

**TOWARDS DEVELOPING REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS IN BASIC
EDUCATION IN NAMIBIA: THE CASE OF THE KEETMANSHOOP
REGION**



A mini thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Educationis in the Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape.

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Cicilia Anna Mostert

KEYWORDS

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Lifelong learning

Critical inquiry

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BETD

Namibia

Support

Conducive environment

School-based studies

Change agents



ABSTRACT

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C A Mostert

M Ed mini thesis, Faculty of Education, University of Western Cape

The Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) in Namibia was developed to transform the fragmented and segregated teacher education in the country before independence in 1990. The main aim of the BETD is to empower teachers to meet the challenges of the basic education with its four goals of equity, access, quality and democracy and to become change agents of being at the forefront of educational reform and development in the country. Developing reflective attitudes and skills were identified as the tool to realise this, since reflective practices have the potential to put the practitioner in charge of her/his professional development by constantly re-evaluating your practice in the quest for improving teaching and learning in your classroom. In essence, by taking reflective practices on board, teachers are being acknowledged as having the potential to take charge of what is happening in their classrooms and to make positive changes towards quality education and thus national development.

I found that, consistent with earlier studies, the BETD did manage to initiate attitudinal changes and to equip prospective teachers with the skills to inquiry practices. However, the BETD clearly indicates that it can only initiate this life long journey of becoming reflective practitioners. Taking the nature and complexity of reflection into consideration, it could have been idealistic to expect of these young and inexperienced teachers to get into the field and to bring about changes. Besides the fact they have to struggle to come to grips with the realities of every day school life, they had a schooling repertoire of twelve years ahead of teacher education that were in direct contrast with reform principles. Moreover, they would be appointed at schools where the majority of the staff has extensive experience in practicing and upholding past principles and condoning the culture of silence.

Through this study I investigated what the conditions are BETD graduates face at schools where they are appointed and how they manage to sustain their ongoing professional development as reflective practitioners. The case study revealed that, although the environment at the school was conducive to promote continual professional development through reflective practices, some additional measures are

necessary to assist and support these graduate teachers to develop the confidence to implement and sustain the skills of inquiry in schools for the ongoing improvement of their practices. Concerted efforts are necessary to raise the credibility of the BETD as a national teacher education programme, and to value its aims and purposes, as well as the strategies of reflective practices and lifelong learning it employs to realise these aims. Partnership between all stakeholders in teacher development at teacher education institutions and in the regions is essential to strengthen and reinforce these efforts and ensure that the teacher education reform initiatives permeate into schools, where it is meant to make a difference.



DECLARATION

I declare that *Towards Developing Reflective Practitioners in Basic Education in Namibia: The Case of the Keetmanshoop Region* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Cicilia Anna Mostert

December 2002

Signed:.....



ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BETD	Basic Education Teacher Diploma
MBEC	Ministry of Basic Education and Culture
MBESC	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MHEVTST	Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology
SBS	School Based Studies
TEC	Teacher Education College
TRC	Teacher Resource Centre
UNAM	University of Namibia
WCE	Windhoek College of Education



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CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE STAGE

"He who dares to teach must never cease to learn" (Anonymous)

Introduction

Namibia is a developing country in the south western coast of Africa and its development was marred by almost a century of colonisation, oppression and segregation. When the country finally gained independence in 1990, the scars of its history were evident in the segmented and underdeveloped nation.

Before 1990, during the colonial regime of South Africa in Namibia, the education system reflected the apartheid policy in more than one respect. Not only were eleven different administrations responsible for the education of the different ethnic groups, but the education philosophy was further based on policies to maintain the status quo of apartheid: teachers were mere transmitters of knowledge that was constructed elsewhere, they had no input whatsoever in curriculum development and the curriculum was non-negotiable – irrespective of the fact that it was a “foreign” curriculum and, therefore, not relevant to the Namibian learners. Teacher education for the majority of the nation (black population) was also structured to serve the “politics of exclusion and oppression” (Swarts, 1998: 32) to the extent that the poor quality of teaching and learning that took place allowed only a selected few to succeed, while the gross majority failed and dropped out along the way, thus securing the dominant position of the white minority.

Namibia became independent in 1990 and educational reform in the post-independence era, based on the four goals of equitable access, equality, quality and democracy, is a quest towards democratic pedagogy. The government, by adopting the vision of education for all, expressed its recognition of education as being the

pillar for future development, a vehicle for social change, “for Namibia to change, so must its schools. And for its schools to change, teachers must themselves become both agents and facilitators of change” (MEC, 1993: 76). Teacher education could, therefore, not merely be an “appendage that follows efforts to affect change in schools” like in some developing countries according to Samoff (in Zeichner and Dahlström, 2001: xv), but it should rather precede the reform. This is consistent with the view of Mc Laughlin and Oberman, as cited in Swarts, that “the problem of reform is a problem of teachers’ learning” (2001: 36).

This underlines the Namibian Government’s acknowledgement of the key position teachers hold in educational change and development. Teachers should therefore be prepared and equipped to make a major shift from being passive recipients of knowledge, innovation and change, towards becoming the innovators and facilitators of change in education and society at large.

This vision would remain at the level of rhetoric within the framework of the segregated, fragmented and technocratic foreign teacher education programmes that were in place before independence. The Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) was developed after independence to bring about dramatic transformation to prepare teachers for their new role as change agents. This unified teacher education programme aims at developing teachers as critical thinkers and reflective practitioners to cope with the demands of the reformed education system and the needs of the dynamic developing nation in a fast and ever changing world (MEC, 1993: 10).

The Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD): Some background

The primary aim of the BETD, which was implemented in 1993, is consistent with the expected role teachers are to play, i.e. to develop the “professional expertise and competencies that will enable teachers to optimize the new Basic Education for

learners and to be fully involved in promoting change in educational reform in Namibia” (MEC, 1993: 3). The programme places much emphasis on practice and critical inquiry to expose students to a series of learning experiences, through which student teachers are both active participants and observers, develop and assess their own materials, evaluate and assess their own progress and do their own action research during school based studies. This aims to develop higher cognitive skills like critical analysis, synthesis, reflection, etc. (MBEC and MHEVTST, 1998) and reflects Olson’s notion that “the potential for productive change comes from an increased awareness of the practitioner’s own practice” (1985: 301). It also endorses the teacher’s role as change agent, since reflective practitioners are acknowledged as having the potential to bring about change (Clark, 1993) and their classrooms are valued as the “centre for teacher development” (Thiessen, 1993: 85) and the arena for curriculum development (Avenstrup, 1994). Furthermore, the BETD broad curriculum underpins lifelong learning when it explicitly spells out that it only *induces* professional growth and development (MBEC and MHEVTST, 1998). Through reflective practices teachers are expected to continuously seek to understand and improve their practice towards improved learning for their learners, construct new knowledge in their practice and pursue the best way to assist learners to construct their own knowledge (Grimmett, 1995).

Namibian teacher education made the first step towards developing reflective practitioners (Richter, 1990) by encouraging and requiring reflection in the BETD programme. The BETD graduates may, however, find themselves in a “professional desert” (Gomez, 1990: 46) when they start their career. If teacher development is to become a lifelong process through reflective practices, the skills novice teachers attain during their initial teacher education programme need to be nurtured and developed in an environment of collaboration and support, to enable them to gain the necessary experience to become real change agents. They need continuing support by their teacher education institutions, their regional offices, the school administration and

their colleagues, as studies done by Johnston (1984) and Richter (1990) clearly indicate.

Aims and relevance of the study

The Keetmanshoop region, one of the seven educational regions in Namibia, has no teacher education college. Despite being the biggest geographical education region, it is sparsely populated and in the fortunate position to have one of the highest number of qualified teachers. This results in fewer student teachers being recruited for teacher education from the region, fewer graduates being deployed in the region and, most probably, isolated practices for these graduates, once they start their career in the region. This raises the concern that, in view of the requirements for developing reflective practitioners, this region will, in the long run, be adversely affected and educational reform and change would take so much longer to be institutionalised.

As someone who is responsible for teacher development in the Keetmanshoop educational region, I was concerned with questions like the following:

- What do teacher education colleges do to support their graduates towards ongoing professional development as reflective practitioners once they start their career?
- What efforts were made to involve regional and school administration in this process?
- Do BETD graduates manage to become reflective practitioners under the current conditions of professional isolation at most schools in the region?

It is trusted that the study will provide insight into the difficulty that BETD graduates, under these circumstances, might face and that the relevant stakeholders will become sensitive to obstacles on the journey of BETD graduates to realise the vision of becoming reflective practitioners and, ultimately, real change agents in the Namibian education system.

Since the BETD programme is still in an evolving phase, this study does not intend to probe the success of specific teacher education colleges in developing the skills for reflective practices, but rather to establish “how the seeds for reflective practice, planted in the teacher education institutions, can be nurtured and brought to maturity in schools” (Swarts, 1998, 235).

The research questions/strategic aims of the study are therefore to establish:

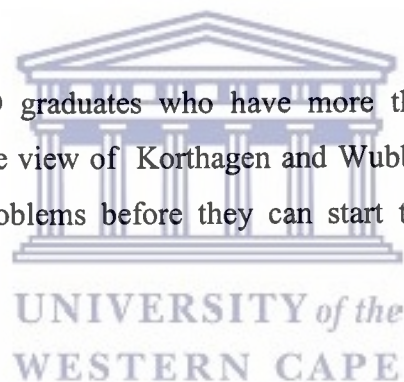
1. How does the BETD programme attempt to develop prospective teachers to become reflective practitioners?
2. What are BETD graduates' attitudes towards and understanding of reflective practices and how do they perceive their role as change agents?
3. What support is available at school level, from their school management and their colleagues, as well as from regional administration and their teacher education colleges, to assist them on this journey to develop as reflective practitioners?
4. How does the support/lack of support effect their attitudes and their attempts to develop reflective practices?

I have opted for a qualitative, rather than a quantitative approach to the study, since I do not intend to test existing theories, but rather endeavour to generate understanding of the situation. Furthermore, qualitative research has, according to Ragin (in Neuman, 1997), the potential to enhance the data and in the process one can “see the key aspects of cases more clearly” (cited in Neuman, 1997: 15).

The exploration of the first research question was done mainly through document analysis of the Broad Curriculum of the BETD and other related policies adopted by the Namibian Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBEC) and later, the Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology (MHEVTST) in relation to teacher education.

A case study was done in one school where seven (7) BETD graduate teachers have been deployed at the time of the data collecting. Data collection was done mainly through semi-structured interviews and observation at the school where the case study was done, to elicit BETD graduate teachers' perception of reflective practices and related concepts and to establish what support they receive to develop these practices on an ongoing basis.

The target group was BETD graduates who have more than two years teaching experience, consistent with the view of Korthagen and Wubbels that novice teachers have to “overcome initial problems before they can start to reflect meaningfully” (1990: 41).



Structure of the mini thesis

Chapter 1 sets the background of the study by introducing the development of reflective practices in the context of the Namibian teacher education programme, stating the aims and the relevance of the study and providing a short outline of the study.

In chapter 2 I give a short review of the literature on the development of reflective practices. I specifically look at ways how the BETD attempts to develop reflective practices in prospective teachers and I also discuss the findings of relevant studies and evaluation documents on the BETD concerning the impact the reformed teacher education programme had on the development of these practices.

Chapter 3 elaborates on the research design and the methods and instruments used to explore the research questions.

Chapter 4 reflects on the data gathered and presents the findings.

The final chapter provides the conclusions and recommendations towards improved support to BETD student teachers and graduate teachers in the process of developing reflective practices.



CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPING REFLECTIVE PRACTICES THROUGH THE BETD IN NAMIBIA

“(A) thorough overhauling of pedagogical education is suggested, one that empowers teachers to do what must be done in the schools, rather than one that tells them what to do.” (Fosnot, 1989: xiii)

Introduction

There has been a propensity during the last two decades that teachers, as the key figures in education and thus educational change, should have the capacity to direct what is happening in the classroom and to steer their own professional development and growth towards understanding learning and teaching better, to become better practitioners (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1993 and Zeichner, 1994). Thus reflective practices have gained field to empower teachers to take control of what is happening in the classrooms. But even though many teacher education institutions took the development of reflective practices on board in their preparation of future teachers and, despite many efforts and quite extensive research, there still seems to be no clear consensus on what reflection is (LaBoskey, 1993 and Loughran, 1996). This is mainly due to the complexity of the processes of learning and teaching.

Reflective practice

This study seeks to conceptualise the meaning and significance of reflection in the preparation of teachers through the Basic Education Teacher's Diploma (BETD) in Namibia. Due to the ambiguity of this important buzz word in education circles, it may, however, be necessary to first explore how reflection and reflective practice are

being conceptualised across the globe. In this way I also attempt to demystify reflection and reflective practice for myself.

Although reflection was always part of good teaching practices (Carson, 1995) it was only increasingly becoming significant in teacher education programmes towards the end of the twentieth century, despite the fact that Dewey already introduced the importance of reflection in teacher development and growth during the early years of the twentieth century. Most interpretations of what reflection is have been based on Dewey's argument, as cited in Loughran (1996: 4):

Reflective thinking, in distinction from other operations, to which we apply the name of thought, involves (1) a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty, in which thinking originates, and (2) an act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that resolve the doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity.

In terms of reflective teaching, this argument does not only imply that knowledge, and therefore learning and teaching, can never be static, (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1993), but also calls for incessant probing towards better understanding of how learning takes place and how teaching can be improved for better learning to take place. Kemmis argues that self-evaluation is “the basis for - the *sine qua non* of - educational innovation and change” (1987: 74). Clarke (as cited in Loughran, 1996) also refers to the characteristic of “intrinsic uncertainty” of teaching, which stimulates deliberate thinking and searching for better understanding – an act of learning. This underlines the relationship between learning and teaching, as Richert (in Swarts, 1998: 139) states that “(in) this way learning is central to teaching”.

It further suggests that reflective teaching does not only develop “an increased awareness of the practitioner's own practice”, but has the “potential for productive change” (Olson, 1985: 300) and gives teachers the mandate to “design their own development” (Clark, 1993: 75). This is in line with the strong argument of

contemporary educationalists, like Clark (1993), Hargreaves and Fullan (1993), Thiessen (1993) and Wideen & Andrews (1987), that teachers need to be central in and responsible for their own professional development to claim ownership of the changes they make. Only then will constructive changes and improvement in education be possible, because, as Tabachnick clearly states, “(c)hange that is developed and mandated at a distance from classrooms is likely to produce misunderstanding and resistance. These proposals for change are also likely to be undercut by features that seem impractical from teachers’ perspectives” (cited in Zeichner and Tabachnick, 2001: 212).

Reflective teaching also gives, according to Clark, an “optimistic picture of teachers” as being “active, ready to learn, knowledgeable, diverse and unique” (1993: 75), because their practice is not prescribed by theory, but theory and practice are being “married” by their becoming researchers in their own right. Calderhead and Gates view reflective teaching as recognition of teaching as being “thoughtful and professional” (1993: 2) and having the potential to empower and emancipate teachers, since it enables them to value their own practice and use it as a basis to question ideologies and to construct new theory.

Schön differentiates between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, based on when or the time the reflection takes place. Loughran (1996: 20) takes this further and calls reflection *in* action contemporaneous reflection, which, due to the limited time frame, might be the most demanding, but he values it as the most powerful, since it implies immediate learning and experience. He refers to reflection *on* action as retrospective reflection, since it reflects on past experiences, while anticipatory reflection is planning or reflection *for* action. Loughran (1996) is of the opinion that this time aspect has an influence on the context and thus the learning that eventuates from the reflective experience and therefore needs attention in preparing teachers to become reflective practitioners. Dewey, however, looked at the time aspect from a different perspective when he emphasised the futuristic disposition of reflection in his

argument that while “(w)e cannot undo the past; we can affect the future”(cited in LaBoskey, 1993: 35-6).

Reflective practice in teacher education programmes

According to Valli (1993: 13) many different approaches to reflection are being applied in teacher education programmes. Her distinction between approaches is based on the content and quality of reflection. According to her, some approaches emphasise the delivery of instruction and how the classroom is managed, and thus limits the content of reflection. This *technical* reflection also implies static knowledge (derived at externally) that directs practice and which, in her view, affects the quality of reflection negatively. She is more in favour of what Grimmett (cited in Valli,1993) calls *deliberative* and *dialectical* reflection, which approaches a problem by exploring it from different perspectives, and is based on relativistic knowledge, which is context based and which informs, rather than directs, the practice and relates to what McCarthy calls *strategic* reflection (cited in Valli, 1993).

Knowles (1993: 84) has discussed the different orientations and hierarchies that are being attached to reflection in teacher education programmes. Technological reflection, the lowest level of reflection, places emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness. The second level (practical/problematic reflection) takes reflection a bit further by making decisions, while personal reflection is depicted as making decisions based on own meaning and interpretations. The highest level, critical or emancipatory reflection, takes the political, social and ethical context into consideration when making decisions pertaining to their practice.

Noffke and Brennan (as cited in Knowles, 1993: 85), among others, oppose this hierarchical orientation that implies that reflection is a linear process when they argue that reflection is a “dynamic, multi-dimensional, and social activity”. They value all

the dimensions (sensory, moral/ethical, historical and “determinants” dimensions) as equally important in the dynamics of reflection. Pollard (in Swarts, 1998) underlines the continual cyclical nature of reflection as a process which enables teachers to monitor, evaluate and revise their practice. Loughran further underwrites this when he argues that “(t)he results from the test may not satisfy the inquiring mind and may therefore lead to further reflection” (1996: 21), which is consistent with Dewey’s notion that “any particular overt test need not be final; it may be introductory to new observations and new suggestions” (cited in Loughran, 1996: 72).

Edwards and Brunton support this notion that reflection is a “social action” when they state that “(r)eflection on practice has to be more than a solitary activity if learning is to occur” (1993: 158). Liston and Zeichner take this further when they claim that the collaborative nature of reflective practice “gives it its power to offer hope that the kinds of institutional and cultural changes that are needed will be realised” (1990: 251).

Despite the different conceptualisations of reflection and what reflective practices are, it is being valued as crucial and essential in teacher development (Loughran, 1996) and, therefore, became a prominent feature in many teacher education programmes in the developed world during the past decades. This is so because life is not static and societies, and therefore schools, are subjected to constant and rapid change, especially so during this technological age in which the future is “much less predictable” (Wideen, 1995: 2). Teachers need to be equipped to cope under these changing circumstances and to adapt their practices accordingly. Moreover, teacher education can, according to Grant and Zeichner (in Knowles: 1993), never prepare prospective teachers for every possible situation that they will be confronted with during their career, but it should rather facilitate acknowledgement of the basic uncertainty of teaching, which compels the development of critical inquiring skills (Loughran, 1996). They therefore need to develop strategies to enable them to continuously grow and develop professionally towards better understanding of their practice and new

developments in education and the world. Reflective practice has the potential to give the practitioner control over her/his learning and practice, it has an emancipatory and empowering role and even “puts faith in the power of education to shape a new social order that truly plays out the democratic role of schooling” (Knowles, 1993: 83).

Calderhead and Gates (1993: 2) listed the following as aims of teacher education programmes that intend to foster the development of reflective practices:

- to enable teachers to analyze, discuss, evaluate and change their own practice, adopting an analytical approach towards teaching;
- to foster teachers’ appreciation of the social and political context in which they work, helping teachers to recognize that teaching is socially and politically situated and that the teacher’s task involves an appreciation and analysis of the context;
- to enable teachers to appraise the moral and ethical issues implicit in classroom practices, including the critical examination of their own beliefs and about good teaching;
- to encourage teachers to take greater responsibility for their own professional growth and to acquire some degree of professional autonomy;
- to facilitate teachers’ development of their own theories of educational practice, understanding and developing a principled basis for their own classroom work;
- to empower teachers so that they may better influence future directions in education and take a more active role in educational decision-making.

But even with these aims as the foundation of teacher education programmes, reflection might not necessarily follow automatically, since Dewey (in Loughran, 1996) argued that reflection is not possible without the attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility and whole-heartedness. The literature displays many different interpretations of what these attitudes are (LaBoskey 1993; Loughran, 1996), but the mere inclination that not only skills but also attitudes are involved, underwrites the view of Loughran that to instil reflection in student teachers, they need to be “educated about it not trained in it” (1996: 18). Shulman’s notion, “(t)o educate is to teach in a way that includes an account of why you do as you do” (as cited in

Loughran, 1996: 18), supports this and also emphasises the responsibility aspect of reflective teaching.

Researchers on reflection in education (MacNamara, 1990; Wubbels and Korthagen, 1990) have, however, indicated that it is not easy to develop reflective practices, because it is difficult to “transfer the mental capacities to actual teaching” (MacNamara, 1990: 153). Furthermore, theorising about reflection, or as Russell refers to it as “learning from words” (in Calderhead & Gates, 1993: 8), does not hold the capacity of developing reflective practice, consistent with Dewey’s view that reflection and action are interrelated in reflective teaching (in Calderhead & Gates, 1993). This implies the need for ample opportunity for experience during the teacher education programmes for student teachers to be able to develop reflective skills and to gain “the authority of experience” (Slabbert and Greenhalgh, 1998: 28). This is promoted in teacher education programmes through, what Loughran (1996) calls social (seminars, discussion groups, interviews and feedback from supervisors) and artificial (journals, video recordings of student teachers’ own lessons) tools and by doing action research. It is, however, only when the teacher is in a real life teaching situation that the real challenge of evolving reflective practice hits home, for, as Schön argues “(a)ction is the necessary precursor to reflection” (cited in Tremmel, 1993: 438).

Moreover, as was earlier mentioned, to reflect requires self-evaluation (Kemmis, 1987) and is based on the fact that teaching has an intrinsic element of uncertainty and it could, therefore, pose a threat to the self-identity (Edwards & Brunton, 1993). It requires the acknowledgement of a mysterious or hidden self. Carson refers to this as the “troublesome side to critical reflection, it makes you doubt yourself” (1995: 156) and as a result he contemplates on its potential to bring about positive change. This relates strongly to the velveteen rabbit’s apprehension that becoming ‘real’ could be hurtful and Skin Horse’s subsequent solace “(t)hat’s why it doesn’t often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or have to be carefully kept”, but

“(w)hen you are Real you don’t mind being hurt” (Williams, 1962: 199). This is consistent with Tremmel’s argument that, “in order to begin to be mindful and truly reflective, one must have the skill and the courage to begin to know the self” (1993: 449).

Liston and Zeichner (1990) point out that reflection is a collaborative/social action, which cannot happen in isolation. On the contrary, the collaborative nature of reflective practice “gives it its power to offer hope that the kinds of institutional and cultural changes that are needed will be realized” (ibid, 1990: 251). This social character of reflection also stresses the role of peers in the development of reflective practices, because they become “mirrors for one’s own practice, leading one to reflect on it and reformulate it more critically” (Hargreaves, 1995: 153). It also implies that a conducive and supportive environment is essential for the development of reflective practices (Calderhead & Gates, 1993). This environment does not only refer to that at the teacher education institutions, where the teacher educators should be role models (Loughran, 1996), but if reflective practices are to be continual throughout their career, policy underlying education need to value and support reflection. This argument also holds for teacher educators, school managements and administrators. If reflective practices are not valued, they will persist with prescriptive and authoritarian pedagogy and management styles which leave no room for reflective practice and changes.

According to LaBoskey (1993: 31), beliefs about teaching affect the inclination towards reflection. Student teachers enter initial teacher education with their own set of pre-conceptions: their backgrounds differ and so do their aspirations and expectations, their abilities, skills and their values of teaching and learning, which influence their readiness to accept the role of reflective practice in their personal and professional growth (Swarts, 1998). This has serious implications for entry requirements and alludes to the significance of attitudes that Dewey (in Loughran, 1996) referred to.

The literature reviewed served mainly to explore and clarify how reflective practices are being perceived across the globe. I will now probe the Namibian perspective of reflective practices and how it manifests in the Basic Education Teacher's Diploma that was developed after Namibia became independent.

The Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD)

The diverse teacher education programmes that existed in Namibia before independence did not suit the goals of equity, equitable access, quality and democracy of the reformed basic education in post-independent Namibia. They were based on “images of teacher as telling and controlling and of learning as absorbing and conforming”, which left “existing classroom practices as essentially unalterable and beyond criticism” (Wade, in Swarts, 1998: 141). Some emphasised subject and academic knowledge, and therefore formal examinations, to the extent that the professional aspect was grossly neglected. Certification was the ultimate priority; understanding and the acquisition of the necessary skills and attitudes to function as a professional were of lesser importance (Swarts, 1998: 40). This implies that once the certificate was obtained, the teachers' professional growth stopped, with the result that teachers also concerned themselves in the classroom with preparing the learners for a certificate, without ever questioning the source of the knowledge that they transmitted and the system. This stemmed from the apartheid ideology to ensure, according to Mayumbelo “deliberate and wholesome erosion of teachers' intellectual resources” (1996: 3).

The Namibian constitution, Article 20, declared education as a basic right, which is further underwritten by adopting the vision of Education for All. This vision necessitated a transformed education system that would also serve as a vehicle for social change in post colonial Namibia (MEC, 1993).

Within the framework of the pre-independence teacher education programmes, this vision would merely remain rhetoric, for as Dietersweg argued way back in 1865 “(t)he school is worth precisely what the teacher is worth and for this reason any improvement in teacher education is a first step in any education reform” (in Swarts, 1998: 131).

The Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD), based on democratic pedagogy which is directed at empowerment through understanding and taking responsibility for one’s own learning and development, was introduced in 1993 as a uniform and unifying teacher education programme. The main aim of the programme is to prepare teachers to realise the four main goals of access, equity, quality and democracy in the basic education programme. The BETD intends to *induce* ongoing professional development and growth through the development of critical inquiry and reflective practice, which were envisaged to be the requirements for teachers who could meet the demands of education for all in a developing country (MEC, 1993). These demands include the following:

- accepting responsibility to facilitate successful learning
- expecting growth/development/best for every learner
- learner-centred education
- active participative teaching which results in active learning
- lifelong learning.

This programme not only aims to develop professional expertise and competency in teachers, but also attempts to empower them to “be fully involved in promoting change in educational reform in Namibia” (MBEC & MHEVTST, 1998: p 3), within the framework of the four goals of the Namibian education system. This is a quest for teachers in independent Namibia to be able to cope with *more* learners in a multicultural and multilingual context, while striving simultaneously to improve the

quality of learning for all learners and enable them to take up their democratic role and responsibilities in a liberated and developing nation (MEC, 1993). This “moral demand” (Cook,1998: 33) of teaching, which will motivate teachers to continuously improve their practice to the benefit of their learners, links it closely with the learner-centred approach taken on board as one of the strategies to realize the four goals of basic education in Namibian education.

By adopting the learner-centred approach in basic education, which requires learners to construct concepts and principles from the basis of their existing conceptual structures, Namibia expressed recognition of the complexity of teaching and learning (Murangi, as cited in MBEC, 1997) and the need for teachers who will be able to assist the learners in this – reflective practitioners. The teacher cannot enter the classroom with static knowledge, because s/he has to start from the basis of where the learners are – and every learner comes into class with his/her own context and conceptual framework. The Development Brief: Toward Education for All (MEC, 1993: 80 –81), articulated the role of teachers for a learner-centred orientation as follows:

Learner-centred education presupposes that teachers have a holistic view of the learner, valuing the learner’s life experience as a starting point for their studies. Teachers must therefore have sufficient knowledge and skills to be able to interpret syllabi and subject content in terms of the aims and objectives of Basic Education and to relate these to the learner. Teachers should be able to select content and method on the basis of shared analysis of the learner’s needs, use local and natural resources as an alternative or supplement to ready-made materials, and thus develop their own and the learner’s creativity.

This obviously was a demand for teachers who are able to think critically and analytically. They should, through reflecting on what and how they do what they do, reach greater depth and understanding of their practice (MBEC, 1997) and should be able to make decisions towards an improved practice. Furthermore, it requires a

change in the whole concept of learning and teaching. No longer will the teacher be the mere transmitter of knowledge, and the learner the sponge to absorb this knowledge, but they are collaboratively creators of new knowledge. Moreover, the teacher should now be able to make decisions, based on her/his own research in the classroom, which is in itself liberation from the apartheid era, where teachers were just implementers of external knowledge and had to act on instructions from elsewhere (Swarts, 1998). This also implies that the teachers should become a lifelong learner, for “(i)n the process of rethinking our philosophy it is important to recognize that we are all learners. Learning is a lifelong activity – a process and not an event” (MEC, 1993: 11). This is consistent with Heidegger’s argument that “(t)he teacher is ahead of his students in this alone, that he still has far more to learn than they – he has to learn to let them learn” (as cited in Swarts, 1998: 125).

The BETD, therefore, had the following aims (among others), as stated in the Broad Curriculum for the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (MBEC & MHEVTST, 1998, 3-4):

Basic Teacher Education will strive to:

- develop a reflective attitude
- develop analytical and critical thinking
- develop the ability to actively participate in collaborative decision-making
- develop social responsibility towards learners, colleagues, the community and the nation at large
- develop an understanding of learning as an interactive, shared and productive process
- develop the ability to create learning opportunities which will enable learners to explore different ways of knowing, and develop the whole range of their thinking abilities

Developing these attitudes and skills were believed to be the only way to “ensure that the reform agenda and the innovations will be carried into the classroom and will not just remain popular slogans” (Swarts, 1998: 146).

Developing reflective practice in the BETD

Against the background of the literature it becomes clear that there is still no single definition of what reflective practice is, since, as Swarts concluded, it “can vary considerably depending on the orientation, ideology and/or context in which it was carried out or investigated” (1998: 143). This makes the development of reflection and reflective practices an even more complex task.

However, Namibia, being a colonised nation for almost a century, was in need of developing nationhood, as well as equality for all its members, without having to suffer quality. The Ministry of Education and Culture identified reflective practitioners as having the necessary dynamics and potential to bring about the necessary change and to establish democratic pedagogy through learner-centred education. Taking reflective practices on board in preparing teachers for their career, was also acknowledgement and recognition of the role of teachers in the development necessary in this country. Developing reflective thinking would liberate teachers to become flexible, adaptable and innovative. They would no more be enslaved by static external knowledge and instructions, but will become creative curriculum developers, within the context of their learners, innovative material developers, with locally available resources and co-constructors of knowledge within the framework of learner-centred education.

A transformed teacher education programme in Namibia should therefore, according to Swarts (1998: 143 - 4), consist of some of the following elements if it intends to develop reflective practitioners, who are able to make optimal learning possible for every learner:

- conscious and careful consideration and examination of own beliefs in order to question and evaluate assumptions;

- attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility, dedication and commitment, as reflection requires looking at alternatives and compromises, and the willingness to do more;
- awareness of the social context as ideological and institutional forces may impact upon or constrain freedom of action;
- analytical and critical thinking about goals, action, and environment and the best possible way(s) in which to achieve the goals in a specific environment;
- careful consideration of consequences of action as no action is carried out in a vacuum;
- questioning and clarification of choice of methods, procedures and content which requires competence in and understanding of content and methods;
- deliberate and systematic inquiry into own practice, based on competence in methods of classroom inquiry;
- exchange of ideas and support between colleagues (collaboration and sharing of experiences as classroom dynamics are becoming increasingly unpredictable and more complex);
- skills of monitoring, analysing, evaluating and responding effectively and appropriately to new situations and demands as they occur;
- problem solving skills as reflection can take place only when there is a real problem;
- generation of new knowledge and deeper understanding of the situation;
- willingness to engage in constant self-appraisal and development;
- valuing of the principle of lifelong learning which is a continuous and dynamic process.

The aims of the BETD, as stated earlier, obviously include these elements. By taking critical inquiry and reflective practices on board, “teacher education reform in Namibia has clearly taken a different path” (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 2001: 218) and to promote reflective practices during the pre-service BETD programme, the following measures were taken:

Entry requirement: Besides the minimum entry requirements, which are Grade 12, and an acceptable level of maturity and suitability for the study, prospective student teachers are subjected to an interview to ensure that they have the necessary attitude towards reflection and education as such, which is consistent with the literature that

certain attitudes are a prerequisite in developing reflective practices (Calderhead and Gates, 1993; Loughran, 1996).

The role of the teacher educator: Teacher educators, who were previously gatekeepers, guarding entry and ensuring quality control in a teacher education system where examining played a prominent role, needed orientation towards their new role. By becoming reflective practitioners themselves, they would be role models for student teachers (Proctor, 1993), consistent with Loughran's argument that "the influence of the teacher/role-model is crucial if student-teachers are to develop their skills of reflection" (1996: 9). Against the background of democratic pedagogy, teacher educators would have to make the transition towards more equality with their students: mutual responsibility and involvement in curriculum and materials development and assessment would develop a more intimate relationship with their students and establish a **nurturing environment** for the development of reflective practices at the teacher education colleges. The Ministry of Education and Culture was aware of the crucial role the teacher educators have to play in the transition towards a transformed teacher education programme. Several measures were taken to ensure attitudinal and professional development of teacher educators, like the placement of facilitators, who were responsible for staff development, at every teacher education college; the establishment of Educational Development Units at colleges, which attended to the educational needs of the teacher educators and the fostering of inter and intra-college activities (Dahlström, 2001 and Swarts, 1998).

The role of **assessment** during the whole programme is also specifically designed to foster reflection. Ample assessment opportunities would emphasise that assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and encourage self assessment and peer assessment skills, while competencies for assessment would be negotiated to be truly democratic. The student teacher should continuously be involved in assessing his/her progress, individually and in collaboration with the teacher educators and, during school-based studies, with the support teachers at the host school. This paves the way

for a relationship of trust between the students and their educators, which facilitates reflection. Self-evaluation also has, according to Edwards and Brunton (1993), the potential to develop some sense of responsibility for self development and the construction of a professional identity. Furthermore, student teachers are closely and critically involved in the appraisal and evaluation of the BETD curriculum and the programme (Swarts, 1998) to gain insight into educational evaluation activities as part of their preparation for teaching, which is consistent with the reflective nature of the BETD.

Much emphasis is being placed on the **practicum** or school-based studies (SBS) as it is known in the BETD. It gives the student teacher the opportunity to gain the necessary experience, which is crucial for developing reflective practices. School-based studies in the BETD “seeks to represent essential features of practice to be learned, while enabling students to experiment at low risk; to vary the pace and focus of the work; to go back and do things over when it seems necessary to do so” (Swarts, 1998: 147). Student teachers get the opportunity during their first year to be exposed to critical inquiry by doing a small scale research project, aiming at broadening their understanding and enhancing their knowledge of holistic development of a child or a group of children through observation (Mayumbelo and Nyambe, 2001). They record their observations, after which they analyse their observations and recordings against their own assumptions of learning and teaching and the technical knowledge and existing theories (Dahlström, 2001). This is consistent with the claim of Tann (1993) that observation is an essential prerequisite for developing reflective practices.

During the second year they spend three weeks at support schools and they are expected to collect data on their own teaching and learning through diary writing and journals. These they use to reflect on their own classroom practices and the consequences of their specific actions and strategies during their second and third year in order to change the observed situation (Mayumbelo and Nyambe, 2001). This prepares them for critical reflection, which requires them to theorise their experiences

and make decisions and judgements, after questioning the moral, ethical and normative criteria which is related to the classroom and the context of the learners. In their third year reflective practice is mainly promoted through action research (Reimers, 1998). This enables student teachers to break the ground to become researchers of their own practice and teaching and learning processes, which initiates developing “the power of decision making” (Mayumbelo, 1996: 2). School-based studies (SBS), with its intention to be a true reflective practicum, therefore, not only gives opportunity for the integration of theory and practice, but also facilitates the opportunity for practice to inform theory and SBS becomes the “bridge between the worlds of academy (college or university) and the classroom” (Swarts, 2001: 43). School-based studies furthermore facilitate teacher education reform to filter through to schools (Dahlström, 2001) and could be a learning and professional development opportunity for the support schools.

By including reflective practices in teacher education, teacher empowerment should not remain a mere cliché, but could rather become “powerful metaphors of liberation in the widest sense of the word” (Mayumbelo and Nyambe, 2001: 72), especially since the historical past deliberately smothered intellectual creativity and development. The transformed teacher education is, therefore, not only a replacement of redundant or outdated programmes, but it “represents the restructuring of the individual and collective consciousness of what should constitute educational practice” (ibid, 2001: 72). As such, teacher education would not be mere subsidiary to educational change and development, but it, and therefore the teachers, would rather take the lead in the reform process, consistent with the view of Wideen that teachers should be “seen as partners and prime movers in the process of change“ (1987: 5).

Although the primary focus of this study does not intend to evaluate to what extent the BETD was successful in developing reflective practices, it might be useful to mention some of the findings of the evaluation reports (MBEC, 1997 and MBESC, 2000) and other studies (Andersson and Mbodo, 1998; Mayumbelo, 1996; Mayumbelo and

Nyambe, 2001 and Swarts, 1998) done on BETD pre-service students and the first cohort of graduate teachers.

The first cohort of BETD graduate teachers demonstrated internalisation of concepts of critical reflection when they used it in their responses on the survey for moderation purposes in a natural way and they valued it as a “tool to develop the teaching and learning situation” (MBEC, 1997: 24). The authors of the report, however, express concern for the need for more emphasis on reflection beyond the immediate and technical dimensions during teacher education. But they are also appreciative of the fact that this is acceptable in view of the early stages of the process of developing reflective practitioners, which is consistent with the view of Russell that novice teachers are (wrongly) expected to “run before they walk” (1997a: 230). Reflective practices have also been acknowledged by this first cohort of BETD teachers as a powerful way to continuously rethink the learning and teaching processes in the search for understanding and action towards improvement. This underwrites the graduate teachers’ recognition of professional development as an ongoing ‘journey’ and indicates that certification is not seen as the end, but rather that the BETD managed to instil an attitude of lifelong learning (MBEC, 1997). Mayumbelo and Nyambe, however, raise the concern that, despite the fact that a foundation has been laid for developing reflective practices, it may not result in continuous reflective practices unless it is followed through (2001: 79) and the environment is created for teachers to continue with action research and reflection in schools.

The BETD graduate teachers furthermore seemed to be aware of and prepared to meet the challenges of reform and development in education and their “emphasis on the learner is a cause for optimism” (MBEC, 1997: 57), especially in view of the fact that their own experience of schooling was based on teacher-centred education and an authoritarian “culture of fear and silence” (MBESC, 2000: 83), which was deliberately cultivated in the pre-independence era and of which remnants are still prevailing. They could identify the crucial problems they experienced during their

first year of teaching, but they were adamant that the BETD programme prepared them to tackle these challenges through innovation and problem solving rather than to “wait for the government to solve it” (MBEC, 1997: 20). This clearly alludes to attitudes of accountability and responsibility instilled by the programme and links with Dewey’s requirements for reflective practice. The need to develop more skills to deal with diversity in classrooms, however, seems to be addressed insufficiently during their teacher education. It is, however, also clear that too much may have been expected too soon, especially if it is taken into account that change, being a complex process and not a once off event, as Fullan (1993) argued, will take time to evolve.

Collaborative learning, the social dimension of reflection, has also been realised by the BETD when the graduate teachers maintained that they shared ideas and worked with and learnt from their fellow students, which created a valuable mechanism of collegial support, especially during the SBS, to face the realities of the classroom situation and integrate theory and practice (MBEC, 1997: 31). They, therefore, experienced the contrast of the lack of support and the isolation they were subjected to in the schools where they were appointed as very stressful and disappointing.

These are indicative that the BETD programme has the potential to realise its main aim to *induce* ongoing professional development. Teacher education is not supposed to be the end, but rather the beginning, “the first induction into the profession, an initial step in an ongoing process of professional growth and development” (MBEC and MHETST, 1998: 4). Swarts concluded in her study on BETD student teachers in their final year that “student teachers articulate and demonstrate conceptual changes as well as a broader repertoire of educational views and methods; and that they are supportive of ongoing professional development” (1998: 236). She, however, raised the concern whether schools could, and would, accommodate these reflective teachers, since school managers might prefer teachers who “prescribe to a pedagogy of answers rather than a pedagogy of questions” (ibid: 153).

This supports the argument of Guba and Lincoln for “Responsive Constructivist Evaluation”, which claims that “(i)nterventions are not stable; when they are introduced into a particular context they will be at least as much affected by that context as they are likely to affect the context” (cited in MBESC, 2000: 5). The 1997 annual evaluation report already depicted the lack of collegial support and isolation the first cohort of BETD teachers experienced in schools and consequently made the following recommendation:

What is needed is to create an environment where teachers can experiment, where they can be creative, where they can apply their minds, where they can be free to think and find solutions to daily problems. The teachers themselves can help shape and create this environment, but there is also need for more systematic support from the authorities (MBEC, 1997: 61).

The question of sustainability of the reform efforts of the transformed teacher education programme is therefore relevant, if the school environment in its totality is not able to render the “unconditional support”, which Melber (cited in MBESC, 2000: 83) argues will be a prerequisite for success in a rather ambitious teacher education programme, taking the historical and prevailing conditions in society in Namibia into consideration.

This chapter intended to explore the theoretical underpinning of reflective practice and specifically how the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD), implemented in Namibia after independence, endeavours to induce reflective practice in prospective teachers and thus answers to the first research question.

For the exploration on the remaining research questions I embarked on field research and the next chapter will elaborate on the research methodology and the instruments used to collect the data.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

*“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view -”
 “Sir?”
 “- until you climb into his skin and walk around in it” (Lee, 1982: 30)*

Introduction

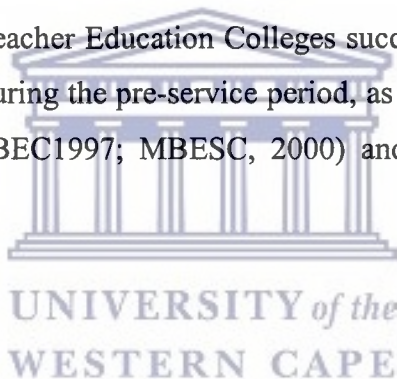
The aim of the study, thus far, had been to establish how the BETD curriculum in general intends to develop reflection and reflective practices in prospective teachers in Namibia after independence. According to Swarts (1998) and the BETD evaluation and moderation reports (MBEC, 1997 and MBESC, 2000) the BETD did manage, to various degrees, to instil reflective practices in prospective teachers.

However, becoming a reflective practitioner is, in essence, as LaBoskey states, “an ongoing process, not a final product” (1997: 161). Even the progressive broad curriculum of the BETD, with its emphasis and high premium on school-based studies (SBS), might expect novice teachers to “to be vanguards of a new revolution before they are professionally mature enough to appreciate fully the magnitude of the task at hand” (MBEC, 1997: 5 – 6), if efforts to develop reflective practitioners through the BETD cease when prospective teachers leave the teacher education institution. As was earlier mentioned (chapter 2), there are certain preconditions to develop as a reflective practitioner: not only should the practitioner have the necessary inclination to open-mindedness, responsibility and commitment as Dewey suggested, but they need a supportive and encouraging environment, or as Russell purports “a *community of professionals in a school*” (1997a: 230)(own italics).

The field research intended to establish the BETD graduate teachers' understanding of reflective practices, what the environment at their school is like and if it fosters the further development of reflective practices. Subsequently, the field research is also a quest to elicit what ongoing support these graduate teachers receive from their teacher education institutions or regional education offices to assist them when they start their professional career and their "journey" towards reflective practitioners, in line with the aims of the BETD broad curriculum to develop as reflective practitioners and to ultimately become change agents (MEC: 1993).

Assumptions

This study assumed that the Teacher Education Colleges succeeded to some extent in fostering reflective practices during the pre-service period, as was indicated in several BETD evaluation reports (MBEC1997; MBESC, 2000) and also found by Swarts (1998) in her study.



Research design

A qualitative research approach was followed, mainly because this study intends to elicit attitudinal stances of BETD graduate teachers towards an understanding of reflection and reflective practices. It was, therefore, necessary to familiarise myself with the context of the participants in the study and try and place myself in their shoes, to be able to gain understanding of their perspectives and to get a more holistic picture (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1996), rather than to collect clinical responses that can be quantitatively illustrated or manipulated. The study was also not directed by a fixed hypothesis or theory, but rather pursued to gain understanding (McMillan and Schumacher: 1993) of the reality of the BETD graduate teachers' circumstances in their practice against the background of the objectives/aims of the BETD course they

followed to prepare them for their practice. A case study was therefore done at a school in the Keetmanshoop educational region.

Data collection was done mainly through semi-structured interviews (see transcriptions in Appendix B), which facilitated an “interactional situation” and also the emergence of the “complexities of factual and emotional responses”, according to Day (1993: 126) and put the researcher in a learning position. This is consistent with the quest to understand the situation in the field, rather than to test existing theories. Classroom and general observation was also done, primarily to enhance familiarisation with the participants under study and also to investigate any traces of his/her skills to do reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Observation in general also revealed the professional teaching and learning environment and supplied some triangulation for data obtained from both teachers and the management of the school through the interviews. This is also consistent with Neuman’s view that the “core of social life is communicated through the mundane, trival (sic), everyday minutia” (1997: 361).

Where they were available the teachers’ action research projects and reflective statements, done during their final year at the teacher education college, were also studied, because it could indicate the teachers’ reflective skills when they started their professional practice. It could also be of use to establish if any growth/further development ensued after graduate teachers started their practice. Unfortunately not all of the participating teachers kept their reflective statements and action research projects, because it would have been a valuable tool for data collection and could have enhanced the final findings of the study.

An interview was also conducted with a principal of the school. This primarily intended to elicit what knowledge the school management has of the policy and philosophy of the BETD and reflective practices and what measures are put in place to support and assist novice teachers once they start their career. The inspector of education responsible for the specific school was also requested to participate in an

interview, but he chose to answer the questions in writing, due to his work load and time constraints.

Sample for the study

Purposeful sampling was used to select an “information-rich” case (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993: 378) and to select the school where data was collected. The following criteria for selection of the sample applied:

- A school in the Keetmanshoop educational region, where more than one BETD graduate was appointed. In an environment where more than one graduate teacher went through the transformed teacher education, the possibility of professional isolation, which could have influenced the validity of the data, was less possible.
- Participants should at least have two years teaching experience after completion of their teacher education. Hope (1999), as well as Wubbels and Korthagen (1990), acknowledged that teachers need to overcome the initial struggles of the practice and adapt to the everyday demands of the teaching profession before they can start to develop meaningful reflective practices.
- The school should be within the radius of 200 km from Keetmanshoop, where I am based, to facilitate regular visits and not to interfere with already hectic responsibilities by travelling far distances.

The school under study had the most BETD graduate teachers (seven at the time of the data collection) appointed in the whole region. It is an isolated school in a semi-urban area. The school has, because of its isolation, a high turnover of teachers and all three the BETD graduates who were involved in the study did not apply for a post at the school, which means that they did not choose to teach at the school voluntarily. They

were appointed at the school because they did not manage to secure a post at any of the schools to which they applied and this school was the only school left with a vacancy. All three teachers also expressed their hope to secure a post elsewhere soon.

The school is a combined school, which caters for more than 600 primary and junior secondary learners from grades 1 to 10. The school is situated almost 80 km from the nearest schools, which are not on the same route, and about 180 km from Keetmanshoop, which is the economical and political hub in this area. It serves the farming community in this predominantly agricultural area and most of the learners are mainly children of farm workers or from the local community, which has a very high unemployment rate.

The three teachers that participated in the study were the only ones with more than two years teaching experience at the time of data collection. All of them were educated at the same teacher education institution (Windhoek College of Education), which is not surprising, since it is the nearest for prospective teacher students from the south of the country.

Their subject/phase specialisation was not taken into consideration when they were chosen to participate in the study. Graduate teacher 1 (referred to as GT#1 further on) specialised in Lower Primary Education, while graduate teacher 2 (GT#2) majored in Mathematics and Integrated Natural Sciences and graduate teacher 3 (GT#3) specialised in the commercial field, with Mathematics as a minor option.

Data collection

Access to the school under study was gained through the Regional Education Office, which was not difficult, due to the fact that the study is closely related to my professional duties in the professional development domain.

The school was informed per letter and their willingness to participate was communicated telephonically. Teachers conveyed their consent to be part of the study via their principal.

During the first visit to the school an introductory session was conducted with the principal and the participants to inform them of the purpose of the study. The teachers and the principal indicated during this session when the teachers would be available for classroom observation and interviews.

During the first visit when lesson observations were conducted, the school programme was adapted to work in time for teachers to be able to do business in Keetmanshoop (some 180 km from the town) on the last day of the week when they received their monthly salaries. This resulted in periods being shorter than normal, which might have had an impact on teaching and learning at the time.

It would have been ideal to have the classroom observation before the interview in order to elicit incidences of reflection during the interviews, but unfortunately the tight schedule of the teachers did not always allow this arrangement. Some of them were involved in sport coaching and community affairs, which did not allow much flexibility, even after school hours. As a result a second visit was necessitated to follow up on some of the classroom observations, which in turn, had a negative impact due to the time lapse since the classroom observation.

I attended the sport coaching session to enhance the relationship with the participants in the study and to become familiar with their relationship with their learners in a more relaxed atmosphere than the classroom. I was also invited during my first visit to attend a demonstration lesson presented by the phase head to the lower primary teachers. During the second visit I was also fortunate to observe preparation for an impromptu concert that the teachers intended to stage on World Teachers' Day. This

was also valuable against the background of the qualitative study, which requires that the researcher should become “part” of the environment/context of the participants in the study in order to build rapport and develop understanding and ultimately empathy (Neuman, 1997).

Interviews were mainly conducted in the classrooms when teachers had administrative (free) periods, but also in the staff room and the offices of the management. Although it mainly took place during the school day, minimum interference or interruptions were experienced due to the effective discipline at the school. Due to the time constraint most interviews were limited to the duration of the administrative period (approximately 35 minutes). It was, however, beneficial in the sense that the interviews did not tire the participants, which may have resulted in their positive reaction when follow-up interviews were scheduled.

Participants were given the option to conduct the interview in the language of their choice (English or Afrikaans) to enable them to express themselves more clearly in the language that is familiar to them. Although some opted for English, they were allowed to switch to Afrikaans when they wanted to.

Although a schedule of interview questions (see Appendix A) was prepared beforehand, the interviewees’ responses were used to direct the flow of the interview, rather than to stick to a strict order. The follow-up visit also aimed to elicit information that was not gained initially due to this specific strategy and the time constraint during the initial visit. This clearly underwrites McMillan and Schumacher’s view that data collection and analyses in qualitative studies are “interactive research processes” (1993: 383) and that of Neuman that data analysis is “a dimension that stretches across all stages ...rather than being a distinct final stage” (1997:420).

