variations in the scheduling of College Based-Studies (CBS) and School-Based Studies (SBS). Having said that, however, it is also important to examine the rationale of the ETP within the BETD programme that have underpinned the philosophy of reform process.

The rationale of ETP has a central role within the BETD programme, cementing together all other elements of the curriculum and linking subject knowledge, pedagogical theory and praxis. Further to this, ETP teacher educators work closely with other departments in course planning and delivery. ETP as a core subject in the BETD also provides academic and administrative leadership in the area of School-Based Studies, and in doing so, provides the vital link between the college course and teaching practice at school level. Because of its central role, the ETP course which is offered to students must take cognisance of the needs at school level as well as ensuring that the philosophy embedded in the education reform programme is reflected throughout the three-year course.

In the light of rationale of the ETP syllabus (2001), it is also important to examine what ETP is anticipated to reach and how it relates to the rationale as the Educational Theory and Practice syllabus states:

- familiarise the student with the various teaching and learning principles and approaches based essentially on social constructivist theory, in order to equip him/her with knowledge and insight regarding the “how” and the “why” of teaching and learning;
- enable the student teacher to develop this knowledge, along with the relevant skills and attitudes, to concrete teaching and learning that is interesting, stimulating, meaningful and productive;
- provide student teachers with the knowledge and skills to producing teaching and learning materials, and to use them in flexible and creative ways by adapting them to learners’ reality and needs;

- encourage a reflective approach towards teaching and learning, both in their role as student teacher and as classroom practitioner, in order that they take responsibility for their own professional development and are able to contribute to quality improvement of education in Namibia. (p.1).

Van Harmelen et al. (1999) argues that to be in line with the Broad Curriculum, the rationale and the aims need to be translated into desired outcomes and professional competencies that are identified by the reform process. According to them, these outcomes should form the basis for a conceptual framework on which the learning programmes can be based. The Broad Curriculum for the Basic Education Teacher Diploma has suggested the following for the student teacher that:

- Teachers will have a critical understanding of the theoretical perspectives underpinning Learner-centred education from within a social constructivist approach;
- Teachers will be able to make critically informed decisions about the systemic implications for teaching and learning within the social constructivism as a particular approach to learner-centred education (this includes views of knowledge, learning, the learner and development, assessment, classroom environment, school management, etc);
- Teachers will have a critical understanding of the historical, socio-political and economic dimensions of educational reform within a national and global context (Broad Curriculum, p.3).

The ETP syllabus draws on the constructivist view of knowledge, the paradigm on which the reform programme is based incorporating a number of guiding principles which flow throughout the syllabus. The ETP syllabus does not only reflect and enhance the various elements of the reform philosophy, but it also provides the basis of a model of practice for teacher educators to apply and for the student teachers to emulate, for example:

1. Learner-Centred Education is based on the constructivist view that learning should begin with the learner's own experience of the world". Therefore the

concept of the beginning from the known to the unknown ultimately results in practical teaching experience of the student when he/she teaches during SBS.

2. Interactive Methodology propagates that learning should be an active rather than a passive process, involving the learner directly in the construction of their own knowledge through interactive or problem-solving tasks which challenge their intellect and encourage them to see the relevance of what they are learning in their own lives.
3. Critical Inquiry/Reflective Practice it is also based on the constructivist view that knowledge is constructed through reflection on one's own practice and that collaborative learning through the sharing of experiences with others leads to socially-constructed 'new' knowledge. At the end of each topic, student teachers are required to reflect on their learning experiences by engaging in a process of guided reflection. However, during the SBS lesson presentation changes occur as the situation demands and often student teachers have been criticized by teacher educators of having changed their initial lesson.
4. Integration of knowledge should not be viewed as compartmentalised into subject disciplines but rather based on the reality of the real world where knowledge is derived from real-world issues, problems and their solutions. An attempt has been made to integrate ETP content and methodology with that taught in other subject areas. In many cases however student teachers' work in ETP are not well connected to the area of specialisation.
5. The Cognitive, Psychomotor and Affective Domains (after Bloom et al.) is based on the critical theory and the constructivist view that treats the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes as inseparable and emphasises the importance of teaching the 'whole child'. Each topic in the syllabus attempts to cover the development of the student teacher across the three domains, based on the understanding that each domain is interrelated to, and interdependent on, the others.
6. Increasingly challenging intellectual demands is viewed that learning should begin with the learner's own experience and knowledge, but extended by accepting that this experience and knowledge is not static but itself develops with time and exposure to new situations. In other words, sometimes a teacher educator uses unfamiliar terminology that makes it difficult for the student teachers integrate into their specialisation area. (ETP syllabus, 2001:4)

5. INTERPRETATIONS OF ETP SYLLABUS

Although the ETP and the Broad Curriculum are very clear and explicit about the way ETP should be taught, there are many different interpretations from both the teacher educators and student teachers. ETP falls short in the sense that it is not subject-oriented as it needs to be taught in an integrated way. This is the main rationale that has prompted me to choose integration from among other areas in the ETP syllabus. The issue of the integration of knowledge is emphasised in the revised ETP syllabus (2001) that is based in the constructivist view that knowledge should not be viewed as compartmentalised into subjects but rather be based on the reality of the real world. According to the syllabus, integration of knowledge forms an integrated perspective recognising the needs of the student teachers, the Namibian school system and of the reform programme.

5.1 The Concept of Cross-Curricular teaching

Loubser (1997) contends that because all subjects deal with “parts of the total world out there”, one could well ask what would be the best methods of teaching about this “world”. He further questioned why subjects or subject fields should be taught in a cross-curricular way. This is very important for us as teacher educators to pay attention to the “how” and “why” of the cross-curricular teaching.

5.2 Cross-curricular

The term cross-curricular can mean different things. According to Loubser (1997) cross-curricular is the teaching to a common theme in design and technology; a mathematics teacher helping students in the use of language; cross-curricular weeks in the summer term on projects in the local community and so on. In fact, the different perspectives by those teachers have led to confusion and, ultimately, failure to get cross-subject work built into the curriculum of many schools (Murray, 1994:2). This could be the case with the teacher educators at the Rundu College of Education. A project the ‘Rundu Initiative’ was launched in 1998 at the college by NIED to teach according to *EnviroTeach*, which emphasises the thematic approach. This project failed, however, probably because teacher educators were not trained to understand the full integrated relationship between the subjects that were combined (*EnviroTeach, Phase Two*: 1998; Cronje, 1993). It is obvious though, that the

compartmentalisation of the curriculum could also have contributed to the fact that teacher educators are not used to integration.

Traditionally, education globally as it the case in Namibia have emphasised teaching by means of certain subjects. Loubser (1997) maintains that cross-curricular teaching is therefore an approach 'foreign' to most teachers. It is true that the approach is foreign; however, resistance to change is another factor. Resistance to change is a worldwide phenomenon, and also applies to Namibia. Very few teachers show interest in changing their teaching habits (Loubser & Raath, 1996). It has been indicated that the new curriculum in Namibia will be integrated and approached from an integrated angle. Unfortunately, this means that almost no teachers have been educated for this approach. Loubser is adamant that many teachers are battling to cope with the present demands of curricula and although, 'the new system may eventually be a better one; a new approach will initially demand a lot of the teachers in the classroom'. This could be done but due to the fact that teacher is not only not well trained but also unwilling to participate (Environ Teach, Phase Two).

5.3 Integrated Learning:

We are so accustomed to teaching subjects in compartments at school level that most people think of subjects as the natural way to structure knowledge. The general practice is that almost everyone is involved in education; this includes lecturers, tutors, and teachers etc., got where they are by studying on a subject-based analysis of knowledge. Such a structure arises more from convenience than from reality. There is no hard line that divides history from geography or mathematics from science; each of them frequently invades the territory of the other and any pursuit of learning that tries to restrict such interaction soon becomes sterile or dead (Cohen et al., 1996; Farrant, 1980, Koppelman, 1996).

Children, in their natural learning, do not divide knowledge into subjects or categories. For them, according to Farrant (1980:132), 'any dividing line' is there purely because it separates what learners do not know from the known. He further stresses that 'their knowledge is the result of innumerable experiences, each contributing some new feature to what they know, yet being fully integrated into their total body of knowledge' (Ibid, 1980:132).

New experiences often make them modify what they have previously learned when they discover that it was either wrong or incomplete. There is constantly, a process of correction and refinement of concepts. Farrant (1980) argues that unlike adults, children do not learn in an orderly way, but do so in structured sequences. Farrant is of the opinion that children learn best through a story, by making connections or associations and a set of relationships. By so doing it helps the children to put ideas together in order to form a meaningful whole. Integration learning occurs in many ways and it for this reason Farrant (1980) has identified an integrated day, abandoning formal timetables so that the children can work on their own, either individually or in groups. It must be noted that when the formal timetable is abandoned, learners are not left unattended but guided by the teachers. On the contrary, Farrant (1980:132) stresses that 'a stimulating environment' is created where the teacher carefully prepares the classroom for the learners to learn and provides a wide range of materials for the children to use during lessons. The teacher carefully selects the data, he knows, he will give the learners the kind of learning they need at that moment.

Cohen et al. (1996) identified two key concepts at the heart of educational practice in open and progressive classrooms. These are the integrated day and the integrated curriculum. Cohen et al (1996:167) describes the concept that the integrated day implies that 'timetables or other formalised ways of changing from one activity to another, are abandoned. Instead, the flow of children's learning activities is broken and changed informally and often individually, with a large element of the children's own choice governing the matters.' The 'sharp division' in the tradition classrooms has been heavily criticised by the advocates of open or progressive education as it sees learning take place in a 'separate packages' (Cohen et al., 1980: 96). Therefore, in every area there should be many activities that involve knowledge and skills, which are in an integrated curriculum. Cohen et al (1996) recommends an integrated curriculum in which subject boundaries are less defined. It is believed that the work of a class could be organised around broad unified themes, which encompass a number of subject areas. This could be accomplished if teachers in especially primary schools were trained to teach all subjects to all classes or grades, which could ultimately lead to class teaching across the primary school phase. People who taught and were trained in the 60's were trained to teach all subjects for all grades. This has equipped them to handle a multi-subject curriculum.

The learners are thus seen as active participants in the integrated curriculum while the role of the teacher teaching in an integrated way, to facilitate and to create a conducive environment for effective learning to take place. Hinkson (1991) has been very vocal on the role of the teacher and learning. According to Hinkson (1991:29), “the notion of ‘learning how to learn’ as opposed to learning particular knowledge, deserves special emphasis. I am suggesting that one should not learn how to learn but rather that in this shift from teacher as teacher ... to teacher as facilitator, that we find a structural shift which gives insight into the changing function of education”. He has indicated that industry will be looking for flexible workers and there will be a displacement of the “information knower” in favour of the “information handler” (Ibid, 29).

From the above it is clear that the learning and teaching about its components (subjects) should be seen in interrelated content. Loubser (1997) argues that children do not learn and reason in compartments. He further confirms that the reality about which children are taught has components, but these components relate to each other. Loubser (1997:26) maintains that in his view ‘the small child, in particular sees his/her world as whole’. However, on the other hand Koppelman (1996:6) argues that we must not lose sight of the fact that there are discrete and valuable skills, processes and knowledge in our individual subjects. From the above examples, at Rundu College, is that in practical subjects like Mathematics, Geography, the sciences and pre-vocation subjects, skills like observation, demonstration, interpretation and understanding play a dominant role. In History for instance, interpretation of what is proclaimed and interpretation thereof plays an important role. Languages concentrate on reading, writing, speaking and comprehension, which should be cross-curricula oriented.

In the short term, as claimed by Koppelman (1996:6), “at the absolute minimum we need to make links across the subjects and work on common outcomes. These links need to be seen as relevant rather than contrived connections which satisfy departmental priorities”. He concluded by saying that an integrated programme increases the connectedness of the curriculum to reflect the real world, which is not compartmental. It is worth noting that in students we must encourage flexibility, abstract analytical skills, design skills, thinking skills, the ability to reflect and

appraise. These are the skills essential for success in a changing world (Koppelman, 1996).

In the Namibian context one of the areas that cause integration to be difficult is the education system, which is examination-driven. It is because of the external and regional examinations, which concentrate on the components, which are prescribed in the syllabus. Teachers and innovators find it difficult to use their own initiative and work on the thematic approach, which is an excellent way of integration. It also affects the teaching of students who should follow the prescribed methods per subject instead of allowing some freedom for innovation.

There two are other arguments in favour of the integrated curriculum, namely: (i) the new subjects that have been added to the curriculum which are interdisciplinary and conceptually linked; and (ii) where the subject boundaries are reduced, it is possible to reduce the influence of subject content (Pollard and Tann, as quoted in Cohen et al., 1996:168). Inevitably, in most integrated days there has to be a certain amount of formal time tabling. This usually happens as Dearden (cited in Cohen, 1996:167) noted that “where the use of common or shared resources, such as in music or television programmes, is involved.” Similarly, even though an integrated curriculum may be in operation, Cohen argues, a certain amount of differentiation must occur. Cohen further argues that, from the child’s perspective, integration in learning is natural during the early years of life and therefore integration stems from the child and from the natural ways in which she or he learns. “It is the child who integrates, not the teacher” (Dearden cited in Cohen, 1996:168). It is worthwhile to note from the preceding, however, that the integrated day risks being task-focused rather than child- or teacher-focused, for instance that the amount of child-teacher might become reduced and that the teacher’s talk might be managerial and procedural rather than instruction (Ibid: 1996:168).

5.4 Integration of Subject Areas

The concept integration is a new one in Namibia’s teacher education, and it is, therefore, not a well-known or researched topic in our education system, and literature on the subject is not easily available. There are many different views and thoughts about integration and what integration means and to what degree it should take place.

Nitschke (1994:2) has defined integration as “one should experience his/her social world not only in relation to specific subjects or a subject, but to an overall background knowledge.” ETP as a core subject on the other hand emphasises the importance of integration. It reveals that ‘reality is not divided into disconnected bits, and understanding of reality should for that reason not be fragmented. Integration between theory and practice, between different subject areas, should be adopted as a general principle’ (MEC, 1992:20).

At the heart of Bernstein is the issue of classification and framing of educational knowledge. Bernstein (cited in Stenhouse, 1975) distinguishes two types of curricula, a collection type in which the various content elements are clearly bounded and insulated from each other; and the integrated type where content stands in an open relation to each other (Stenhouse, 1975). There is no doubt that traditional approaches may be exemplary in their own right but the teaching of ETP was no doubt done in exemplary fashion and was in the eyes of its teacher educators, of benefit to their student teachers. Bernstein (cited in Stenhouse, 1975:48) “defines classification, to refer to the degree of boundary maintenance between contents; whereas frame refers to the degree of control teachers and pupils’ possess over the selection, organizing and pacing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship.” Taken from there, the concept integration, as used by Bernstein refers minimally to the sub-ordination of previously insulated subjects or courses to some relational idea. He says that integration can be handled by one teacher or a group of teachers. It can be argued; in fact that integration depends on the capacity of those involved to hold on a particular open attitude to knowledge. He alerts that ‘knowledge depends upon the abandonment of the idea of knowledge as a possession and a source of power to be dispensed grudgingly to those who accept the system hierarchy and are prepared to defer satisfaction’ (Bernstein cited in Stenhouse, 1975:49).

As an ETP teacher educator in the BETD programme, I have realised that the way we have been teaching the ETP course is not in the line with the BETD principle of integration. A study done by Shipena (2000) about subject integration and theme studies in Social Studies at the Ongwediva College of Education revealed that teacher educators were still working in isolation, in a perhaps even more fragmented manner than before. It has also shown that student teachers were more vulnerable to not

gaining a holistic picture of what teaching was all about and he said that they would only get to know their 'small corner of specialised knowledge domain' (Shipena, 2000:114).

In conversations with teacher educators, it has been shown that teacher educators have the concept that, if you are a specialist in a particular field, only you can observe a student teacher teaching that particular field. How do teacher educators integrate if they are so compartmentalised that they can not go out of their own field of expertise? However, the same teacher educators said that ETP, which ideally is the umbrella area or a core subject, can observe every subject even though the ETP teacher educators have not been trained in the specific methodology, skills, techniques and content of that particular specialisation. The above perception is obviously incongruous.

It is also the case with Rundu College of Education where many teacher educators are confined in their areas of specialisation and do not think of integrating their subject content with that of others. In other words, there is a long way to fully grasp how integration works e.g. some teacher educators are not even helpful in assisting student teachers with language, because it is the language peoples' problem. It is evident that integration has never taken root in many spheres of teaching and learning. It is also clear that teacher educators are curriculum-bound although the broad curriculum makes provision for integration and enrichment to take place.

