RHODES UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MASTER OF EDUCATION RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

RESEARCH PORTFOLIO PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

**MASTER OF EDUCATION in
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Portfolio Abstract

This Portfolio was submitted in 2005 to Rhodes University as a Research Portfolio presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in General Education Theory and Practice. The Portfolio consists of seven (7) key parts. The reader of this Portfolio is courteously informed that the structure of this portfolio is to some extent differ from the thesis structure. Thus, the reader should be attentive not to weigh against the two. Further more, I hereby declare that this portfolio is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of references indicated at the end of each part.

Part 2 and 6 are the core parts of the portfolio. The focal point of part 2 is the contextual curriculum analysis of Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum in order to investigate its implementation in four educational circuits: Oshigambo, Onathinge, Onyaanya and Omuthiya in Oshikoto Region. Based on the findings of this analysis, lack of critical inquiry and reflective practice among Oshindonga teachers was identified as one of the major obstacles that preventing the effective implementation of the curriculum. Most of these teachers are Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) postgraduates.

Thus, part 3 and 4 were developed as supplements to inform the main research paper (part 6) which is related to teacher's professionalism in the classroom. The focus of part 3 (literature review) was on the teacher as a reflective practitioner. This is in line with the Namibian Education Policy, which identifies reflective practice as the heart of teacher professionalism. In this part, I explored a variety of views related to the notion of professionalism in teaching. I have also focused on views related to teacher's professional development both on macro and micro levels. These views provided a clarification and an underpinning framework on which to base my analysis of reflective practice as professionalism in education. Part 4 (education theories) focused on the digging of understanding of knowledge as an important theoretical domain of behaviourist and constructivist theories.

I have tried to establish how the two theories (Behaviourist and Constructivist) view knowledge and its acquisition and to gain an understanding of how the two theories have been informing the practice. Subsequently, part 6 meant to investigate and assess the extent to which Basic Education Teacher Diploma postgraduate teachers are autonomously applying the theory of critical inquiry and reflective practice in the classroom.

Both part 2 and 6 have findings. There is much correlation between the issues and problems in the implementation of the curriculum as identified in part 2 and the findings of the main research paper (part 6). Though critical inquiry and reflective practice is the key journey towards a high level of reflectivity and one of the significant characters of teacher professionalism in the classroom, most issues and problems identified were related to the insufficient practice of critical inquiry and reflective practices. Low correlation was found between critical inquiry and reflective practice theory and teachers' practices in the classroom.

Despite to the fact that various rationales were mentioned as to why critical inquiry and reflective practice successful implementation is not taking place, the study positioned an emphasis on team working at school, cluster and circuit base that could contributed to a great extend to making teachers more competent and supporting themselves in mastering the applicable critical inquiry and reflective practice skills.

Acronyms

AR	:	Action Research
ATs	:	Advisory Teachers
BETD	:	Basic Education Teacher Diploma
CA	:	Continuous Assessment
CIC	:	Critical Inquiry Committee
CIRP	:	Critical Inquiry and Reflective Practice
DNEA	:	Directorate of National Evaluation and Assessment
ETP	:	Education Theory and Practice
HIGCSE	:	Higher International General Certificate for Secondary Education
HIV/AIDS	:	Human Immune-deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IGCSE	:	International General Certificate for Secondary Education
JSC	:	Junior Secondary Certificate
JSP	:	Junior Secondary Phase
LCE	:	Learner Centred Education
LPP	:	Lower Primary Phase
MBESC	:	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture
NEEC	:	Namibia Environmental Education Certificate
NIED	:	National Institute for Education Development
NNC	:	Namibian national Curriculum
NNLP	:	Namibian National Language Policy
OCC	:	Oshindonga Curriculum Committee
SBS	:	School Based Study
SIP	:	School Improvement Program
SS	:	Senior Secondary
TEs	:	Teacher Educators
UNAM	:	University of Namibia
UPP	:	Upper Primary Phase

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INTRODUCTION

1. My Educational Roles

I attended my basic education in 1975-1986 through the Bantu education system where teacher' education was very fragmented, learners were regarded as empty vessels, corporal punishment was the only way of ordering the class, sharing of ideas, knowledge and experiences was seen as stealing another's knowledge, democracy was not known either at home or at school, and parental support and involvement in their children's education was not considered as an important role. This education system was described by Swarts (1999) as the one that led to dramatic inequalities and disparities in the quality of education services rendered to various Namibian people. In our time if we were to do teaching course, we had to do both standard 10 and the teaching course at the same time, thus in 1986 I had completed my high school and teacher education certificates concurrently.