Tape recordings were done of all interviews to enable me to have constant eye contact and to maximise rapport with participants. It could also contribute towards the reliability of the data, since verbatim transcriptions could be done (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). The participants all agreed to the use of the tape recorder.

My role as Senior Advisory Teacher in the regional education administration could have had a negative impact on the study (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993), since it caused teachers to be cautious when answering some questions, and might have caused the participants to be nervous initially. This is especially the case since most teachers still confuse advisory teachers as quasi inspectors, a role which they fulfilled in the dispensation before (and even for some time after) independence. This was obvious in the (almost aggressive) question from one of the participants “(w)hy did you choose *our* school for the study?”, when she was first approached during my first visit. I tried to minimise this negative effect by guaranteeing confidentiality, initially by means of the letter, again when briefing the interviewees on my arrival at the school, at the beginning of each interview, as well as constantly during the interviews (whenever some discomfort was observed). It was, therefore significant that this same teacher indicated during the last interview that “(I)t is always good to give your views and experience to someone. Most of the time you don’t talk to someone about your experience and you anyway forget what you’ve experienced.” (GT#2).

Data analysis

Data analysis was done on an ongoing basis from the first observation lesson and interviews, consistent with the views of Neuman (1997) and McMillan and Schumacher (1993) that qualitative data analysis is a continuing and integrated process. The data obtained in the observations and interviews also stimulated further data collection, since some of the interview questions were based on the observations

made. Likewise, the semi-structured nature of the interviews also requested “instant” analysis and lead to further questions for data collecting and analysis.

The data was scrutinised to search for possible “patterns of similarity and differences ...to try to come to terms with diversity” (Neuman, 1997: 419). The patterns were then coded after several attempts and categorised according to themes, which were mainly deduced from the research questions and will be discussed in the next chapter. Comparison was mainly used as an intellectual tool, not as a final goal in itself – “it being the emergence of larger, comprehensive picture” (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993: 484).

The data, however, also revealed some surprises and some themes emerged from the data, which underwrites Neuman’s view that coding “encourages higher level thinking” (1997: 422) and the stance of McMillan and Schumacher (1993) that data analysis is a reflective activity. It further supports the view of McMillan and Schumacher that the “final set of categories are not totally predetermined, but are carved out of the data according to their meaning” (1993: 487), which brings to mind Cresswell’s metaphorical explanation of qualitative research as “an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various blends of material” (1998: 13).

As was mentioned by Neuman (1997) qualitative data analysis is indeed much more demanding and requires experience on the part of the researcher, which I was lacking. Involvement in the research study, however, stimulated reflection in both the interviewees and the researcher, which enhanced the learning experience and gave another dimension to the research study. It furthermore underwrites McMillan and Schumacher’s statement that “(m)aking sense depends largely on the researcher’s intellectual rigor and a tolerance for tentativeness of interpretation until analysis is completed” (1993: 482).

It was also experienced that, due to the language barriers (the researcher and all respondents were not native English speakers and two had English as third language), some problems concerning articulation were experienced and, although both the researcher and all the respondents were fluently conversant in Afrikaans, English is the official language and as such most of the educational concepts and terminology are mainly communicated through the medium of English. Some interpretation gaps might therefore have emanated. This was also evident in the constant repetition of aphorisms and phrases/words with no meaning in the responses, but could also relate to what Eason calls “implicit knowledge” (as cited in Magerman, 2000: 86) and that teachers do not find it easy to articulate why they do what they do, but could also allude to Tann’s (1993) view that teachers need to be provided with the terminology in their teacher education to be able to reflect and share their experiences.

True to the theme and nature of this study, the next chapter intends to draw a picture that emerged from reflecting on the data collected.



CHAPTER 4

REFLECTION ON DATA AND FINDINGS

“It doesn’t happen all at once. You become. It takes a long time” (Williams, 1962: 199)

Introduction

Through the policy analysis, the question how the BETD intends to develop reflective practices was already extensively exhausted in chapter 2. It also emerged from the evaluation reports (MBEC, 1997 and MBESC, 2000) and other studies (Andersson and Mbodo, 1998; Mayumbelo, 1996; Mayumbelo and Nyambe, 2001 and Swarts, 1998) that the BETD programme managed to lay a foundation for prospective teachers to appreciate professional development as an ongoing and lifelong venture. It was also revealed that BETD graduate teachers value reflective practices as a powerful tool towards continual improvement in their practice. Through the programme they also learnt to appreciate the importance of collaborative learning and the power of cooperative or collegial support, which could assist them to meet the challenges of the reforming education towards a democratic pedagogy.

This study’s specific interest was to establish what the conditions were in schools and how the BETD graduate teachers manage to sustain reflective practices after they completed their teacher education and left the environment of their teacher education institutions.

Prior to assessing the conditions at the school, it is vital to first explore how these graduate teachers perceive learning and teaching and how they conceptualise reflective practices, as it emerged from the data collected during the field research. This exploration will be done against the background of the intentions of the rather

ambitious aims of the BETD (Melber in MBESC, 2000) and the subsequent progress that other studies, mentioned above, asserted to regarding the development of inquiring skills and reflective attitudes in student teachers.

How do the graduate teachers perceive learning and teaching and their own professional development?

Van Haarmelen argues that “(how you) view knowledge determines and informs every dimension of practice in education” (in MBESC, 2000: 9). Learning was expressed by the interviewees as a process, not only construed from theory, but rather emanating from experience - a lifelong journey:

“The three years that I had been teaching, I learnt a lot. ...when I finished the course, I did not really understand the concepts as I understand it now” (GT#2, interview 2).

“I developed (through experience) a deep insight in my subject” (GT#2, interview 1).

“When you come from the college, you are not really prepared ... You really start learning at the school ... There are a lot of things that I feel that I still need to learn ... We can learn daily ... Your few years of studies is not enough” (GT#1, interview 1).

“When you are at the college, sometimes you think that you know what to do, but when it comes to reality, things happen to change” (GT#3, interview 1).

This is consistent with the views of Loughran (1997) that a great deal of learning is construed through experience and Russell that “reflection is inseparable from experience” (1997a: 230). Russell further contemplates that “‘the learning is *in* the experience’ rather than ‘from’ the experience” (1997b: 39), which gives authority to authentic experience and learning as a life long activity (Slabbert and Greenhalgh,

1998: 28). This implies that through reflection, learning becomes a road “with no end or termination. Rather it is an ongoing commitment to growth, change, development and improvement” (Brubacher et al, 1994: 130). It also reminds of Dewey’s notion that “experience plus reflection equals growth” (as cited in Cook, 1998). This clearly illustrates that the graduate teachers value the authority of experience and have a propensity for learning through awareness and understanding of their practice.

Moreover, these teachers demonstrated a true reflective cycle by not only learning from their experience, but they made some changes, based on reflection on their teaching, since they started to teach:

“I am stricter now. At the beginning you have to adapt to the new situation and you concentrate more on your lessons ... now I can emphasise discipline more and be stricter” (GT#1, interview 1) and “I understand children better now and can work better with them” (GT#1, interview 2).

“Maybe, when I started off as a first year teacher I had different media every day, but as you get practised, you see that you don’t have to make a poster every day ... Media is the things around us ... I used to get angry when a learner did not understand. I used to blame myself, but...I learnt more tolerance. I learnt to try again and again and again” (GT#2, interview 1).

“When we were at the college ... your lesson had to follow a certain format ... It is not always that you can stick to it” (GT#3, interview 1).

This relates strongly to Olson’s argument that “(t)he potential for productive change comes from an increased awareness of the practitioner’s own practice” (1985: 300). It also links with the goal of democracy for basic education in Namibia (MEC, 1993), for “(t) rue development can only take place when people make choices for themselves” (MBESC, 2000: 14). This also alludes to the observation of Swarts (1998) that reflective practice incorporates development of problem-solving skills and

that reflection on events improves independent decision making and judgement. This notion is also resonated by the following responses of interviewees:

“(T)hey (the grade 10 learners) did not understand the subject properly.... we go back to work of Grade 8 and 9 ... I revise the work that they are already supposed to know” (GT#2, interview 1).

“I found that if I haven’t prepared myself for that lesson, yes, I would have disciplinary problems, because the learners do not know what to do and I would end up telling them to keep quiet.” (GT#2, interview 1).

“We start with the easier work and then it gets more difficult. Then I have to make a choice – should I do all the easier tasks and leave the more difficult ones, because the children’s standard is just not up to it” (GT#1, interview 2).

On the question “*What would you do if you establish at the end of a lesson that the learners did not understand?*” it was very promising that not one blamed the learners. They rather seek to understand what they as teachers did or did not do that learning did not take place and try to take action to rectify it - the continual cycle of reflection on action which leads to new action (Loughran, 1996):

“ I’ll go back to my lesson – how did I start it. Maybe it was not good enough. Did I perhaps put too little emphasis on a specific part? ... try to find out where I did not give enough attention/emphasis and then give it more emphasis” (GT#1, interview 2).

“I will repeat it and try another method. I will just have to make time for it” (GT#3, interview 2).

“I would go back to my lesson. Maybe it would be the method in which I presented it ... give them games or help them to discover first before I give them the content. Maybe if they discover, they will understand better” (GT#2, interview 1).

This relates to Cook's notion that "(r)eflection is looking back on teaching to detect patterns that are responsive or unresponsive to the learner and that may be effective or not effective in helping the learner to learn" (1998: 33). He further contemplates that if teachers respond to this "moral demand" that they feel for their learners, they will be motivated to improve their practice to enhance learning (ibid, 1998). LaBoskey underwrites this notion, for "(a)ll students deserve teachers who are primarily guided by student needs and interests and who are both willing and able to construct and examine their practice in conscientious, principled, and judicious ways" (1997: 162). It also confirms Swarts' finding that the BETD students demonstrated that "learners are at the heart of the learning enterprise" and that this illustrates a "commitment to learners and to improvement" (1998: 218).

Likewise, when the teachers compared their own experience as scholars with learners and learning presently, they demonstrated a change in their view of teaching and learning and an understanding of and appreciation for reform and the rationale behind it:

"Those days when you saw a teacher, you shut up. Today learners are more outspoken or open – (those days) when you saw a teacher, you hid, you kept quiet. You did not raise your opinion. Today children speak their minds" (GT#1, interview 1).

"Those days the teacher talked most of the time and you just had to answer from the writing board. Now children can say what they feel. The other day the children told the teacher that he made a mistake. We would never have done such a thing to tell the teacher that he is wrong. You rather shut up. If learners tell me that I made a mistake, I will admit it. I am only human – it is not wrong (to make mistakes). We learn daily" (GT#1, interview 1).

"(T)he teacher talked all the time and children had to sit and absorb (in the past). Teachers involve learners more (now)" (GT#1, interview 2).

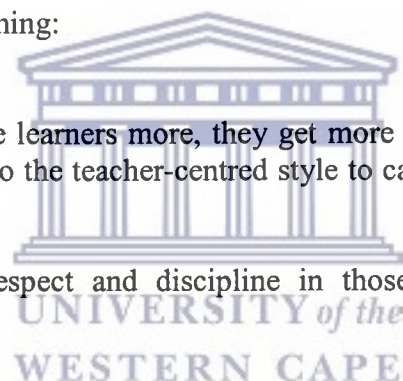
"Those days we were very much afraid of the teachers." (GT#3, interview 2).

These responses suggest that active and participatory learning is fostered in schools and that teachers make an effort to “become animators of this process” (Callewaert, 2001: 241). It also supports the findings of the National Evaluation of the BETD (MBEC, 1997) and Swarts (1998) that BETD students demonstrated changed perspectives and attitudes towards learners and their participation in the learning process. In addition, it illustrates the progress that has been made towards democratic pedagogy, especially if the historical culture of silence and fear referred to earlier, is taken into consideration.

As a result of this prevailing culture of silence and their own history of autocratic classroom practices in schools, teachers experience difficulty in managing participatory learning and teaching:

“When you involve the learners more, they get more disorderly and I will sometimes revert to the teacher-centred style to calm them down” (GT#1, interview 2).

“There was always respect and discipline in those days” (GT#3, interview 2).



Teachers have a teaching repertoire and a wealth of knowledge of the profession through their own schooling before they started preparing themselves for the profession (Nicol, 1997). They, therefore, tend to teach the way they were taught and it is difficult not to revert to “old” practices, especially when they experience problems.

What was very auspicious is that one teacher, when comparing the two ‘worlds’, did some reflection and, as was earlier mentioned, ascribed the lack of respect not to the learners but pondered on the idea that teachers might be responsible for it:

“Children showed more respect to teachers in the past ... maybe it is us (teachers) ... there is more a relationship of friendship than a teacher-learner relationship” (GT#1, interview 1).

All three graduate teachers valued learning from peers and even learners (collaborative learning) and they even have sympathy for teachers who do not experience collegial support. Their responses also demonstrated their perception of learning as a continuing process:

“(T)hat was the place (at the teacher education institution) where we really worked together as a team, especially during times of SBS, where you did not know what to do, the only persons that could help you are the other student teachers ... I believe I can learn from anyone” (GT#2, interview 1)

“Now I am missing out on teaching and working together ... just to share - even if he is not giving me advice” (GT#2, interview 2)

“I learnt from those teachers’ mistakes. I learnt to maintain that teacher relationship (with learners)” (GT#3, interview 1)

“I learnt a lot from the teachers and from the staff, especially from my two colleagues ... We got together and discussed the problems we experienced during the day ... we shared ideas. The three of us helped each other ... I believe she (Phase Head and HOD) can learn from me too ... We learn from each other” (GT#1, interview 1)

“One learns a lot of things ... you can pick up when visiting someone else” (GT#3, interview 1)

“If learners tell me that I made a mistake, I will admit it. We learn daily” (GT#1, interview 1)

These views are consistent with Zeichner’s argument that reflective teaching, being a social practice, has as its purpose to “create a community of learning” (cited in MBEC, 1997: 57). Guilfoyle et al (1997) also refer to the importance of conversation or talking in the social constructivist learning process, because “I do not know what I

know until I say it” (1997: 186), which strongly relates to the powerful reflections of GT#2:

“Most of the time you don’t talk to someone about your experience and you anyway forget what you’ve experienced. So maybe telling it to someone, also gives you a reflection of what you have done and what you need to do” (GT#2, interview 2).

It is, therefore, quite disappointing that the classroom observations revealed that this power of conversation in learning and the concept of collaborative learning is not optimally used in some of the classes. Although the learners were grouped to sit together, teaching concentrated on whole class teaching and learners were individually involved, but group dynamics were not utilised, even when the situation and topic made it an excellent strategy to use. This reminds strongly of the “false clarity” that Fullan (1993) refers to, since the two teachers’ explanations, when they were probed to reflect on this, gave an indication that they did not feel very confident with the use of group work and also that they lack understanding of how assessment should be done when learners work in groups.

GT#1 on the other hand, displayed a natural ease with group work and learners were constantly motivated to assist each other and to discuss with each other while they were busy with their tasks, for, in her words “you will be surprised how they can help each other, because they are on the same level” (GT#1, interview 1). This reminds of the partnership with learners in sharing teaching and learning, that Thiessen (1993) refers to.

Despite the graduate teachers’ appreciation for the value of collaborative and cooperative learning, they, however, still refer to seniority and years of experience as being superior to learning from peers and learners and their responses also exhibit a tendency towards content-based learning and have a strong technical inclination:

“I learnt a lot from him, because he had experience” (GT#1, interview 2)

“We (novice teachers) need an experienced person to help me where I see problems. They should know how much we need guidance from a senior person ... I did not have a senior teacher (in the subject) at the school to help me out with a problem” (GT#2, interview 1).

“How can you learn something from a junior? ... This subject head didn’t even have experience of grade 10, so he couldn’t help me” (GT#3, interview 1).

These responses echo the observation of Wubbels and Korthagen (1990) and Hope (1999: 14) that inexperienced teachers need to overcome the “trials and tribulations of the hectic” day-to-day demands of the school day. They are concerned mainly that they will lose control and respect of their learners (and colleagues) if they make any mistakes, hence their quest for technical assistance from a more experienced person. It is for this reason that Zeichner (1990) alludes to the discrepancy between the teacher’s role as technician and that of a reflective practitioner as an impediment for teacher learning. Carson, however, contemplates that this might not only be a quest for “technical know-how” (1995: 155), but rather an acknowledgement of the apprenticeship quality of the teaching practice.

All three teachers could vividly call to mind the topics of their action research projects that they completed in their final year at the college and valued the learning and experience that they gained from it:

“I gathered enough information that I can apply ... I can still use it. I use the information – I apply it on my learners with reading problems” (GT#1, interview 1).

“my hypothesis was ... if you are unprepared, you are more likely to have disciplinary problems ... So I found that if I haven’t prepared myself for that lesson, yes, I would have disciplinary problems” (GT#2, interview 2).

“I learnt from those teachers’ (involved in his action research) mistakes” (GT#3, interview 1).

When asked if they can apply action research in their practice, they indicated that they can use the knowledge that they gained through the inquiry, but they seem to be insecure about applying the skills and doing ongoing action research. Not one of them attempted to do any action research after they had started their practice. This underwrites the concern of Andersson and Mbodo when they ask “(a)re the new BETD teachers prepared to implement action research in their future schools?” (1998: 15). Mayumbelo and Nyambe express similar doubts, “whether one experience of action research by pre-service teachers will result in continued inquiry, deliberation, and reflection” (2001: 79). These concerns could relate to the findings of Lampert (in Pomuti, 2000) that teachers find it difficult to link their inquiry activities with their classroom practice, mainly because they do not value the significance of their experience as a base for construction of knowledge.

No reflective diaries/journals were kept by the graduate teachers during their studies, which is consistent with the concern expressed in the annual evaluation report that students of the Windhoek College of Education were not exposed to this valuable tool for developing reflective practices (MBEC, 1997). They were, however, expected to record reflective statements during the periods of their school-based studies and they seem to value them as reference material:

“I made a note of those things that went wrong or good (sic) in the lesson. When I started to teach, I could use that same lesson and correct the errors in order to be successful” (GT#3, interview 2).

GT#2 vividly recalls her reflective statements on the experience of her involvement in the student body and how it affected her studies negatively. Although the reflections

were more on a personal level, it reminds of the attitude of open-mindedness and the willingness to know the self that were referred to in Chapter 2. According to Carson the latter is the key to becoming a teacher, for teaching is “something that we *are* and *do*” (Carson, 1995: 159).

GT#1 indicated that she was expected to enter her reflections in her portfolio, but she only found it a valuable learning tool “at that time”, suggesting that it was a once-off experience.

It is, however, clear from the responses of the teachers that the reflective statements were not exploited maximally for the development of reflective practices, because it seems as if no reflective discussion was fostered or entered into, since “(i)t was meant for yourself. You did not submit it.” (GT#3, interview 2). This might have instigated the perception of the teacher who, when asked if I could use her SBS file for data collection, responded “I do not know if the content has any value” (GT#1, interview 2). GT#1 also recalled that they (the Lower Primary students) had an excursion in their final year of teacher education where they visited schools. They made notes of what they experienced and observed, but no reflective discourse followed to take full advantage of the learning experience (GT#1, interview 2). One could, therefore, conclude that the reflective statements and the SBS file just had to be completed to get credit at this institution. This contradicts the statement of a reform facilitator, that doing SBS is “not just a question of getting marks” (cited in Mayumbelo and Nyambe, 2001: 77), but it intends to foster a propensity towards reflective teaching.

GT#2 had a very negative experience in the third year during the SBS, to the extent that she wrote in her reflective statements (Appendix C): “SBS III was not such a heavenly experience at all”. She managed to identify the cause: “there was no sound relationship between my support teacher, my science subject teacher at the school and myself”. It resulted in very negative feelings and insecurity: “I was like torn between two fires” and “(t)hat really was quite unpleasant to deal with and I think it was all so

unnecessary”. While this experience could have been a wonderful opportunity to develop skills to deal with challenging relationships, it seems that it was never capitalised on through a reflective discussion with the tutor, since she concludes her written retrospection on this issue with “Well, that is life, I guess” (GT#2, reflective statement).

It is clear that the three graduate teachers, who went through the same programme at the same teacher education institution, although they majored in different areas (Lower Primary, Natural Sciences and Commercial), had different experiences of reflective practices and, therefore, different perceptions of and proclivity towards the concept. Their personal attitudes and contexts could have resulted in this, but it also raises the question whether the different departments at their teacher education institution could have given more or less prominence to developing reflective practices. As was indicated in Chapter 3, the subject area or phase of specialisation was not taken into consideration when the sample of interviewees was decided upon. The following discussion, therefore, reflects some of the surprising elements that the data revealed.

It was, for instance, obvious that the lower primary teacher (GT#1) appeared quite insecure when reference was made to the concept of reflection or the strategies like action research. She, however, demonstrated a very positive notion toward reflection *in action*. When being observed during a lesson, she could not find the beginning of the song on the tape recorder because it was not rewinded by the previous teacher who used it, but she immediately reverted to an alternative strategy when she started to sing the song herself. Throughout the interviews she displayed an attitude that is indicative of reflective teaching and learning, especially when she referred to the possibility to learn from the learners, which makes her a co-learner in the classroom (Thiessen, 1993) and also when she tried to contemplate on the reasons for unsatisfactory progress in Mathematics. This gives the impression that the terminology and underlying theory were not given the necessary attention during her teacher education,

for, she states that “ (w)e teach everyday or ordinary things like politeness and you don’t need qualifications for that” (GT#1, interview 1). This raises concern for at least two reasons: Firstly the BETD was specifically designed to rectify the disparities of past programmes that rendered sub-standard qualifications to lower primary teachers (Swarts, 1998) and in the second instance the specific college of education might have missed the opportunity to facilitate the development of reflective practices in a prospective teacher who demonstrates a very positive inclination towards it.

The teacher in the commercial field (GT#3) illustrates quite a limited understanding of reflection since he seems to limit the need to reflect and improve his practice to specific content and a specific group of learners. When he was asked if he could do reflection during SBS in his final year of teacher education, he indicated that it was not possible, because he seldom got the same class every day. I found it quite challenging to work with this interviewee, since he often responded with blunt answers and when probed, he seemed to tighten up. When I reflected on this specific case, I attributed it partly to being inexperienced as interviewer (I can clearly identify with Carson’s self-doubt mentioned earlier!), but also pondered on the notion that it could be a gender issue: in our social setup males find it more difficult to reflect and maybe more so when the ‘interrogator’ is female. It could also be attributed to the fact that this teacher taught as an unqualified teacher before he attended the teacher education college and that he did not find it possible to cross the bridge from the “teacher knows it all” presumption that is still prevailing in most schools. This same teacher also indicated that he cannot learn from a junior (and for that matter from the learners) and that he does not see the need for further professional development.

The Science/Mathematics teacher (GT#2) seems to be the one who got closest to experiencing true reflective activities during her teacher education period, as earlier discussions also revealed. This could be attributed to her very positive perception of her teacher educators as role models, for she contemplates “not only did they present ‘modern’ lessons, but they allowed us... most of the time we were the ones to present

lessons” (interview 2). She demonstrated a personal inclination towards reflective teaching and responsibility towards the learners when she undertook to improve on the low achievement in Mathematics at the school. She also experienced her participation in the research study as a learning opportunity, when she expressed her eagerness to apply the interviewing skills that she observed being used in the interviews for this study.

Unfortunately, not one of the three graduate teachers had any contact with the teacher education college after they graduated. Although the principal, from his own experience more than fifteen years back, acknowledges that it is not common practice, he regrets the fact that no interest is shown in students who completed their studies at teacher education institutions. GT#2 experiences this as disappointing and she also reveals her proclivity towards reflection when she pondered on the idea that following up their students would not only benefit the students, but also the teacher educators’ practice of preparing their students:

“I think they have a responsibility to maybe find (sic) out where exactly are their students and how they’re coping, because they should reflect on how successful their methods were and maybe try to improve on it” (GT#2).

Yet her colleague (GT#3) does not think that the college of education can play a role in his ongoing professional development, which strongly relates to his notion that he does not need further professional development. GT#1 never gave the idea any thought but thinks that the teacher educators will be willing to assist if the graduate teachers take the initiative to contact them.

If the BETD claims to only induce professional development, and teachers are expected to value lifelong learning, some effort should have been made by the teacher education institutions to follow up and reach out to their students after completion of

their initial teacher education and to render some support on their journey of continuing professional development. This is especially important against the background that teacher education is expected to be a forerunner in educational reform (MEC, 1993) and bearing in mind that the culture in schools remained basically unchanged. Moreover, the BETD is still in an evolving process and teacher educators could, faithful to the aims of the BETD, use follow-up activities as means to inform themselves towards improving their own practice and to strengthen the teacher education reform initiative.

The data confirms the observations in the National Evaluation Report that these teachers do seem to be able to “venture beyond the borders of classroom practice” (MBEC, 1997: 23) and consider the impact of contextual issues in the community they serve, on learners and learning. They were all very positive about the way in which the community is involved in the school activities and attributes it to the school’s attitude towards the community:

“(P)arents can come with their problems. The school is open for them ... The school is very much *for* the community ... We sometimes need assistance from the community and you should come and observe the close cooperation” (GT#1, interview 1).

“They (the community) is (sic) quite responsive to the needs of the teachers. You are highly respected” (GT#2, interview 1).

“(T)he parents are willing to come and assist us with afternoon classes. Even with other extra-mural activities they’re always willing ... without being paid.” (GT#3, interview 1).

This is an indication that this school is well on its way to realise the goal of democracy and the vision of the Education Ministry that parents and the community will no longer be “unwelcome outsiders”, but rather active participants in the education of their children (MEC, 1993: 42).