Katewa (2001) observes that EE must become part of everyday subject teaching in the classes and not as a formalised "separate" subject. He cautioned the implementers of the curriculum to be aware of the good intentions; however, the problem is the way in which to inform all the teaching staff about these intentions, keeping in mind that workshops are not very effective in doing this. Contrary to this, Lower Primary has been successfully implementing the integration, using the material of EnviroTeach designed for higher grades in a cross-curricular, thematic approach, scaling down to the appropriate level (Katewa, 2001).

In the same vein, integration and cross-curriculum as approaches and teaching are sometimes used interchangeably to refer to the way we should teach at the college. Du Toit and Sguazzin (1995:10) revealed that in the Namibian context the concept

integration and what that referred to as “across-curriculum” in the teaching and learning and say the following:

Most modern curriculum emphasise the importance of holistic education, but most schools in Namibia are traditionally organised around a number of set subjects with fixed syllabuses. This system can result in a narrow, compartmentalised view of the world where knowledge, skills, and attitudes learned in one subject are not related to those learned in other subjects. This approach is unnatural and artificial as an understanding of the real world does not occur in compartments. Cross-curricular learning aims to bridge the gaps between subjects and give learners an overall view of the situation as well as to allow them to practise skills and knowledge gained in a wide variety of subjects. Cross-curricular teaching allows emphasis on important principles by focusing on them from different subjects. Themes can be developed where a number of teachers of different subject all focus on a particular issue from their subject’s particular angle.

Jacobs (1989) calls interdisciplinary as a curriculum approach that consciously applies methodologies and content from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, issue, problem, topic or experience. While discipline-based approaches stress separation, an interdisciplinary approach encourages linkage. According to Jacobs (1989) an interdisciplinary approach focuses on the commonalities of themes across disciplines. Jacobs focuses on themes and problems experienced in everyday life:

(1) Co-operative teaching provides the opportunity for two teachers with different backgrounds and experiences to develop a common understanding, shared meanings, and the will to explore and improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. It provides a sound basis for systematic reflection for individuals, groups and schools, which are trying to develop into self-reflective communities. Similarly, co-operative learning requires our student teachers to work together as a team to learn. It is worth stating that what the student teachers learn depends on the common effort towards the shared instructional goal. Each student teacher’s success depends upon and is linked with every other student’s success.

(2) Team teaching is a system of teaching/learning which is organised as a team. It is where two or more teachers from the same discipline share responsibility for a part of the curriculum. Team teaching also uses the different specialities of various teachers to enhance the teaching product as whole. Thus, team teaching becomes multi-skilled and expands their personal repertoire of abilities, becoming more valuable teachers in

the process. If this trend is consistently implemented, this could lead to compartmentalisation and students playing teachers up one against the other.

(3) Collaborative teaching, each teacher is informed of what the others are doing, although the work done by each may still be distinct and separate. It promotes a view of teaching that is based on collaboration rather than competition or isolation. Teacher educators and student teachers need to be exposed to new collaborative ways of interacting and thinking to realise the importance of consulting with each other. Education is by its nature a collaborative effort, there should, therefore, be room for consultation. This can occur if cross-curricular meetings are held on a regular basis.

(4) Flexible timetabling is a paramount important concept to consider with regard to integration. The standard division of teaching/learning time into subjects and periods does not presuppose that work has to be organised into rigid subject compartments and timetabling. If an institution considers some subjects as more important than others more time could be spent on those neglecting others. For this reason Nyambe (1996:126) states:

Time needs to be set aside for various options to share experiences and insight from their own areas of study and practice to see their place and function which the perspective of the teaching of Basic Education as a whole, and to sum up and reflect over the study programme itself.

It is noticeable, however, from the statement above that if teacher educators from different departments start talking and consulting with each other and share their experiences, the time available for teaching and learning can be organised differently and in a more flexible way.

Challenges of integration

There are many ways and reasons why educational institutions such as colleges should take note of integration in the curriculum. I will therefore cite some of these challenges. In his research Jacob (1989) revealed that students retain knowledge better if it is presented to them in ways that integrate the different subjects. It is learnt from this experience that we come to know that teaching students, thinking skills in addition to content assists them in approaching learning as a process of solving problems, rather than as one of memorising material. The advantage of integration is

that if teacher educators plan together and team teach, they will know which topics can be integrated and how to teach such topics or themes.

It further requires teacher educators to have knowledge and insights not only in the subject area of their specialisation but also the other specialisations in order to jointly plan the overlapping themes. Shipena (2000:119) acknowledges this when he says “topics such as AIDS, which are of general concern, should be addressed in all disciplines across the college curriculum.” As it was the case of the project of the Rundu Initiative which was a failure, where teacher educators failed to implement it, so the AIDS topic is not included in the lesson presentations. An AIDS Committee is in existence at the college however AIDS related issues are not adequately dealt with in the teaching and learning situation. Subsequently, Mubita (1998) reiterates that integration themes can be taught in many ways such as through projects and other methods within the learner-centred approach. It is argued that whoever finds himself/herself in the learning/teaching situation should see the connectedness in such a way that the student teachers will be required to recall the information they have learned in the classroom, but also be able to be analytical and creative thinkers that will span various disciplines. This can only be achieved if teacher educators integrate some subject areas in the curricula.

In addition, it also requires from teacher educators and advisory teachers to consider the benefit and potential of subject integration and for them to realise that it is the one way or another way of dealing with the problem of curriculum overloading. It is believed that teacher educators at all teaching levels complain about how they are required accomplishing their teaching loads. The other way they can bring all these tasks together is through integration because this helps them to deal with several topics, concepts and skills at once rather than as separate subjects. In the real sense integration should be taken seriously on account of its strategic approach towards the problem of fragmentation and transferring of knowledge to the student teachers without really involving them.

Miller et al (1990: 37) sees a holistic curriculum as “the focus of holistic education is on relationships – the relationship between linear thinking and intuition, the relationship between mind and body, the relationship between various domains of

knowledge, the relationship between individual and community and the relationship between self and self.” It is of paramount importance to find ways that enable the students to relate knowledge in the classroom to what goes on outside it. Shipena (2000) strengthens the concept that knowledge needs to be seen as a continuum of experience, not as individual compartments. The biggest challenges are to persuade specialists to move outside their field of specialisation to be able to integrate with other subject or subject areas into their field.

CONCLUSION

The literature review presents an account on the way teacher educators and student teachers perceive Education Theory and Practice. It is apparent from the literature review that an early perception of the BETD programme has influenced the way in which teacher educators interpret ETP. The review also reveals how difficult it is to interpret the ideals into the practice. It is also evident that the policy document is not well implemented by the implementers.

This study has shown that the concepts integration and teaching across the curriculum are not well rooted at our college and is really difficult put into practice if teacher educators are subject selfish. This has clearly shown that in the absence of subject integration and thematic approach ETP cannot be seen as a subject that cements together all elements of the curriculum and links subject knowledge, pedagogical theory and praxis. The success of integration lies in the hands of those who plan and teach according to the Broad Curriculum principles. If teacher educators implement integration correctly, it will help the institution to see that the subject knowledge and skills they acquire in relation to the whole of their immediate environment and to the broader social environment of which they form part.

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Introduction

The speed of social and technological development in the world of today is a world phenomena and perhaps the most significant reason for educational change and reform especially experienced in Namibia after Independence. Ornsken and Hunskin (1993: 151) maintain that education may either accept the tendencies of the time and develop school programmes that mirror current social and political forces, or it may appraise the times and develop school programmes that respond to the dynamics of change and shape the society.

Teacher educators should be real catalysts and agents of transformation, which should be eminent in the change of teacher education, the curriculum and syllabus of teacher education should indicate that there is awareness that there are major changes taking place in the world of today. Such a curriculum should include ways on how these programmes are structured; the processes and methods of teaching/learning; methods of evaluation; nature of extramural activities; the structure of staff-student relationships; leadership and management structures and procedures; and a range of other factors, which characterise the particular shape or form of the whole programme (Donald, Lasarus and Lolwana 1997).

The purpose of this paper is to provide background to the evaluation of the curriculum of Education Theory and Practice (ETP) and to outline the rationale for the Namibian student teachers undergoing the Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD) from years 1 to 3. The paper aims to examine the curriculum of ETP in terms of the needs and aspirations of the student teachers.

A further rationale behind this examination is to get information and look closely at the extent to which the curriculum is responsive to the needs and aspirations of the student teachers. It covers the socio-historical and economical view of teacher education, discusses the methods employed, and draws the threads together and reaches a conclusion.

2. Methodology

The study is conducted as a piece of qualitative research. Many researchers argue for the superiority of interviews over questionnaires and observations, but Best (1991:153) argues that researchers have become preoccupied with one method of inquiry, leading to a neglect of the potentials of others: “Because each data gathering procedure or device probably has its own particular weaknesses or bias, there may be merit in using interview, observation and questionnaire.” For this study, I decided to use four methods namely, interviews, questionnaires, documents analysis, and in situ observation to benefit from all four methods as opposed to one. According to Cohen and Manion (1994:233) “Triangulation attempts to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint”. To me the triangulation helped to overcome the problem of “methodboundness.”

Interviewing as a method of gathering data was chosen because it allows me to critically analyse the interviewee’s view on the questions raised. It was anticipated that time might be a factor, so three teacher educators were selected for interviews. The three teacher educators were selected because of the following reasons: their knowledge and experience about the teacher training programme at the Rundu College of Education and because they have been teaching ETP as a core subject. This method best enables me to explore the topic and enables me to get an in-depth understanding of the programme at the College and how people view the programme from different perspectives. The responses from the interviewees were recorded in the form of field notes because of time constraints. The questions used during the interviews are attached as Appendix 1 at the end of this paper. Structured and semi-structured interviews as the principal data collection tools were used. Tuckman (1987:237) states that the aim of the structured or unstructured in-depth interview is “to obtain the desired data with maximum efficiency and minimum bias”.

A questionnaire was chosen as an additional instrument for this study due to the number of questions that were posed and the diversity of the population questioned. The survey questions were structured in such a way that student teachers were expected to share their

personal views, opinions and experiences. The questions were more open-ended in nature to allow participants to freely express their opinions.

Document analysis enhanced the overall understanding of the situation under study. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:43) define document analysis as “a record of past events that are written or printed; they may be letters, diaries, tax records and receipts, maps, journals, newspapers, court records, official minutes, regulations, laws, and the like.” This method was adopted to enable me to analyse information already recorded. Other materials used include inter alia; the Broad Curriculum, the revised syllabus for ETP and the Desktop analysis of Namibian Teacher Education syllabuses by the Rhodes University lecturers to solicit information about effective teaching and learning of the programme and other aspects that need to be included to make the programme more effective.

In situ observation was used to observe colleagues teaching at the College and to find out how effective the teaching approaches adopted are; in this case the learner-centred education (LCE) that has been implemented in the teaching of the ETP syllabus. The teacher educators were observed in the classrooms to see how they applied the new educational approach. Cohen et al., (1994:) explain that the purpose of observation is “to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establish generalisations about the wider population to which that unit belong”. In situ observation was used as a tool for gathering information from two teacher educators at the College on how effective the LCE approach has been conducted and the challenges teacher educators face in the classroom situation.

The study was limited to the population of the student teachers and teacher educators at the Rundu College of Education. The sample of 3 teacher educators for interviews was small and thus limits the generalisation of the conclusion.

The Socio-Historical and Economic Situation

The studies on Teacher Education in colonial Namibia, in particular the Rundu Regional Education is a subject on which, so far, very little research has been done – if any at all. In the course of the study it is lamentable indeed that one finds only a lot of peripheral references being made on this topic, but no substantial material on it at all. Based on this, it is therefore worth writing about the historical development of the teacher education system, which Namibia went through, of which the Rundu College of Education forms a part.

Historically the education provision in Namibia has been influenced by the past developments in the history of Namibia. Namibia went through various education systems: Missionary, Bantu Education, and the National Christian Education each determined what should be taught in the schools and colleges, and how it ought to be taught and examined. All these developments have impacted on the post-colonial education provision in Namibia. The political system in colonial Namibia which was based on apartheid as well as the negative socio-economic conditions which prevailed during the colonial and post-colonial periods, also had a major influence on the current education provision in Namibia's post Independence in 1990, and the introduction of the new educational system (Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBEC): 1993:2-3).

The curriculum, being the core instrument in education (Salia-Bao 1991:79), was used as the main weapon for the inferior education especially in the Black teachers' colleges. The content was irrelevant to the needs and aspiration of the Namibian people. Anderson, Callewaert and Kallos in their report "Teacher Education Reform Forum" concluded that pre-service education in Namibia prepares the teachers for work but does not provide the teacher with knowledge and skills needed to actually carry out the work in the schools (1991: 29).

Curriculum in the Bantu Education was viewed in a very different way as Mubita (1998:20) observed:

In the colonial education system, curriculum was regarded

as a parcel that was designed in a different place and environment by people and by designers who had no background about the people they were designing for or their situation. This curriculum could be picked up at the airport by education officers and then posted in the schools. When examinations came, many learners failed because they could not achieve the objectives put forth by the curriculum.

In view of the short historical review, it is seen that since the independence of Namibia that, teacher training both pre-service and in-service training, should be regarded as taking priority to enhance socio-economic developments and progress in all spheres of life for the Namibian nation. Teacher training therefore should be united to ensure co-ordination of programmes, equitable sharing of resources and the maintenance of equal standards.

Socio-Political Situation in a New Dispensation

At independence a deliberate effort was made to bring Namibian education on par with other education systems. Teacher education became the first priority in the attempts to transform the education system. According to Angula quoted by Salia-Bao (1991:131), teachers are the prime movers in education delivery, their attitudes, inclinations and competences will, to a great measure determine the quality and operation of an educational enterprise. According to (MBEC 1993:32), states that the new educational system of Namibia is guided by four major great goals: access, equity, quality and democracy. It further states that all children and young people will have access to education, that education they receive is equitable, and that it is an education in and through democracy.

The BETD was a fundamental shift in paradigm for Namibia, the fruition of ideas which had been shared both within and outside Namibia before independence, but which had not had a chance of being realised as a whole in the country before; in other words a change from teacher-centred to learner-centred education and strict control and rote learning to free and insightful learning (Zeichner & Dahlström, 1999: 36-37).

Umeá University was also asked to undertake a review of teacher education in 1990. The report by Anderson, Callewaert & Kallos (1991) was presented to Namibia at a Conference on teacher education in May 1991. Since 1993 the cooperation between Umeá and Namibian educators in the area of teacher education become the basis for Umeá's involvement in the post-independence reform efforts. The National Teacher Education reform started in 1992 with the first draft steering documents produced during the year and finalised during the National Induction Seminar for Teacher educators at Ongwediva in January 1993 (Anderson et al., 1991).

The National Institution for Educational Development (NIED) was created shortly after independence as the professional wing of the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture. This conception of NIED as the spearhead of the transformation process was created out of the conviction that the normal ministerial and administrative bureaucracy was unable to initiate transformative practices, because of several reasons (Zeichner & Dahlström: 1999).

Teacher Educator reform commenced in 1992 with the establishment of a Task Force comprising all relevant stakeholders and a Curriculum Co-ordinating Group (CCG) which coordinated policy programme design and development. Teacher education was considered to be one of the most important areas of reform at independence. It has a very important role to play in the transformation of the education system, because teachers' strategic role in being both agents and implementers of change in the reform efforts (MBEC, 1993:75-80). This policy document recognises that without a meaningful transformation of values of teachers, without improving the quality of teachers, efforts to introduce innovations are but vain attempts. The role of the teacher was examined closely in relation to the goals, philosophy and policies and was redefined to meet the demands of the post-independence system (Zeichner & Dahlström, 1999).

The New Philosophy of Teacher Education (Curriculum)

After independence the curriculum in the teacher training institutions was adapted to the new political, socio-economic and cultural demands. Even schools, after attainment of independence, were not seen as places where one went simply to learn new facts, but as a

place where one would experience values, new ideas, new opinions and new concepts. The teachers were seen as the ‘agents of change’ and the whole philosophy of teacher training changed (Cohen 1994). The aim was to create and develop a unifying national teacher education programme for basic education, i.e. Grades 1-10, based on the new post-independence philosophy expressed in the document *Towards Education for All* (MBEC, 1993)

It is within the framework of the constitution, new philosophy, new policies, expectations, and goals, and against the backdrop of international development in teacher education that the BETD was conceptualised, designed and developed. This programme is in sharp contrast to previous teacher education programmes offered in Namibia. The approach is learner-centred, based on the principle that teachers will teach in the way they themselves have learnt subject knowledge on the one hand and professional skills and insight on the other (Swarts: 1998). In view of this, the programme BETD, if properly implemented, strikes a balance between solid subject knowledge on the one hand and professional skills on the other. The main goal of the BETD is to produce teachers who can meet the demands and rise to the challenges of the post-independence basic education system.