I joined the teaching profession as a primary teacher at Amunganda Combined School in the Oshana Region from 1987 until January 1990. From 1990 – 1992 I completed a three-year Education Diploma course at the University of Namibia (UNAM) and became a secondary teacher at Nehale Senior Secondary School in the Oshikoto Region from 1993 until November 1999 when I was appointed as an Oshindonga Advisory Teacher for the Oshikoto Region. From 1994 I was involved in various distance education programs where I obtained a number of diplomas and one degree.

The region I am working for consists of 5 educational circuits. There are four phases in the Namibian education system: Lower Primary (LP), Upper Primary (UP), Junior Secondary (JS) and Senior Secondary (SS). In practice I am currently responsible for the Upper Primary, Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary phases. My work as an advisory teacher includes a range of activities. I am a member of the Oshindonga Curriculum Committee (OCC) responsible for evaluating and revising the syllabuses for Upper Primary, Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary to ensure that they are in line with the current teaching approaches as prescribed by the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC). I also evaluate textbooks and related teaching, learning and support materials to see if they reflect the approaches advocated by the syllabuses before approved for classroom usage.

I am also responsible for training Upper Primary, Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary Oshindonga teachers and facilitators. Facilitators are selected teachers who are expected to train other teachers at circuit and cluster level workshops. These workshops follow a stream model: selected facilitators are trained at either national or regional level. These facilitators then hold workshops for teachers at circuit or cluster level. I also carry out school visits and observe teachers to see whether the ideas that they are exposed to in workshops are being implemented in their classrooms and to give them the opportunity to discuss their problems and share their achievements.

In the national policy document that translates the Namibian philosophy on education into concrete and implementable government policies, Toward Education for all (1993), the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture highlights the role of learner-centred (LCE) and critical inquiry and reflective practice (CIRP). It also highlights the importance of developing the ability to use first languages as a tool for expanding skills of a more general application, e.g. analysis, synthesis, drawing of inferences, questioning, and creative intellect, enabling learners to discuss issues rationally, to make careful observation and analysis, and to apply themselves to tasks. It describes learning of first languages as a vehicle in which learning across the curriculum (integration) has to be driven. Thus critical inquiry and reflective practice aspects should be promoted among Namibian teachers.

However, most of my workshops have focused on enabling teachers to use learner-centred approaches as outlined by the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture teacher education program, the BETD. Critical inquiry and reflective practice is an area that has not been emphasized in previous workshops and it is against this background that I have undertaken the main study in the portfolio. The study attempts to determine the extent to which Oshindonga teachers implement critical inquiry and reflective practice in relation to the ministry's guidelines and requirements, their understanding of critical inquiry and reflective practice and what their recommendations are towards the improvement of effectively applying critical inquiry and reflective practice in their classrooms.

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2. Portfolio Structure

The portfolio consists of the following parts: A table of contents, list of figures and acronyms used in this portfolio are provided at the beginning of the portfolio. An introduction section follows. This section introduces the route map of the whole portfolio to the reader. A contextual analysis of the Grade 8-10 Oshindonga curriculum is the second piece of work. This is mainly a descriptive analysis drawing from my prior knowledge and experiences in my field of specialisation, drawing from knowledge recorded and published by a number of the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture documents as well as drawing from small scale research work conducted *in situ*. This paper describes the context in which the main portfolio research paper will take place. It describes the Oshindonga Grade 8-10 Curriculum after independence. It elaborates on the prevailing situation of the subject resources, namely, teachers and materials. It was also intended to form a foundation for the research paper of the portfolio.