The teachers are, therefore, responsive to the needs of the specific community and feel a moral obligation to attend to these needs:

“I took it on myself to give them (the learners) books home to read if they do not have books at home ... children should be exposed to the library and television more ... We can do fundraising and buy books. But money is a problem ... You might end up buying from your own money” (GT#1, interview 1).

“(M)ost of the learners come from farms. So they don’t have high expectations. Teachers can play a big role informing community members ... inform the parents about choices ... encourage them to have a goal, a vision for themselves.” (GT#2, interview 2).

“They are not exposed like other learners in other towns ... That forms part of their general knowledge...and then the learner does not know what you are referring to ... talking about an ATM ... here you have to explain it ... We use a lot of teaching aids” (GT#3, interview 1).

From the reflections on the data discussed above it is clear that the teachers did have exposure to developing reflective practices during their teacher education programme and some of them demonstrate very promising attitudes and propensity towards reflective practices. They have an overall changed view of learning and learners and they value collaborative and lifelong learning. This is indicative of a paradigm shift, but it is clear that they did not develop the confidence to take the next step to become real change agents: they did not attempt to apply the tools of reflective practices and inquiry in their classrooms and in the school. After only two/three years in practice it might be too soon to expect them to have overcome the encumbrance of the struggle of novice teachers to adapt to the realities of teaching, but it might be necessary to look at the environment in which these teachers practise to come to a more final conclusion.

The next section will, therefore, have a close look at what the data reveals concerning the school environment and how conducive it is for ongoing professional development through reflective practices.

How supportive is the school environment of developing reflective practices?

The National Evaluation report (MBEC, 1997) refers to the kind of school environment and support needed to sustain the reflective practices developed through the BETD programme. Russell (1993) is of the opinion that the school environment is an important factor for being reflective and, should it be supportive and conducive to reflection, most teachers would be reflective practitioners. This is especially so if you take into consideration the sensitivity aspect of critical self-reflection that Tann refers to, which requires an emotionally secure environment with “close support and frequent encouragement” (1993: 58).

Although all three graduate teachers did not choose to teach at the school under study, they all maintained that they did not regret that they were eventually appointed at this school, for it provided them with an excellent foundation for their teaching career. The reasons that they provide for this stance are:

“(T)he school is a good ‘practice-school’... I learnt a lot from the teachers and the staff, but especially from my two colleagues ... and the subject head ... You actually learn at the school and I got the necessary assistance here” (GT#1, interview 1).

“I’m happy here, enjoying my work ... Here we work as a team” (GT#3, interview 1).

“I wouldn’t have been such a dedicated teacher that I am. I should say one thing about this school: you work very hard ... and I think that’s what I like about this school” (GT#2, interview 1).

When asked what assistance they got from the school management when they started teaching, they chorused similar positive responses:

“If I was having a problem, all doors were open” (GT#3, interview 1).

“(I)f you experience any problems, you can contact her (phase head). ... You feel free to ask if you do not understand – they are open, they won’t reject you. They will help you” (GT#1, interview 1).

“I wouldn’t have had such a holy respect (elsewhere) ... like I have for my principal” (GT#2, interview 1).

From the last response it is also clear that the principal plays a prominent role at the school by setting an example and GT#2 indicated that she would like to observe his class, because “he is not such a teacher-centred person” (interview 1). This gives an indication that the school management does not display an authoritarian leadership but that a supportive environment exists, which leaves room for innovations and changes from staff members, an atmosphere that could be conducive towards developing continual reflective practices.

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When asked how they think the school management will respond if they, as relatively inexperienced teachers, made suggestions for changes at the school, it was again clear from their responses that there is an accommodative and inviting environment which welcomes participatory decision making at the school:

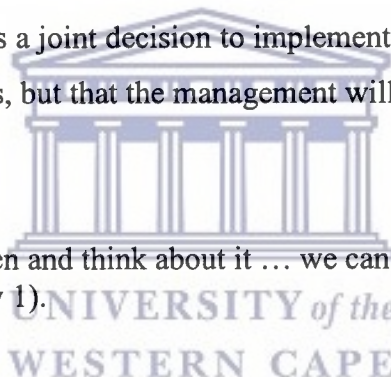
“I think they are already positive ... they welcome any suggestions, from any teacher, irrespective of your experience ... When I was a first year the management relied so much on the first years, because maybe they think the first years got this new methods ...they want to change. They belief one should update your methods...are quite positive on ideas” (GT#2, interview 1).

“(T)hey accommodate a lot of new ideas. If I was having an idea, they’d discuss this and sometimes they’d also use my idea ... they do welcome new ideas” (GT#3,interview 1).

What is also very promising is the indication that the idea to learn from the BETD graduate teachers (mentioned above by GT#2), who were only novices at that stage, was not imposed by the management, but came from some of the other colleagues and the management responded to it positively (Principal, interview).

Even the lower primary teacher (GT#1), who pitied the fact that the afternoon sessions for junior secondary learners and their extra-mural responsibilities do not allow them to get together as colleagues so often to reflect on problems and to plan together like in the past, indicated that it was a joint decision to implement afternoon classes for the junior secondary phase learners, but that the management will probably reconsider it if they take it up with them:

“I believe they will listen and think about it ... we can discuss it with them” (GT#1, interview 1).



This attitude is also illustrated by the principal when he refers to his open door policy:

“(M)y office is open for any suggestions. And we test it and see if it works, but if what we had been doing works, we will tell the person. But one does not want to cling to old practices” (Principal, interview).

The teachers’ close and relaxed cooperation during the sport coaching session verifies this atmosphere of participatory management and the management team’s openness to initiatives and innovations was clear with the alterations allowed in the normal school programme to prepare for the impromptu concert to commemorate World Teachers’

Day. The enthusiasm with which the staff practised and participated in the concert also clearly underscores the one teacher's proud statement that "(h)ere we work (and it seems play) as a team" (GT#3, interview 1).

It was, therefore, surprising that two of them, when questioned on the acquisition of sufficient readers for the lower primary level and additional resources for the subject, did not bother to question the current practices at the school:

"Those were the only books that we received this year ... we just accepted it" (GT#1, interview 1).

"(I)f you don't need a book, if the book was not on the list (textbook catalogue), then he'd (the principal) advise me to go to Edumeds (and buy the book myself)" (GT#2, interview 2).

Prescribed books are being acquired through an order placed by the school within a budget allocated to each school. These orders are then processed by the regional office. The teachers are clearly involved in the process of ordering books, because GT#1 mentioned that they get a form each year to indicate their needs for every grade. They might not have followed up the fact that they did not receive the number of books they requested simply because it seems as if she is not acquainted with the procedure for ordering of books. It could, however, also illustrate a lack of transparency in the process of ordering of books at either the school or at the regional office.

If schools need resources that are not on the text book catalogue, teachers normally acquire it from own funds, since the school development fund, which is raised through parent and community contributions, seldom allows for the acquisition of educational material, especially in a community where the unemployment rate is high and parents are from a low income bracket.

Although two of the interviewees indicated that they did not get the necessary technical support when they started to teach, the principal indicated that they allocate a mentor for each novice teacher appointed at the school. The mentor is supposed to assist the teacher with the basic administrative tasks. This is apparently a new practice, in response to the need identified by novice teachers. GT#3 refers to induction that they gave an experienced teacher who earlier joined the commerce department for the first time. GT#2 also mentioned being a mentor to a BETD in-service teacher. This practice is consistent with the expectations of the circuit inspector that the management should appoint a teacher to guide the novice through the process.

The principal indicated that collaborative learning is fostered and supported at the school and the mentors sometimes invite the inexperienced teachers to visit their classes. GT#3 confirmed that the management members invited them to visit their classes.

During my visit two demonstration classes for lower primary teachers were also conducted by the phase head and an experienced teacher. The initiative apparently came from a novice teacher who experienced problems teaching reading. I attended one such demonstration lesson and the atmosphere of collaboration and collegiality was obvious. The teachers' spontaneous discussions afterwards also illustrated this spirit and confirmed that this was not a once-off experience, but normal and regular practice at the school.

The graduate teachers indicated that regular subject meetings are being held, which could be a forum for sharing, reflection and collegial support and reminds strongly of Zeichner's (in MBEC, 1997) "community of learning" mentioned earlier. From the interviewees' responses, it is, however, clear that discussions and sharing are mainly on the technical level and they do not explore beyond the boundaries of administrative routine and content:

“(W)e discuss everything from the syllabi...scheme of work...the layout of papers...anything else with regard to the subject” (GT#3, interview 1).

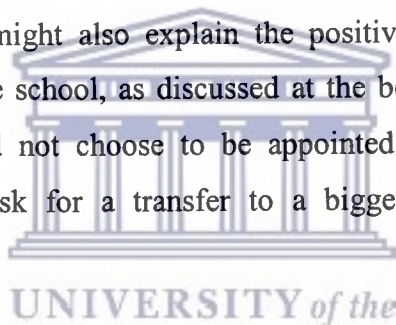
“(W)e sort of had an induction course with her, telling her what to do, what she must expect, how the papers should look like” (GT#3, interview 1).

When this teacher (GT#3) was probed about methodological assistance they gave to the inexperienced commerce teacher, he indicated that this would have been done if the initiative came from this teacher: “if she doesn’t ask, we think that she knows everything” (GT#3, interview 1). This quest for technical know-how might relate to novice teachers’ quest for technical assistance when they start teaching. It could, however, also be an indication that this teacher (GT#3), even after a few years of teaching experience and having been able to come to grips with the everyday routine and technicalities of teaching, still did not venture beyond the technical level, which may be coherent to the earlier observation on his reflective attitude. This might also explain his opinion that he does not need any further development.

The procedure used by the school management when doing class visits, displays emphasis on support, ongoing professional development and improvement rather than just administrative routine. The principal stressed that the visiting management member is supposed to facilitate discussion after such a visit and this is clearly illustrated by the statement of one teacher that “(y)ou are never left wondering what now?” (GT#2, interview 2). This is, however, not consistent with the implied notion of GT#3 who indicated that, if he could give advice on how class visits should be conducted, he would give advice and never just visit the teacher, which might have alluded to some earlier experience he has had. His reference to *advice*, though, alludes to a premise of one telling the other what to do, rather than to enter into discussion to

facilitate reflection and enhance understanding of your practice to stimulate action for improvement.

Teachers are being valued at the school as professionals and, in the words of the principal “(e)ven though I am the principal, I don’t want to have to remind you (meaning the staff) to do your work” (Principal, interview). From my general observation it is evident that teachers value this acknowledgement, since the teachers were constructively teaching all the time during both my visits and the school had a very disciplined, though secure, unthreatening and relaxed atmosphere. These, as well as the cooperation during afternoon sessions and with extra-mural activities, demonstrate to me an environment where teachers willingly and enthusiastically participate and collaborate, because they are part and parcel of decision-making processes at the school. It might also explain the positive attitude that all three teachers displayed towards the school, as discussed at the beginning of this section, despite the fact that they did not choose to be appointed at this school and the indication that they would ask for a transfer to a bigger town as soon as the opportunity arises.



The principal is clearly not informed about the philosophy underlying the BETD and the strategies the reformed teacher education employs to meet its aim of inculcating reflective practices and lifelong learning in the quest to facilitate teachers to become change agents. This is most probably since schools in this region do not have any contact with teacher education institutions. He is of the opinion that transformation of teacher education might have been necessitated by the reformed curriculum in education. Although he acknowledges that BETD teachers are methodologically well prepared for teaching, he expressed concern that their content base is low and they specialise too early, which do not prepare them to be as flexible as teachers who were trained before independence.

The principal's inclination towards change and innovation is, however, clearly illustrated by the teachers' responses as well as his willingness to accommodate 'workable' new ideas. He also perceives the challenge of a very unstable teaching staff (newly appointed staff seldom stay at the school for longer than two/three years), caused by the remote and isolated location of the school, quite well. He alludes to preparing teachers as 'real' professionals to be able to teach at any other school when they are eventually transferred, for "they get a good foundation here" (Principal, interview). For me, this attitude alludes to the moral obligation towards improvement that Cook (1998) refers to - not only to the learners, but also to the professional development of his staff and teacher development at large. Moreover, it implies a realisation of the partnership that our development brief sets as a requirement towards our common agenda of education for all (MEC, 1993).

According to the data it is evident that this school established a conducive environment for ongoing professional development and, as was earlier concluded, that the BETD graduate teachers have (although some more than others) developed a propensity towards reflective practices. Against this background and the fact that this school might be the only school in the Keetmanshoop educational region with so many (seven in total at the time of the study) graduate BETD teachers, the question is: why do these teachers make the choice to maintain the status quo? Why are they hesitant to implement the tools and skills that they acquired to become real "strategic agents" (James, 1996: 82), the forerunners in the transformation of education in Namibia?

Zeichner and Tabachnick allude to necessary "changes in the conditions in which teachers practice if the reforms are to be successful" (2001: 215) and if these conditions are favourable *at* the school, it might be required to explore for answers beyond the borders of the school.

How does the regional office support teachers to become reflective practitioners?

The Regional Education Office in Keetmanshoop accommodates one of the seven Directorates of the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture and serves and supports schools in the two political regions of Karas and Hardap in Namibia. This is geographically a very big region (almost one third of the country), but it is sparsely populated because of the arid conditions, since this is where the Namib Desert and the Kalahari Desert struggle to meet.

The educational region consists of 107 schools, of which 12 are senior secondary schools and 24 schools offer the junior secondary curriculum. These schools are scattered across the region from Rehoboth, just south of Windhoek (the capital), right down to the Orange River, the southern border of the country: a vastness of almost 800 kilometres. Distances between towns and schools are long and, despite the fact that a relatively good infrastructure existed even before independence, these conditions pose special challenges in terms of time and fiscal resources to this directorate in their task to assist and support schools.

The educational region is divided into 5 circuits and for every circuit an Inspector of Education is responsible for management and leadership support. These circuits have recently been further divided into clusters and the clustering system was introduced to enable cluster schools to assist and support each other with the aim to improve the quality of education. The Directorate has a professional development team (Advisory Services and Teacher Resource Centres) who are responsible to monitor and support curriculum implementation and teacher development and, together with the Inspectors of Education, they are tasked to assist and support schools professionally.

When the school under study expanded its curriculum to the full junior secondary level (up to grade 10) some five years ago, they received continuous professional support through the process. Their first cohort of candidates performed surprisingly

well when they first sat for the Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) examinations in 1999.

The data I collected at the school revealed some surprising perceptions of the role and the function of these ‘professionals’ at the regional office when asked what role the regional professional development support personnel can play in the continuous professional development of BETD graduate teachers:

“(W)e need an experienced person to, maybe just chat with me and help me maybe where I see problems...they (the Advisory Teachers) have been once where we are at this stage and they should know how much we need guidance from a senior person” (GT#2, interview 1).

“(S)ometimes you think you know what to do, but when it comes to reality things happen to change...sometimes you think you are on the right track, while you are not. So these guys (referring to the Advisory Teachers) have a big role to play to make sure that the teachers, especially new teachers, are on the right track. Check that they’re OK. If they are on the right track, motivate them and if they are not, assist them as well” (GT#3, interview 1).

This may allude to the ‘authority’ of experience discussed earlier, but it could just as well hint at a prevailing culture of ‘authority of the authority’, in which “new and improved knowledge is gained from external sources and ‘experts’”, as Russell suggests (1993: 145), which could inhibit teachers to value their own practice and experience as a learning field. The graduate teachers clearly seem to value assistance from advisory services, but again it seems as if they would only need them as novices while they struggle with the technical aspects of teaching or when they experience problems and not necessarily to support their ongoing professional development. This may be consistent with the principal’s response that they will call in the Advisory Teachers when they cannot assist the teachers at the school themselves.

GT#2 had problems to recall the name of the Advisory Teacher responsible for her subject and GT#3 waited and “struggled through until the Subject Advisor came out one day” (interview 1), which implies that the initiative came from the Advisory Teacher and not from the teacher himself, despite the fact that he was not coping. Despite the earlier observation that graduate teachers value support from regional advisory services, this might suggest the impression that the professional development team does not necessarily form part of teachers’ repertoire of support and assistance for ongoing professional development. Consistent with this reflection, the Inspector of Education also only vaguely refers to the role of the Advisory Teachers to render subject specific support initially, confining their role to that of *subject* specialists, rather than the all-encompassing role of facilitating professional development.

However, their quest for support and assistance from advisory services might also be very promising, especially in view of the former role of subject ‘inspectors’ that Advisory Teachers fulfilled before (and for some time after) independence, where their function was to prescribe and dictate and, as most teachers perceived them, find fault if you did not adhere to these prescriptions and dictations. These practices were experienced as very demoralising and deskilling and teachers, therefore, stayed aloof from these subject ‘inspectors’ and for some time, advisory services were treated with this same indifference. It is, therefore, a promising sign if this stigma is beginning to erode and it may be ascribed to efforts by the advisory services division in this region to embark upon teacher development initiatives that lean over to fostering reflective practices and the own responsibility for professional growth through team teaching, rather than taking the stance of the ‘expert’ who should give advice based on observation of single lessons only.

Although GT#1 felt very comfortable and contented with the assistance that she got from her colleagues and did not seem to have a need for support from elsewhere, she would welcome the professional development team to visit her, which illustrates both arguments above. GT#3 sees the role of advisory services as a motivational one too,

maybe because he did experience some problems and, with the assistance of an advisory teacher, managed to sort it out satisfactorily.

However, despite the fact that these graduate teachers portray an inclination towards reflective practices and their school seems to have a positive environment for the further development of these practices, they do not seem to match their ongoing professional growth with the role of the advisory services as a professional development team from the regional offices. This may be so because advisory services in the past and until very recently had the role of a “fire brigade”, partly because of the physical conditions of distance and budgetary constraints, but also since the perception existed that they should concentrate on the schools where their assistance was needed most: the formerly disadvantaged schools, where most of the teaching staff were unqualified or under-qualified. The more affluent schools (the formerly advantaged schools) were perceived to be on the right track and, therefore, did not need to be visited. Although the school under study was not exactly a former advantaged school, it had a very stable and reputable record, which was established by a very strong management team, and, therefore, did not ‘qualify’ for regular visits by the professional development staff.

This suggests that a culture of lifelong learning did not yet take root in this educational setup, both at the regional education office and at schools. This could be ascribed to the fact that this region does not have a teacher education institution and, due to the distances, schools in this region are not currently being utilised for SBS by teacher education institutions. Schools have, therefore, not been exposed to the teacher education reform initiatives other than by appointing the graduate teachers. Since these inexperienced teachers initially have a battle to adapt to the technicalities and demands of the teaching practice, they also do not have the confidence to challenge the existing cultures in schools. Schools in this region, therefore, remained ‘untouched’ by the teacher education reform initiatives.

Furthermore, the high percentage of qualified teachers and the low density of the population in this region, resulted in less vacancies to be filled by BETD graduate teachers. BETD graduates often landed up being placed in remote schools, of which the school under study is one. Consequently the effect of the teacher education reform efforts are, therefore, so thinly spread over the region, that it is easily choked by the proverbial 'thorns' within the existing cultures in schools.

Similarly, the professional staff at the regional office also has no contact with the teacher education institutions and, they were not closely involved in the teacher education transformation. Though some of these professionals are involved in the BETD in-service initiative, which is being administered on a regional level, they are, therefore, basically uninformed about the BETD and the efforts to foster lifelong learning through the development of reflective practices.

Although the focus of this study did not intend to evaluate the credibility of the BETD as teacher education programme, this issue was brought up time and again both during the field research and also at several occasions, meetings and at forums where schools, parents and other stakeholders had the opportunity to give an input on educational quality. It might, therefore, be necessary to discuss it as an aspect that affects the conditions under which the BETD graduate teachers practice.

Despite the fact that the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) is internationally acclaimed as one of the more progressive teacher education programmes in developing countries (Callewaert, 2001; Craig et al, 1998), there has locally been wide ranged critique and dissatisfaction with this programme ever since its inception. The most general critique is the alleged low content base, which the University of Namibia (UNAM) used as one of their reasons for not accrediting the BETD (Callewaert, 2001) and consequently BETD graduates echo this discontent since this stance of UNAM limits possibilities of furthering their qualifications beyond the BETD.

In my capacity as Senior Advisory Teacher in the Keetmanshoop Educational Region I have come across many similar arguments that are devaluing the BETD and its capacity to prepare teachers sufficiently for the profession and this very same argument of low content base was also reiterated by both the graduate teachers and the principal at the school where the field research was conducted.

This argument has, however, been contested by independent evaluators of the University of Rhodes, who indicated that, being a programme to prepare teachers for basic education, is overloaded with content (MBESC, 2000). This report also ascribed the above critique partly to the fact that BETD teachers are sometimes misplaced in phases and subjects in which they did not specialise and this consequently resulted in this unjustified critique. However, schools and for that matter, teachers, seldom have access to these reports and educational articles. This is reflected by the principal's lack of information on the BETD and its underlying philosophies at the school under study, even though many BETD graduate teachers were deployed at this specific school over the past few years.

This lack of information regarding the BETD in schools and at the regional office, who are the clients of the teacher education institutions, resulted in general misinformation and misconceptions about the BETD and effected its credibility. This resulted in a situation of little ownership of this programme which is truly Namibian and the brainchild of our national vision as depicted in the development brief (MEC, 1993).

If their teacher education has low or no credibility among its 'consumers', what hidden message does it give to the BETD graduates? How can it be expected that they value their teacher education and the skills they acquired? What chances are there that they will use these skills and knowledge to continually improve their practice and develop professionally? Could they then rely on the necessary unconditional support from their colleagues at the school and the regional officials to continue with these

practices? Could they be blamed if they bury what they have learnt in boxes in dusty storerooms and try to adapt to the unquestioning culture prevailing at most schools?

The above discussion reflected on the conditions in the field that could foster or hamper the continual professional development of the BETD graduates once they left the safe environment of the teacher education institution. The field research at the school under study portrayed quite an optimistic environment and a 'fertile' terrain for the ongoing development of reflective practices. However, other factors like the lack of confidence to implement the skills and challenge the status quo at schools, the lack of information on the BETD and the philosophy underpinning it and the subsequent low credibility it has among various stakeholders and its 'clients' seem to stifle the sustainability of efforts to develop inquiring practitioners during teacher education through the BETD.

It is evident that, despite various efforts to prepare the field during teacher education, the 'seed' of reflective practices might need more time and efforts to germinate and grow. This should, however, not give reason for disillusionment, but the positive aspects should rather serve as inspiration to continue the 'process' of change, for, as Melber hints at in the evaluation report, "too much is expected too soon" (MBEC, 2000)!

I, therefore, attempt to recommend in the final chapter some additional measures that could facilitate more systematic support towards sustaining the process of ongoing professional development through reflective practices in education in Namibia.

CHAPTER 5

THE WAY AHEAD

“A spider’s web is stronger than it looks. Although it is made of thin, delicate strands, the web is not easily broken” (Chinese poet, 500 BC as cited in Fosnot, 1989)

Introduction

The Namibian government embarked on several initiatives to reform education after becoming an independent state in 1990. The key role that teachers are supposed to play in this process was highlighted by the dramatic efforts to transform the teacher education. The BETD was, however, not only designed to equip teachers with the necessary (and new) skills to answer to the demands of the reformed education system. Ultimately, it aims at empowering teachers through different practices, attitudes and ways of thinking (Zeichner and Tabachnick, 2001) to be at the forefront of continuing change and improvement towards education and development in the country. Furthermore, by taking the development of reflective practices and critical inquiry in teacher education on board is, therefore, not only a quest for improved quality in education, but also confirms democracy as a “central purpose of our education” (MEC, 1993: 41).

The main aim of this study was to establish how teachers, who graduated through the BETD in Namibia, understand reflective practices and perceive their role as agents of change and how their school environments facilitate ongoing professional development through reflective practices. The previous chapter intended to elicit these through the discussion of the data and findings of the field research done at a school in the Keetmanshoop educational region in the south of Namibia.

In this final chapter I will now, based on these findings, propose some recommendations to the various stakeholders towards the improved implementation of teacher education reform efforts and continuous professional development of teachers in Namibia. Although the study was done at one school in the traditionally more advantaged region, it is trusted that these recommendations will be of value across the country. The idea, however, is not to generalise the findings, but rather to raise understanding and awareness of the difficulties graduate teachers experience in their quest to become 'real' teachers when they start facing the realities of their practice after completion of their initial teacher education.

Furthermore, the conditions that inhibit teachers from using reflection towards continuing learning from and improvement of their practice, might prevail in other schools and regions to a greater or lesser extent. It is, however, trusted that this study could serve to sensitise stakeholders on practices and attitudes that restrain/stifle BETD teachers from taking initiatives in their own professional development. The following recommendations, therefore, epitomize the challenges all stakeholders in teacher education and professional development face, to realise the noble aims of the BETD programme and sustain efforts to assist and support teachers to become change agents in education for the development of education and our nation (MEC, 1993).

1. Strengthening skills and confidence to practise ongoing action research and reflection

Through the discussions in the earlier chapters it became clear that the BETD has the promise to realise its aims to develop reflective practices in prospective teachers and, although it will be too early to sing the praises of the programme (Callewaert, 2001), the positive aspects illuminated by this field research and other studies (MBEC, 1997 and Swarts, 1998) give reason for hope.