The BETD is in essence a good programme and has its strengths and is a vast improvement on some previous courses offered. To some extent, although the curriculum addresses the needs and aspirations of the Namibian people, it still lacks two important elements, i.e. content and assessment. The misconception of the content stems from the fact that what constitutes the substance and content of a professional teacher education programme differs from what constitutes the substance and content of a senior secondary programme or of an academic degree. It seems to have been overlooked by the various critics, including the teacher educators, student teachers and other educational stakeholders, like the University of Namibia, that the BETD is neither a continuation of senior secondary school nor is it a degree course.

Nyambe (cited in Nera, 2001) argues “the BETD places focus not necessarily on content alone, but also on other issues pertaining to the professional development of student

teacher”. Many people also questioned the worth of BETD programme as the Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training (1999:171) affirmed that “Some teachers and parents may not fully understand the new learner-centred educational process and are critical of it. Some of the longer serving teachers may not wish to change the teaching habits of their professional lifetime and find it hard to adapt to new methods.”

3. Document Analysis

The desktop analysis of the ETP syllabus is focused on comparing the Broad Curriculum, the Revised Syllabus of ETP and Evaluation done by Rhodes University teacher educators. It is a comparative analysis looking at the nature of teacher education, the ETP syllabus (curriculum), and the implementation of the ETP syllabus by the teacher educators. Thus, the evaluation entails a discussion of the following (1) the epistemology of the curriculum, (2) learning area of developing understanding, values and attitudes, (3) integration of curriculum and (4) a comparison between the preamble and the content and the assessment strategies used in the ETP syllabus vis-à-vis Broad Curriculum.

3.1 Epistemology of the Curriculum

In order for us to understand what epistemology is and how it relates to the ETP curriculum that teacher educators use in their teaching and learning, one must look closely at the concept of ‘epistemology’. Epistemology (Burrell and Morgan cited by Cohen: 1994) is concerned with the very bases of knowledge- the nature and forms, how it can be acquired, and how communicated to other human beings. Epistemology is also whether knowledge is something which can be acquired on one hand, or is something, which has to be personally experienced on the other. Bodner (1986:874) attempts to define epistemology as “How do we come to know what we know?” He further summarises that: “Knowledge is constructed in the mind of the learner” and the epistemological relationship between teacher educators and student teacher is that we are all learners.

The curriculum is a strategy for co-operation in which both teachers and learners have important roles to play. According to the social constructivist view (Ernest, 1993)); the

curriculum develops through the participation of all interested parties at both central and grassroots level. It implies that the curriculum is the result of negotiation with all players in a community. By so doing it is hoped that the curriculum will serve the needs and aspirations of the particular communities.

Prawat (1991:743) asserts

...that epistemological empowerment is essential if teachers are to become full participants in the scholarly discourse community, helping to shape the knowledge generated by the community instead of being mere consumers of finished products.

The Curriculum in the social constructivist view should be constantly reviewed and revisited by the teacher educators as well as the student teachers to meet the changing needs of the society and the learners in that society. Claims made by Prawat (1991:756) emphasise the extent to which curriculum helps teachers to make sense of particular situations and leads to changes in the ways they understand or experience practice. The Broad Curriculum clearly states that teachers must therefore have sufficient knowledge and skills to interpret the syllabus on the basis of the aims and objectives the Basic Education, and to relate subject content to the needs of the learners.

Van Harmelen, Wilmot, Bolt and Probin, (1999) in their contribution to the analysis of the Namibia Teacher Education Syllabus noted that Education Theory and Practice indicates that in the light of the BETD Broad Curriculum, the intention is to provide an integrated focus for the foundational aspect of education. It further notes that this approach to teacher education programmes has considerable currency and it is in the line with both the most recent research into education studies and is consistent with the tenets of epistemological position and has systemic implications.

3.2 Learning Area of Developing Conceptual Understanding, Values and Attitudes

As Donald et al., (1999:17), educationists who have contributed much to our understanding of process of educational change, have said: “At the centre of changing the process in education is the need to change the values, understanding, and actions of individual people - parents and members of the community, student, and professional

educators. What need to be examined is what people believe about themselves and what they are involved in; what they think and why they think it; and what they do, how they do it, and why they do it.”

The BETD aims at preparing teachers to engage in critical reflection, which is the fundamental transformation. Such teachers do not only have to reflect on the process of the classroom instruction, they also need to question the goals and purposes of teaching. They need to consider and probe issues of gender and class, race and power relationships, and how these factors influence teaching and learning.

According to Zeichner & Dahlström, (1999) the BETD programme emphasises the philosophy underpinning the reform process as learner-centred, reflective, analytical and productive methods and approaches in teaching teacher education. It seeks to integrate various types of exposure to the classroom situation so that theory and practice can be integrated meaningfully for the benefit of the student teacher.

The revised ETP syllabus (2001) suggests that learner-centred education based on a constructivist view is that learning should begin with the learner’s own experience of the world. Following this theme, each topic in the syllabus begins by inviting the learners to reflect on their own experience growing up in a community, as learners in the school and, after exposure to the school system as student teachers, from their experience during School-Based Studies (SBS). Similarly, teaching begins with the interests of the learners, their level of maturity, their previous experiences, and the nature of the subject being taught. Our emphasis must be on the quality and meaningfulness of learning (MBEC: 1993:60).

The interactive methodology in the ETP syllabus is based on the constructivist view that learning should be an active rather than passive process that will involve the learner in the construction of their own knowledge through interactive and problem solving tasks that will challenge their intellect and encourage them to see the relevance of what they are learning in their own lives.

In support of the statement above, le Roux (2000: 64) maintains that:

The work of educational psychologists like Piaget, Bruner, Ausubel and Vygotsky made educators recognise the importance of learners' prior knowledge, and how learners use this prior knowledge to gain new knowledge. Learners are not empty containers who passively absorb meaning, but active contributors of meaning who bring their existing understanding into the learning situation.

Thus, within a constructivist perspective, Le Roux (2000) maintains that the teacher is neither a top-down authority or social engineer; nor a background facilitator, but an active participant mediator of knowledge and values with learners.

Given the fact that LCE is located in the social constructivist theory which is heralded by the Namibian reform process as the philosophical approach most appropriate to bring about changes, van Harmelen et al (1999:6), suggest the four dimensions the teacher education programmes in which social constructivism is based. Thus teacher education programmes must:

- reflect the integrated and interrelated nature of knowledge rather than knowledge as made up of clearly distinguished and separated compartments;
- reflect the nature of knowledge as being related to conceptual understanding based on the acquisition of skills, values and attitudes, rather than of knowledge as constituting discrete (and often unconnected pieces of factual information or lists of facts to be memorised);
- must provide teachers with clear understanding of the interrelated nature of knowledge and of concepts across the curriculum whatever their areas of specialisation;
- must provide teachers with clear and critical understanding of the essential concepts on which their areas of specialisation are based and how these are structured and interlinked in their own learning domain and how they relate to other learning areas.

In supporting these ideas, the *Towards Education for All* (MEC 1993:39) asks inspiring questions such as: “How successful are our schools in helping learners become skilled at using the information they acquired? Do our education programmes enable learners to

integrate scattered bits of information into a coherent understanding and then apply that understanding to unfamiliar situations? Do we succeed in making learning itself a self-directed, interactive, exciting, and intrinsically rewarding activity?"

3.3 Integration of Curriculum

In the revised ETP syllabus (2001), the issues of the integration of knowledge is emphasised in that it is based on the constructivist view that knowledge should not be viewed as being compartmentalised into subjects, but rather be based on the complexity of the real world. According to the syllabus, integration of knowledge forms an integrated perspective recognising the needs of the student teachers, the Namibian school system and the reform programme.

It also emphasises that ETP integrates content and methodology with that taught in other subject areas. In this syllabus, many topics require tasks to be implemented in a subject or specific level, student teachers working with peers in the subject-specific groups. In doing so the transfer of learning from ETP to subject areas is addressed, although it is recognised that this must be a reciprocal process if student teachers are to make the essential shift from a compartmentalised view of knowledge towards the integrated perspective espoused in the reform philosophy.

Van Harmelen et al (1999:3) argue that subject specialists in discrete areas and in the integration of subject will need to:

- Identify the conceptual framework that underpins their own subject area and to identify how these 'big ideas' that make their learning area unique can be developed to form a coherent whole. To enable them and their learners to construct the desired meaning for their understanding of their world and as a means to create a more just world.
- Provide a rationale and methodology that will overcome the inherent tension in the syllabuses between the development of the student teachers own knowledge base and the development of strategies for teaching and learning.

As seen above, teacher educators are required to have good ideas of how the integration of subject areas is infused in other learning areas. Teacher educators teaching ETP need to integrate their subject content for students to gain an understanding from different components within the whole. The Broad Curriculum recommends the use of integration strategies. It however, does not prescribe setting up the teaching and learning programme in terms of rigid compartmentalisations of knowledge. In other words, the intention of the syllabus and the Broad Curriculum is a good one, and what seems to be a challenge here is how to implement it.

3.4 Comparison Between the Preamble and the Content as well as Assessment

I am using the competencies – professional themes of the Broad Curriculum - as a guide to see if the rationale and the professional themes of the ETP syllabus meet these requirements to ascertain where the rationale of the ETP syllabus complies with the competencies of a good teacher.

The rationale of the ETP syllabus (2001:1) states that: “Education Theory and Practice has a central role within the BETD programme, cementing together all other elements of the curriculum and linking subject knowledge, pedagogical theory and praxis. As such, ETP teacher educators work closely with all other departments in course planning and delivery. ETP also provides academic and administrative leadership in the area of School-Based Studies, and, in so doing, provides the vital link between college courses and teaching practice at school level. Because of this central role, the ETP course which is offered to students must take cognisance of the needs at school level as well as ensuring that the philosophy embedded in the education reform programme is reflected throughout the three year-course.”

The rationale of the ETP syllabus does not specifically accentuate the basic competencies as described in the Broad Curriculum as well as the importance and the continuous assessment of the teacher teaching and the learners learning. There is a similarity in both the ETP syllabus and the Broad Curriculum that student teachers will develop appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes through ETP to equip them to teach effectively within the chosen subject area and phase level. It is done so to enable them to develop the

knowledge of the learners by using particular appropriate techniques, to make this part of the learners' everyday life. Planning for learning through themes and topics is not emphasised in the ETP syllabus, which is stressed in the Broad Curriculum "under competencies and professional themes for the prospective teacher." ETP teacher educators do not plan and teach in a thematic approach but rather teach separate topics. Organising and managing learning environments appropriate is also emphasised in the ETP syllabus that so they will be able to teach in a number of different learning environments both inside and outside the classrooms and to choose the most appropriate approach for the purpose of learning. In the ETP syllabus it is stated that students will learn how to assess and to evaluate their colleagues' and their own practice, whereas the Broad Curriculum emphasises assessing, recording and reporting learning in the subject/topic. The Broad Curriculum talks about developing a critical inquiry approach into one's own practice and context. The ETP syllabus also agrees with the development of a critical inquiry approach both as student teachers and teacher educators, as they are guided through a process where they are encouraged to continually reflect on learning and practice. This is done so that student teachers study learners in depth, to develop research techniques and to engage in an Action Research (AR) project.

Having realised the rationale of the ETP syllabus, it is important to look at what the syllabus is aiming at. Thus the syllabus of ETP (2001:1) aims to:

- Familiarise the student with the various teaching and learning principles and approaches based essentially on the Social Constructivist theory, in order to equip students with knowledge and insight regarding the "how" and the "why" of teaching and learning;
- Enable the student teacher to develop this knowledge, along with the relevant skills and attitudes, to concrete teaching and learning that is interesting, stimulating, meaningful and productive;
- Provide student teachers with knowledge and skills to produce teaching and learning materials, and to use them in flexible and creative ways by adapting them to learners' reality and needs;

- Encourage a reflective approach towards teaching and learning, both in their role as student teacher and as classroom practitioner, in order that they take responsibility for their own professional development and are able to contribute to quality improvement of education in Namibia.

To be in line with the Broad Curriculum, van Harmelen et al., (1999) comment that the rationale and aims will need to be translated into desired outcomes/professional competences that are identified by the reform process. These outcomes should form the basis for a conceptual framework on which the learning programmes can be based, and the Broad Curriculum suggests that:

- Teachers will have a critical understanding of the theoretical perspectives underpinning LCE from within a social constructivist approach;
- Teachers will be able to make critically informed decisions about the systemic implications for teaching and learning within social constructivism as a particular approach to learner-centred education (this includes view of knowledge, learning, the learner and development, assessment, classroom environment, school management, etc.);
- Teachers will have a critical understanding of the historical, socio-political and economic dimensions of educational reform within a national and global context (p.11).

Assessment in the BETD is learner-centred and criterion-referenced. It is designed to encourage a focus on progress and achievement, and to measure each student's personal and professional development towards the competencies. It is, however, an integral part of the teaching and learning that can provide feedback to teachers and students through a wide variety of formative and summative assessment processes. The purpose of the formative assessment is cyclical and involves, among others: decisions made as to what extent it will be expected to be evaluated by the teacher educators, peers and themselves. Similarly, the summative assessment is the process of summing up the student's achievement throughout a designated period of time. The Curriculum also advocates the two assessments that are based on norm-referencing for cumulative assessment, criterion

referencing for continuous assessment and performance referencing of the desired outcomes.

In the ETP syllabus (2001), the formative assessment of a student's progress in working towards the achievement of the competencies and aims of the BETD throughout the three years is seen as vital but demands time and commitment from both student teachers and teacher educators in order for support to be provided when needed. Thus, ETP is used to monitor strengths so that they can be built upon and to identify areas for further assistance. The ETP syllabus (2001:28) echoes the Broad Curriculum by saying that summative assessment is the "summing up the student's achievement throughout a designated period of time and provides a description of a student's performance and progress against explicit criteria as they progress through the ETP course".

The evaluation done by van Harmelen et al., (1999) states that LCE should focus on a way of teaching and learning that identifies learning as the construction of knowledge through a particular process that cannot be achieved through the transmission of facts that are assessed through their successful memorisation and regurgitation. It suggests that if assessment is to be valid depends not only on adopting 'an' alternative approach but adopting and incorporating various assessment strategies that are valid in relation to what is being assessed.

In essence, the ideal alternative assessment as suggested by van Harmelen et al., (1999) is a good intention if correctly applied. According to them (the evaluating team) student teachers should keep journals where they can record their own perception of their professional development.

4. Analysis of the Students

Cameo studies were used to analyse the learners of the Rundu College of Education. It was hoped that student teachers could express their opinions and experiences freely by employing this type of study. A proforma was designed to provide students with the information the researcher needed from them and related to the following aspects: who

they are, their education to date, how they view education, and how student teachers' culture views education (Appendix I).

There were similar views expressed by the student teachers such as: Education starts from the day one is born, and she said that one develops ones mental powers from the first day of ones life. They further responded: "It is where one comes to know your environment and where you learn to improve on skills, knowledge and understanding of everything". One student teacher said: "A person starts learning when handling objects and seeing things (the first stage of Piaget). When a person grows, the knowledge is also increasing because he/she is gaining education by visualising, handling objects, seeing things and reasoning."

On cultural aspects, student teachers responded as follows: One said: "Yes, in our culture we observe what elders are doing and we learn from them and we still pass it on to the next generation. It is an ongoing process that has taught us about ourselves, who we are and where we come from. It is because of education that we for example have traditions, language and also learn how to speak it. Yes, it is really important because culture teaches us about, living life and how to survive." Another one revealed that: "From the Damara cultural perspective, we view education as skills, knowledge that a person can acquire on a daily bases. We value education as an important weapon to pass through our culture and values so that it must not die out. You are taught how to think and behave. In my own view, education starts at home and environment plays an important role in education. You start observing your parents, peers and how they do things. It starts from your childhood. I started learning how to count at home."

This how student teachers view education: All student teacher responded as followed; one responded by saying that: "In my own understanding education is teaching and learning in a specific environment, which leads to change in behaviour and it does not happen overnight but is a life long process", while other one said: "Education in my understanding is shaping ones life for a better future. It develops ones ability and gives knowledge about everything in life. This is also a process whereby a human acquires

skills and knowledge through observing and where they learn to become critical thinkers. Education is to know and understand life as a whole.” One asserted that education is very important, “because nowadays if you do not have knowledge you will be considered as a person who cannot contribute to the economy of the country.” She further said, “It also gives us information on how to deal with problems and different information about our environment and society. To be educated a person’s thinking capacity also develops.” One student teacher revealed, “I view education as a positive thing, something, which brings changes, development and progress in the community and breaks down financial barriers, negative ways of living and good things in society. Education starts from the day one is born, one develops your mental powers from the first day of your life. It is where one comes to know your environment and where you learn to improve on skills, knowledge and understanding of everything.”