The third paper is an analysis of the key theories underpinning the Namibian education reform. This paper helped me to understand knowledge as an important theoretical domain, to understand how behaviourist and constructivist theories view knowledge and its acquisition and to gain an understanding of how theories inform practice. The fourth paper is a literature review that introduces some important terms, concepts, features and tools relevant to teacher professionalism and critical inquiry and reflective practice (CIRP). A variety of views related to the notion of professionalism and CIRP were explored. These views provided a clarification and an underpinning framework on which to base my analysis of critical inquiry and reflective practice as a key part of teacher professionalism in a classroom.

The Research proposal is the next section. It introduces the main research paper – critical inquiry and reflective practice as a key part of teacher professionalism in a classroom. It should be noted that the main focus of this study is on critical inquiry and reflective practice and it's relevance to teacher professionalism. The study investigates and assesses the extent to which BETD postgraduate teachers autonomously apply the theory of critical inquiry and reflection to their practice in

order to become reflective practitioners and turn their classrooms into communities of inquiry. The final section is a reflection of my professional development as a result of engaging in the research processes of the portfolio. There are of course many important factors that influenced my professional development as a result of the program, but I hope nonetheless that the aspects I have chosen will convey a professional development overview that is not too skewed. References cited in the research papers are listed at the end of each paper while appendixes are at the end of the portfolio.

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF OSHINDONGA CURRICULUM: GRADES 8-10 IN OSHIKOTO REGION

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

This paper deals with a contextual curriculum analysis of Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum. There are different criteria one can use to analyze a curriculum. In this study, I have analyzed the Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum and have investigated its implementation in four educational circuits in Oshikoto Region. The Grade 8-10 Curriculum is the progression from the Lower Primary Phase (Grade 1-4) and Upper Primary Phase (Grade 5-7) leading to the Senior Secondary Phase (Grade 11-12). It prepares learners to choose the right field of study when entering the Senior Secondary Phase. During the senior secondary phase (Grade 11-12), learners should synthesize what they have been taught in Grades 1-10 within their chosen field of study. If they have not grasped the previous phases well, in particular the Junior Secondary Phase, it will negatively impact on their entire basic education.

The paper will provide a brief introduction to the Oshindonga Curriculum and its implementation as part of the Namibian Reform process. The methodologies employed to gather data for the curriculum analysis and for the investigation of its implementation will follow the introduction. The third section of the paper provides the curriculum analysis while the fourth section presents the results of the implementation in the four educational circuits and reflects the views of my research participants in this regard. The concluding section of the paper provides a synthesis of the study and raises key issues of concern that have emerged in the course of the study.

2. Review of Methodology

In reflecting critically on the methods used, some difficulties as well as successes were encountered. Traveling to collect data was not a big challenge since it happened at the same time as conducting official work. Face to face contact with participants helped me to familiarize myself with the questioning process and to motivate my participants to

complete the questionnaires. Although it was explained that these questionnaires were for research purposes, the teachers were delighted to participate because they were asked about their daily experiences in their classrooms. I had little difficulties in developing the workshop activities and questionnaires, as these are part of my normal work. The desktop analysis provided to be valuable as it focused my attention on the relationship between the policy and its translation into the broad curriculum and subject syllabus and exposed a number of anomalies.

One main aim of this analysis was to analyze the Oshindonga Grade 8-10 Curriculum. The frustrating problem was to distinguish between subject curriculum, subject policy and subject syllabus. I was shocked to find out that I was not fully aware of the differences between these related curriculum aspects. Another concern was the way one has to analyze curriculum aspects; working with the assignment instructions was initially a question of concern. Logistically, time constraints were also a problem. Lack of time constrained me from going back to participants to get additional clarification on some issues where I was not clear.

3. Methodology

The main aim of the study was to understand the Oshindonga Grade 8-10 Curriculum and teachers' implementation. As a result, the interpretative orientation (Cohen & Manion 1994) underpins the study. The research was a case study (Cohen & Manion 1994) focused on a critical investigation on the implementation of critical inquiry and reflective practice skills by the professional teacher in the community of inquiry classroom. Grade 8-10 Oshindonga teachers from four educational circuits in Oshikoto Region were the focused participants. Four data collection tools were selected; these involved document analysis, questionnaires, workshops and 'in-situ' analysis. The data collected by these means were analyzed qualitatively.