The data also revealed that the environment at the school under study, is quite favourable for fostering own professional development. Not only does it display a well disciplined, though unthreatening atmosphere where teacher initiative is welcomed, but participative decision-making seems to be at the order of the day. Furthermore, teachers are being recognised as professionals by both the management of the school and the community and the latter plays a significant role in the activities at the school. The school would, therefore, have been the ideal field for the 'seeds of reflective practices', sewn during teacher education, to germinate and blossom to full bloom. Despite this very conducive environment, graduate teachers were still hesitant to apply the skills that they developed during teacher education, despite the proclivity they portrayed towards reflective practices.

It is, therefore, clear that some aspects need more support and reinforcement to secure sustainability of the reflective attitudes and skills that the programme expects to foster in prospective teachers. I share the doubt that Mayumbelo and Nyambe (2001) expressed, namely that one encounter with action research during teacher education will not ensure that teachers apply reflection as practising teachers. More efforts are needed to ensure that these experiences during teacher education have a lasting influence on the way teachers view and sustain their ongoing professional development.

Firstly, all stakeholders involved in teacher education and professional development should value and model reflective practices to corroborate the value it has for lifelong learning. This has several implications and I cannot claim to exhaust them fully, though the following might be essential to have some effect:

- Teacher educators and professional development staff at regional offices should **value reflective practices** themselves and constantly seek to improve their own practices through reflective strategies (Carson, 1995; Loughran, 1996). Student teachers, who have a teaching repertoire of uncritical practice,

will only value reflective practices if their lecture rooms will become laboratories where they can experience critical inquiry practices through observation and experience and if teacher educators practice what they preach (Gore, 1991). This is in agreement with Noffke and Brennan (1991) when they suggest that teacher educators should not only ‘use’ action research during teacher education, but that they should ‘do’ it with their students, for it is “difficult to convince student teachers that they should be producers of knowledge if most of their university (or teacher education college) experience directly contradict this” (ibid, 1991: 189).

- Strategies to develop reflective practices (action research projects, reflective diaries/statements and SBS files or portfolios) should have **eminence beyond accreditation** during teacher education to ensure that teachers do not value it only for certification (Noffke and Brennan, 1991). Prospective teachers will value reflective practices and develop confidence to use it on an ongoing basis if it creates authentic learning experiences. This will only be possible if it is carefully guided and valued by the teacher educators by facilitating constant, constructive and reflective discourse/discussions/seminars and sharing of their experience (Hoover, 1994; Noffke and Brennan, 1991). This will not only facilitate the creation of a community of learning, but will also serve to give student teachers’ own experience and learning authority and facilitate recognition of themselves as knowledge constructors.
- The role of **support schools and teachers** during SBS should be more prominent and they should be **carefully selected and prepared**. Support teachers should preferably be teachers with reflective attitudes like responsibility, open-mindedness and whole-heartedness (Wood, 1991) and teachers who value lifelong learning through reflective practices. It would be ideal that the support teacher collaborates with the student teacher in doing action research, for if student teachers do not observe it being valued or

practiced at the schools where they do SBS, they might diminish its function and value to only serving towards a credit for certification.

Secondly, conditions in schools should foster participative decision making and establish a secure and supportive environment for teachers to continuously explore and experiment for best ways to improve their teaching for enhanced learning (James, 1996; MBEC, 1997). This implies democratisation not only at school level, but also that the Ministry and its directorates will set an example by being less prescriptive and more supportive of school initiatives towards improved teaching and learning: teachers should be supported to do what they have to do, rather than told what to do and how to do it. Forums should be established both at school, cluster, circuit, regional and national level for teachers to voice their concerns and to share their experiences. Unless their voices are publicly heard, their classrooms will remain lonesome and isolated islands (Hoover, 1994) and the knowledge that they construct through their own experience will, therefore, not get the necessary recognition and its value may be diminished to the extent that they will revert back to old practices and value knowledge constructed elsewhere more.

However, for this process of reformed teacher education to continually have a positive impact, the above-mentioned actions should not happen in isolation, but should be executed in unison with some other efforts, which are vital for lasting changes in the way teachers are prepared for their profession in Namibia.

2. Recognition of the BETD as national teacher education programme

Graduate teachers, being inexperienced and struggling to adapt to the realities and demands of the teaching practice, will be hesitant to implement 'new' strategies of the reformed teacher education within a context where their qualifications do not get the necessary recognition and credibility among all stakeholders.

For Namibians to accept and value the Basic Education Teacher Diploma and the teachers that are educated through this programme with its radical changes in theoretical underpinnings and strategies, it is necessary to sensitise all the stakeholders and especially the schools and their communities. One cannot rely on documentation like the development brief, the Reform Forum and the BETD moderation reports to do the trick: at best they might gather dust in the dark cupboard of the principal's office!

It is, therefore, a matter of urgency that all stakeholders be familiarised with and updated on the aims and purposes of the reformed teacher education programme and the strategies it employs to realise these. If stakeholders can identify with these, they might claim ownership of the programme and give it, and the graduate teachers, the required and wholehearted support to evolve as a sustainable teacher education programme. Recognition should be a vital condition towards "more systematic support" (MBEC, 1997: 61), which is essential for the BETD to have the necessary impact its broad curriculum intended.

It is not suggested that teacher education colleges should get into every school to sensitise schools towards their reformed teacher education programme. Teacher education institutions might not have the capacity and the resources to deal with such an undertaking themselves, and this brings me to my next recommendation.

3. Partnership with professional cadre in regional directorates and schools

Like in the past, teacher education institutions still function, to a large extent, in isolation and, therefore, do not manage successfully to extend the reform process into schools. This is also evident at the school which was involved in this research study, where seven BETD graduates are appointed but the principal is relatively unaware of what the reformed teacher education entails and can thus not support these graduate

teachers maximally on their journey of continual professional development. On the contrary, schools have some high expectations of these ‘qualified’ teachers, especially since they were supposed to have undergone their teacher education within the reformed teacher education structure. Since these schools were never sensitised or involved in the teacher education reform initiatives, they were not exposed to the reality that the BETD is intended to be an induction to ongoing professional development and improvement and not a certificate of expertise. Moreover, these schools still function within the theoretical framework that knowledge is constructed by the experts somewhere else than in the schools. How could school managements and colleagues, under these circumstances, be able to render the necessary environment and support these graduate teachers need on their ‘journey’ towards continual professional growth?

Teacher education institutions, with its limited resources together with other constraining factors like the geography of the country, could not claim sole responsibility for teacher education (Wood, 1991) and hope to be successful, especially if lifelong learning is valued. Teacher education should rather be a concerted effort and a partnership between the teacher education institutions and schools, with the support of the regional administration. The current sharp critique and dissatisfaction with the BETD programme could be the result of the absence of this partnership, especially in those regions (like the Keetmanshoop education region) where there are no teacher education institutions.

The structure of the regional directorates of the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture with their Inspectors of Education and professional development components (Advisory Services and Teachers’ Resource Centres) could and should play a crucial role in marketing and supporting the BETD as a national teacher education programme. By sensitising and involving this professional cadre of regional directorates in teacher education, they will not only ‘spread the message’ and market the BETD as “the professional symbol of the new national education perspective”

(Swarts et al, 2001: 249), but these divisions would also be more prepared and capable to render ongoing support towards sustainable and ongoing professional development, the latter being the long term mission of the BETD.

This professional development division has unremitting contact with and access to schools and teachers and they could play a valuable role in promoting the BETD through their communication systems and their information dissemination channels. They could, however, play an even more important role if they could get involved in monitoring and supporting student teachers during their practicum. This partnership could have far reaching and multi-dimensional impact on teacher education reform initiatives:

- Regional administrations, whose professional development initiatives are mainly directed at school based efforts, could, through their exposure to SBS and critical inquiry be commissioned and motivated to **foster reflective practices**. Consequently they will be able to empower teachers to decide what must be done based on information and awareness of their own practice (Grimmett, 1995) instead of the prevailing practice of imposing advice on teachers and telling them what to do and how to do it, which is deskilling teachers and in direct contrast with the BETD ideology.
- By involving the regional inspectorate, advisory services and Teachers' Resource Centre (TRC) personnel in monitoring SBS, teacher education institutions will be able to use many more schools across the country for SBS. Thus **more schools will be exposed to the reformed teacher education** and its underlying philosophy. This could have a significant effect on the institutionalisation of the general education reform agenda and consequently the quality of education in the country. With the involvement and assistance of these divisions the colleges will not only expand their existing resources to assist student teachers to become reflective practitioners during their practicum, but they could have a doubled

“output”. This enhanced support structure might be able to provide **reinforced support to the support teacher structure** at schools and reflective practices will reach twice as many teachers! These officials are also familiar with schools and teachers in their regions and they could assist more effectively with the identification of support schools and competent support teachers.

- The nature and role of the inspectorate, advisory services and TRCs are continual and ongoing assistance and support to practicing teachers. This cadre will have a much longer professional relationship with teachers than the three years that student teachers have with their teacher educators. By integrating these officials in pre-service teacher education, they will be exposed to the strategies of lifelong learning through reflective practices and the teacher education institutions can secure more **coherent and consistent support to their graduates** throughout their career.
- The involvement of the professionals in regional offices could, furthermore, serve as a structure to give **feedback to teacher education institutions** on the success of the programme and their efforts to develop reflective practices and indicate the need for necessary changes and adaptations to improve the practice of teacher educators.
- Teachers’ Resource Centre personnel and Advisory Teachers in regions are closely involved in the provision of the **BETD in-service programme**. **Closer linking** between these two service providers could contribute towards improved coherence between the two modes and also reinforce the reformed teacher education initiatives.

This proposal for partnership is consistent with the proposals in the BETD national evaluation report (MBEC, 2000) and the recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Education (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2001). As GT#2

puts it, the regional directorates should be a communication hub between schools and teacher education institutions (interview 1). This concerted assistance and support would facilitate the expansion of the teacher education reform efforts into schools and the classrooms, where it really matters. This dynamic partnership holds the promise to render the “spider web” of support that will facilitate teachers to take action for change to realise the vision of education for all.

In conclusion, it is evident that the BETD has the capacity to evolve as a powerful programme to facilitate change in teachers, their practice in schools and to ultimately realise the Namibian government’s quest for education for all. It is, however, crucial that all stakeholders in teacher education value and demonstrate the attitudes of responsibility, open-mindedness and whole-heartedness and exemplify the moral obligation to continuously search for improved ways to assist, support and empower teachers on their “journey” to become “real” teachers and change agents. All actions and efforts should, therefore, resonate the words of Wolfe and Giandomenico that “(l)asting c hanges e ffecting s tudent a chievement a nd s atisfaction a re m ore l ikely t o result from policies that encourage “bottom-up” action, “top-down” support and school-specific reform efforts” (1989: 198).

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

BETD GRADUATE TEACHER

Introduction:

I am interested in finding out about your teacher education, how it affected your understanding of learning and teaching and how you manage to improve your practice continuously.

The information will be used for a research study I am doing on the further development of reflective practice during your teaching career. The information received from you will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and your name/identity will never be used in the writing up of the study, nor will the school be mentioned to make it traceable to you.

A. TEACHER EDUCATION

1. a) WHAT WERE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF THE BETD COURSE IN PREPARING YOU FOR THE TEACHING CAREER WHEN YOU STARTED YOUR TE?
b) HOW DID THE BETD COURSE FULFILL/FAILED THESE EXPECTATIONS?
2. WHAT WERE YOUR PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING AND TEACHING BEFORE YOU STARTED YOUR TEACHER EDUCATION?
3. HOW DID THIS PERCEPTIONS CHANGE DURING YOUR TEACHER EDUCATION? WHAT BROUGHT ALONG THE CHANGE?
4. HOW DID THESE PERCEPTIONS CHANGE AFTER YOU STARTED YOUR TEACHING PRACTICE? WHAT CAUSED THE CHANGE?
5. WHAT WAS THE MOST VALUABLE ABOUT TEACHING THAT YOU LEARNT DURING YOUR TEACHER EDUCATION?
6. DID YOU KEEP ANY JOURNALS /DIARIES DURING YOUR TE PERIOD? NOW?(would you mind if I study it for my research – confidentiality guaranteed) WHAT VALUE DOES IT HAVE TO YOUR TEACHING PRACTICE?
7. DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN ANY SEMINARS AT THE TEC AND HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE IT?
8. HOW DID STUDENTS SUPPORT EACH OTHER/ LEARN COLLABORATIVELY AT THE TEC?
9. a) WHAT CONTACT DID YOU HAVE WITH THE TEC AFTER YOU STARTED TEACHING?
b)WHAT ROLE COULD THE TEC PLAY IN YOUR CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

B. SCHOOL BASED STUDIES

1. SBS HAS A VERY PROMINENT ROLE IN THE BETD TO PREPARE YOU FOR THE REAL TEACHING PRACTICE:
 - a) HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE YOUR FIRST SBS SESSION? WHAT DID YOU FIND VALUABLE ABOUT IT/LEARN FROM IT?
 - b) WHAT DID YOU FIND DIFFICULT ABOUT IT AND WHY?
 - c) HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO OVERCOME THESE DIFFICULTIES?
 - d) WHAT CHANGES WOULD YOU RECOMMEND REGARDING SBS TO THE TEC IF YOU WERE IN A POSITION TO DO SO?
 - e) SAY YOU WERE THE TUTOR, WHAT ADVISE WOULD YOU GIVE FIRST YEARS BEFORE THEY GO OUT ON THEIR FIRST SBS SESSION?
2. WHAT DO YOU NOW DO DIFFERENTLY FROM YOUR SBS DAYS AND WHY?
3. TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR AR PROJECT IN YEAR 3. WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM IT?
4. DO YOU STILL APPLY ACTION RESEARCH IN YOUR PRACTICE AND WHY/NOT?
5. WAS IT POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO THINK ABOUT/REFLECT ON HOW YOU TEACH AND HOW IT AFFECTED THE LEARNING OF THE LEARNERS WHILE YOU WERE DOING YOUR SBS? IF SO, TELL ME ABOUT SUCH AN EXPERIENCE.
6. HOW DID THIS EXPERIENCE CHANGE YOUR WAY OF TEACHING?
7. DID YOU FIND THIS EXPERIENCE DIFFICULT/EASY AND WHY?

C. TEACHING CAREER

1. DO YOU THINK THE BETD PREPARED YOU SUFFICIENTLY FOR TEACHING AND WHY?
2. WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST SHOULD CHANGE ABOUT THE BETD COURSE TO PREPARE PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS MORE EFFECTIVELY AND WHY?
3. WHAT ARE YOU DOING DIFFERENTLY/SIMILARLY THAN YOUR TEACHERS, WHEN YOU WERE STILL AT SCHOOL, AND WHY?
4. HOW ARE THE LEARNERS DIFFERENT FROM/SIMILAR TO YOU WHEN YOU WERE STILL AT SCHOOL AND WHY?
5. WHAT DID YOU FIND MOST PROBLEMATIC WHEN YOU STARTED YOUR TEACHING CAREER?
6. HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT TO OVERCOME THIS?
7. WHY WOULD YOU RECOMMEND/OR NOT THIS SCHOOL TO OTHER NOVICE TEACHERS?

8. a) WHAT CONTACT DID YOU HAVE WITH OTHER BETD GRADUATES AFTER COMPLETION OF YOUR TE?
b) WHAT VALUE COULD SUCH CONTACT HAVE FOR YOU AS NOVICE TEACHER?
c) WHAT DO YOU THINK COULD BE DONE TO FACILITATE/FOSTER SUCH CONTACT?
9. WHAT SUPPORT DID YOU GET FROM THE MORE EXPERIENCED COLLEAGUES/ MANAGEMENT WHEN YOU STARTED TEACHING?
10. WHAT SUPPORT WOULD YOU GIVE NOVICE TEACHERS WHO JOIN YOUR SCHOOL?
11. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY (LEARNERS, YOUR COLLEAGUES, THE COMMUNITY, THE PARENTS, THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL) TO A STRANGER THAT WANTS TO JOIN YOUR SCHOOL?
12. a) HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE YOUR FIRST CLASS VISIT BY A SENIOR STAFF MEMBER?
a) WHAT WILL YOU DO DIFFERENTLY IF YOU WERE A SENIOR STAFF MEMBER WHO VISITS A NOVICE'S CLASS?
13. a) IN WHICH AREA DO YOU THINK YOU STILL NEED SUPPORT/IMPROVEMENT?
b) WHERE COULD YOU GET SUCH ASSISTANCE?
14. WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU DISCOVER AFTER YOU COMPLETED A LESSON THAT MOST OF YOUR LEARNERS DID NOT GRASP THE BASIC COMPETENCIES YOU AIMED TO INSTILL WITH A LESSON?
15. IF YOU THINK THE SCHOOL IS HANDLING A CERTAIN ASPECT (EG. DISCIPLINE) INCORRECTLY, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?
16. a) WHAT WOULD YOUR REACTION BE IF A COLLEAGUE WANTS TO VISIT YOUR CLASS?
b) WOULD YOU LIKE TO VISIT OTHER COLLEAGUES' CLASSES AND WHY?
17. a) DID YOU EVER CONTACT A TEACHER IN ANOTHER SCHOOL WHEN YOU FELT YOU NEEDED SUPPORT?
b) WHAT WAS THE VALUE/COULD BE THE VALUE OF SUCH CONTACTS?
18. DID YOU EVER HAVE CONTACT WITH THE ADVISORY TEACHER FOR SUPPORT?
19. WHAT SUPPORT WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE AS NOVICE FROM THE ADVISORY TEACHERS AT RO?

PRINCIPAL/SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Introduction:

I am interested in finding out about how the BETD Teacher Education affected graduate teachers' understanding of learning and teaching and how they manage to improve their practices continuously.

The information will be used for a research study I am doing on the further development of reflective practice of BETD graduates. The information received from you will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and your name/identity will never be used in the writing up of the study, nor will the school be mentioned to make it traceable to you.

Thank you very much for your willingness, your time and openness.

1. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE PHILOSOPHY THAT UNDERLIES THE BETD AND WHY IT WAS NECESSARY TO CHANGE TE IN NAMIBIA?
2. DO YOU THINK THE BETD (PRE-SERVICE) PREPARES TEACHERS SUFFICIENTLY FOR THE DEMANDS OF BASIC EDUCATION AND THE TEACHING CAREER AND WHY?
3. WHAT AREA NEEDS MORE EMPHASIS?
4. a) WHAT WAS YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE BETD TEACHERS WHEN THEY WERE INITIALLY APPOINTED AT YOUR SCHOOL?
b) HOW DID THAT PERCEPTION CHANGE AFTERWARDS AND WHY?
5. WHAT IS YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF A NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHER WHEN S/HE JOINS THE STAFF?
6. a) HOW DO YOU SUPPORT A NOVICE TEACHER THAT JOINS THE STAFF?
b) WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE MANAGEMENT/OTHER STAFF MEMBERS?
c) WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK THIS NOVICE NEEDS MORE ASSISTANCE?
7. WHAT DO YOU THINK OTHER STAFF MEMBERS COULD LEARN FORM THE BETD GRADUATE TEACHERS?
8. a) WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF CLASS VISITS AT YOUR SCHOOL?
b) WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE BEFORE AND AFTER?
9. ARE TEACHERS BEING MOTIVATED TO VISIT EACH OTHER'S CLASSES AND WHY/NOT?
10. HOW WOULD YOU REACT IF ANY OF THE TEACHERS INDICATED THAT THEY WANTED TO VISIT YOUR CLASS AND WHY?
11. WHAT IS THE VALUE OF SUBJECT MEETINGS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS AT YOUR SCHOOL?

12. WHAT IS BEING DONE FOR ONGOING STAFF DEVELOPMENT AT YOUR SCHOOL?
13. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE ROLE OF COLLEGES IN THIS REGARD?
14. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE ROLE OF REGIONAL OFFICE SUPPORT STAFF IN THIS REGARD?
15. HOW WILL YOU REACT IF A NOVICE TEACHER/INEXPERIENCED TEACHER WANTS TO CHANGE THE WAY YOU ARE HANDLING CERTAIN ISSUES (E.G. DISCIPLINE) AT THE SCHOOL?
16. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ACTION RESEARCH?
17. IF YOU COULD MAKE INPUTS IN THE WAY TEACHERS ARE CURRENTLY EDUCATED, WHAT WOULD IT BE?



SUPPORT STAFF AT REGIONAL OFFICES

I am interested in finding out about how the BETD Teacher Education affected graduate teachers' manage to improve their practices continuously.

The information will be used for a research study I am doing on the further development of reflective practice of BETD graduates. The information received from you will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and your name/identity will never be used in the writing up of the study, nor will the school be mentioned to make it traceable to you.

Thank you very much for your willingness, your time and openness.

1. WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF A NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHER WHEN S/HE JOINS A SCHOOL?
2. HOW DO YOU THINK DO THE BETD (PRE-SERVICE) TEACHERS MEET THESE EXPECTATIONS?
3. HOW DO YOU EXPECT A NOVICE TEACHER TO BE SUPPORTED/ASSISTED WHEN S/HE JOINS A SCHOOL?
By the management of the school?
By other staff members?
By Regional Administration (ATs, IEs and TRCs)?
4. DEVELOPING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE, WHICH IS CRITICAL RETHINKING ON ACTION (TEACHING), IS ONE OF THE MAIN THRUSTS OF THE BETD. WHAT IMPACT DO YOU THINK THIS MAY HAVE ON ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?
5. HOW DO YOU THINK THE BETD GRADUATE TEACHERS MANAGE TO IMPLEMENT IT IN SCHOOLS?
6. WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER AS POSSIBLE OBSTACLES FOR THE MPLEMENTATION OF THESE PRACTICES IN OUR SCHOOLS?
7. HOW WOULD THE REGIONAL OFFICES BE ABLE TO ASSIST IN THIS REGARD?
8. WHAT IS BEING DONE FOR CONTINUING TEACHER DEVELOPMEENT IN SCHOOLS AND WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD IT BE?
9. WHAT ROLE DO YOU THINK DO THE TEACHER EDUCATION COLLEGES HAVE REGARDING ONGOING TEACHER DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOLS?
10. WHAT WOULD YOUR REACTION BE IF A NOVICE TEACHER CHALLENGES YOU ON TEACHING STRATEGIES THAT YOU SUGGESTED?
11. IF YOU COULD MAKE ANY INPUTS IN THE WAY TEACHERS ARE CURRENTLY EDUCATED AT THE TECs, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

GRADUATE TEACHER 1 (GT#1): Interview 1

(This interview was conducted in Afrikaans and translated to English)

- I *Do you think the BETD course prepared you sufficiently for teaching?*
- GT#1 With Lower Primary practical teaching was emphasised and it prepared me well. Especially in our third year with SBS we were at schools for the whole trimester. We learnt a lot. We had practical lessons and I could relate it to the real classroom situation.
- I *Is there anything that you do differently from what you have done during the SBS?*
- GT#1 It depends on the classroom situation, but I think what I have done there, I am still doing, I still apply it.
- I *With regard to the SBS – you did action research in your 3rd year. What value did it have for you?*
- GT#1 Mine was about reading and how to assist learners with reading problems. I gathered enough information that I can apply. I still have that information on paper and I can still use it.
- I *Do you still apply action research in your practice?*
- GT#1 No
- I *So you do not do action research like you did during the SBS?*
- GT#1 I use the information – I apply it on my learners with reading problems.
- I *So you use the information that you gathered through the action research and do you think it is still applicable or of any value?*
- GT#1 Yes
- I *Did you have many learners with reading problems?*
- GT#1 A lot.
- I *And presently ?*
- GT#1 Yes, but the situation improved since I applied it – I give extra attention to them. I took it on myself to give them books home if they do not have books at home for extra reading, because we do not have time during the school day and they can read after school.
- I *And do you think it works well?*
- GT#1 Yes, I can see an improvement.
- I *Do you think it is possible to do more action research? For instance if you identified disciplinary problems in your class, would you be able to do action research in your class?*
- GT#1 Yes
- I *Do you feel equipped enough to apply action research in your practice?*
- GT#1 (Does not answer but affirms with a nod - seems not to be very confident about it and seems to feel uneasy)
- I *When you started at this school, was there any reason that you chose to teach here?*
- GT#1 I did not apply for a post at this school. I contacted the regional office and since this school had many unqualified teachers, I got a post here.
- I *How did you feel to come to this remote town, since it was not your choice to teach here?*
- GT#1 I could not be choosy, because I did not want to be idle – I wanted to start working.
- I *Where are you originally from?*
- GT#1 I am from Keetmanshoop
- I: *So this town was not so strange to you?*