5. Analysis of the Learning Environment

Based on the information provided above, one has to analyse the learning environment by looking at what constitutes a good learning environment at the Rundu College of Education. The college was built after independence in 1994 and has the following facilities at its disposal. There is a Computer Room, Educational Development Unit (EDU), Multi-Purpose Hall, library, laboratories, special classrooms e.g. Art class, workrooms for teacher educators, Language Centre, Home Ecology and Needlework Laboratories as well as Integrated National Science and Mathematics Laboratories. The learning environment is essential for any learning to take place. The RCE has capacity to host about 350 students and can accommodate 280 in the hostel.

All specialisation rooms for options are there, but ETP does not have specific rooms. ETP classes are being taught in the Mathematics laboratories and Early Childhood Education Centre or anywhere else available. If ETP classes are to be realised, then specialised classrooms with a series of videos, overhead projectors, and media development rooms, where student teachers can be exposed to various teaching aids, need to be built. ETP should have a library of videotapes that would enhance learning and a video camera that would record students’ performance during microteaching and School Based Studies (SBS).

Interview Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine or evaluate the result of the ETP syllabus. The findings were generated from the research instruments used in the study, interviews, questionnaires, documents, and in situ observation. In this study a qualitative research method was used. The study looked at the vital questions used during the interviews and the questionnaires. Analysis of data collected revealed many different themes. The following were the findings from the interviews and questionnaires about the evaluation of ETP the syllabus.

Does the subject content of ETP meet the expected standard for the student teacher? Elaborate?.

From the data collected it was reported that the subject content of the ETP meets the expected standard for student teachers, one teacher educator said “yes at a Diploma level”. The interviewee firmly believes that if it is well presented and if student teachers also create background knowledge of the subject matter it is a good programme. One student educator said: “According to the syllabus, Broad Professional Themes and Competences covered will help the students to reach the required standard, however areas like specific learning problems and children with special needs, have to be explored more.” The other interviewee pointed out that ETP as a single subject has a lot of content but this content is not enough to build a teacher as a whole. It was also pointed out that in the teacher training in the past and in University programmes, content of teaching modules included areas covering philosophy, psychology and sociology of education. The interviewee was of the opinion that certain components are present in Education Theory and Practice, which is not enough. However other content areas are saturated. One interviewee argued that there is just too much to deal within one subject for example, methodology. The subject could be divided into more modules on the time-table. The number of periods on the time-table was mentioned as one interviewee revealed that there is not enough time to deal thoroughly with all these topics. Hence not enough time is spent on a specific topic and it makes it difficult for the teacher educator to go in-depth into a topic.

Is the subject content of the ETP curriculum presented in a context relevant to the students?

On the question whether the subject content of the ETP is presented in a context relevant to student teachers, data collected revealed that all interviewees agreed that it is relevant. It was reported that the micro teaching contextualises whatever a teacher teaches. One interviewee said that School-Based Studies also helps with the content and puts into context what they have learnt by putting it into practice. Action Research was mentioned that makes it relevant for a teacher to reflect on their teaching and learning and all its approaches. Questionnaires received from students indicated that the unequal distribution of resources and poor learning environment hinder the students since they are not exposed to adequate information or sufficient resources.

Do teacher educators apply Learner-Centred Education during the lessons?

For the third question whether teacher educators apply the learner-centred teaching approaches during lessons, data collected revealed that they do not apply LCE. One interviewee reported that there is too much talking about LCE and very little practice visible in student involvement in the total learning process. It was also reported that teacher educators find it difficult to become divorced from the traditional 'talk-chalkboard' approach. The other interviewee argued that LCE is not coming into its own during the lessons and said that there is a general misconception that LCE is group work. It was reported that teacher educators have a preconceived notion of students that they still cannot take charge of constructive knowledge and need guidance. Teacher educators have to teach and let the students experience all the concepts as presented in the curriculum. What teacher educators fail to see is the educating and teaching, because of this failure they find it difficult to know when and how to employ LCE. The students said it happens yet disproved their own statements by giving contradictory information. According to them all topics are presented as discussions and debates, and this way student condemns, confirms, agrees or disagrees with what is written. These enable students to share views and to make learning more meaningful to them.

What are the main challenges you face in the teaching and learning of the ETP Curriculum?

The answers from teacher educators to the main challenges revealed that when using LCE as a teaching principle, it takes time to realise what one wants to achieve. One teacher educator stated that students come from a tradition where they have to learn well because there is an examination at the end of the day. In the absence of this, it is always a tug-of-war to teach. Assessment is more 'ceremonial' and it is not really assessment per se. It is more like a placeholder. The interviewee stated that ETP does not quite link up with other subjects options (discipline), for example Lower Primary and Home Ecology. There is nothing wrong with the syllabus, but the implementation. The other interviewee stated that subject that ETP lecturers neglect or do not give students ideas on, is how to represent concepts which will be unfamiliar to the learner such as desert, mountains, ocean etc. Teacher educators do not link Handwork and Technology with a topic to make things understandable e.g. a making volcano from paper mashe. The other interviewee felt that students should be made aware of the fact that classrooms control has three main problems, namely: the work is too easy, too difficult or uninteresting. This includes differentiation in a topic in every class you have. Data collected showed that students must be made aware of learners with special needs and how to deal with them.

Does ETP syllabus allows for integration of subject?

All teacher educators interviewed answered yes. It allows for integration but that it requires initiative and enthusiasm. Both teacher educators and student teachers stated when talking of a learning theory, you cannot talk about that in isolation; you have to go into the classroom situation and make reference to various subjects e.g. Geography and History. It is up to the teacher educators to interpret the work to suit their needs. One interviewee argued that interaction with subject specialists is important if one does not offer the particular subject. One must realise that one is not living on an island but in a community and content knowledge of the subject is important. Another interviewee is of the opinion that insight is needed to let students explore the development of activities, the sequencing of particular subject matter during a particular lesson and the importance of arousing and directing as an introduction; and that the conclusion is not necessarily a blackboard summary and that it can be in the form of an assessment; it can also take the

form of games or can be ended with a rhyme or a song for example in Lower Primary (LP). The interviewee agreed with the Presidential Commission (1999), which noted that lecturer should go to the school situation and get full re-experience of the real situation of the classroom. Many lecturers believe if student teachers prepare a lesson plan that they must see that lesson when in actual fact the student teacher realises that the previous work should be re-taught. This attitude leaves students in dire distress and certain work completely unmastered by the learners. Lecturers decline to take cognisance of the reasons given by the students in their critical reflection as to why a lesson strategy was changed on the spur of the moment. One student teacher revealed that topics such as Environmental Education, Population and Health Education, Human Rights or Multicultural, Information Technology are taught across the curriculum in the case of Lower Primary phase. Another student teacher however, indicated, "I do not have an idea as to how these subjects could be integrated with ETP. I am in the dark as to which methodologies are applied."

Difficulties Experienced

The student teachers interviews have been studied carefully in order to see what kind of pattern emerged from them in order to compare it with the data from the questions posed to the teacher educators. The factors that hampered the administration of the interview schedules were the participation of some teacher educators who could not avail time for the interviews. Some of the teacher educators misunderstood the indications concerning the selection of the people to be interviewed and/or the interviewing method, which led to unexpected situations and a delay in time schedules.

Synthesis

This paper has shown me that the concepts of team planning and team teaching are not really put into practice in ETP, which, contributes to the absence of subject integration and the thematic approach. This is contrary to the desired competencies that the Broad Curriculum advocates and forms the conceptual framework of Education Theory and Practice that would involve taking an integrated thematic approach to the concepts identified in the topic of the syllabus that is located in the historical and socio-political context. It was evident from the document analysis that awareness of ETP syllabus

among the teacher educators is lacking. It should be noted that the syllabus of ETP emphasises that teaching and learning principles and approaches should be based on the social constructivist theory for the student teachers to be able to have knowledge about the “how” and the “why”.

It was also discovered that teacher educators do not share the ETP syllabus with their student teachers and as result student teachers are not aware of the requirements of the syllabus. This was evident, during the class observation that only teacher educators had a copy of the ETP syllabus. Thus, the student teachers’ participation is questionable here and this needs to be researched to see the extent of student teachers’ involvement in the drawing up of the subject curriculum. It must be noted, however that when the syllabus of the ETP was drafted all stakeholders were involved, namely the teacher educators through the Curriculum Development Group as well as the Student Representative Council. It must be remembered that involving all stakeholders in the drawing of the syllabus is vital otherwise it will become an anomaly.

The ETP teacher educators should work closely with lecturers in other departments in the course of planning and delivery to ensure integration and correlation. These are all good intentions of the curriculum and do not happen, as teacher educators teaching ETP do not work closely with other teacher educators. Thus, the Broad Curriculum ideals are just worthy on paper and the implementation of it needs to be looked into. Other ideals are the content of the other areas that need to be infused into the ETP curriculum such as Health Education (like HIV/Aids), Environmental Education, which are not taught across the curriculum in other options (disciplines).

Looking at the historical background of our college coming from a High School to a fully-fledged college, the resources at its disposal are not utilised for the purpose they are intended for. For example, the language education centre, and EDU are not used for the purpose it was built for. Education Development Unit was built for lesson planning of teacher educators and the development of teaching materials but now it is converted into an office because of a lack of offices.

The College of education has achieved the major goals of Basic Education; such as equity, democracy, access and quality. Looking at the survey I conducted, it is evident that all students from the different regions are admitted at our College as opposed to the previous dispensation. This case study also showed how our students view education from a cultural background and linked to the ETP syllabus. This has actually dismantled the issues of regionalism, ethnicity that existed in the previous government. However, the location and the geographical position of our College pose more questions than answers. One wonders why the College is situated five kilometres out of town away from the majority of schools which could have been used for regular teaching practice to supplement the regulated School Based Studies (SBS).

Conclusion

In the past the College curriculum was predetermined and teacher educators were provided with a fixed syllabus. This did not allow for teacher educators to participate in the curriculum development process. The new curriculum framework enables teacher educators to become more actively involved in designing of learning programmes. This could be the case with Rundu College of Education. At college level, the curriculum should be contextualised to cater for student teachers' needs by involving all shareholders.

It is evident that this paradigm shift in the curriculum development will resolve problems such as “content overloading” which prohibited the needs of many learners from being met, inappropriate content that did not meet diverse needs, gender and special needs discrimination, inflexibility and undemocratic control of the learning process that led to lack of participation by teacher educators, students, learners and the community.

From this study it is evident that the “what” and the “why” of the syllabus are relevant to the teacher education course. What is provided is a clear direction in different techniques, methodology, attitudes and skills. The reason is to produce a competent, self-evaluating individual who can innovate, adapt and implement ideas and is a reflective practitioner.

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Abstract

Educational reform in Namibia has emphasised the need of teaching in a learner-centred approach that includes teaching in an integrated way. The focus of integration at the College, however, requires a necessary shift from a rigid teaching approach, which is from teacher –centred to one which is more open and flexible and allows for substantial teacher educator’s input. This assumes that teacher educators become empowered so that they have the necessary knowledge, skills to significantly teach in an integrated way that is related to important educational matters. However, while existing research and literature point to the importance and value of integration in Namibia, the perceptions and understanding of the concept of integration are less well documented.

The purpose of this study dictated the methods and procedures to be used, which is to investigate the difficulties and complexities of combining a theoretical knowledge of integration and a practical knowledge of how to implement its strategies. The research design, sampling selection, data collection procedures and data analysis are addressed in the study. The study revealed that integration with some subjects are difficult than in others. Data collected revealed that integration is difficult and complex to be realised in the classrooms situation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Namibia has entered exciting times of change and this new political dispensation has opened up opportunities in education. Although the education system is currently being restructured, there have been developments that point to the most important changes likely to take place. One of the important focal points is the integration of subjects. To this end, integration and cross-curriculum teaching are said to be an important part of this approach (Loubser, 1997). It is however, also evident, as argued by Loubser (1997) that most teachers in Namibia are not able to teach in an integrated way. This is because this approach is new development in education in Namibian, especially in disadvantaged areas where most of unqualified or underqualified teachers use (d) the textbook method.

Traditionally, there has been an emphasise on teaching by means of certain subjects. Loubser (1997) maintains that cross-curricular teaching is therefore an approach ‘foreign’ to most of the teachers. It is true that the approach is foreign; however, resistance to change is another factor. Resistance to change is a worldwide phenomenon, and also applies to Namibia. Very few teachers show interest in changing their teaching habits (Loubser & Raath, 1996:28). It has been indicated that the new curriculum in Namibia will be integration oriented and approached from an

integrated angle. Unfortunately, this means that almost no teachers have been educated for this approach. Loubser is adamant that many teachers are battling to cope with the present demands of the curriculum and although, 'the new system may eventually be a better one; a new approach will initially demand a lot from the teachers in the classroom' (Loubser, 1997:28). This could be the case due to the fact that teachers are not only trained but also unwilling to partake in these new practices.

Most teacher are so accustomed to teaching subjects in a compartmentalised way at school level that most people think of the subject being the natural way to structure knowledge. This includes lecturers, tutors and teachers who got where they are by studying subject-based knowledge. Such structures arise more from convenience than from reality. There is no hard line that divides history from geography or mathematics from science; each of them frequently invades the territory of the other and any pursuit of learning that tries to restrict such interaction soon becomes sterile or dead (Cohen et al., 1996; Koppelman, 1996; Farrant, 1980).

The study is primarily intended to investigate the difficulties and complexities of combining a theoretical knowledge of integration and a practical knowledge of how to implement its strategies: the case of Rundu College of Education. It will cover the context and background to the research, the methodology employed and critical analysis of the findings.

2. CONTEXT OF AND BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Namibia gained her independence a 1990 and the major educational reform programme was launched in Namibia. The Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, embarked on new programmes in the area of primary, secondary and teacher education had introduced in schools and teacher training institutions after Independence (MEC, 1993). The main idea for the reform process was, and still remains education for all (Kristensen, 2001). This has brought about changes from the conventional "teacher-centred" way of teaching, which Kristensen referred to as "the rote learning of facts" compared to the learner-centred approach that promotes understanding and conceptual development of each individual learner. This is evident in the educational policy, *Towards Education for All* (MBEC, 1993:10):

As we make the transition from educating an elite to education for all we are making another shift, from teacher centred to learner centred education ...Teacher centred instruction is insufficient and frustrating to most learners, and certainly is not consistent with education for all.

The BETD programme was developed for pre-service training to address the different entry requirements, scope, duration, organisation and focus of the previous programme. It is a unified programme, in general preparing all teachers in Basic Education. It aims to strike a balance between professional insight and skills on the one hand, and subject knowledge on the other. Swarts (1993) pointed out that it also strives for consistency in terms of aims, objectives, competencies, structure and assessment procedures. As the aim of the BETD is to produce good teachers, this demands not only the theoretical knowledge, but also practical experience of how to put theory into practice. Therefore, teacher education requires two types of practices, namely: brief visits to observe and explore in practice concepts taught at the college and School-Based Studies (Reimers, 1998). Taking this into account the Ministry of Higher Education went one step further emphasising that ‘it requires, longer visits, [and] teaching practice, designed to give student teachers exposure to the total experience of teaching’ (MHEVTST, 1998:5).

ETP has a central role within the BETD programme, cementing together all elements of the curriculum and linking subject knowledge, pedagogical theory and praxis. These words encapsulate the philosophy of the BETD embedded in the ETP syllabus that states: ‘the issue of integration of knowledge is emphasised in the ETP syllabus that is based in the constructivist view that knowledge should not be viewed as compartmentalised into subjects but rather be based on the reality of the real world’ (ETP syllabus, 2000). According to this syllabus, integration of knowledge forms an integrated perspective recognising the needs of the student teachers, the Namibia school and reform programme.

Education Theory and Practice (ETP) as a core subject in the BETD programme, prepares all student teachers irrespective of subject or orientation to teach in Namibian schools by developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will form the basis of continual professional development during their college course and

subsequently, through their career as qualified teachers. It must be noted that, although the sequencing of the topics throughout the syllabus is predetermined based on a developmental sequence, there is some degree of flexibility at the implementation level. This is due to the fact that at the college there are variations in the scheduling of the College Based-Studies (CBS) and the School Based-Studies (SBS).

3. FOCUS OF THE STUDY

As an educator at the Rundu College of Education, teaching Education Theory and Practice (ETP), I have seen in many cases how our student teachers struggle with the learning of ETP. ETP is taught in an integrated way assuming that all options, for examples Mathematics, Social Sciences, Lower Primary, situations, methodology and criteria for various mentioned options are the same. Although the ETP syllabus and the Broad Curriculum are very clear and explicit about the way ETP should be taught, there are many different interpretations from both teacher educators and student teachers. ETP falls short in the sense that it is not subject-oriented therefore is not taught in an integrated way.