a. Document Analysis

Documents are mainly written texts that relate to some aspects of the social world. These range from official documents to private and personal records (Smith 2002). In this study, official documents were the primary sources used and were analysed using a desktop approach. A desktop analysis involves the analysis of the selected documents with no references to other sources that the researcher uses to increase knowledge and understanding about her topic (Patton 1990). In this study, a desktop analysis was done for the following reasons:

- To clarify the Namibian education philosophy that underpins the Namibian reform process as well as the development of the curriculum under study,
- To analyze the preamble, goals and aims of Grade 8-10 Oshindonga curriculum,
- To analyze the Grade 8-10 Oshindonga curriculum content,
- To analyze how the Grade 8-10 Oshindonga curriculum ought to be implemented in terms of policy recommendations

The official documents studied included:
- The MBESC (1999) Memorandum of Understanding: Namibian Teachers Qualifications
- The MBESC (2000-2001) Junior Secondary Certificate Oshindonga Examination Reports
- The MBESC (2000-2001) Senior Secondary Certificate Oshindonga Examination Reports
- The MBESC (2001) Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum
- The MBESC (1996) Pilot Curriculum Guide for Formal Basic Education
- Towards Education for All. A development brief for Education Culture and Training
- MBESC. (2003). *Learner-Centred Education in the Namibian Context: A Conceptual Framework Discussion Document*. Okahandja: NIED.

b) "In-situ" Analysis

The "in-situ" analysis dimension of this research was an intrinsic part of my in-service work with the teachers with whom I work. "In-situ" analysis is essentially related to the researcher's observation and experiences in the selected field (Cohen & Manion 1994), in this case, the teachers with whom I work. In-service is a long-term process for teacher development. As an Oshindonga Curriculum Advisory Teacher, some of my key roles are to support subject teachers in providing effective lesson instructions and to ensure that subject teachers are effectively doing their teaching based on learner-centered education relevant to the subject curriculum. The means of performing those roles are through paying school visits and doing class observations, monitoring subject teachers' work, conducting subject workshops and coordinating subject teachers' needs in the curriculum committee. Other duties include conducting subject teachers' needs assessments, conducting small-scale researches, advising subject teachers on how to use resources effectively as well as evaluating subject teaching and learning support materials. This study draws a lot on my experiences of working with teachers in schools.

c) Questionnaires

Irwin (2000:4) defined a questionnaire as typically being a series of questions set out on paper. The questions are usually, but not always, related to a single topic, and focus on an area of interest. Questionnaires can be used for qualitative as well as for quantitative data collection. They can be completed individually or in-group settings under varying degrees of control by the researcher. For this study, two questionnaires were developed. One questionnaire was used for workshop 1 (see appendix A). The questions in this questionnaire designed in an activity format that varies from structured to semi-structured questions. The second questionnaire focused on continuous assessment in Oshindonga for the Grade 8-10 curriculum (see appendix B). The questionnaire was completed at workshop 2 held in the four educational circuits. The two questionnaires were compiled in Oshindonga (the English translation is attached). I administered the questionnaires

with teachers and consequently avoided the problem of having to collect questionnaires later. I was also able to clarify questions with teachers who were not sure of how to complete them. These two problems are cited as potential weakness of questionnaires (Cohen & Manion 1994).

d) Workshops

Two workshops were held with Grade 8-10 Oshindonga teachers in the Oshikoto Region. The first workshop was conducted in February 2002 and the second one in June 2002. Workshops were conducted at each of four educational circuits in the Oshikoto Region including Oshigambo, Onathinge, Onyaanya and Omuthiya. The Grade 8-10 Oshindonga teachers were invited to the workshops and I met with them at their respective circuit offices. All together, ninety-nine teachers managed to attend the first workshop and one hundred and three teachers managed to attend the second workshop.

The objective of the first workshop was to introduce the revised Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum. The workshop was designed to involved teachers in participatory activities (see appendix A). All of the activities were structured to provide data to highlight teachers' understanding and difficulties in implementing the curriculum. The second workshop focused on monitoring learners' continuous assessment marks. The reason for focusing on continuous assessment is because it is seen as an integral to the successful implementation of the curriculum.

Teachers were requested to bring their daily lesson plans, continuous assessment recording forms, six samples of learners' work books (including all levels of competences) and all possible evidence that the teachers have to prove the reliability and validity of learners' continuous assessment marks. Subject facilitators helped to assess teachers' continuous assessment forms and compared them with learners' classroom and homework activities given.