- GT#1 It was. I only visited the town once before
- I *When you started teaching, do you think you got the necessary support from the school?*
- GT#1 To be honest, the school is a good “practice school” because I learnt a lot here. I came here without any experience but after these 3 years I feel I am well equipped. I learnt a lot from the teachers and the staff, but especially from my two colleagues, who are experienced, and the subject head.
- I *Since the subject/phase head is not on the same premises, how do you make contact and how does she support you?*
- GT#1 She does class visits and if we experience any problems, we can just contact her.
- I *So you say she was very supportive, like your 2 colleagues....*
- GT#1 If I felt that I did not understand something, I could go to them without any hesitation and I was helped immediately. It is not like it is with a new teacher in another grade, who feels quite at loss because she feels that the experienced teachers did not give her the necessary support. When you come from the college, you are not really prepared, I think. You really start learning at the school and I got the necessary assistance here. But this poor teacher had to work on her own, because she did not feel comfortable to go to her colleagues.
- I *Do you think her colleagues did not make it possible for her or did she herself not feel to ask help?*
- GT#1 Maybe she just didn't ask.
- I *Do you think the school management gave you the necessary support?*
- GT#1 Yes. You felt free to ask if you do not understand – they are open, they won't reject you. They will help you.
- I *Would you recommend a friend to teach at this school?*
- GT#1 Definitely.
- I *That's good to hear. How do you experience the school community (learners, teachers, community at large)?*
- GT#1 They work closely together and parents can come with their problems. The school is open for them. The school is very much for the community. Like with sport events we sometimes need assistance from the community and you should come and observe the close cooperation. The relationship is so open, you feel free. We enjoy it and we communicate freely.
- I *What do you think is necessary in this community to make it easier for learners to learn better?*
- GT#1 I think children should be exposed to the library and television more frequently. It helps them a lot. Only a few learners have access to television and it helps them a lot. You can easily observe the difference when kids tell you in the class what they have seen on the TV. You can see the difference between them and the kids from the farms. It would help kids with their language if they watch more television and then we need more books.
- I *What do you think can teachers do to bring about change in this regard?*
- GT#1 We can do fundraising and buy books. But money is a problem in this town. So it does not always help. You do not get money from the community easily. You might end up buying from your own money and then sell again., which is not very profitable. Money is a problem.
- I *Can I move to another issue? How do you think are children now different from when you were at school, or are they still basically the same?*
- GT#1 When I was at school, we were more. Those days when we saw a teacher, you shut up. Today learners are more outspoken. When I was at school when you saw a teacher, you hid, you kept quiet. You never raised your opinion. Today children speak their minds.
- I *Do you perceive this as negative or positive?*
- GT#1 I think both. It could be an advantage and a disadvantage. Children showed more respect to teachers in the past. Today there is less respect ... I think maybe it is us, or some teachers, especially in the higher classes, are 21 when they start teaching ... there is more a relationship of friendship than a teacher-learner relationship.
- I *But you said it could also be good. In what respect can it be good?*
- GT#1 Children feel free to give their ideas and opinions with learner-centred education. Those days the teacher talked most of the time and you just had to answer from the writing board. Now

- children can say what they feel. The other day the children told the teacher that he made a mistake. We would never have done such a thing to tell the teacher that he is wrong. You rather shut up.
- I *And you teachers, how do they handle it if learners tell them that they made a mistake?*
- GT#1 Yes I will ... If learners tell me that I made a mistake, I will admit it. I am only human – it is not wrong...
- I *Those days we were afraid to make mistakes, but it is part of the learning process, don't you think?*
- GT#1 Yes. We learn daily...
- I *You mentioned that you got maximum assistance from your two colleagues when you started teaching. Would you be able to give assistance to a new teacher who joins the school?*
- GT#1 Yes, I will. I will be able to give information and assist with administration like preparation, record file, etc. I will be able to give help.
- I *Is it possible for you to visit each other's classes in Lower Primary?*
- GT#1 We can arrange it. Today we had a lesson demonstration. One grade 3 teacher had a problem, but we also sat in, because we could also learn from it. There are a lot of things that I feel that I still need to learn. Your few years of studies is not enough. We all learnt from it, not only those who are new. We arrange such demonstrations regularly. Thursday there will be another demonstration about teaching reading arranged by the grade 1 teachers.
- I *Now do you think an experienced teacher with 20 or more years experience can learn something from you?*
- GT#1 Definitely. The teacher who did the demonstration today, also learnt something like I did. It doesn't matter how experienced you are, you could still learn. If I present a lesson, I believe she will be able to learn from me. After class visits we get together and discuss and sometimes the phase head will say that she learnt something new from you who are inexperienced. So we learn from each other. The number of years of experience doesn't matter.
- I *You mentioned earlier that the BETD puts much emphasis on practical teaching. Some people perceive this as a negative aspect, and the critique is that the content base is too low. You felt it prepared you better for the real situation?*
- GT#1 In the higher grades you might need more content. We learnt more practical, like the sounds and you still need to teach everyday things like how to behave and you do not need education for that. In the Lower primary they could have put more emphasis on how to assist learners with reading problems.
- I *What was the biggest obstacle that you came across during your first year of teaching?*
- GT#1 In the beginning... I think it was discipline. The learners who take their time to finish a task. You sometimes feel, to be quite honest, to dish out a spank or two. It does help, you know.
- I *Do you think you can handle discipline better now and why?*
- GT#1 I stress it more. I am stricter now. In the beginning you have to adapt to the new situation and you concentrate more on your lessons and other things, but now I can emphasise discipline more and be stricter as in the beginning. I am definitely more stricter.
- I *Class visits by management. You said it is mainly you phase head that visits you. Is it possible that you can also sit in her class? Is it allowed at the school?*
- GT#1 Yes, that is what will happen on Thursday. We are going to sit in when the phase head presents a lesson. Last year we also sat in when we presented a class. It is allowed. When I experience a problem, I can just ask her to present a class in Mathematics for instance.
- I: *Is there an area, besides discipline, where you still feel a bit insecure and need more assistance?*
- GT#1 There are a lot of things that I still need to learn and I would love to sit in at another teacher's class for a week. I can still improve on lesson presentation, Mathematics, etc. I can still learn a lot.
- I *You already indicated that your colleagues are always willing to assist. Should they not be willing, where would you have gone to get the necessary support?*
- GT#1 (long pause) I don't know. I never thought about it.

- I *Did you ever have any visits from Advisory Teachers during the three years that you taught?*
 GT#1 I only had a visit from the inspector, with the permanent appointment.
- I *In what way do you think the Advisory Teacher could give you support?*
 GT#1 I never had a visit from them, but they can come and give us some guidance.
- I *Did you have any contact with the college after you graduated?*
 GT#1 No
- I *Do you think they can still play a role in your further professional development and how?*
 GT#1 I never thought about it, but I thinkYes, I can go back to any of my lecturers and I believe they will be ready to help me if I have any questions, something that I do not feel so secure about. They will
- I *What else, besides the demonstration lessons, is done at the school to develop teachers continuously?*
 GT#1 (long pause) I can't think of anything, besides that we come back to school in the afternoon to do lesson preparation and marking.
- I *And to consult each other – do you do that in the afternoon when you are together?*
 GT#1: Yes, before we started with the study groups for the grade 10 learners. My colleagues and I often got together and discussed the problems that we experience and shared ideas how to go about with Mathematics or reading. But with the study groups it is not so possible anymore.
- I *Do the study groups get together every day?*
 GT#1 Yes, on Mondays and Tuesdays. On Thursdays we have sport and Wednesday is a free day
- I *Did you try to discuss it with the management that you get less time to give each other professional support and how do you think they will react if you bring it up?*
 GT#1 They will most probably discuss it with us and they might just make alternative arrangements like shifting our groups to other teachers to give us a chance to get together.
- I *So you think they will be open for such suggestions?*
 GT#1 Yes
- I *If an inexperienced teacher makes a suggestion for change, say with regard to the way management handles discipline, how do you think they will take it?*
 GT#1 I believe they will listen and think about it. I believe we can discuss it with them
- I *So they are quite open for suggestions, even if the teacher is inexperienced?*
 GT#1 Normally one feels a bit “frisky” and that others will give you a funny look, but I believe if you take it up with them, they will listen
- I *How was it decided to form the study groups?*
 GT#1 We had a meeting and we all decided to implement it and if you did not agree at that time, you could have said it. We all made the decision.
- I *Do you have any contact with other BETD graduate teachers at other schools?*
 GT#1 Not at all (seems uneasy about it)
- I *Did you ever paid a visit to the TRC?*
 GT#1 We did. And when we had our last phase meeting we decided to visit the Keetmanshoop schools, but we are still waiting for their response.
- I *What value could such a venture have for you and how can you learn from it?*
 GT#1 One can learn from any teacher. It doesn't matter what class it is, you can learn from it. Every teacher does something differently from what you do and you can learn from that.

QUESTIONS BASED ON LESSON OBSERVATION

- I *You did group work. How did you form the groups?*
 GT#1 Especially with English I put them in ability groups for pair work.
- I *Do you experience that ability grouping is working better than mixed ability groups?*
 GT#1 When they sit at their desks I use mixed ability grouping, so that they can assist each other. But the disadvantage is that weaker one can get too dependent on his neighbour. That's why I let them do some individual work as well to ensure that he can work independently.

- Sometimes the leader in a group can become too dominating, which could be a disadvantage, although it also good to have a strong leader.
- I *I observed that two groups were busy with questions in pairs. One read the questions and the other one wrote. The group you had with you read individually and then you asked them questions...*
- GT#1 *It was a prepared reading lesson, because they started last week to read a piece. Next time it will be unprepared reading where I will choose a page for them to read. But this was prepared reading and they chose themselves what they wanted to read.*
- I *You asked the others in the group to follow when one was reading and I observed that you asked them to assist the reader if s/he struggled with the question. This is called peer assistance. Do you find that it works?*
- GT#1 *You will be surprised how they can help each other because they are on the same level. I sometimes think they understand each other better than they understand me. We sometimes do not manage to get to their level, because it seems so easy for us. But the better learners find it easy to explain to their peers. Sometimes when I see they struggle I let them sit with a each other and then I see that they grasp it easier than when I explained it.*
- I *And they are also all constructively busy. You made some notes or something or were you busy recording assessment?*
- GT#1 *Yes*
- I *Some schools still leave assessment for a specific time in the trimester. What do you think are the advantages of doing assessment continuously?*
- GT#1 *I think it is important to record their progress, otherwise you tend to forget. Sometimes they surprise you. A learner may not have grasped something when you have done assessment at a specific time, but sometimes they just understand it a little later just like that 9snap fingers) and if you do not do regular assessment, you may think that the learner is still on the level that you last did assessment.*
- I *And for the learner who does not make progress?*
- GT#1 *You will then know to give extra help*
- I *I've observed that there were two learners who kept the books quite close to their faces. Do you think they have sight impairment and how do you go about it?*
- GT#1 *Yes, we do try to identify it, but I did not specifically observed it today.*
- I *And what do you do if you identify it?*
- GT#1 *Earlier this year we checked for all the learners with ear and eye problems*
- I *Why did you send out the books?*
- GT#1 *We do not have enough books for all classes. Why only have those few of that specific series. That is why I have to send it on to the next class.*
- I *How do you coordinate the classes?*
- GT#1 *We moved the periods. It was simultaneously at first, but because of the lack of books we moved it to have English on different periods.*
- I *How do you manage to teach English in an integrated way under these circumstances?*
- GT#1 *Yes it is a problem. Even if I felt that I would like one or two learners to do a bit more reading, it is not possible. It is a problem*
- I *What can you do to solve this problem? Could you order more books?*
- GT#1 *Those were the only books that we received this year and we just accepted it – that those were the only ones we could get.*
- I *How are you involved in the ordering of books?*
- GT#1 *We get forms to fill out for every grade. We did indicate the number of books we needed, but we did not get what we asked. We just assumed that it is not possible to get more.*
- I *You already mentioned that you have reading problems and how you handle it. Are there learners with other special needs and how do you attend to it?*
- GT#1 *I just do extra reading exercises with them*
- I *So you have mainly reading problems?*

- GT#1 And Mathematics. This year all three of us experienced that the group as such is a weaker group. According to the works books there are some that just don't make any progress. We start with the s easier work and then it gets more difficult. Then I have to make a choice - should I do all the easier tasks and leave the more difficult ones, because the children's standard is just not up to it, especially this year.
- I *Why do you think is that so?*
- GT#1 It is only this year that they struggled so much. Maybe it is just that the learners ... (long pause)
- I *Did you have the same grade 1 teachers previous years? Could it be that the teachers changed?*
- GT#1 (long pause) We only have a new teacher in grade 1 this year. I can't really say if the teachers are the reason.
- I *Don't you think it would be good thing to do action research and try and find the possible causes and address it?*
- GT#1 Actually it is a school problem. The higher classes also experience the problem. Every day you hear how they struggle with Mathematics. I wondered what could be the reason...
- I *Is this not something that you explore with action research? Would you be able to assist other teachers to do action research?*
- GT#1 Yes. (somewhat unsure)
- I *It would be interesting to find out what the underlying causes are and you can share your findings with other schools, because it is not only your school that struggles with it. But your school has many BETD graduates who did action research. At one stage you set up the tape recorder but you never used it...*
- GT#1 The problem was that the teacher who used it first was supposed to rewind it but she did not. That's what we normally do. But since she did not and I didn't want to search for the song.
- I *The BETD wants to develop reflective practices and I believe you learnt something about reflection. Did you learn about reflection-on-action and reflection-in-actions? (no answer, seems puzzled). You did not do something about reflection in ETP?*
- GT#1: We did, only a little bit.
- I *While you're doing something and you see that it is not having the effect you wanted, that you try an alternative action....*
- GT#1 Like I did with the song?
- I *Precisely. This is an excellent example of reflection-in-action. You discovered it is not working and you reverted to another strategy by starting to sing the song with the learners. It was very interesting to observe that when you started dramatising the song/poem with intonation and body movements, they enjoyed it very much. Do you use this often and what effect do you think it has?*
- GT#1 We do it quite often. They get so excited. Like with those pictures, they just run to the front and point to it and then I have to reprimand them and ask them to put up their hands first and then I can call your name. It does restrict you from doing it more often, because if you do something extra you always have to keep them back. They like those actions and things. (bell went off)
- I *But did you notice that not a single one of them did not take part when you demonstrated the body movements to them. Some forgot the movements, but all remembered to wriggle their bodies when Tom wants to play...Kids seem to love education which is fun, don't you think?*
- GT#1 Yes they like it a lot.
- I *And that is why it seems to you that they get unruly?*
- GT#1 One has to be careful to keep within the limits...
- I *You handled it well. I guess that's it for today. Thank you for your time.*

GRADUATE TEACHER 1 (GT#1): Interview 2

(This interview was conducted in Afrikaans and translated to English)

Introductory remarks

- I *What would you like to do differently or similarly than your teachers when you were still at school?*
- GT#1 I would say we are more learner-centred. It is not anymore so that the teacher talks all the time and the children have to sit and absorb. Teachers involve learners more.
- I *Is there anything that you do that your teachers did?*
- GT#1 'Something interesting – when you involve the learners more, they get more disorderly and I will sometimes revert to the teacher-centred style to calm them down.
- I *Did you keep a journal or diary during your studies?*
- GT#1 Yes, during SBS we were supposed to make notes at the end of every day.
- I *Do you still have it available??*
- GT#1 Yes, it is in my SBS file.
- I *Is it possible that I can look at it and use it for this study?*
- GT#1 (Laughs shyly) I am not sure if it is of any value.
- I *I would just like to establish what you did and how you learnt to do reflection and what you understand of reflection.*
- GT#1 I would just like to reorganise it a bit.
- I *What did you learn from making these notes?*
- GT#1 I can't recall. I did not look at it recently.
- I *Do you think the notes were of any value?*
- GT#1 Yes, at that time. It was of value.
- I *Did you have to attend any seminars during the time at the college?*
- GT#1 Once...the lecturer took us to schools. It was not during the SBS, but normal lecture time. And we went to observe teachers.
- I *And did you find the exercise valuable?*
- GT#1 Yes, we made notes that I still have and I learnt a lot from it.
- I *As student teachers, did you had close contact with each other, support each other and work together on projects?*
- GT#1 During SBS we did a lot of "peer teaching", because we were always two in a class. Then one presented the first part of the lesson and the other takes over from there, or we prepare together and one presents.
- I *What did you learn from this? Was it a valuable experience?*
- GT#1 I can recall that I was with a student who already taught. I learnt a lot from him, because he had experience.
- I *During the first interview you mentioned that the experience of discussing with your colleagues on a regular basis, was quite valuable to you. So you already experienced this during your time at the college?*
- GT#1 Yes, and also to work together.
- I *To come back to SBS – if you were in the shoes of a lecturer, what advice would you give a student that has to do SBS?*
- GT#1 I would say that they should be very, very observant, make a lot of notes and pay attention. If you go and you do not pay attention and are not interested, it will be detrimental to you. I would really advise them to pay attention and make notes, which they can use later on.
- I *What do you do differently than when you were doing SBS?*
- GT#1 I have more experience now and I understand children better now and can work better with them, because I have more time with them. At that time I did not really understand them, because you were with them only for short periods, sometimes only a period. Now you spend

- from the first to the last period with them and you can work better with them, because you understand them better.
- I *Was it possible for you during SBS to reflect and think about what you are doing and if there are better ways to do it?*
- GT#1 In the beginning you are a bit overwhelmed, but later on you get accustomed and it gets better. In the beginning, when you are still learning. During the third year, SBS is quite long. So during the first six weeks you adapt to the situation, but around the seventh week you start to find your feet. You feel more at ease with the classroom situation.
- I *Do you think there is anything that lacks in the way the BETD prepare student teachers for their practice?*
- GT#1 Maybe a bit more content is needed.
- I *So you are happy with the methodology of teaching?*
- GT#1 Yes
- I *What would you suggest should change regarding the curriculum for teacher education?*
- GT#1 I think more content. We were more practically oriented.
- I *Does that mean that you had more practical experience?*
- GT#1 Yes, right from the first year you did observation at a school. During the second year you start to teach and in your third year you have quite a long period of teaching practice.
- I *Is there anything that you feel you still need to improve through experience or further guidance or study?*
- GT#1 Yes, I've seen that RAU offers a course that I need – how to understand your learners better, to do remedial teaching and those type of things. There are a lot of things that I feel that I still need to learn, because we were not really trained how to teach learners to read. We can only help the child by letting them read as much as possible, but the finer points, besides the children with sight impairment whom you can refer for eye tests, but the other type of problems
- I *So you feel you need more guidance on special needs of learners?*
- GT#1 I would like to do that.
- I *If you prepared yourselves properly for a lesson and you discover at the end that the learners did not really grasp, what would you do?*
- GT#1 I'll go back to my lesson and see how did I start it. Maybe it was not good enough. Did I perhaps put too little emphasis on a specific part? I'll go back and try to find out where I did not give enough attention/emphasis and then give it more emphasis.
- I *Your involvement in this specific study – how did you experience it?*
- GT#1 It took my mind back. Like last night I could not sleep and then I went back to my SBS Lower Primary file. I've discovered lately that I've run out of ideas. So I went back to see where I can get some new ideas. It renewed my thoughts a bit. You sometimes forget what you have learnt and then it is good to refresh your memory. Being part of the interviews reminded me to give more attention to what i have learnt during my studies.
- I *Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.*

GRADUATE TEACHER 2 (GT#2) Interview 1

Introductory remarks

I *What was the biggest obstacle when you started teaching?*

GT#2 When I was at the college, if I had a problem, if I encountered a problem, I could always rely on my lecturers, but when I came here, I knew I had to solve the problems myself, because unfortunately I was the only teacher for Mathematics. I did not have a senior teacher at the school to, for instance, help me out with a problem. So I was only relying on myself. This town is a remote place where do I go for information from a textbook and that was actually one difficulty. But other than that I found out that the learners was also - they did not like the subject at all. They were having a negative attitude towards the subject, because, not because they do not like the subject, but because they did not understand the subject properly. And there was a bridge (meaning gap?) from Grade 7 to Grade 8. So when the learners moved from Grade 7 to Grade 8 there was the vast hole in their mind. They did not really understand Mathematics as such. So I felt that somewhere, at the lower grades the importance was not dealt with Mathematics as it should....

I *Did you manage to change that?*

GT#2 Slowly but surely I've managed to change that. When I started the first year the learners who passed Mathematics...I cannot remember the figures, but I had many ungraded learners. Last year I improved that and I had only three (3) ungraded learners and the rest managed to pass. And this year, hopefully, the whole 100% will pass. But that is quite a wild dream.

I *What did you do differently?*

GT#2 I didn't do anything differently. I give them more ?...I want to built up their CASS mark, because I think that's where the whole problem is about. I want to give them a strong CASS mark and I want to do more remedial teaching...that's where the afternoon lessons are coming in. So every Tuesday, now and then, I divide the class, because they are 45 learners for one teacher in one class and that's quite a big group. So when we come back for the afternoon sessions, I divide them into two sessions. We go through old question papers and we go back to work of Grade 8 & 9. So that is basically what I do in the afternoon lessons. I revise the work that they are already supposed to know, but they don't know at this stage.

I *You mentioned something about the gap between grade 7 and grade 8. Did you ever manage to get down to Grade 7 also?*

GT#2 I would not say...but it is a common problem ...if maybe you have talked to my colleague about it, he also would have told you about last year. He also had a problem with the grade 7s. And we talked about it, but we...it was realized that grade 7 teachers and the grade 6 teachers ..."hulle lê 'n bietjie slap" (they do not do their duty), because maybe they...in the past they did not write a...they did not have a Maths person who really had the insight in Maths. So their subject head would have been, maybe, someone like the principal, who is teaching Woodwork and he would moderate their question papers, for instance, and he wouldn't know that this question paper is maybe not sufficient for the grade, or whether it difficult or too weak ((meaning easy) for the grade So the things would go pass (meaning it will be approved without proper knowledge). But slowly and gradually, like I say, the problem is starting to be rectified.

I *The Mathematics department...do you ever get together?*

GT#2 Yes. We have...we meet every term, maybe once, but if the need arise, we can make it more. Like we met at the beginning of this term, because the teacher that was giving Mathematics last year...I think the year before last year...the grade 8s...he was quite an easy one to learn, since he was also a BETD Inset student. So he wanted to learn and I happened to be also his mentor. I happened to be his mentor, so because maybe I was his mentor he wanted to always come in and listen to my lessons, because they needed that for their studies ... to listen some of the lessons of his/her mentor. So actually I think the idea came from him and I just passed it on to this year's teachers.

- I *Are some of the other teachers involved also BETD teachers, or are some of them teachers that were trained in another course?*
- GT#2 One teacher here, the one that is teaching Mathematics Grade 7, he is also a BETD teacher. I think it was his minor field...Mathematics was his minor field. The one teaching grade 5 and grade 6, I think...he is a drop-out from university and he started this year. He enrolled through the BETD Inset programme. And the other teachers...I'm not so sure how they ...but the rest are also BETD graduates.
- I *Do you think those who feel uncomfortable visiting each others classes, are they mainly the BETDs or mainly the people who didn't go through the BETD course?*
- GT#2 I think mainly... the complaint came from a person who did not go through the BETD. I don't know whether it had anything to do with being a BETD student or not. But maybe it had to do with the teachers not being ready to prepare for an ordinary teacher...just wanting to prepare for senior member, wanting to prepare for the principal. And they did not maybe want...if I should call myself...I am a friend to them. So they did not maybe want their friends to see how they do the job. It would reflect badly on their friendship. But I don't think that is the way it should be. So they only want to prepare for senior teachers. For a person who is maybe more close to them they feel they should only socialize and not work together.
- I *If a novice teacher, or a teacher who didn't have any experience wanted to come to your class, would you have any objections to that?*
- GT#2 No, not at all. I believe that I can learn from anyone and its not all the teachers that helped us through up to grade 12 that were qualified. So I would not have any objection. I can still maybe learn one or two things.
- I *Say for instance the principal was a Mathematics teacher. Would you like to sit in his class and how do you think he will react to that if you request to sit in his class?*
- GT#2 I would definitely like to sit in his class. Whether he would welcome that, I don't know.
- I *This was your first school after you graduated?*
- GT#2 Yes, it was my first school
- I *And when you joined the school, would you say that the experienced teachers gave you enough support at the school?*
- GT#2 Yes, I would say they gave me enough support, but I did not deal with many teachers. I only dealt with one, since from the beginning I was only interested in one subject...not interested, but I was confined to one subject. I also taught, in the beginning, Physical Science, but then...like I said, I only communicated with the people of my field and they gave me enough assistance concerning the knowledge. But strictly speaking, the help that I got from teachers, I mean the administrative part, was not so good. I mean, when you are a new teacher, you don't know how to prepare a lesson. Every school has got its different style of doing things and we did not have a special teacher confined (meaning allocated) to us saying that if you have got problems with your CASS marks, if you got problems with your administrative work or with your tests you could consult this person. You had to decide with whom you feel most comfortable with and then go to that person yourself.
- I *You're not from this area?*
- GT#2 I'm not from this area. I'm from the Erongo region.
- I *How would you describe the school community and when I talk of the school community I mean the learners, the parents, the community at large. How do you experience the community.?*
- GT#2 The school community... let me compare it to where I come from; maybe that would make things easier. I mean this is ...it's quite different and this is maybe why, after three years I wouldn't really mind if I can still stay on at this school, apart from the vast distance from my home town to here. They are quite responsive to the needs of a teacher, you are highly respected. The learners...it's a fact that the south is one of the best regions in education and maybe that's why I would like to stay on in the south, but if I could just move up that would be fine, not that it would make any difference yet. So I think I am...I like this community, but I wouldn't like for instance to teach in my home town where I know the people. It wouldn't be