A study done by Shipena (2000) about subject integration and theme studies in Social Studies at the Ongwediva College of Education revealed that teacher educators were still working in isolation, in perhaps even more fragmented manner than before. The study has shown that student teachers were more vulnerable to not gaining a holistic picture of what teaching was all about due to getting to know their 'small corner of specialised knowledge domain'. Language taught in context as well as skills incorporated in each lesson is not done as ETP teacher educators are not trained in the rationale of the language teacher.

The findings of the above mentioned study also apply at Rundu College of Education where many teacher educators are confined in their areas of specialisation and do not think of integrating their subject content with that of others. In other words, there is a long way to go to fully grasp how integration works. For example, some teacher educators are not helpful in assisting student teachers with language, because they feel that is the language department's problem. It is also evident that integration has never

taken root in many spheres of teaching and learning. It is also clear that teacher educators are curriculum-bound although the broad curriculum makes provision for integration and thereby gives them the opportunity to widen their scope of knowledge.

A project, the Rundu Initiative, was launched in 1998 at the college by NIED to teach according to EnvironTeach, which emphasises the thematic approach. This project failed, however, mostly because teacher educators were not trained to understand fully the integration and relationship between the subjects that were combined (EnviroTeach, Phase Two, 1998). One need also to understand that when the project was introduced teacher educators were not prepared to take up this challenge. Thus, the compartmentalisation of the curriculum could also have contributed to the fact that teacher educators are not used to integrating subjects.

4. GOAL OF THE RESEARCH

The goal of this research is to develop a framework for further study of how our teaching and learning have influenced the teaching styles of the teacher educators and therefore contributes to the current research on teacher education. This study aims to improve the integration of ETP at college through:

- finding the reasons why there is a resistance towards accepting and implementing ETP; and
- examining and investigating factors that have contributed to the teaching in a compartmentalised way.

5. METHODOLOGY

The researcher shows that teaching in an integrated way is indeed a very important component in the teaching and learning situation. At college level, learner-centred education is considered equally important, even though many teacher educators are confined in their areas of specialisation and do not think of integrating their subject content with that of others. It is impossible however to embark on research without knowing what one is looking for and one needs guidelines in order to keep track of what is to be attained. Therefore, this study attempts, to answer the following

questions: To what extent is ETP perceived and practiced the way it was developed or meant to be implemented? And if not, why are teacher educators not teaching in an integrated way?

The purpose of the methodology is to provide a review and description of the methods and procedures that the researcher employed in conducting this study. The purpose of this study dictated the methods and procedures to be used, which is to investigate the difficulties and complexities of combining a theoretical knowledge of integration and a practical knowledge of how to implement its strategies.

5.1 Research Design

A qualitative research approach was used in this study. The qualitative design was deemed most suitable for this study since it allowed the researcher to gain insight into the difficulties and complexities of combining a theoretical knowledge of integration and a practical knowledge of how to implement its strategies. The limitations of this method of study, particularly the small sample size is acknowledged. However, since the investigation has been essential to the exploration with a view to stimulate discussion rather than verifying data, it was felt that the teacher educators and student teachers' perception on integration gained in interviews may illuminate their experience of teacher education and provide useful information for further research.

The qualitative research was chosen in this study because the understanding of the information was of essential concern to the researcher. In this study, an interpretative paradigm was employed. Cohen & Manion (1994) says that the interpretative paradigm, in contrast to its normative counterpart, is characterised by a concern for the individual. Whereas the normative studies are positivist, all theories constructed within the context of the interpretive paradigm tend to be anti-positivist. Similarly, Hammersley (1994) draws a contrast between interpretative research and action research. Like action research, Hammersley says that the interpretive researcher aims to reclaim the meaning and significant of acts by interpretation, but the interpretive researcher rests content once these significances have been reclaimed. Contrary to this, the action researcher used such understanding as a basis for transforming the social world (Hammersley, 1994:236). Thus to the interpretive researcher 'the

problem-source is the opacity of the past to understanding; the end is understanding; the method is interpretive reconstruction of the past in terms which make it comprehensible to the present (Ibid: 236).

5.2 Data Collecting Tools

In preparing the instruments to meet the aims of this study, the first step was to review and evaluate instruments used in relation to study. The instruments used were interviews, questionnaires, and observations. Best (1991) argues that researchers have become preoccupied with one method of inquiry, leading to a neglect of the potential of others. According to Best (1991:153) says, 'Because each gathering procedure and device probably has its own particular weaknesses or bias, there may be merit in using the interviews, observations and questionnaires'.

An interview can be defined as 'a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by the research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation' (Cannel & Kahn, 1968 quoted in Cohen and Manion, 1994). Interviews as a method of gathering data was chosen because they allowed me to critically analyse the interviewee's view on the questions raised. Structured and semi-structure interviews were the principal tools to be used. A questionnaire was also used as the most appropriate instrument for this study due to the number of questions to be answered, and the diversity of the population to be investigated. Cohen et al. (1994: 233) emphasises the importance of using more than one tool when saying: 'triangulation attempts to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint'. Triangulation helped me to overcome the problem that Nyango (1999: 28) refer to as 'problem of methodboundness'.

5.3 Sample

The five respondents who participated in the study were all selected purposefully. The main criteria were that each respondent should have background in the BETD programme as either a teacher educator or student teacher. The rationale was that the

researcher wanted respondents with at least experience with the rationale of the ETP course. Two Head of Departments from the departments of Social Sciences and Mathematics were selected to see whether there are disparities of how integration is being infused in their respective subjects. Three teacher educators were selected because of their experiences and knowledge about the subjects they teach. They were from department of Mathematics and Integrated Natural Sciences, Education Theory and Practice (ETP) and Lower Primary. Three student teachers were also selected to distinguish between what the teacher educators' claims to teacher and what actually happens in the classrooms.

5.4 The Strengths and Weaknesses of Each Tools Used

The strength of this method is that I was able to probe in order to get more depth or ask further questions to clear up understanding. By using interviews I have been able to record facial expressions and body language by taping the interview as well as listening to the tone of the voices. Interview generated a lot of unexpected responses that have influenced my research question. I was also aware of my subjectivity that could have influenced the interviews, but questionnaires were used to avoid this (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Using questionnaires also had the problem of generating so much information that was interesting and was not easy to decide whether to use it or not. Participative-observation was employed. With reference to participative-observation Mouton and Marais et al., 1988 (quoted in Hoberg, 1997:40) conclude that by means of participative-observation the researcher is in a position to observe all the phenomena personally and thus spontaneous occurrences can be noted.

6. PROCEDURE

The interviews were conducted during June 2003 at the college. Teacher educators were interviewed in my office and student teachers in specially arranged venues. The interviews with the teacher educators ranged from half an hour to one hour. Student teachers' interviews of one and half hours to two hours in length were conducted in the afternoon in order not to disrupt the college programmes for too long or to impinge on the time of the student teachers during working hours. The workload of

teachers, the time of the year and the instruction time during School Based-Studies contributed to the choice of student teachers interviews.

Permission was granted by the teacher educators and student teachers to take down detailed notes and in some cases to make tape recordings of interviews during the interviews. The researcher expanded the notes immediately after completion of each interview. Significant comments were grouped from which various patterns emerged. Those categories were further refined and divided into subcategories. The literature and observations assisted me in identifying the final categories. The data analysis also allowed for unanticipated categories such as emergent teacher educator concerns. Cross checking was done by comparing the comments of student teachers, teacher educators and HOD's of various departments.

7. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In order to gauge contextual and other factors that might have influenced the teacher educators' perception of teaching in an integrated or if in a compartmentalised way, the study examined the extent to which teacher educators apply this method. The study looked at vital elements of the difficulties and complexities of combining a theoretical knowledge of integration and a practical knowledge of how to implement its strategies. Also such matters as teacher knowledge of integration, interest of interviewee concerning integration, planning of integrated lesson, etc. are looked at. The findings for each of the vital elements of the difficulties and complexities of combining a theoretical knowledge of integration and a practical knowledge of how to implement its strategies will be presented here.

In order to find out what the teacher educators regard as important aspects of integration, questions were asked to find out what they thought caused them to teach in a way that is not related to the philosophy of the BETD. The purpose of these questions was to get a sense of how teacher educators view their roles in implementing what the Broad Curriculum intends to achieve. Generally, the teacher educators' views on this question were categorised in terms of: the knowledge of subject matter. I then looked at each category in a more specific way by providing examples of what the teacher educators had to say and interpreted the questions.

THE FIRST QUESTION “What is integration?”

The four teacher educators I interviewed defined integration in different ways. One teacher educator from the Department Mathematics and Natural Sciences said that you have certain different components within a subject that you put together. This can be within a specific area of the subject topics or can be topics chosen areas and it can be general issues that you put together and present as a whole, as a holistic view within, for example science only and that is integration. The ETP teacher educator viewed integration as “when you try to bring into teaching/learning different aspects of information and materials so that if you are teaching for instance biology in explaining some concepts, you should relate/translate to other aspect of life to give it meaning. Both departments Lower Primary and Social Sciences elaborated when defining integration as a process of incorporating content in your subject area that is not included in the topics of your area. They felt that this is dealing with topics that are not necessarily an intricate part of the scope of the subject. For example, these are either areas of concern e.g. social conditions or overlapping from other subjects. So when you integrate then you look at other syllabi, real life situations and integrate these into your lessons. One teacher educator commented “Integration also means contextualising the work for your learners and bringing theory into practice’. However, Lower Primary was very specific: ‘Integration is when a lecturer or a teacher combines information in her/his teaching from different subjects to explain a certain point and relating it to real life situations’.

Similar views were also expressed by the student teachers when the Mathematics and Integrated Sciences student teachers said that they do not remember any integration being carried out and the plans do not have any reference to integration. These students however admitted that integration is taking place in their minor subjects, which is lower primary. For example Agriculture as a minor subject for Science is not used as part of Life Science for integration. The Social Science student teacher said that he was not aware of integration, ‘I do not have an idea as to how these subjects could be integrated with ETP. I am in the dark as to which methodologies are applied’. Although at first the teacher educators responsible for SBS was not included

in my selection of teacher educators to be interviewed, I decided to include her because every student teacher I interviewed in her class mentioned her as the first and the best example of integration, and they were enthusiastic about integration. The LP student teachers confirmed that integration is indeed taking place as one student said ‘our teacher educators attempt to involve us in the integration process and are alerted to personal differences or concerns among students’.

THE SECOND QUESTION In your opinion, how does subject integration help you to relate the subject you teach?

According to the responses I received, most teacher educators described subject integration in a similar way to this interviewee: ‘The subject I teach namely biology is an integrated science in itself for example, if you take biology you need to have knowledge of chemistry or if you take biology you need to have knowledge of physics. Those subjects are integrated in biology’. Knowledge in itself is integrated that is why most people prefer the process of teaching subjects in an integrated fashion by making sure all the dimensions are taken into consideration.

In response to the same question, the ETP teacher educator interviewed expressed different views. He described the relationship between ETP and other subjects as ‘linked’ and ‘applicable’. He stated that when you integrate subjects it helps you. For instance, when you teach a language like English that one should have knowledge of other subjects for example economics to integrate the latter terminology in the teaching of English or vice versa. So when you integrate the two it becomes a combined lesson English in economics and economics in English. When you combine the three it becomes easy to apply whatever you teach not only for you as a teacher but even for the learner.

Another teacher educator said that it makes the subject he teaches relevant to learners. It brings a connection between what we teach and the life-world of the student. It brings sense in what we are teaching so that students can see that what we are teaching is relevant to their life-world. It was stated that they could see that information we teach them is part of their whole lives after studies. One student teacher says: ‘Integration gives the learners the holistic picture of education and that the subject is part of the other world also’. Other one say: ‘The subject is part of the

big cake of education and it lives'. The female teacher educator I interviewed responded: 'To me integration is not a subject but an approach used within all subjects. This helps the teacher and me to relate to other sections within my subject or other subjects'. However it is not an easy thing to do. LP teacher educators have no problems with the subject integration as this is the way they teach on a daily basis.

THE THIRD QUESTION What type of methodology do you use in your subject?

Many teacher educators reported use almost the same methods such as experimentation and inquiry lecture. Teacher educator from the Mathematics & Sciences department said: "Methodology used in teaching biology like any other subject is, experimental methods, inquiry methods, lecture method and student project methods'. So there are, of course, different methods one could use in teaching biology and this is determined by the level of the students, the type of topic you are teaching and finally the materials you have available.

Teacher educators expressed similar views with regard to teaching methods in ETP. They cited examples they used in ETP that it is more of discovery learning because it is linked to the LCE approach. One explained 'through discovery we try to give students challenging activities through which we wish them to see different things in different aspects of learning and they just consolidate whatever information they have learnt and we encourage them to do a lot of reading on certain topics and then give them the opportunity to discuss different views at the beginning then just try to consolidate. I think it works well in ETP'.

The Social Sciences and LP teacher educators reported that they try to use as many methods as possible. Student teachers also agreed with their teacher educators. One said: 'My lecturer used those methods', while the other one said: 'I don't see the link between the methods and integration'. Some examples were listed as discussions, drama, demonstrations, lectures etc; perhaps the most common one is discussion, which they either do in groups or pairs. One listed a lot of methods used in her teaching and learning. She said: 'I use a variety of teaching and learning methods e.g. learning methods: quizzes, pantomime, monologue, drama, interviews, riddles, calculations etc. Teaching methods: co-operative learning, model such as jigsaw, and co-op, pair work and lectures'.

THE FOURTH QUESTION Where have you seen your subject fail to support our prospective student teachers?

Teacher educators stated that there is a lack of educational facilities and resources at the college. One of them commented: 'Biology as a science subject needs a lot of infrastructure. Students should be able to lay their hands on equipment needed for teaching science, for example microscope'. It was also said that they have to do the practical work themselves so that they will be able to do the work with learners. Another problematic aspect was 'timetabling' as this does not always allow for practical work.

In terms of integration the ETP teacher educator believes that they do not do so well when it comes to assignments for instance. He reported that most of the assignments that are given in ETP should one way or another link up with other departments - 'In that way we will be seen to be promoting integration rather than just talking about integration. Now we are not actively applying integration we are just talking about it'.

A person from the Social Sciences is of the opinion that students could be better supported on HIV/Aids related information as this disease has an impact on the demand and supply of teachers in our country. The other Social Sciences teacher educator commented that the nature of History is more of a story telling technique but that should not stop us from being creative and imaginative to change the approach of our teaching. It was also felt that content learnt up to grade 12 is not enough.

FIFTH QUESTION Are you taught (about integration) how to integrate the subjects and how to relate content to every day life to make it a reality for the learner?

Of the four teacher educators that responded this question, only two said that they were taught about integration. The Mathematics & Sciences teacher educator said that when one goes through training at the university the professional teachers teach

science with a holistic view of science in an integrated form, and further said that the university tries to go into the depth and width of subject matter.

The teacher educator from the ETP department also agreed but admitted not to having the necessary skills how to do it. He said that the way in which to do it is the thing you yourself need to learn to do and give the process a try everyday. All student teachers said that they heard about integration and not taught about it. One out of three student teachers I interviewed mentioned that they related educational issues with the subjects, but were unable to give concrete themes or example. The problem is to bring theory into practice. Another teacher educator said that she was never trained how to integrate topics but is required to deliver, thus to swim or sink in order to produce student teachers who can also integrate their subjects. She said that it will still take time before we can really say we are comfortable with integration. People have to go through a course and attend workshops to know how to do it. This was one of the need assessments for all the colleges and teacher educators that really lack these skills. She concluded by saying that they only have the basics.

SIXTH QUESTION *When integration takes place learners realise the interrelated nature of all subjects in the real life situation. Do you believe specialists should follow their own students if integration is the ideal in teaching?*

Both arguments have positive and negative challenges. The teacher educators reported that all teacher educators teach subjects in which they have received professional training. Integration is indeed an ideal for teaching principles especially when it comes to lecturing and when it comes to SBS. All teacher educators identified ‘specialised knowledge, exposure, authority and authenticity of knowledge’ as important elements when advising student teachers. One teacher educator said that when you ask a specialist to support his students, he looks at them from the angle of that specific discipline, which is an advantage. If one goes into an area where one is less informed, one cannot give guidance as much expected.

One teacher educator noted that the issue of following students within a specialisation should not confuse us with what integration wants to achieve. If one does not have

adequate knowledge in that specialisation, such a person will even make integration more difficult because, she/he would not really know which part will be relevant for integration or to be highlighted or emphasised in that subject. Expertise is still needed for the integration to be effective and successful.

It was also felt that when it comes to authority and authenticity of knowledge there are certain people who are specialised and can do so. We should not allow anyone who is not a specialist to advise students on the content however; they could advise students on other issues. Teaching is a very broad area. There will be certain aspects certain angles where a specialist may not help and vice versa.