4. The Status of the Oshindonga Curriculum in Namibia

Oshindonga is one of the thirteen core languages in Namibia, originally spoken by about 714 000 Aawambo speakers. Aawambo constitutes approximately 50,6% of the total population of Namibia (Maho 1998:14). Most of them live in the Northern-Western political regions of Namibia – Oshikoto, Ohangwena, Oshana and Omusati. Many Namibian people now speak the language countrywide. The map (see appendix C) displays the regions where the language is now spoken in Namibia.

Maho (1998) briefly overviewed issues related to the status of local languages in Namibia. He indicated that under colonial rule, indigenous literature and teaching and learning were given little encouragement. Missionaries even tried to replace traditional oral poems, folktales and proverbs with Christian songs, although at a certain stage, folktales and proverbs in Oshiwambo were collected and published. One can say that that was a start, but despite these no language development, linguistic analysis or research work concerning local languages took place during the first half of the twentieth century, either by missionaries or anyone else. As a result, we are still lacking local language experts and linguists who are be able to develop linguistic books and materials in our own local languages.

Due to the inadequacies in Bantu education imposed during the apartheid era, the Namibian government after independence in 1990 called for the immediate development of a Namibian National Language Policy (NNLP) and the Namibian National Curriculum (NNC) for African First Languages. All Namibian learners are exposed to the new Namibian education system to promote equity, quality, democracy and access to education (Towards Education for All ... 1993). Given the recent introduction of the curriculum, the study aims to provide an understanding of the curriculum and its implementation, the new Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum was introduced for the first time in 1993 after independence and was introduced in the senior secondary phase in 1996. It was revised in 2001 and is currently under review once again. The development of the Oshindonga Curriculum was seen as one way to reform the teaching and learning

of the local languages in Namibia after independence. The improved status of local languages was one of the aims underpinning the educational reform process after independence.

5. Curriculum Analysis

In doing the curriculum analysis I first of all focused on the Oshindonga Grade 8-10 Curriculum aims and objectives and their relationship to the broad curriculum. Second was an analysis of the curriculum content to assess the extent to which it provides a learner-centered education focus and the extent to which its conceptual coherence is in line with the ideals of learner-centered education which emphasis integration rather then compartmentalization. The third area of focus was assessment. In learner-centered education, assessing the progress and achievements of each learner continuously is an integral part of the teaching and learning process (Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum 2002:28). In recent years there has been a shift to recognizing and valuing continuous assessment, which is classroom-based and developed and implemented by teachers as part of their teaching and learning situation. Therefore continuous assessment approaches ought to gather evidence of learning in its fullest sense and diversity by undertaking assessment at different times, and by gathering evidence of learning from different sources and by using different techniques (Wilmot 2003a).

Curriculum is a very comprehensive concept with many different interpretations, emphases. There is no consistency or accuracy in the definitions of curriculum. But a good curriculum is an instrument that utilizes the experiences and activities of learners for the society (Bao 1987). Fraser et al (1990) defined a subject curriculum as the interrelated selected and organized learning content of particular aims, assessment procedures and meaningful teaching and learning opportunities, experiences and activities as guidelines and minimum requirements for the implementation. Drawing from Fraser's definition, the Oshindonga Grade 8-10 curriculum aims and objectives were analyzed and assessed in relation to the broad curriculum.

5.1. Aims and Objectives of Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum

In this section, I analyzed the Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum's aims and global goals by comparing them with the Namibian Broad Curriculum's aims and global goals and saw how they related to each other.