- any challenge for me. It is a challenge to be accepted in another community, to learn their different behaviours, to learn how they react, communicate with one another. So it is quite... I feel more comfortable to be in this community than I would have in my own home town.
- I *To bring it closer to the school: Do you think it would have made a difference to your teaching approach if you started your teaching career, say for instance, at your home town and not at this school?*
- GT#2 Yes, it would have made a difference. I wouldn't have been such a dedicated teacher that I am. I should say one thing about this school: you work very hard. You don't get easily time...the only time that you get for relaxation is during weekends. So I think if I was at home, most probably I would have known the principal. I wouldn't have had such a holy respect for him like I have for my principal. So I think it would have made a different teacher out of me...it wouldn't have made me such a hardworking teacher that I am at this stage. At this school, even if you are off, you get Wednesdays off, you do not have to come Wednesdays to prepare or so, but I like to come just to be well prepared for my next day's lesson. And I think that's what I like about this school. It helps a teacher that would have maybe...otherwise fell into a deep/dark hole, to stand up for yourself.
- I *With regard to the SBS. What are you doing differently from what you did at the SBS now? Can you recall, or is it too far back?*
- GT#2 I think I can recall. I think, with the SBS I tried ...the whole concept about the college was you should have supposed to have so much media and with the SBS I tried almost every lesson that I should have media. And now, to be honest, I don't have every day different media. Maybe when I started off as a first year teacher I had different media every day, but as you get practised, you see that you can...you don't have to make extra or different ...you don't have to make a poster every day, you don't have to ...you can just take the chairs and they can be your media. So you don't have to go .. make an extra effort for media. Media is the things around you. So with SBS we thought that maybe we had to make special posters, we had to get special equipment for the lessons and so, but as I got, like I said, as I got experience I realized that sometimes media is just next to you, then you don't see it (meaning you are not aware of it).
- I *There are, like for instance your colleague, who has also been through the BETD course. Do you often contact each other, get assistance, support each other?*
- GT#2 Yes, yes we contact each other. My colleague...I moderate his question papers. He's a writing grade 7 and he also checks my question papers since we are the only ones teaching Mathematics... of course, except the other grades that I said. So we moderate each others question papers, as a matter of fact we stay at the same house also. So we discuss our problems with one another. Actually we are in close contact with that. He also happens to be the subject head of me.
- I *He's your subject head. But you have the same number of years experience?*
- GT#2 No, he is longer in practice, but Mathematics...he specialised in the commerce...he specialised in Accounting and Business as his major field and then his minor field was grade 7 downwards Mathematics. So as a teacher he's got more experience than I have.
- I *Any contact with other BETD students outside your school?*
- GT#2 Yes, I have contact with students outside my school. I would maybe say just around this region, because I am also a very active Nantu member. We happen to meet at those workshops and in the planning meetings that we have, we talk about it. Then we also talk about our problems and one of maybe the points on the agenda of Nantu is maybe to try to improve the skills of the Science teachers. So that's where we mostly talk about. So I think Maths and Science is a field that is discussed.
- I *Any contact with the college still, after you completed your studies?*
- GT#2 Besides my graduation, nothing, I think.
- I *Do you think the college has a responsibility towards their graduates after they have left the college?*

- GT#2 I think so. You need to check up how effective were you (meaning evaluate?). So I think they have a responsibility to maybe found out where exactly are there students and how they're coping, because they should reflect on how successful their methods were and maybe try to improve on that. So I think, yes, they should have a responsibility.
- I *And they're not coming up with anything?*
- GT#2 No. Apart from the Ministry trying to found out how many BETD students there are? I don't think the College directly does
- I *What role do you think the regional office can play in that regard?*
- GT#2 The regional office can be a coordinator between the schools and maybe the colleges. Maybe the regional office can also try to facilitate...to spread information. They can serve as a "powerhouse" or a communication point for schools or for teachers to come, for instance, to the RO if they need specific help. They can...they should always feel free to go to the RO. So I think the RO should be the "powerhouse" of each and every region, when it comes to problems of teachers ...not only problems. Teachers should always feel free to walk in anytime at the RO and feel that it's their second school.
- I *Do you have the confidence to contact the RO if you experience any problems?*
- GT#2 I have the confidence...but do I have the time...not the time, I have the confidence, but I don't know who to contact. Besides...
- I *Do you know who the Mathematics advisory teacher, for instance, is?*
- GT#2 I know it is Mr ...what is his name again? I don't really know. But the only time I hear from them...I was never visited by any advisory teacher. The only person who came and visited me was the inspector for my permanent appointment. Apart from that I ...of course, despite the fact that we have made requests that they should come and visit our school....we need an experienced person to, maybe just chat with me and help me maybe where I see problems. I didn't have any contact from him...is it maybe Mr O. He only phoned me last year to tell me that we need to enrol learners for Advanced Mathematics. And that was the only time that we had contact. But other than that, Mr O never gave me a formal visit or an informal visit. I don't know how he looks, he doesn't know how I look.
- I *So you never met him*
- GT#2 I've never met him.
- I *And do you feel Advisory teachers can play a role assisting teachers along their professional development?*
- GT#2 Yes, they can play a role, because they have been once where we are at this stage and they should know how much we need guidance from a senior person. So I think they can play a big role.
- I *What would you say is the most valuable thing that you learnt since you started teaching? You didn't know it beforehand – you learnt it through your practice.*
- GT#2 Maybe I did not have...before my first year...I did not have any tolerance. So I learnt that this year...I've learnt to take one day at a time and I want to be more patient. I used to get angry when a learner did not understand. I used to blame myself, but I have like I said, I learnt more tolerance toward the learners. I learnt to try again and again an again, basically. And besides that, I have also, to be honest, I learnt to ...I have now more depth in my subject. Other than I had at the college. I only had what I had from school and maybe what I only got from the teachers at the school from the SBS. But I didn't learn anything extra from what I strictly had up until my Grade 12. So I developed a more...deep insight in my subject.
- I *Well, you did Action Research in your last year. Do you still apply it in the school?*
- GT#2 What aspect of the AR are you talking about, because I don't know whether I ...we had to identify a problem and to work on that problem. And yes, I think it is applied and ...(long pause)
- I *Is it difficult or easy for you to identify problems and to find ways to change?*
- GT#2 Yes it is very easy now that you are constantly in the environment. Now that you don't have "borrowed" time or limited space or so. So it is...like, if I can remember my topic was on disciplinary problems, how it was affected by absenteeism and unprepared teachers. And I can

think, yes, after I ...my hypothesis was...and I said in my action research...I think if you are unprepared, you are more likely to have disciplinary problems. And I found out, yes, my ...for instance at the RME lessons, I mostly most of the time don't know what to do, because the small syllabi or scheme of work that I have, is...I've just work out of the scheme of work for grade 5 and its not even enough. So I found that if I haven't prepared myself for that lesson, yes, I would have disciplinary problems, because the learners do not know what to do and I would end up telling them to keep quiet. If they don't hear, it would stress me out and yes, I can

- I *You have three years experience now. If you look at your school and you make a suggestion to the school management that you should, say for instance with regard to disciplinary actions, change that. Do you think the management will be positive towards any suggestions from your side as so-called inexperienced teacher?*
- GT#2 Yes, I think they are already positive. They already acted ...they welcome any suggestions coming from any teacher irrespective of your experience and I learnt also that, when I was a first year, the management as such, they relied so much on the first years, because maybe they think the first years have got this new methods that they can ...they want to change as the time ?. So they are also welcoming ideas from inexperienced teachers, because they belief one should update your methods and so they are quite positive on ideas.
- I *Especially the most experienced teachers, they find it difficult to change their ways.*
- GT#2 Yes, they find it difficult to change, I should say, but we ...at this school, I haven't heard (of) such a problem.
- I *Say for instance, with learner-centred education, do you think they could make that change?*
- GT#2 Yes they could make the change. It is ...but not...of course, the most experienced teachers haven't completely changed their teacher-centred method. Like I said, they feel more comfortable with what they know and they don't want to challenge, but we have got...you don't have ...our principal, I think you can agree with me, is not such a teacher-centred person. He's not coming so much from the old dispensation. He's not so much like...I would really say...he was taught by Mr R himself. So he would more easily maybe change towards the learner-centred than I would say Mr R would.
- I *I would like to ask you one last question. The community – what do you think should change in this community to enhance learning?*
- GT#2 The aims or the ideals of the community should change, because most of the learners from this school, they are coming from farms and their parents are farmers or the parents are working in Bronco (local shop). So, if you ask them for instance ...if you were teaching a language and if you ask them what do they want to become or their career choices, they would opt for their parents' ...so they don't have high expectations. So maybe I think the community should be more motivated.
- I *What role do you think teachers can play in that?*
- GT#2 Teachers can play a big role in informing the community members. They don't have to end at where they are. They can still go further. So they can maybe try to...if they did not reach what they thought they would, maybe they can try to instil that positive attitude for the learners, because the learners, strictly speaking, the learners of this school...if they fail grade 10, they think it is the end of the world. We've got lot of Grade 10 drop-out in the streets or becoming street kids, drinking around, visiting bars. They don't ...they are not aware of the essence (meaning existence) of Namcol, they are not aware of other programmes where they go further if they fail school. So maybe the community...we as teachers can maybe try to inform the parents when we have parent-teacher meetings about other choices or other things that the learners can refer to if they fail grade 10 and to try to develop, or encourage them to have a goal...to have a vision for themselves and not just to try to end at grade 10, because that's the only (meaning highest?) grade offered by this school, or so.
- I *Thank you very much for you time and the frankness with which you answered the questions.*

GRADUATE TEACHER 2 (GT#2): Interview 2

Introduction: Thank teacher for being available for a follow up interview

- I *Do you think the BETD really prepared you sufficiently for teaching?*
 GT#2 The three years that I had been teaching – I learnt a lot. Previously, when I finished the course, I did not really understand the concepts as I understand it now.
- I *What would you advise the college in this regard?*
 GT#2 I would say more insight into the syllabus, the content. We concentrated more on the methodology, how to teach, but we forget that sometimes you finish grade 12 not grasping the knowledge and then you go over to the college without the subject knowledge.
- I *Don't you think the problem would then be at the schools, that schools should make sure that grade 11 and 12 content is grasped?*
 GT#2 No, I don't think so. I was at a very good school. When you finish school, then ... most of the time you forget what you've learnt in school. The purpose of going to tertiary is to build on what you've already learnt and to polish up or round off. At school you actually study for the exams to pass. So when you come at tertiary level there is a purpose, you must understand why you are studying. You must understand the content fully before you go and... because you have to convey this content to someone else. When I was at college some of the students...I felt like I was lacking something. You really need to be good, to explain properly for someone else to grasp the knowledge.
- I *You don't think it is a deficiency of schools that they do not let learners learn for life? Is it acceptable that learners just learnt for examinations?*
 GT#2 It is not acceptable, but in schools, learners are still learners (meaning children) and when you go to college or university you are regarded as an adult. So when you are a learner, you will be irresponsible. So it is true that we (schools) should prepare you for life long learning, but because of the fact that you are a child and irresponsible, you will not take it so seriously, like you will do at college level. For then you are a grown adult and that's where the rounding off should take place, even though you have already done at school.
- I *Did you keep any diaries or journals while you had been at the TEC?*
 GT#2 Every year we wrote reflective statements. Sometimes it was weekly and even in my last year I also wrote reflective statements. If you have told me I could have collected it for you.
- I *I would love to have look at it and if you don't mind I would like to use it in my studies.*
 GT#2 One of my points in my reflective statements was ...I was on the SRC at the college and when you are on the SRC, you take the political side too much serious and you are always absent from classes. One day the lecturer called me when I failed a test for the first time and she told me "It is unlike you. I think you should refrain a little bit from the SRC". It was also one of the disadvantages. You have to balance. You have to maintain a balance between your academic side and other activities.
- I *It is interesting that you reflected on that and thought about it and saw that you had to make a change – for the better.*
 GT#2 Yes, when we had to give over to the new SRC, that's when I really improved drastically in my academic studies. Because the first year I was a bright learner. The beginning of the second year I was also very good. The second year I was voted for an SRC member. You had the majority support that strike or boycott and you had to go and represent them at ministry level and so it dropped, dropped, dropped
- I *Did you participate in any seminars or had any seminars at the college?*
 GT#2 Yes
- I *And what did you learn from that?*
 GT#2 I learnt a lot. Mostly the Science department – they used to have a lot of seminars, lots of workshops. And also they identified certain learners – in my first year I was identified to go on a science programme to Ongwediva College. I learnt a lot from that.

- I *Would you say that at the college students were able to support each other for collaborative learning.*
- GT#2 Yes. That was the place where we really worked together as a team. Especially, during times of SBS where you did not know what to do. The lecturers normally stay at the college, so the only persons that could help you are the other student teachers, especially if you are in your first or second year and you struggle with learner-centred education.
- I *You also mentioned earlier that you are the only teacher for senior Mathematics at the school and that you learnt most of the things while you were practicing. Was there any collaborative learning involved?*
- GT#2 Of course I've learnt most of the things while I was practicing, but I missed what I had at college, but I would not really say that I learnt here at school, because I never had someone who could advise me on the subject area that I am in. I feel that now I am missing out on teaching and working together since there is not a senior person who's got more experience, just to share – even if he is not giving me advice or so.
- I *Your Action Research project, do you still have it with you?*
- GT#2 I still have it, but I was not so sure what you were talking about and I brought it along.
- I *Would you mind if I take it along and study it. Maybe I should make a copy and send it back to you. (nods affirmatively) Thank you.*
- I *You mentioned that when you started teaching your biggest problem was to be patient with learners?*
- GT#2 I think I must tell you that I used to get very angry in the past but now, with classroom experience, you learn to be tolerant to those learners who don't easily understand or quickly grasp a thing.
- I *And that you also got through experience?*
- GT#2 (nods)
- I *If you discover at the end of a lesson that the learners didn't grasp anything or only a little bit, how would you go about it?*
- GT#2 Yes it is actually also happening currently. I would go back to my lesson. Maybe it would be the method in which I presented it. Most of the time when I start a new lesson I see that the first class don't grasp it properly. By the time I get to the second class, because I just teach one subject, by the time I get to Grade 9C and I started with 9A, I will be able to explain it properly because I could see what was the problems or why did they not understand or maybe I did not explain certain aspects properly. So by the third time (that I present the lesson), that would be the class who would understand properly. So I would go back to Grade 9A, the class where I was useless in my method and give them games or help them to discover first before I give them the content. Maybe if they discover, they will understand better and will start (?) with my method.
- I *So actually you were trying to do some reflection while you are going through the day's work? And it is working?*
- GT#2 Yes. And one of the things that I also do, even if the previous lesson did not succeed, you might just try to revise the main concepts that you were talking about. They will remember the main rules and main concepts if they don't even know how to apply. Because then (after revision?) you can start with application.
- I *When I observed your class the other day, learners were in groups or actually the furniture were clustered together, but you mostly worked with them on an individual basis. Is there any reason for that?*
- GT#2 Well I tried – the concepts of group work – with group work you do not really discover or find out the learners that do not understand the work so you have to now and then go back and work individually.
- I *When you marked their work – the learners that came to you when they were finished with the sums that they had to do – do you also discuss with them why it is wrong if it was wrong ...*
- GT#2 I mostly discuss it, but mostly the time does not allow it, because of the number of learners in a class. So the next day I discuss it – I don't really discuss the class work, but when I give them

- homework I put up the homework the next day and I explain. Because mostly the class work will be similar to the homework and I take it that they've already done it.
- I *Is there an area that you think you still need some improvement?*
- GT#2 Yes, I would like to – basically I would like to have access to especially Mathematics resources. The library that we have here do not even have one single Mathematics book. The only Mathematics books that I have is the ones that I use to teach, the one that the learners use. I do not have access to other media.
- I *I believe that there's more than one text book on the catalogue. Did you ever try to get hold of a second text book?*
- GT#2 I did not think of it that way, because...if you don't need a book... a book, that was not on the list, then he'd advise me to go to Edumeds.
- I *If there was any possibility to make an input into the BETD programme, you already said that maybe the content...*
- GT#2 I would actually like to change a little bit the phases they have there of specialization. In your first year, irrespective of whether that is a science major or LP it is the same structure. So I think it would be better for me if from the first year I start with what I want to do. So that you don't go and redirect yourself the next year, you have to change again your focus.
- I *So you would actually advise specialization earlier on?*
- GT#2 Yes, earlier on. Even if it is not in the first term, but starting from the last term or the second term so that you don't sit with a whole lot of books that you don't need or subjects that you don't need. I'm sitting with a box of books that I don't need that I had to buy in my first year.
- I *And with regard to methodology?*
- GT#2 I don't have a problem. I don't know how the other fields were set up, but we had a set up, the math and science students... we had our Math lecturer, we had our different science lecturers, we had our physics, we actually had a special lecturer who taught us the methodology.
- I *And LCE – how did they go about it?*
- GT#2 I think they managed that and they were really serious with what they wanted to do, because not only did they present modern lessons, but they allowed us most of the time we were the ones to present lessons – it was learner-centred education. I don't think anyone who experienced that should have a question about that.
- I *We already discussed the issue about the senior staff visiting classes. If you have a class visit, it is normally being discussed afterwards. What would you advise senior staff member with regard to class visits?*
- GT#2 Sometimes they come for formal visits and then they inform you, but sometimes its informal visits – that should be done, otherwise we get slack. Even if it is informal or formal visit, they still come back to us and discuss it. Even if they just have to tell you "I liked your lesson". You are never left wondering what now?
- I *Do you think being part of these interviews also helped you a little bit with reflection?*
- GT#2 Yes it helped me and not only that it helped me to reflect, but it gave me ideas on how to conduct interviews if I want to. It is always good to give your views and experience to someone. Most of the time you don't talk to someone about your experiences and you anyway forget what you've experienced. So maybe telling it to someone, also give you a reflection of what you have done and what you need to do.
- I *This sort of thing – exposure to interviews - do you think it can work in your practice, that you have interviews/discussions on lessons with your colleagues.*
- GT#2 I think it will be wonderful. It will work.
- I *Thank you for your time and cooperation.*

GRADUATE TEACHER 3 (GT#3) Interview 1

Introductory remarks

- I *This was the first school that you started teaching after you completed the BETD?*
- GT#3 Yes
- I: *Any reason why you came to this school?*
- GT#3 No, I had no choice. It was the only school open...it was the only school which accepted me. So I didn't want to struggle with it. I just said yes.
- I: *And do you have any regrets that you had to come here?*
- GT#3 No, not at all
- I: *Why?*
- GT#3 I'm happy here, enjoying my work. Apart from...it is far away from home. I also wanted to get away from home. I wanted to make my start somewhere else.
- I: *To become a little bit independent?*
- GT#3 Yes, sort of.
- I: *Do you think it would have made a difference if you started your teaching career at another school? If you look back now over the past few year...*
- GT#3 I cannot say, because I haven't taught at another school, so I won't be able to compare how I would feel if I was teaching at Windhoek or so.
- I: *But you did your SBS in Windhoek?*
- GT#3 Yes
- I *And how was that different from your experience at this school?*
- GT#3 It was a little bit different. While I was in my SBS, I would enjoy the few weeks, then I had to go. And I only had to do what I had to do and so on.
- I *So you don't think you can make a comparison between...*
- GT#3 No, I don't think I can make it.
- I *You are mostly in the commercial field of study?*
- T3A That's correct.
- I *When you joined the school, were there any teachers who assisted you?*
- GT#3 No, OK I didn't have any ...there were no assistance. All that I ...I was given the syllabi...I had to start. Ok, I was having a subject head but he was not really assisting me, because it was actually the first time for the school to have grade 10. The first year when I came here, I had to teach Grade 10. So this subject head didn't even have experience of grade 10, so he couldn't help me. So I struggled through until the subject advisors came out one day...put me on the right path...onwards.
- I *The subject head is also involved in the JS phase?*
- GT#3 Yes he was ...he was involved. That year ...I'm not talking about now. I'm talking about 4 years ago...in 98.
- I *And he had experience in 8 & 9? (meaning grade 8 & 9)*
- GT#3 Yes, he taught 8 & 9 before me.
- I *And he still felt he couldn't assist you?*
- GT#3 Yes...no, it is not that he didn't felt...he didn't have the experience, or he didn't know if I had any questions, he didn't know. He didn't...he haven't done the syllabi with learners.
- I *You being an inexperienced teacher when you joined the school- what other support did you get from any of the other staff?*
- GT#3 Right...If I was having a problem, all doors were open...everybody would...
- I *The principal also?*
- GT#3 The principal as well.
- I *Do you think the teachers at that stage...you were an inexperienced teacher ... most of them were experienced teachers. Do you think they would have been willing to learn something from you?*

- GT#3 I don't know. I cannot say. How can you learn something from a junior, somebody who just came into the profession? I don't think they expected much...they expected to learn from me...as I was a junior and they have been in the profession...how can this new guy who came into the profession lately give them, sort of...how could he assist them?
- I *I was actually referring to the fact that you were in a programme that specifically aimed at equipping you for the reformed curriculum, while their teacher education didn't...their teacher education maybe started in the old dispensation. Their TE might not have prepared them exactly for our reformed curriculum. Do you think they thought that they could learn from you or did no one ever contact you or ask you to assist them with, especially with the reformed ideas and...*
- GT#3 No. Nobody came to me asking me for ideas or...nobody came.
- I *In your subject area...do you have a lot of experienced teachers together with you?*
- GT#3 At the moment...this year I have one. Last year he was not having more experience than me. He never...let me answer no. But from this year there is someone who's having experience in my subjects.
- I *Can you tell me a little bit about your subject meetings. What do you normally do at subject meetings?*
- GT#3 At subject meetings we discuss everything from the syllabi, whether a teacher is having a syllabi, scheme of work and we discuss common problems about the subject itself, we discuss the layout of papers and any other information...anything else with regard to the subject.
- I *Say you get an inexperienced teacher. Do you use subject meetings also to assist inexperienced teachers?*
- GT#3 That's correct. This year we're having a new Business teacher for grade 8 so we sort of had an induction course with her, telling her what to do, what she must expect, how the papers should look like... all those things we worked...we explained...everything was clearly explained to her.
- I *She's a trained teacher?*
- GT#3 She was a qualified teacher and it was the first time to teach the subject so we had to assist her.
- I *You assist her with subject knowledge, or do you also assist her with methodological issues?*
- GT#3 Both, only if questions arise... if she has questions. So, if she doesn't ask, we think that she know everything or...I mean the syllabi is not that difficult. It's not that one is going to need extra knowledge and the knowledge is obtainable...she can search the...she can do research...
- I *You're the subject head for the commercial field?*
- GT#3 I am for one subject, Business Management.
- I *So you have to visit other teachers' classes? What would you do if they indicate that they would like to visit your class?*
- GT#3 They are always welcome. They know they are always welcome to come.
- I *And do you sometimes learn something from visiting their classes?*
- GT#3 Yes, there's always ideas. One learns a lot of things. Not always a lot of things, but one or two things you can pick up when visiting someone else.
- I *What would you say to a novice teacher who want to join the school beforehand?*
- GT#3 No, he's welcome. He could come...he will learn a lot from us. Here we work as a team.
- I *How would you explain what the school community – the learners, teachers, parents – is like, to them,?*
- GT#3 Relations between the school and the community? That is very well. Even...the parents are willing to come and assist us with afternoon classes. Even with other extra-mural activities, they always willing. Even at sports, for officials we use parents and the community. They are always willing to do it freely, without being paid. They are willing to help, to assist.
- I *In an informal discussion earlier today, you mentioned that there are many more weak learners here. Why would you say that is the case?*
- GT#3 No, I wouldn't say weak. I would rather say slow. It's not to say they are slow. They are not exposed like other learners in other towns.
- I *And you think that specific thing has an effect on their learning?*

- GT#3 Yes. That forms part of their general knowledge and even if you are teaching, some of your examples which usually come from general knowledge and then the learner doesn't know what you are referring to. So he won't be able to understand as fast as a learner who is going to know what I'm talking about. So, for a learner in another city who understand faster than a learner here. Let's take for example a simple thing like the ATM machine, the BOB machine. Talking about an ATM machine, all the learners in Keetmanshoop will know what is an ATM machine, but here you have to explain to them.
- I *Now how do you think you can overcome that and ensure that your learners do not look worse than learners from Keetmanshoop? When they go to grade 11 and 12, they have to go to Keetmanshoop.*
- GT#3 There are teaching aids. We use a lot of teaching aids. Video ...OK, you can use video's and photos or posters. But it is not always possible.
- I *And you have equipment here to have video's ...*
- GT#3 That's the other problem. We don't have.
- I *Not even one single...*
- GT#3 We have...I think we have one. But it's not in a working order. It's out of order actually.
- I *Can I ask you a question about...if you as say relatively inexperienced teacher – you have four/three years experience..*
- GT#3 I have more than that. I was teaching before I went to college.
- I *But if you look at, say for instance Mr Rs, with his long, long years of experience. What do you think the management of the school will do if one of the inexperienced teachers come with a suggestion that something that they've done over the past few years in a specific way, that that could change for the better. Do you think the management will be open?*
- GT#3 Yes, they are always...they accommodate a lot of new ideas. Because I've been working with them with a lot of things, as I was active in different committees. So I was working closely with them. If I was having an idea, they'd discuss this and sometimes they'd also use my idea. So they accommodated new ideas and they do welcome new ideas.
- I *Would anyone of them, if you ask them that you would like to come their classes to do a class visit and to see how they go about teaching, how do you think they will feel?*
- GT#3 Yes, I haven't tried, but they made it clear that we can come to their classes, asking can I visit you. They said we would be welcome if you are willing to ...if we want to visit them.
- I *The teacher education college, Windhoek College of Education...*
- GT#3 Where I attended,, yes.
- I *Did you have any contact with them after your graduation?*
- GT#3 With the college, the office or...
- I *The college itself.*
- GT#3 No, only that time before graduation and thereafter we haven't been in contact.
- I *Do you think they have a role to play in your ongoing professional development?*
- GT#3 Maybe. I don't think so.
- I *The regional office? You said after the advisory teachers visited you, you feel that you're on track now. Do you think the regional office in the form of advisory teachers, inspectors, the support staff there, do you think they have a role to play in your continuous development?*
- GT#3 Yes, as they did. Especially if you are a new teacher, you ...environments differ. When you are at college, sometimes you think that you know what to do , but when it comes to reality things happen to change. Some things that you didn't know and sometimes you need...not actually the first days, but actually here in the middle of the year ...sometimes you think you are on the right track, while you are not. So these guys have a big role to play to make sure that the teachers are, especially new teachers, are on the right track. Check that they OK. If they are on the right track, motivate them and if they are not, assist them as well.
- I *your SBS. Do you think it really prepared you for real teaching?*
- GT#3 Yes, I enjoyed it very much.
- I *And what are you doing differently or the same as you did during SBS?*

- GT#3 When we were at the college, SBS, we had to....your lesson had to follow a certain format: first you had to do this and then that. But in practice ... It is not always that you can stick to that.
- I *Why do you think is that?*
- GT#3 Because it differs. If I started a new topic, for example, I will start with the method of the college, but if I have to do a revision test or to do a follow-up of a test, you know you are going to use another method again. There is a difference.
- I *The action research project that you did in your last year, what was that about?*
- GT#3 Mine was about behaviour. Behaviour of learners towards different teachers.
- I *What did you learn from that?*
- GT#3 I learnt that a teacher can contribute to the discipline of the learners...
- I *Or the lack of discipline?*
- GT#3 As well as the lack of discipline, because if you allow a learner certain things, then they might ...you might end up not respecting each other and that can cause a lot of discipline problems. And vice versa, if you don't allow learners...I mean, I did it on three different teachers and the learners had then behaved differently. The same learners, but they behaved differently at different teachers.
- I *Do you think action research can be valuable in the practice?*
- GT#3 Yes.
- I *Do you still use it?*
- GT#3 OK. I use it. I learnt from those teachers' mistakes. So I'm trying to ...sort of ...my problem is discipline, because I cannot ...my class cannot go on if there's discipline problems. If we don't respect each other, me and a learner. So I learnt from it...I learnt how to keep my learners at a certain level...I mean, we try to maintain that teacher relationship.
- I *What do you think are the causes of indiscipline?*
- GT#3 Sometimes it is caused by the teacher.
- I *In what way?*
- GT#3 Like for example...it is very simple...a learner has a "koggelnaam" (nickname) which he doesn't like. I can't call him that. What will I do if he says something back? What if he plays the fool with me too?
- I *In other words, like degrading learners. If you degrade a learner in your class, they will definitely not show you respect..*
- GT#3 Yes. You know, there are a lot of examples. (bell indicates end of period)
- I *I believe you have a class next period. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.*

GRADUATE TEACHER 3 (GT#3) Interview 2

Thank You for your willingness to grant another interview to follow up on information not yet gained.