The Social Science teacher educator revealed that to her integration is not a subject but an approach used within a specific subject. This helps the teacher or teacher educator to relate to other sections within her subject as well as other subjects with her subject.

Some teacher educators felt that specialists should follow their own students if integration is the ideal in teaching. Some examples were: “I think integration makes sense in teacher training. It goes along with the concept of holistic teaching. At the end of the day education is about to produce somebody who is prepared for the world out there”. So integration allows the students to be exposed to issues outside the subject content that are important to him also. However, some teacher educators expressed different views. Integration does not really mean changing of experts and sending them to different options for the sake of integration. Issues like gender, HIV/Aids and human rights are some issues that the students will have to deal with and should be dealt with by all teacher educators.

8. DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the difficulties and complexities of combining a theoretical knowledge of integration and a practical knowledge of how to implement its strategies at the Rundu College of Education. Not much is written about the integration of subjects at the national colleges in Namibia in the contemporary educational literature. Colleges in Namibia do not recognise the teaching of integration and across the curricula as important elements for academic

excellence. However, many teacher educators who participated in this study acknowledged the importance of teaching in an integrated way.

8.1 Discussion

An analysis of the data revealed many different themes. The following are the findings about the difficulties and complexities of combining a theoretical knowledge of integration and a practical knowledge of how to implement its strategies. There are several factors to the process of implementation of integration in ETP of the BETD programme. These are teacher educator's knowledge of ETP, teacher interest in implementing integration in the formal curriculum, teacher planning of implementation, teacher educators' concerns and difficulty of subject lecturers to accomplish the implementation. Each theme that emerged is addressed separately.

8.2 The Reasons why there is a resistance towards acceptance the theory and implementing the ETP.

8.2.1 Teacher Knowledge of Integration

The knowledge teacher educators have appears to determine the type of implementation they carry out. Data revealed that the teacher educators have different interpretation about integration. However, teacher educators in some departments believed that ETP can be intentionally incorporated within their subjects, but they do not know how to do it. It was reported that these teacher educators emphasise internal integration because they have done the educational theory and know the theoretical meaning of ETP but do not know how to implement it in the classes. Teacher educator in the Mathematics & Sciences department may have other priorities in mind, or, for those knowing how to integrate, lack of resources and facilities were cited. A stabilised implementation of ETP make teacher educators satisfied with what they are doing and hence does not considered changing their strategies. Student teachers, however, recognise integration with teacher educators in ETP and are able to mentioned concrete examples, but perceive that they are not very much involved in the integration process.

It can be interpreted further that ETP as the umbrella subject in the BETD programme that should link all subjects and give guidance to all options or specialisation is not realised and the ETP teacher educators still working in isolation. This creates an environment where specialists are not well advised and guided by the ETP teacher educators. It is, however, obvious that teacher educators understand the interrelationship of subject areas within their own area of specialisation and do not have an interest in including it in their departmental meeting. However, it was reported that certain individual ETP teacher educators for example those that are responsible for LP and languages, are linking well with other teacher educators of other departments to strengthen the concept of integration.

A teacher educator in the Mathematics & Sciences department includes integration as the ETP syllabus requires and teaching it in their classes, but with no coherent worldview presented. Thus, make integration to be either superficial or irregular. It is irregular to me when teachers relate only a few topics of the subject with the values, but do not continue the integration systematically throughout the subject. One of the teacher educator I interviewed is not against planned integration supporting, rather spontaneous and unplanned integration.

A teacher educator in the Mathematics and Science department includes integration as the ETP syllabus requires teaching it in their classes, but does so without presenting a coherent worldview. This causes integration to be either superficial or irregular. It is irregular when teacher educators relate only a few topics of the subject with the values, but does not continue the integration systematically throughout the subject. One of the teacher educators I interviewed is not against planned integration support if that reduces the amount of spontaneous and unplanned integration.

8.2.2 Theoretical Knowledge about integration and Knowledge about implementing integration.

This study determined two kinds of knowledge: theoretical knowledge about integration, and knowledge about implementation of integration. The first one deals with teachers' concept of integration, teachers' worldviews, teachers' knowledge of ETP that underscore the subject, and the teachers' idea of the expected ETP integration about the subject they teach. Gaebelien (1969) and Holmes (1975, 1977)

expressed that a comprehensive concept of Integration of Faith and Learning (IFL) that involves all areas of curriculum facilitate the integration. In fact, this research determines that teacher educators who include the formal and formal curriculum in their concept of integration are in the highest levels of implementation in the formal curriculum.

Most of the current literature on integration deals with the worldview in general or particular issues of different subjects; but little deals with the foundational basis of ETP themes that underscore different subjects; and there is no clear profile of the expected integration that can be accomplished in the diverse academic areas. This lack of knowledge affects teacher implementation. The greater the knowledge of the subject on the foundational themes that can be integrated, the higher the stage of implementation. Cohen et al., (1996) recommends an integrated curriculum in which subject boundaries are less distinct. It is believed that the work of a class could be organised around broad unified themes, which encompass a number of subject areas. This could be accomplished easily if teachers in especially primary schools were trained to teach all subjects to all or grades, which could ultimately lead to class teaching across the primary school phase.

It was also noticed by de Korniejczuk (1994) that partial or wrong ideas on integration do more harm than good. Likewise, teacher educators who had been trained toward superficial integration tend to reject it, and do nothing to implement integration in the formal curriculum in order to avoid artificial teaching. A balance between all phases of integration, whether in the formal, informal, and hidden curriculum, tends to be accomplished by the teacher who has a more comprehensive understanding about integration and a fair knowledge of all subjects content. Literature on teacher change and implementation suggests that translation from knowledge to implementation requires good training, teamwork, and support from leadership (Fullan, 1992; Hall & Hord, 1987). What transpired from the interviews was that many teacher educators expressed how they struggled alone for years in looking for ways to use integration. One of the new teacher educators I interviewed would like to have advice from experienced teacher educators along this route. This was also revealed by one of the Head of Department who blatantly admitted that workshops and meetings were vital to strengthen the capacity of the teacher educators. It was evident from the data

collected that teacher educators want to leave this isolated condition to share with others both their successes and concerns.

8.2.3 Interest and Planning of the Integrated Lesson

It is worth mentioning that teaching in an integrated way at this college is problematic and both teacher educators and student teachers find it difficult to make a distinction between what they can do in their own class and what is happening in the other classroom. There is strong evidence that teacher educators are aware about integration but what is of interest is the way integration is being interpreted by them. Many think that integration is when one teaches a bit of some of the information from other discipline.

Although the great majority of the teacher educators I interviewed expressed interest in integration, there are differences in their particular views of integration. Many teacher educators reported that they would like to know the experiences of other colleagues in the area of integration. Three of the teacher educators expressed that they would like to know that their HOD's thinks about the integration process and what they have accomplished. In spite of the high general interest, a minor number of teacher educators were interested in the requirements or implementation of integration. Interest in particular issues of implementation was expressed only by those who were attempting to implement integration in their classes, whereas those who were not implementing expressed no specific interest in any aspect of integration.

Teacher educators' individual opinions varied according to the level of implementing. Teacher educators who were not implementing were mostly concerned with external factors such as the support of the Head of Department and the availability of resources. On the other hand, teacher educators who were implementing integration were more concerned with internal factors such as lack of coherence in the presented worldview, and the lack of student participation and commitment.

Fullan (1992:31) pointed out that "in order for implementation to succeed, implementers have to gain a clear understanding of what to do and change in order to put the innovation into practice". Thus, all selected departments are familiar with the

Broad Curriculum of the BETD programme where goals and aims were clearly stipulated toward integration; however some teacher educators as well as student teachers are not familiar with the Broad Curriculum requirements. Therefore, the Broad Curriculum requirements are rarely transferred to the subjects.

The importance of planning integration was demonstrated by this study. Only teacher educators who planned integration were implementing it, and in general those who did not plan were concerned that planning of integration would promote artificial integration. One HOD was of the opinion that integration to her does not mean that people must plan together, but only highlighting those other aspects in your subjects. It was further stressed that it does not require from her to plan with someone or with all those involved. However, it was stipulated by this HOD that team teaching is the only area that requires planning of integration, when more than one teacher educator is teaching the same subject, 'then there is a need to plan together'. Similarly, the other HOD said that there is no formal planning and teacher educators identify areas that lend reality to interpretation and link them accordingly.

The teacher educators who were involved in planning the integration approach have the opportunity to set their own targets. Top-down approach and bottom-up approach is very essential when planning the integration lesson. This was seen to be problematic as Murray (1994:10) claims "however, these may be short term and consideration how cross-curricula work might become part of the longer term objectives of the school may be ignored". Another potential challenge is that it is usually enthusiastic teacher educators who may opt for new approaches and they may be too ambitious for the other teacher educators. It must be understood that whatever route we take, the best will be to adopt the best feature of both approaches. However, if integration approach is to be initiated and planned by the teacher educators, it will always be necessary for the top management of the college to oversee the smooth running of the programme.

8.2.4 Leadership in the College

Although, in general teacher educators did not express major concerns, teacher educators' concerns varied from department to department and from teacher educator

who implements integration to teacher educator who does not. Common concerns focussed on leadership and subject backgrounds of student teachers. The leadership of the college is very important in establishing the educational mode at the college (Fullan, 1992; Hall & Hord, 1984). Teacher educators perceived HOD's priorities. Those in Mathematics & Sciences tend to recognize the lack of coherence in presenting an integrated worldview in their classes, but attributed the situation to a deficiency in promoting integration due to various factors. Nevertheless, teacher educators in the LP department seem scarcely to perceive the need, for constant supervision and guidance as the thematic approach used lends itself to the integration of subjects.

Teacher educators are anxious for recognition. Of all the teacher educators who responded to my questionnaires, reported that they would like to know what their HODs think about the integration they are accomplishing. During interviews, some teacher educators in particular expressed that they would like to have an evaluation of their teaching, particularly in the area of integration. Even though in the departmental meetings, HOD's frequently remind them to integrate, they were not sure that they were doing the right job. It was observed that HODs had little knowledge about integration and could not advise the staff members under their leadership accordingly.

An HOD from a selected department described the main purpose of their department is to provide integral information from an integrated perspective. However, they recognise that they are not quite acquainted with the way integration should be implemented in the formal curriculum for different subjects. Some HODs said that the Broad Curriculum as a guide for them is not explicit enough on lesson integration and deters them from emphasising integration in their meetings. On the question as to whether HOD's emphasise and discuss the use of integration, data revealed that this is lacking and left entirely in the hands of the respective subject specialist. It is also apparent that the HOD's were not trusted to question the specialist's knowledge or authority in the field. That is why they encourage teacher educators to do the best they can, and on occasion, invite a guest to provide more ideas. However, some HODs with high academic commitment, who feel they are academic leaders, create an atmosphere where subject specialists and student teachers more involved in the integration in formal curriculum.

8.2.5 Problems associated with the difficulties of subject integration

All the respondents admitted to the problem associated with the difficulties of subject integration in the execution of their subjects. They have expressed a certain amount of fear at admitting their problems publicly as they felt that it could be interpreted as admission of inadequacy on their part. All teacher educators reported that integration is difficult and complex to realise in the classroom situation.

It is believed that some subjects are more difficult than others. This is revealed in Gaebelein's writing (1968) when he expressed that some subjects present more difficulties than others. As the strongest proponents of integration Cohen et al., (1996), Koppelman (1996), Farrant (1980), believe that integration in History, literature, or Biblical studies comes more naturally than in accounting or mathematics. Taken from there, Gaebelein describes the law of closeness of relation that illustrated the relation of knowledge to the person. The movement is from formal, more abstract sciences to the more personal culminating in theology (Gaebelein, 1968). Teacher educators who expressed that integration is difficult to implement, were in the area of Social Sciences. However, the majority of interviewed teacher educators perceived that the subject that they teach does not present difficulties in integration.

Integration is a very complex process and most teacher educators and student teachers do not realise when they do it. However, to be fully conscious of integration one should have roadmap in the back of your mind which makes you investigate other subjects to be integrated in your subjects for the concept to come to fully realisation. It is not simple tension between theory and practice. Things are far more complex than that, it is a case of real people grappling with real issue of integration in different ways.

Even though teacher educators integrate other subjects and the real life situations, the student teachers do not seem to be aware that integration has take place. This is not specifically pointed out to them when integration occurs. If one brings theory into practice, theory is not a reality for the students as it is not integrated with other

subjects into the particular topic. Lower Primary teacher educators, however, are trained to do integration therefore their integration becomes everyday teaching. A student teacher teaching a grade 1 level experienced integration as a daily occurrence however her colleague teaching grades 2 and 3 were not exposed to integration at school level.

They also perceived that some topics are easy to include in other areas while others are difficult. Teacher educators that are more interested in thematic approach or integration or more knowledgeable about it can reach a higher degree of implementation. It was also noticed by some teacher educators that although Broad Curriculum is regarded as a guide and not prescriptive, the methods of teaching, according to one HOD, demand consideration of several factors, which are not constant and therefore have to be adapted according to circumstances. The factors included among others: (i) the level of student teachers, (ii) the content, (iii) individual differences and (iv) the availability of materials.

Critical Reflection of the Researcher

The focus of this study is the difficulties and complexities of combining a theoretical knowledge of integration and the practical knowledge of how to implement its strategies at the Rundu College of Education. As educators, we must find out where the student teachers begin in their endeavour to extend meaning of their world around them. Every college day should have time in which student's voice, through teaching and learning what they already know and how that links with what the college wants them to know.

The principle of integration requires us to change our ways of looking at things in a different manner. This implies that teacher educators, according to Shipena (2000) have to find ways that enable our students to relate knowledge in the classroom to what goes on outside; relate knowledge from different subject areas; and to look at knowledge as a continuum of experience. This can be done to enable our students to think beyond their chosen areas of specialisation or the subjects that are taught at the college.

The researcher participates in the construction of information and data from the interviews and questionnaires. The question the researcher wants to ask himself is: to what extent does his pre-conceptions and interpretations influence the result? I find the question difficult to answer. To some extent the researcher has been aware of his biases. I had my own opinion about what the contradiction between the teaching of combining a theoretical knowledge of integration and a practical knowledge of how to implement its strategies. This opinion was strongly influenced by my experiences for being a teacher educator of ETP for five years at the college now. I also had an opinion about how the subject should be taught effectively: through active participation of student teachers in the learning and teaching process.

I felt frustrated at times when my plan was not possible to carry out due to events that I felt should not disturb the daily routine. For example, some of my colleagues who have attended workshop in Okahandja who had appointment with me for interviews. However, how much it influenced my observations or interpretations is hard to say. There are two crucial points when my pre-conceptions might have influenced the outcome. One is the analysis of the curriculum and another analysis of the interviews.

There are several reasons why national colleges of which, Rundu College is one, should consider integration as benefits in their curricula. For the purpose of this study, I will highlight one reason. A researcher like Jacobs (1989) has revealed that students retain knowledge better if it is presented to them in ways that integrate the different subjects. We have also learnt from experience that teaching students thinking in addition to content assists them in approaching learning as a process of solving problems, rather than as one of memorising material. This confirms with what they said that integration helped them see the links between the subjects itself and other subjects.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that the teaching of subjects in an integrated way is a difficult one at the college. The study furthermore presents an account on the way teacher educators and student teachers perceive Education Theory and Practice. It is from the

data analysed, revealed that training of teacher educators has influenced the way in which teacher educators interpret the ideals into practice.

It is imperative that teacher educators and prospective teachers realise that teaching is a constant process and continual broadening of horizons and knowledge. Each lesson in every day is an action research-based to prevent one from falling trap of overemphasising for example in biology lesson the history of development of that particular aspect.

This study has shown that the concepts integration and teaching across the curriculum are not well rooted at our college and is difficult to put in practice if teacher educators are subject selfish. It is true, however, that in the absence of subject integration and thematic approach Education Theory and Practice cannot be seen as a subject that cements together all subjects of the curriculum and links subjects knowledge, pedagogical theory and praxis.

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Abstract:

There are many powerful ideas, which have been used to guide and justify the way we do things. The way in which we see things affects the way we do things. We become aware of these perspectives and we recognise the influence they have on our teaching and learning experiences. In other words, we do not have to become victim of them and can instead draw on the various ideas and methods when appropriate. This paper will introduce the educational perspectives namely behaviourism and social constructivism. The two perspectives cannot be seen as separate entities, but have become interwoven into a framework of powerful ideas that has been used to justify and guide our educational processes. In order to explore these perspectives, however, I do need to separate and look at each of them in turn.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a challenging task, and one should seek and strive for ways to make learning more effective. If we want to change the way we teach and interact with our students, we have to develop confidence in ourselves and in our ability to relate to other people. I believe that our students can think for themselves, learn by themselves, can take initiative and do so responsibly. It is therefore important to make a study of the behaviourist theory, which emphasises the scientific knowledge as opposed to constructivism that stresses the internalisation of knowledge through social interaction.

In the subsequent section I will focus my discussion on the two educational perspectives mentioned, namely the behaviourist and constructivist that have been particularly persistent in our educational practices. In doing so I shall not assume that one has replaced the other in a linear succession. Rather each of these perspectives highlights a particular dimension of education and it is the social and historical context that leads to one of these perspectives becoming dominant at particular times. The paper will attempt to define the concept epistemology, and the relationship within behaviourism and positivism. Materialism, realism and empiricism led to the development of behaviourism. The paper will also shed more light on radical, social and critical epistemology versions sprouting from constructivism.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology according to Berry (1998) is the branch of philosophy that seeks to define “knowledge”, that seeks to explain what it means, “to know” something, that seeks to understand how humans come to know things. Derived from this definition,

epistemology provides an answer to the question as to what is knowledge is and also provides an essential philosophical foundation for educational practice (Berry, 1998:39). Coinciding with this definition, Burrell and Morgan (cited in Cohen, 1994) say epistemology is concerned with the very bases of knowledge – nature and forms, how it can be acquired, and how it is communicated to other human beings. It is whether knowledge is something, which can be acquired on one hand, or is something which has to be personally experienced on the other hand. Bodner (1986) puts it very simply when he says that knowledge is constructed in the mind of the learner. In the following paragraphs, I will critically examine the two educational perspectives namely behaviourism and constructivism.

BEHAVIOURISM

It is noticeable how complex it is to define behaviourism. Many scholars have tried to define behaviourism from different perspectives. Van Harmelen (1995:51) suggests that behaviourism ‘is both ambiguous and conceptually complex.’ Duminy et al., (1996) points out that behaviourism attempts to establish a law governing learning ... behaviourism takes behaviour as its object of study. Thus, behaviourists have only concerned themselves with external behaviour and have ruled out internal experiences and feelings. Therefore learning from a behaviourist point of view is the study of the activities of humans by means of observation of behaviour and objective experiment and by leaving out consciousness. However, behaviourism oversimplifies human behaviour.

Invariably, ‘behaviourism is to be seen as a network of theoretical perspectives held together by the common belief that personal experience is understood and exhibited as behaviour or actions that result from our interaction with our physical and social environment’ (Van Harmelen, cited in Higgs, 1995:51). Following this, the term behaviourism reflects a belief that teachers should focus all their attention on how to make learners change their behaviour. Thus, behaviourism focuses on behaviour that can make it easier for teachers to assess whether their teaching is effective. Behaviourism has been influenced by materialism, realism, empiricism as well as positivism. In the next paragraph, the focus will be on the interrelationship of these keys words that underlie the assumptions of behaviourism.

The Origin of Behaviourism

Behaviourism has its roots in the philosophical traditions that are related to realism, which is similar to the behaviourists' belief that behaviour is caused by environmental conditions (Ozman and Craver, 1986). According to these authors, there is a close connection between behaviourism and realism, which is the advocacy of science. Thus behaviourists believe that we can understand human behaviour by a meticulous study of particular behaviour. Ozman and Craver (1986) assert that behaviourists expand this approach to the effect that human "nature" can be explained by what traditionally has been thought to be only a particular aspect of human nature – behaviour. Likewise, there is no "internal" reality of the human hidden from scientific discovery for the behaviourists, because what is real is external, factual and observable behaviour, capable of being known. Behaviourists maintain that human traits of personality, character, integrity and so forth are the results of behaving in certain ways (Ozman and Craver: 1986).

Materialism is rooted in the Greek philosophy and it is essentially the theory developed along with modern science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In essence, materialism is according to Ozman and Craver (1986:165) "the theory that reality can be explained by laws of matter and motion." It can be seen that behaviourism is definitely a kind of materialism, for most behaviourists view human beings in terms of their neurological, physiological, and biological contexts. Behaviourists considers humans a two entities namely the body as the 'material' and that behaviour is considered as 'motion' Ozman and Craver (1986:166) states 'states is material and behaviour is motion'. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1579) was such an advocate of mechanical materialism who has rejected the element of self-determination and free will in the thought of Descartes. Descartes, according to Ozman and Craver (1986) simply compare human life to that of a machine which means that a machine has life. He further suggested that 'organised society is like machine; it has an artificial life that has to be maintained' (Ibid: 166).

The Early Behaviourist

Behaviourist education has its roots in modern science and psychology. Some well-known proponents of behaviourist education include Pavlov (1849-1936), Watson (1878-1958) and Skinner (1904-1990). Pavlov was an experimental psychologist and

physiologist in pre-Soviet Russia. Through his physiological studies of digestion in dogs, he developed the classical conditioned response theory. He claimed that learning is largely a physiological matter. From his conditioning studies he noted that there is a close relationship between realism and materialism (Ozman and Craver, 1986). His studies showed that he could take a neutral stimulus (ringing of a bell) and, after successively pairing it with a primary reward (food), the dog would respond with salivation to the neutral stimulus (bell) presented without food. Pavlov terms the stimulus (bell) the conditioned stimulus and the salivation produced by the conditioned stimulus the conditioned response (Duminy, Steyn, Dreyer, Vos and Dobie, 1996).

Van Harmelen (cited in Higgs, 1995) makes some differentiation on the way human beings learn; be it through conditioned or unconditioned behaviour and tries to find answers as to why this conditioned and unconditioned behaviour occur. The behavioural epistemological questions become important to us as we need to give answers to them. Thus, van Harmelen (cited in Higgs, 1995:55) poses the following questions: 'How do we come to learn?' and, 'How do we know what we have learned is true, or an accurate representation of reality?' There are many theories around conditioned and unconditioned behaviour that has given rise to the epistemological questions to prove whether learning has really taken place or not. In attempting to provide an answers to the questions (Brent, 1983:19) suggests that 'any change in behaviour that is more or less permanent over time and that is not the result of maturation'. The second question was seen by behaviourist as 'the manifestation of the desired behaviour' (van Harmelen, in Higgs, 1995:55).

Ozman and Craver (1986) refer to Watson's view of learning as a process based on the development of conditioned reflexes. The work by Watson and other behaviourists is seen by these authors as giving rise to the behavioural claim related to the ability to control and manipulate human's behaviour. Stenhouse's (1981) criticism of behaviourism emphasised the fact that behaviourism can lead to humans being viewed as objects ignoring their right to choose. Ozman and Craver further indicate that Watson's work focused on the fact that all behaviour whether positive or negative was learnt. Thus, suggesting that as long as the relevant stimuli were presented from an

early age that individuals could be 'moulded' into any type of person desired (Ozman and Craver, 1986:168).

Another behaviourist was Skinner (1904-1990) who was known as "the highest priest" of behaviourism (Ozman and Craver, 1989:156). Like Pavlov, Skinner's interest has been conditioning. Skinner's solution to the empirical epistemological problem of universals was operancy (van Harmelen, 1995:58). Van Harmelen further (1995:58) states that 'operant conditioning was the result of operant conditioning and as such was behaviour that was controlled by its consequences rather than by its antecedents'. Skinner held the notion that an organism is not a passive recipient of stimuli in the environment, but that it has the capacity to elicit a response from the environment. His main thesis suggested that knowledge derived from operancy was essentially an exercise in power, as it has an effect on the environment. In view of this, Skinner claimed that the combination of classical conditioning and operancy solved the epistemological problem relating to the question of how we learn (Van Harmelen in Higgs, 1995). From this point of view, van Harmelen asserts that 'learning is a change in behaviour that has occurred either as a result of the reinforcement of a behaviour that has elicited a need-reducing response from the environment'. He maintains that if the consequences of action were unpleasant, this action would not be pleasant. He however, claimed that if the consequences were pleasant the behaviour would recur (Duminy et al., 1996; van Harmelen, 1995).

Logical Empiricism.

According to Locke, Hume and Berkeley (cited in Gross, 1996:21) empiricism is 'the only source of true knowledge about the world is sensory experience, i.e. what comes to us through our senses or what can be inferred about the relationships between such sensory facts.' Logical empiricism can be distinguished in the work of Lyceum; the school founded by Aristotle with its project to record in the encyclopaedic fashion the whole realm of human knowledge and enquiry. The logical empiricism has its roots in the empiricism espoused by the British philosophers of the 17th century. The famous British empiricists were John Locke and David Hume (Ozman and Craver, 1995:156). At the centre of these empiricists' ideas were the nature of experience and the ways in which human beings acquire their knowledge of the world, and the validity and reliability of data acquired in this way (Ibid:1986).

Aspin (1995) affirms that empiricists wanted an account of the growth of human ideas and knowledge that was grounded only in human experience. For the empiricists, he claimed the only way we got such experience is through the evidence of the senses and the inner feelings, combined into meaningful concepts by psychological principles such as association. Knowledge, according to Locke, (quoted in Aspin, 1995:24) consists in the ‘perception of the connection and agreement or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas.’ It is noted that we can have knowledge when we have the psychological evidence that certain of our ideas are connected, consonant, agree or disagree.

Logical empiricism is located in the underlying principles of the strong position of behaviourism that are located in the methodological and the epistemology. Van Harmelen (1995) points out that logical empiricism is, however, generally accepted by contemporary philosophy of science as being defunct on the basis of the principle of verification and therefore in terms of its epistemology. Radical or strong behaviourism, as Van Harmelen claimed, does not wash, as a theory of methodological empiricism or as a theory that purports to be scientifically situated in an absolute and deterministic sense. According to her, many people, among others such as Quine, Wittgenstein, Kuhn and Hanson have questioned the validity of a value-free scientific theory. They argued that no theory can be separated from the values that underpin the ‘conceptual schemes’ or ‘paradigms’ in which researchers work (Howe in van Harmelen, 1995). The viewpoint has been summed up by Barratt (1971:67) who writes:

“The decision for empiricism as an act of scientific faith signifies that the best way to acquire reliable knowledge is the way of evidence obtained by direct experience”.

Positivism

The theory of positivist was influenced and strengthened by the developments in the modernist thinking as people believed more and more in the ideas of positivism and scientific authority (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Positivism is a philosophical position of Auguste Comte, that recognising only positive facts and observable phenomena be it religious system founded in this. Positivism was seen as a scientific approach which views the findings of science as absolutely representative of reality, and

ignores the role of the scientist as a human being who shapes the scientific findings (Ozman and Craver, 1986:170). According to Donald et al., (1999:40) “positivism uses traditional scientific method to try to establish ‘the truth’ about human behaviour.” Donald asserts further that underlying this method is an assumption that knowledge or ‘the truth’ is out there somewhere and all what we have to do is to discover and prove it. To this end, Freire (1970:53) has called this the ‘banking’ approach attempts to deposit knowledge in the learners through direct instruction, where learners are seen as needing to be ‘filled up’ with knowledge. Another characteristic of positivism according to Donald et al., (1999) is the tendency to reductionist ways of thinking. It assumed that the reality could be best understood by breaking it up into its smallest parts: if these parts are understood, the whole can be understood. Du Plessis (1997:9) states that ‘a positivist perspective on knowledge assumes that knowledge is separate from the knower.’ Knowledge is fixed and waiting to be discovered as the human mind can only uncover knowledge that already exists. A positivist perspective is thus the sense that only that which is proven and tested using the scientific method is truth (Olivier 2000).

CONSTRUCTIVISM

The term constructivism refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves; each learner individually or socially constructs meaning as he/she learns. Richardson (1997) for that matter has further demonstrated that constructivism is a way of thinking about the formation of knowledge and understanding. She also maintains that constructivism provides a lens with which we can examine the world - attend to and render events, and, in many cases, but not all, explain them (Richardson, 1997:54). It is also interesting to note that there is a great challenge lying ahead for those of us wishing to portray and nurture a constructivist perspective in teacher education programmes. In view of this, Richardson, reveals that constructivism is a way of thinking about the events of teaching and learning. To her, she reminds us, that it is neither a person nor a method, but a theory of knowledge (Richardson, 1997:54) It is my opinion however, that we have to recognise that there is no such thing as knowledge “out there” independent of the knower, but only knowledge we construct for ourselves as we learn. According to this perspective, before we can begin to claim

to “know” anything, we have to consider what a variety of others can tell us. In other words, we have to construct our own understanding of the world for ourselves basing it on a variety of sources.

Radical Constructivism

Mathews (1992) asserts that “radical constructivists” are idealists – the world is created by human thought and dependent upon such thought. Von Glasersfeld (1989:104) on the other hand points out that: “The realist believes his constructs to be replica or reflection of independently existing structures, while the constructivist remains aware of the experience’s role as originator of all structure ... for the constructivist there are no structure other than those which the knower constitutes by his very own activity of coordination of experimental particles.” Mathews argues that though there are variations in constructivist epistemology, the common thread is that it is subject-centred, experience-based, and realistic. He contended that its relativism needs to be distinguished from the other relativisms in which the goal of science as a search for truth about the world is accepted, and it is then asserted that we cannot know different accounts which one is actually true or better.

The radical constructivism entails a radical rebuilding of the concepts of knowledge; truth, communication and understanding, can be assimilated into any traditional epistemology (Von Glasersfeld, 1995:19). Von Glasersfeld argues that radical constructivism is uninhibitedly instrumentalist. According to von Glasersfeld it replaces the notion of ‘truth’ with the notion of ‘viability’ within the subject experiential world. Hence, it refuses all metaphysical commitments and claims to be more than one possible model of thinking about the only world we can come to know, the world we construct as living subjects.

In contrast, in keeping with thoughts in the philosophy of mathematics, science and social sciences, radical constructivism both have fallibilistic epistemologies. In other words, they problematise the whole relationship between the knower and the known, and accept that no certain knowledge is attainable by humans including mathematical knowledge (Ernest, 1993). The danger according to Ernst is that it can lead to an overly child-centred, romantic progressivism. Thus, constructivism, conceived in a loose and emotive way, can become associated with a sentimental view of the child’

(Wakerdine, 1984) a mythologizing of childhood and an over shielding of the child from social influence, from the ‘nasty’ realities of the world. It must be noted however, that radical constructivism is a rich theory, which is giving rise to a body of fruitful and innovative research in the work of Cobb, Wood, von Glasersfeld (Ernst, 1993:14). Radical constructivism is based in von Glasersfeld’s principles.

The principle of radical constructivism proposes also that the individual learner’s knowledge constitutes a conceptual lens through which their experienced world is observed and interpreted. According to radical constructivism, this view is consistent with modern philosophy of mathematics which rejects traditional absolutist views (Platonism, Formalism) that formal mathematical concepts have an objective existence that is independent of the minds of mathematicians, and that mathematical knowledge results from the exercise of pure reason that is unfettered by physical, social or emotional influences (Taylor and Campbell-Williams, 1993).

Social constructivism

The social constructivist view of learning has its philosophical roots in the work of Mead (1934) and Wittgenstein (1953), articulated by the work of Dewey (1963) and Harre (1953). These authors share with Kuhn (1962) the epistemological view that knowledge is a social artefact, which is maintained through a community of peers. Based on this view, Bruffee (1984; 1986) proposes that knowledge is not based on an objective reality but can be measured and qualified; rather, it is consensually formed through social interaction.

Constructivism is a pedagogical theory derived from the tenets of critical theory (Pomuti, 2000). The notions of the interrelatedness between theory and practice and reflection have dominated constructivist thinking. Drawing on the psychological works of Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner and Levy Vygotsky, constructivism has emerged as a theory of knowledge and learning. Constructivists reject the positivist view of knowledge and the understanding of theory and practice as separate entities. As a theory of knowledge and learning, constructivism stresses that knowledge is constructed in the mind of the individual and learning takes place through the processes of transformation and self-regulation. Constructivism shifts this emphasis to a more active position where human beings are seen as active agents in their own

development. In other words, human beings are shaped by both nature and nurture, but they are also active in shaping their own development (Donald et al., 1999).

Another related and equally dominated strand of constructivism is the idea that knowledge is not passively received. Thus, the work of developmental psychologists such as Piaget and Bruner has shown how knowledge is not simply 'taken in' by people, but it is actively built up and developed to progressively higher levels in each learner. Through engaging in experiences, activities, and discussions that challenge them to make meaning of their social and physical environment, learners are actively engaged in building a progressively more complex understanding of their world (Donald et al., 1999).

Piaget was the first constructivist in the sense that in his view knowledge is constructed in the mind of the learner was based on research on how children acquire knowledge. Piaget sees the individual as actively engaged in an ongoing process of adaptation. He asserts that people are constantly confronted with new information from their environment, thus the physical and social world around them. From childhood, children are involved in constructing or building progressively more complex 'maps' of this world in their attempts to understand and adapt to their world. Piaget suggests that this happens through three continuously interacting processes of assimilation, accommodation and equilibration.