(This interview was conducted in Afrikaans and translated to English)

- I *What was the most valuable thing that you learnt during your teacher education?*
 GT#3 Learner-centred education. I already taught before going to the college. I taught in a teacher-centred way before.
- I *Did you keep any journal or diary or write any reflective statements?*
 GT#3 Only during SBS.
- I *Was it of any value to you?*
 GT#3 Yes, a lot.
- I *In what way?*
 GT#3 I wrote down the things that went wrong and that went well during the lesson. When I started to teach, I could use that same lesson and correct the errors in order to be successful.
- I *Did you attend any seminars or workshops or any other activities where students could support and advise each other??*
 GT#3 Like group work? Yes, a lot. Not with the same people every time – every time there were different people.
- I *What value did it have for you?*
 GT#3 I always ended up being the leader.
- I *During the first interview you mentioned that there were no other teachers in your field when you started teaching. Do you think collaborative learning could have any value for your professional development, even if the teachers are not in your subject field?*
 GT#3 No. My subjects are not like other's (meaning, not everyone can talk about my subjects).
- I *With regard to SBS. Say you were a lecturer at the college and your students are ready for their first SBS. What advice would you give students, based on your own experience with SBS?*
 GT#3 There are so many things. I can't think about something specifically now.
- I *Was it possible for you to do reflection – think about what you did and how you could do it differently - during SBS? (long pause) You said you wrote reflective statements...*
 GT#3 Yes. It was meant for yourself. You did not submit it.
- I *Could you use the reflections to improve on the last lesson?*
 GT#3 You did not get the same class every time. You could only use the reflections if you got for instance 7A and B. If you had 7A and you saw how it went, you could have improved with the next class (7B). Sometimes you could apply it, but often not, because you did not get the same class groups.
- I *Did the SBS have any influence on how you made changes in your practice?*
 GT#3 You know, you felt scared at first. On the first day you had to find your feet and you are nervous. But after the second or third time you can apply what you have learnt.
- I *What do you do differently than the teachers that taught you?*
 GT#3 I'll say my learners enjoy my classes more than I enjoyed classes when I was at school.
- I *And is there something that you do just like your teachers – something that you learnt from them?*
 GT#3 Yes, there are things that I've learnt from them, but I can just try to improve.
- I *Do you think learners are now different from those when you were still at school?*
 GT#3 Very much so.
- I *In what respect?*
 GT#3 Those days we were very much afraid of the teachers. If the teacher approached you, even if he was still far away, you greeted him. You made certain that he saw you greeting him. But today they don't worry anymore.
- I *So you think they had more respect those days?*

- GT#3 Yes, there was always respect and discipline those days.
- I *What do you think brought about the change?*
- GT#3 One thing – corporal punishment helped with discipline. Those days there were no excuses. You did your homework, whether you wanted to or not. If you did not do it, you got a hiding and we were very much afraid of a hiding. So you were forced to do your homework
- I *But do you think one can instil discipline with fear?*
- GT#3 Yes.
- I *What was the biggest problem you experienced after you started teaching after your studies?*
- GT#3 My biggest problem was that I did not have any guidance. I specialised in these subjects, but when I started teaching it was the first time that we offered this grade and there was no one to whom I could go for help and I just carried on. When the Advisory Teacher visited me, he put me on the right track again. So you need guidance, especially when you start teaching.
- I *If you were a senior teacher, what would you change with regard to class visits?*
- GT#3 Give more support and not just visit..
- I *You mean to give more advice and assistance?*
- GT#3 Yes, to give more advice – you could have done this – or just help the teacher.
- I *Do you think there is still an area where you personally need development, or assistance?*
- GT#3 No, at this stage I feel ... (pause)
- I *Comfortable?*
- GT#3 Yes
- I *Say you have prepared well for a lesson and in the end you discover that the learners did not really grasp what you wanted them to learn. What will you do?*
- GT#3 I will just repeat and try another method. I will just have to make time for it.
- I *Could I ask you a few questions based on the observation that I did in your class? I hope you can recall the lesson about “retailers and specialisation”.*
- GT#3 OK, Taxes, retailers and specialisation.
- I *You asked the learners individually to name the characteristics of retailers. For this topic group work would have been very applicable. Is there any reason why you asked individual learners to supply the answers?*
- GT#3 Retailers are in places where they visited. There are many who had been to other towns and cities and they could supply the information to those who never left this town.
- I *So you felt that those learners that you asked to give the answers could answer from experience?*
- GT#3 Yes
- I *I observed that the girls were not so involved – they did not raise their hands to give answers. Did you ever observe that girls are less involved?*
- GT#3 Yes. They come fromboys are the majority. They are only a handful and most of them are farm children and farm kids are not so much exposed like boys.
- I *Is there anything that you can do to get them involved more?*
- GT#3 Yes, they are actually taking part. There are topics where they are more involved than the boys.
- I *So you think this specific topic stifled their involvement?*
- GT#3 Yes, there are one or two that you will never get involved, but the others do take part.
- I *Do you use group work in your class?*
- GT#3 Yes
- I *And how did you find it working?*
- GT#3 It works well, but sometimes ...the lazy ones do not do anything. The others do most of the work and then they get a mark which they do not deserve, because they did not give their contribution.
- I *But you use it sometimes?*
- GT#3 Yes, I use it a lot. Ask them to prepare something for the class and then I ask a specific one to present. Sometimes they are not willing and then I have to ask someone else to make the lesson more interesting.

- I *Last question: How did you experience your involvement in this study?*
GT#3 I do not mind to share my experiences.
I Thank you ever so much for your time and cooperation.



PRINCIPAL(P): Interview

This interview was conducted in Afrikaans and translated to English.

- I *Do you think it was necessary for teacher education reform after independence and why?*
- P I would say yes and also no. I personally feel that teachers that were trained earlier were more equipped. Why I say so, is because they did all the subjects at the college. Now teachers start to specialise in their first year and that's why I say no. Maybe it was necessary in a way
- I *In what way?*
- P Since we implemented a new curriculum and teachers have to teach through the medium of English, it might have been necessary.
- I *Do you have any knowledge of the philosophy of the BETD?*
- P No.
- I *Do you think that the BETD prepares teachers sufficiently for their task?*
- P From my point of view, if I look at their results (meaning diploma) - what I see there - I feel that they should have had a bit more knowledge. For example their subjects are only those that the learners take at school. Take for instance Accounting: he just has to study the syllabus content for Grade 8 - 10 and nothing more to broaden his knowledge base.
- I *You feel the knowledge base of the BETD is perhaps too low?*
- P It is perhaps too low.
- I *And with regard to the methodology, do you also have a problem with that?*
- P No, I don't have a problem with that.
- I *What were your first impressions of the BETD teachers? Your school was one of the first schools in the region where they were appointed.*
- P My first impression about the BETD teachers was on hearsay: they do not work, you struggle with them. The first BETD appointees started together with two UNAM students. The one UNAM student made adapted well, but the other one struggled in the beginning. The biggest percentage of BETD teachers adapted quite well and they work well. It is not necessary to look over their shoulders all the time. Not all of them, but the majority.
- I *What is being done at your school to assist novice teachers who are fresh from the college?*
- P We appoint a mentor for everyone, who helps basically with preparation, attendance registers, etc. The basic administrative tasks. Especially at LP it is difficult, because they have class teaching and you cannot combine classes so easily because the classes will then be too big. The LP people will have to help them in the afternoon. But we do appoint a mentor for everyone
- I *If a novice teacher needs more assistance than what the school can offer, what do you do?*
- P We will call in the advisory teachers. That's what we did with one teacher who taught History. When we saw, and she also discussed it with me, that it is necessary, we called in Mr H.
- I *And you think it had a positive outcome?*
- P A very good one.
- I *What do you think is the role of the college in this regard? The college had these teachers for three years and afterwards they made no contact with them. What role could they play?*
- P Yes, they have a role to play, although it never happened. When I came from the college, they never wrote me a note to ask how I am doing. Not even a format letter. So colleges never make contact.
- I *But do you think they can play a role?*
- P I believe so..
- I *The BETD teachers were specifically equipped to implement the reformed curriculum. Do you think more experienced teachers could learn from them?*

- P Yes. Some teachers came to me and requested that we use the BETD teachers to give us some guidance with this and that. Yes, definitely
- I *What would you say is the aim of class visits at this school? I understand it is being done very regularly.*
- P What we do is to see if the person “copes”. Sometimes, we look for say a year at only specific areas. It is now my sixth year at this school and it is really necessary to do class visits. You get teachers who neglects the continuous assessment completely. Only when the d-date gets near, pushes to get it ready for submission. That is why it is absolutely important.
- I *What procedure do you follow with class visits? Is there a specific procedure or do just do class visits and write a report?*
- P To do class visits and write a report only is out of the question. We normally call in the teacher - we had one in this morning – and we discuss every aspect, or the specific aspect we observed. This morning we had a discussion on continuous assessment specifically. But we also discuss other aspects that we observed that need attention, because there were some things that she did not manage well and I discussed those with her too.
- I *Basically the class visits could also serve as continuous teacher development? Are teachers also motivated to visit each other's classes and why?*
- P This year we did not specifically do it, but we did in the past. Teachers are, however, not eager to do it.
- I *Why do you think is that so?*
- P I don't know. We did the 2 plus 2 one year. It worked well, but teachers, although you invite them, are not eager to sit in. Where it works is when the mentor invites the novice to sit in during an administrative or I'll sit in their classes.
- I *Maybe we are all still a bit afraid of critique?*
- P Precisely.
- I *If a novice teacher requests to visit your class, how will you react??*
- P I definitely do not have a problem with that. If he comes on invitation or not, any time. OK, the nature of our subjects may differ. Woodwork differs totally from History and Geography and those subjects.
- I *Say one of the novice teachers request that you change the way you handle a specific aspect, like for instance discipline. What will your reactions be?*
- P I always tell the teachers that my office is open for any suggestion. And we will test it and see if it works, but if what we are doing works well, we will tell the teacher that. But one doesn't want to cling to old practices.
- I *So you will be open to any suggestions, even from a novice?*
- P Yes, even from an inexperienced teacher.
- I *What role do you think can subject meetings play in the development of teachers*
- P It is of utmost importance. I experienced that if you neglect subject meetings, you will eventually experience many problems. For the development and monitoring of the subject it is necessary to have formal subject meetings and even informal ones. The subject head should communicate with his team on a regular basis. We do it regularly. Sometimes, with our pressing programmes, it gets too late during the trimester, but we try to have at least one formal meeting per trimester. Sometimes we discuss issues at our staff meeting, but it sometimes happen that teachers will then tell you that they didn't know. Once we had a teacher who, when it was time to submit the continuous assessment marks, he had nothing. He could not present a valid explanation nor the books. I told the subject head that he is to blame. I could not find any minutes of a meeting in the subject file and the subject head is responsible to inform the teacher when what would be ready for submission.
- I *Is there anything else that you do for professional development at the school??*
- P I can give you many answers - there are informal and formal . Take teachers' behaviour, physical appearance, example to learners. Then there are the more formal – do not enter a class unprepared. It happened the other time that a teacher did not have the methodology of a subject; say he did Mathematics only up to the level of Grade 10 and he did on BETD level

for example Accounting and English. Sometimes they have to teach Mathematics because of the shortages of teachers. He should then ask for help rather than to get to the class without knowing what to do. I emphasise professional behaviour and ethics almost every day. You are a teacher, you are professionals. Even though I am the principal, I do have to remind you to do your work. We strive that teachers who leave this school and go to other schools, when they get there, people should immediately see they are professionals.

I *Many BETD teachers went through your school and those to whom I talked said that it is good that they could start their teaching career at this school. They feel they got a good foundation for their professional development here. Do you think this school could be a sort of extension for the college? What advantages and disadvantages could this have?*

P As you say, teachers say they get a good foundation here. We try with everyone., but there are some who takes the other path. We had one or two here who said they know everything and you could get nowhere with them. But the majority of them took our advice, they did not come from the college and think they know everything; this principal knows nothing about Accounting and he can teach me nothing. We were quite successful with the BETD teachers who came to this school. I won't say 100%, but if the college wants to use us as an extension, we can do it.

I *Could it have any advantages and disadvantages for the school?*

P Advantages are many, but the biggest disadvantage is that teachers do not stay long with us. Most of the teachers are from places outside the town and then they work here for a year or two and then they go again. Some of them indicated on the very first day that they start here, that they do not want to stay long – they want to get back.

I *This causes that you do not have a very stable staff?*

P It cannot be. Definitely not, because every year we have 4/5 and up to 9 posts to advertise.

I *On the other hand one of the newer teachers said she would like to stay another year, because she learnt so much at this school. This is a big compliment for the school. BETD teachers did action research during their last year at the college...*

P I heard about it, yes.

I *Do you think they can apply it at the school? Would you encourage them to do it? All three teachers with whom I talked never did action research after they completed their studies.*

P Yes, one can try it out and see if it works. We did not call it action research when we were at college. As I understand it you evaluate yourself. When you make progress with the work and when you get to C, you may find that you have to get back to A. How you make adaptations to get it under the knee.

I *Yes, you do reflection on what you do and sometimes you have to go back. You basically identify a problem, you think about all possible actions you can take to rectify it and when you decide on action you take it and reflect again to see what the effect was. It is like a spiral that goes on and on and because the teacher is moving all the time, s/he grows and develops continuously.*

If you could make any contribution to improve teacher education, especially the BETD, what would you suggest?

P This links to an earlier question. They should broaden their syllabuses of the BETD. They should also learn something about IGCSE and HIGCSE and should not only be confined to junior secondary or some only stop with upper primary and even lower primary (meaning they do not go beyond their specialisation phase). Teachers who were trained earlier could teach up to 12. BETD teachers cannot. Definitely not.

I *So you think they should also touch on the content of grade 11 and 12. Do you think the BETD teachers are able to teach in a learner-centred way?*

P Yes, definitely. They can handle it.

I *Are there any questions that you would like to ask me?*

P No, I think we covered everything.

I *Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.*

INSPECTOR OF EDUCATION (IE)

The Inspector could not grant an interview and opted to answer the questions in writing.

Could you please take the time to answer the following questions. Thank you very much.

1. WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF A NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHER WHEN S/HE JOINS A SCHOOL?
IE A professional approach to the task of teaching and learning. Fully prepared at all times. Attitude and or ability to listen to more experienced teachers. Understand the content to teach the learners (taking into account all major subjects) and not concentrate on a subject. Careful administration of the subject and to stay abreast of development in his/her subjects.
2. HOW DO YOU THINK DO THE BETD (PRE-SERVICE) TEACHERS MEET THESE EXPECTATIONS?
IE BETD pre-set teachers are qualified, though inexperienced for their subjects. They do understand the content of the subject.
3. HOW DO YOU EXPECT A NOVICE TEACHER TO BE SUPPORTED/ASSISTED WHEN S/HE JOINS A SCHOOL?
a) BY THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL?
Management must appoint a peer teacher to guide the novice through the process. Regular meetings with experienced subject teachers, guided by a subject head within the cluster system.
b) BY OTHER STAFF MEMBERS?
Support in terms of understanding the principles of class teaching, administration of subject, understanding policies related to the subject and all other related ministerial policies and directives.
c) BY REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION (ATs, IEs and TRCs)?
Welcoming letter from the Regional Administration. Courtesy calls by regional staff. Same to subject area and the ATs. Continuous support by regional administration with corrective, not necessarily punitive, measures.
4. DEVELOPING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE, WHICH IS CRITICAL RETHINKING ON ACTION (TEACHING), IS ONE OF THE MAIN THRUSTS OF THE BETD. WHAT IMPACT DO YOU THINK THIS MAY HAVE ON ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?
IE In essence it will lead to better leadership both in terms of building quality and understanding of education as such. Link the goals of education to their actions.
5. HOW DO YOU THINK THE BETD GRADUATE TEACHERS MANAGE TO IMPLEMENT IT IN SCHOOLS?
IE During the planning phases at the end of the year they can focus reflectively on their actions. Also during cluster and subject meetings.
6. WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER AS POSSIBLE OBSTACLES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE PRACTICES IN OUR SCHOOLS?
IE Possible obstacles: reluctance of management to create opportunities for reflective thinking. Older/teachers outside the BETD scope might see their actions as threatening to their position. Unwillingness to adapt to new changes.
7. HOW WOULD THE REGIONAL OFFICES BE ABLE TO ASSIST IN THIS REGARD?
IE Specific approach from the side of the RO to train members of management in the new way of thinking. Training and sensitization of regional staff must be a priority.
8. WHAT IS BEING DONE FOR CONTINUING TEACHER DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOLS AND WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD IT BE?
IE Courses developed by NIED and curriculum panel give adequate opportunity. All stakeholders must be involved to make sure that information dissemination receives high priority. Opportunities must however be synchronized to give better output.

9. WHAT ROLE DO YOU THINK DO THE TEACHER EDUCATION COLLEGES HAVE REGARDING ONGOING TEACHER DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOLS?
IE They must stay abreast of developments in the field, both nationally and globally. Link between ROs and colleges needs to be formalised and strengthened. They should also take initiative to develop courses for professional development of teachers eg. Multi -grade teaching, more advanced Woodwork, etc.
10. WHAT WOULD YOUR REACTION BE IF A NOVICE TEACHER CHALLENGES YOU ON TEACHING STRATEGIES THAT YOU SUGGESTED?
IE Listen and give a platform to teachers to explore their ideas.
11. IF YOU COULD MAKE ANY INPUTS IN THE WAY TEACHERS ARE CURRENTLY EDUCATED AT THE TECs, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
IE Teachers should be trained for the needs of the country. We need rural teachers able to teach multi-grade classes/. The old idea of being able to reach all subjects in a primary school must be further investigated. Reading, writing and arithmetic should take preference in the whole primary education.



APPENDIX C

GRADUATE TEACHER 2 (GT#2)

This is a typed version of the original written script (without correcting any errors)

FINAL YEAR'S REFLECTIVE STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Ever since I came to the Windhoek College of education, I have been exposed to all sorts of spheres in life. Being a student sure is a tough thing, but definitely not boring. Among the different things that I have been exposed to are the following: A week long exchange student, learning how to swim, SRC, exciting science excursion and being able to do School Based Studies. Now that's what I call growth.

EDUCATIONAL THEORY AND PRACTICE (ETP)

This is the subject that makes the teacher. We get all our subject knowledge from our subject lectures, but we get the educational knowledge from ETP. ETP has brought topics such as professionalism and ethical behaviour to our minds and I now know that as a teacher I should act in such a way to only compliment my noble profession and be a model of decent behaviour. I have also learnt to be a bit of a counsellor (sic) and to ensure that my learners learn well. All aspects that we dealt with in ETP i.e. Curriculum Theory, the School as an organization, Time-tabling and all the others have enlightened me to a certain extent. Educational Theory and Practice is indeed a subject that is fundamental to the growth of a professional teacher. I mean what else can I say because the name Educational Theory and Practice says it all. This is also the subject where you set your mind free and speak of all the educational problems without necessarily being bounded to subject content only. Do I feel ready as a professional? I think so, but maybe my ETP lecturer can shed some light.

SCHOOL BASED STUDIES (SBS)

SBS II was a wonderful, new experience for me. I never thought that I would be able to face a class of +30 audience. I thought that you had to have a whole ounce of confidence. However I learnt that in the beginning it is natural to be nervous and uncertain, but as the time gets by you realize that there is truth in the saying: "Practice makes perfect". I really enjoyed teaching maths and Science during my SBS II. Now that was SBS II.

SBS III was not such a heavenly experience at all. Firstly I am of the opinion that the period was just too long. One really tends to get stagnated. Of course teaching is a life long process yes, but I know I would have done much better in a shorter period of time. I believe that it is not about how long SBS should be, but rather about how effective it should be. Dr Myles Munroe once said: "Living long does not matter, but what matters is living effectively".

The other dark cloud was the fact that there was no sound relationship between my support teacher, my science subject lecturer at the school and myself. I was like torn between two fires not knowing whether (sic) I should do my things the way I want them to do, or the way either my lecturer wants me to do or my support teacher. That really was quite unpleasant (sic) to deal with and I think it was all so unnecessary. Well, that's life, I guess. My experiences with learners and learning once again brought me to the realization of how important ETP and DIDACTICS is to the BETD course.

However, SBS in my minor (English 5 – 7) was great. I had a wonderful (sic) support teacher and we had such a sound relationship.

DESERT AND MARINE EXCURSION

This year the highlight in the Maths and Science department was the Science Excursion that we undertook to Swakopmund. We learnt a lot in an informal setup. Our lecturers did a wonderful job and it was clear that a lot of organisation had been put into it. Hopefully I can be part of such an event at the school next year, that means if I get a post.

EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

In 1996, in my first year I untook (sic) a trip to Ongwediwa College of Education. The SRC had organised an exchange Programme among the students, getting student from different colleges to know other colleges. It was a wonderful experience as I got to know different people, but of one thing I was sure, I would at no cost never swop Windhoek College of Education for Ongwediwa or any other college. We at the Windhoek College of Education are quite previlledged (sic) in terms of exposure.

FUN GALA

In my introductory remarks I mentioned that amongst other things I also came to learn how to swim. Now each year the human Movement Education would organise a wonderful swimming competition just for fun among the year groups. I is a spectacular event because after the competition EVERYONE gets in the water like a big "sea" family. The greater fun about it is that even the "distinguished" lecturers get soaked.

GENERAL INFORMATION

When I first came her, everything and everybody was new to me. Gradually I have grown to make wonderful friends here from my first year. I have fond memories of my TUTOR (Mrs Van Zyl). She really was a great TUTOR.

I have sour memories of the college as well. RACISM was strongly flourishing here. Especially in my first year the were lecturers favouring coloureds, the Herero student thought nothing of the other tribes and all over you you could see the racial division. Coming from a multicultural and racial family I just could not comprehend what the racial fuss is all about. Our group IB once mentioned it to our tutor, but you know we have to work hard to guard against racial division. Believe me, this is quite a put off to some of us. Personally I believe that none of us has the moral standing to look down on others and we should stop that. I am also realistic enough to know that we can do absolutely nothing to change the past, but if we let it go, we can do everything to build the future. I learnt this wonderful lesson from President Bill Clinton. And talking about it shouldn't be wrong either, because it's only then that we identify our mistakes and work on them, well, that's about racism.

The biggest thing that I ever regret at this college was being a member of the Students Representative Council. My studies suffered a great deal under this. One hardly has time to yourself and your schoolwork. Being an SRC is food for leadership purposes and social development yes, but seeing all your academic losses is it really worth it? I can loudly say: Definitely "No". I just couldn't balance my academic life and leadership.

CONCLUSION

It really is hard to keep up with the speed of time. I just came the other day and I will be leaving the other day. To think that 3 years seemed so long to me just to realise that it really is a short period of

time. I am thankful to everyone I've known and with whom I have worked together. Well, life goes on and this is just another last page of a different chapter in my (book) life.