Bruner (1964) cited the importance of insight into the tools of cognitive development. He emphasised the gradual development from representations of the world in action patterns (enactive representation), to representation in images (iconic representation) and to representation of symbols (symbolic representation). It is possible to see how each of these is representing the world and continues to develop in its own right, and in the interaction with others. Bruner (1986) coined from Vygotsky the notion of scaffolding to describe the help given by elders, which enhances the learner's level of development. Scaffolding can also be done by the peer group, who will 'language' at the level most appropriate to the group.

The socio-psychological roots of social constructivism are based on the theories of Vygotsky (1962; 1978; 1993) and others who have modified and developed his views.

Social constructivist views of learning are related to the idea that knowledge is constructed by interactions of individuals within society and that it is social in culture (Vygotsky, 1986, Williams, 1989). Learning is the result of an internalization social interaction. In other words, new thoughts and ideas (knowledge and concepts) are formed by a process of verbalisation. Vygotsky also claimed that children develop as a result of historical-cultural interaction with other members of the society, and that these elders can stretch the child's experience of what Vygotsky call the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and aid intellectual development. The concept of the zone of proximal development 'is the distance between the lower level, where the student or child works independently, and the upper level, where the child completes the task with assistance by an adult or more experienced peer'. Vygotsky (1986) describes children as active in their own development and as creating knowledge of the world through activity. This active role of the learner allows for the transformation of knowledge. This knowledge according to Vygotsky is dynamic and is created, examined, and transformed rather than merely transmitted, whole, from the adult to the child. This concept (ZPD) is by now quite familiar even to educators working outside the Vygotskian framework (Bodrova and Leong, 2001). However, the applications of this concept to instructional practice are not numerous, and in many cases the ZPD is used as a metaphor rather than a theory (Bodrova and Leong, 1996). This is evident that since most teacher educator did not receive this kind of education themselves, there are implications for the preset education of teachers (Richardson, 1997). Ilukena (1998) observes that the moment there is a shift, our comfort zones are being challenged and this may lead into uneasiness because we will be required to adjust our position.

Critical Theory

Berry (1998) contends that all constructivists are not critical theorists, but all critical theorists are constructivists. The characteristic that sets critical theorists apart from other constructivists is an insistence that there is no part of the status quo that should not be challenged. Critical theorists therefore believe that we are all in the position of blind men, limited in our individual perspectives.

Critical theory according to Giddens and Turner (1987) challenges the positivist thinking, which is said to emphasise the direct observation as a way of understanding

the world; that scientific knowledge is the only valid way of knowledge and that the fact that scientific knowledge forms the basis for prediction and control of natural and social processes. Gibson (1986:26) argues that critical theorists have opposed a conception of science that insists on the separation of facts from values and the reduction of human experience to scientific facts. Critical theorists are of the opinion that these assumptions are seen as distorting a real understanding of society. Critical theorists have also rejected interpretative social science's hermeneutic approach to understanding the social phenomena. The hermeneutic approach is a way one would interpret ideas or concepts. It is argued that critical theories, the hermeneutic approach acknowledges human capacity or creativity, but it does not encourage critical thinking. The critical theorists argue that people need to be aware of the conditions that inhibit one's self-understanding and one's understanding of society (Wallace 1987:108). It can be argued that self-understanding as well as the understanding of society is achieved once the cause of distortions to such understandings are clarified, explained and eliminated. In view of this, Gibson (1986) stresses the notions of critique, analysis, and communication as central to a person's self-understanding.

Critical theorists argue that a positivist perspective on the relation of theory to practice is linear, and they argue for a 'recursive' (Gibson, 1986:20). They adopt a totalising approach to the study of social reality and argue for a dialectical relationship between thought and action. This means that from the critical point of view, thought and action are indivisible (Pomuti, 2000). The critical theorist's view of theory and practice is related to its view of knowledge. It argues that knowledge is historically and socially rooted and interest bound. Habermas identifies the central role of subjectivity in constituting and validating knowledge, especially scientific knowledge derived by empirical means (Taylor and Campbell-Williams, 1993). Habermas believes that the historical-material conditions in which people develop will condition the constitution of knowledge. Habermas sees critical reflection into these conditions as central to the constitution of knowledge (Roderick, 1986).

The critical social theory of Habermas challenges the fundamental tents of positivism in ways that are compatible with key elements of constructivist theory, and provides a promising framework for understanding and overcoming cultural constraints that

restrict the scope of constructivist-oriented pedagogical reform. Habermas identifies three knowledge-constitutive interests: the technical, the practical and the emancipatory. While critical theory claims to liberate and empower by allowing people to form their own realities, it cannot dictate whose realities are right or best. It does not; however try to clarify which culture is preferable, since this would go against its claims to liberate. This desire for emancipation is a response to social injustice and oppression, yet the movement towards emancipation is likely to require coercion that some may find oppressive, because they will be deprived of advantages to which they believe they are entitled.

CONCLUSION

It is noticeable from the above that there are a number of similarities between constructivist orientation and the socially critical approaches. There are also, however, a number of tensions between these two theoretical standpoints. A key tension is that the relativism that evolves from constructivist position implies that all constructs must be accepted as valid, while a socially critical theory expects that the validity of a construction will be judged within a particular context and with special attention to the consequences of adopting a particular social construction. It should also be noted that there is a strong influence by constructivist perspectives to learning rather than that of behaviourist approaches. We must not, however, forget that although these theories of learning are different in many ways they also have a number of aspects in common. They are not the only theories of learning, and we also have to accept and anticipate that other theories of learning may become more prominent in the future. The key difference between these two theories is that they see the nature of 'reality' and the origin of 'knowledge' in fundamentally different ways, but from an educational point of view they may share a number of approaches and methodologies; although the way in which they play out in the classroom might be interpreted differently.

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1. CURRENT POSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I am employed in the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation at Rundu College of Education as Head of Department: Student Affairs and Hostels. I am also a member of the Management Team at our college and teach Education Theory and Practice (ETP).

2. ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

I have completed a two year full time Diploma in Youth Development and Policy Formulations at the University of Zambia (UNZA) under the auspices of the Commonwealth Youth Programme. I also completed a part-time diploma in Education through the Windhoek College of Education. A Further Diploma in Education in Environmental Education was acquired from the University of South Africa (UNISA). An International Advanced Certificate in Environmental Education acquired from Sweden-South and Africa sponsored by SIDA. I have completed a Degree in Education (B.Ed Honours) through Rhodes University.

3. RESEARCH INTERESTS

My research interest is Curriculum with special reference in ETP as well as in Environmental Education. In my present position, I am still actively involved in planning, organising and budgeting, which comprise to a large extent, General Public Administration and Student Welfare.

4. LEISURE PURSUITS

I love reading about youth, education and environmental issues. I spend most of my time looking after my children and my vegetable garden at home. I also love domestic animals and own some chickens. Taking walks and teaching young children that what I know about youth, education, agriculture and our environment. I enjoy listening to music, watching television, playing traditional drums, doing traditional dancing and socialising with friends and family.

5. ACHIEVEMENTS

The highest accomplishments in my life have been when I was awarded scholarships in Youth Development sponsored by the Commonwealth African Centre in Zambia to study at the University of Zambia (UNZA) and subsequently attended an Advanced International Certificate in Environmental Education Processes in Formal Education in Sweden and South Africa.

6. HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS

My hopes and aspirations are that my students will benefit from the education I acquired from Rhodes University for them to develop skills and values needed to be reflective teachers so as to improve their teaching skills. This is related directly to the programme of the BETD on educational issues that addresses the short term specific needs of the students across the curricula and in the long term enhances the concept of life long learning. This, with my previous training in both education and youth development would further advance my skills. I can use the new skills and knowledge attained to better serve my community by setting up sustainable developments and projects on educational issues.

REFLECTION ON THE MED GETP PORTFOLIO

INTRODUCTION

An educational portfolio is a very important file in one's life. I will first look at what an educational portfolio is. Sweet (1993) claims that an educational portfolio is a collection of evidence that demonstrates the progressive acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It also gives a picture of your individual experience in a learning situation. This portfolio gives me an opportunity to demonstrate both my growth in the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude required in the field of education and the level of competency in the core competencies of the Master Degree.

I see a reflection of my research portfolio as an important part of my academic progression. In view of this, my reflection gives me an indication on how I have grown in the struggle of the academic journey. To me, a research portfolio is a document where I assess myself on the research processes. Sweet (1993) asserts that a portfolio can be a folder containing a student's best pieces and the student's evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the pieces. It may also contain according to him one or more works-in-progress that illustrate the creation of a product such as an essay, evolving through various stages of conception, drafting and revision. In other words, this is a process that I have seen myself going through in studying through Rhodes University.

In this reflection, I will critically and pertinently look at the overall progression of my academic path during the Master's programme, academic year 2002 – 2003. I have structured my portfolio under the following headings: Reflection on all three assignments, critiques of the process of the portfolio and the conclusion.

THE ACTUAL REFLECTIONS

In my first assignment, I thought my assignment was written in a style to impress my tutors concerning what I know about my situation and the curriculum that I teach. I have much information about a contextual analysis of the subject I teach, which is Education Theory and Practice (ETP). The name of the subject implies translating

theory into practice and my task was to see how teacher educators at my institution implement what the education policies say. I tried by all means to get as much information as possible by reading what these documents talking about and I have also gathered information through interviews and sent questionnaires to both teacher educators and student teachers. A lot of information was collected that made writing about it even more difficult to select which data was needed for the studies and which not; and the interpreting was done according to the information collected.

Another aspect that has enriched my writing was the fact that my colleagues and friends were allowed to read and make comments or contributions on the original draft. To enable me to do this, I have developed an element of tolerance because it was the first time that I allowed someone look at my work. It must be remembered that have come from a background where one regard one's work as more important than others and competition was also important. Sharing of assignments with others was not as easy as the case today. I also felt that if we share the same information, my fellow student might copy from me and vice versa and plagiarism was at stake. However, I received valuable comments from those who had access to that piece of writing. I thank them very much for their input, and through this I have improved my assignments. Again, to meet the requirement of being a Master's student, the assignment should be free of any typing errors before handing it in. There were also many colleagues of mine who helped me to edit and proof read to make my final document a good paper.

During my re-work of the assignment on epistemological bases of behaviourism and constructivism, I accumulated and assimilated valuable knowledge for myself and for the class that I teach. I have read extensively on the two theories, namely behaviourism and constructivism. The two theories are very broad and complex. As a result, I also learned how to get reliable information from various sources. These assignments provided with me with the knowledge and skills on how to extract information relevant to my studies and I think this made my assignments successful. It is worth writing to state that I have obtained useful knowledge from paging through many books. By so doing, it enhanced my writing skills and I think this has contributed greatly to a broader base of knowledge about writing an academic paper.

However, the writing part of it was difficult. I think this can be attributed to my tutors' guidance and assistance.

I have responded quite well to my tutors' comments on the following aspects: (1) to make divisions clearer between various forms of constructivism, (2) to make the language my own and (3) to indicate the implications these two educational theories have on our education. It was equally true that I originally overlooked the divisions of constructivism albeit all forms of constructivism were discussed. I also realised that radical constructivism was not discussed as in detail as I have done in my final draft. The final version has now the three separate areas of constructivism, such as radical, social and critical. I am happy to report now that I am now quite familiar with these theories and that my students are also benefiting from the knowledge I gained from Rhodes University. It is also important to make sure that conceptual understanding occurs in every learning so that student should make meaning of his own world. I also believe the Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky theories have provided me with the necessary insight about learning. To this end, I also realise that what Vygotsky calls 'the internalisation' is an important aspect in learning to make the language my own so that I can interpret it the way it makes meaning to myself and to the people that I work with. This has enabled me to explain concepts to my colleagues and students with ease.

The reading for literature review started fairly difficult. It was also difficult because I collected a lot of reading material before I started writing. Reading different books was not easy task however. The reading material was sometimes very difficult to understand. It took time for me to find the right material for my topic. It was, thus frustrating to some extent. Despite the difficulty with the reading, the writing eventually took place and the topic for my research paper was identified. My topic was integration in the area of the subject I teach at the college. I have selected this topic because of the problems I encountered at the college in 2001 in teaching in the thematic approach that support integration. Integration still remains a contentious issue at our college. I find it also pleased me to have good tutors who continuously advised me on issues pertaining to my topic.

Despite good comments from my tutors, I think, there are also a number of issues that I need to consider as was reflected in our discussions. In our discussions, it was revealed that there should be a clear distinction between what the text says and that of the writer. What was also of particular importance is the fact that referencing should always be consistent. I know for a fact that I do not have a problem with spelling, however, there is a need to have someone edit and proof read my work. It is hoped, by so doing, that this person should critically read my paper, look at the structure, phrasing, paragraphing of the paper, and the way the ideas hang together as well as the coherence and the sequence of ideas.

CRITIQUES OF THE PROCESS OF THE PORTFOLIO

Research has shown that students at all levels see assessment as something that is done to them on their work by someone else. Thus, a portfolio can provide a structure to involve students in developing and understanding criteria for good effort, and to see the criteria as their own and to apply the criteria to their own and other students' work. In essence, a portfolio can serve as a vehicle for enhancing our awareness of a strategy for thinking about and producing work both inside and beyond the classroom.

During the re-working exercise I adapted my work according to the comments I received from my tutors. I received many comments from my tutors. Some were good and some not. Comments play a pivotal role in the development of a paper. The fundamental aspect of the comments that every student needs to know are as follows: (a) comments which indicate that the assignment as a whole has been received and considered by the tutor, (b) comments that establish and maintain the dialogue, (c) comments which correct straightforward errors of facts or simple misunderstandings, (d) comments about the relevance or appropriateness of the content or approach of the answer to the particular assignment, (e) comments which support and encourage the student, and (f) comments which explain the grade (Open University, 1973:10-14). The six points indicated above helped me to get my work done and the re-work assignment was basically based on the said principles.

In all my assignments, I considered the six points as the framework through which my work ought to be done. In applying what my tutors asked me to do, I went through all

my assignments again to refresh my mind. I have worked on the particular problem I encountered in my writings until I was satisfied.

The success of my study contributed greatly to my professional and personal growth. I have increased my knowledge of professional practice, which I believe has influenced the effectiveness of my teaching, both in my current and future classroom as well as in my student teachers' classrooms. All in all, the study has increased my confidence and willingness to move ahead in the area of both my professional development and that of my student teachers.

IMPACT OF THE PORTFOLIO TO ME AS RESEARCHER

By studying MED GETP has allowed me to acquire additional skills to shape my leadership capabilities. This course has enabled me to solve problems and solutions to the problem of action research and critical inquiry which are the backbone of the BETD programme. Being an HOD responsible for Student Affairs, the MED GETP has further given me insight into the management process and managerial skills that had equipped me with the required knowledge and skills relevant to the demands of the staff and students under my supervision.

Equally important, by studying an MED programme, I have incorporated effective learning strategies to better reach my target on concepts such as Critical Inquiry and Action Research, which is the essential component of the BETD programme taught through ETP. Studying research methods have given skills to set up and implement effective action research and critical inquiry approaches that has guided the students throughout the course of BETD during the School-Based Studies and enabled them to understand these concepts better.

It is envisaged that this programme has really benefited my education; in as this case I have been able to allow our students to develop skills and values needed to be reflective teachers and organisers in order to improve not only their skills and knowledge, but improve their own teaching skills. Since a research tradition is not well-developed at our college, the skills acquired afforded me the opportunity to reflect on my experiences thus far and exchange ideas on issues concerning education,

using effective teaching and learning strategies in this complex but interesting field, thereby enhancing my skills for performance. This has enhanced my teaching skills and therefore led to an improved quality of life of our students and myself.

CONCLUSION

It is important to state that a portfolio is a tool where one has to assess him or herself. Given the fact that a portfolio is a collection of evidence of a person's progress, I have found that it is the only way one can measure one's performance. It is also vital to reflect on all work carried out throughout your academic journey using my portfolio.

Having gone through the M.Ed programme route for a number of times, I have realised how important the tutors' comments are. I have also realised that these comments have been helpful, as it required me as an M.Ed Student to critically reflect on my own way of saying something in, writing and perhaps in which way I would improve it for the final draft.

References

Sweet, D. (1993). *Student Portfolios: Classrooms Uses*. //A:/ Archived STUDENT PORTFOLIOS CLASSROOM USES.htm.

Appendix 1

Cameo Study

Write a short and in the information include the following details.

1. Who are you?
 - a) name
 - b) age
 - c) where you come from (region, village, town)
 - d) your educational background

2. Your cultural background:
 - What do you regard in your culture as education?
 - How do you value ETP as a subject?