Figure 1: Relationship between Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum and Namibian Basic Education Grade 1-10 Broad Curriculum's Aims and global Goals

Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum's Aims and Goals	Namibian Basic Education Broad Curriculum's Aims and Global Goals
• Enable learners to communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in speech and writing the language • Promote excellent use of the language and the principle of language adequacy when speaking and writing • Enable learners to understand and respond appropriately to what they hear, read and experience • Encourage learners to enjoy and appreciate the variety of languages, promote the appreciation of the multilingual nature of the Namibian society, and development an understanding of the nature of the interaction of languages within a multilingual society • Cultivate more advance and specialized levels of skills • Promote the learners personal development and understanding of themselves and others • Develop the ability to use the first language by expanding skills of a more general application, e.g. analysis, synthesis, drawing of inferences, etc. • Encourage learners to enjoy different reading habits and cultivate permanent critical habits • Promote and encourage creativity among learners through the use of first language • Promote, maintain and study the oral tradition in Namibian society • Understand and show appreciation of a variety of literacy texts • Promote awareness of language structures so as to facilitate the use of the rightful orthography • Develop the ability to use a recognized orthography during the process of writing • Create a traditional of learning across the curriculum through first language • Foster an appreciation of both the spoken and written mediums of these languages in the learning process and their importance in society • Foster a positive, no-exclusive and affirmative attitude towards the mother tongue	• Promote functional literacy and language development that will enable learners to communicate effectively in speech and writing in any language of Namibia • Promote functional literacy and language development that will provide further development in the mother tongue • Promote intellectual development that will develop a lively, questioning, appreciative and creative intellect, enabling learners to discuss issues rationally, to make careful observation and analysis, and apply themselves to tasks • Promote personal development and self-fulfillment that will help learners develop self-confidence, self-knowledge, self-reliance and understanding of the world in which they live, through meaningful activities • Promote personal development and self-fulfillment that will enable learners to obtain the knowledge and understanding, skills and competences, and attitudes and values needed for their personal development, related to the changes in Namibia society • Promote social and cultural development that will develop the learner's social responsibility towards other individuals, family life, the community and the nation as a whole • Promote social and cultural development that will enable learners to contribute to the development and culture in Namibia • Promote social and cultural development that will promote wider inter-cultural understanding • Promote national unity, international understanding and political development that will further understanding and appreciation of the interdependence of peoples and nations for peace in the world • Promote positive attitudes towards the challenges of co-operation, work, entrepreneurship and self-employment • Equip learners to play an effective and productive role in the economic life of the nation • Develop knowledge, understanding and values, creativity and practical skills for a creative, meaningful and productive adult life
Extracted from the Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum (2002:2)	Extracted from Basic Education Namibian Broad Curriculum (1996:5)

Looking at the aims and global goals of the two curricula, many similarities can be seen. They are both promoting teaching and learning of languages that will enable learners to communicate effectively in speech and writing the first languages. They have established the concurrence in developing the ability to use first languages as a tool of expanding skills of a more general application, e.g. analysis, synthesis, drawing of inferences, questioning, appreciation and creativity, enabling learners to discuss issues rationally, to make careful observation and analysis, and apply themselves to tasks. In the two curricula, learning of languages has been seen as a vehicle in which learning across the curriculum has to be driven. It is therefore important for language teachers to know and understand the two curricula concurrently.

5.2. Content of the Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum

The Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum content is the learning of language skills that included four domains. Each domain has focused on specific kinds of objectives as I illustrate and summarize them in the following figure.

Figure 2: Four Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Domains and their Content

Speaking and Listening	Continuous Writing	Reading and Directed Writing	Language Usage
Learners will:	Learners will:	Learners will:	Learners will:
Listen attentively, with understanding and respond appropriately to a great variety and forms of stories and texts	Use experiences in writing Write letters and speeches	Produce well organized and coherence pieces of writing Reading and understanding	Respond to questions effectively in writing and exercise the functional status of phonetics
Speak fluently and confidently	Write compositions and know the whole writing process	different types of texts in order to bridge the gap between their	Spell and punctuate correctly and show awareness of
Give information clearly and convincingly	Master a variety of writing techniques and paragraphing	personal reading and prescribed school reading	grammatical conventions
Describe intelligibly what is see/heard			
Use tone, intonation and pace appropriately	Write creatively and develop creative	Read to reflect on the writer's ideas for	Use the recognized

Develop critical skills and show sense of creativity	talent through a variety of purposeful writing tasks	particular message	orthography
Show sensitivity of audience and awareness of style	Know and use right spelling, different punctuation marks and complex grammatical structures	Read extensively for a wider knowledge and appreciation of various literature	Use both simple and complex sentence structure and then analyze them
Evaluate, distinguish and discuss		Write in the variety of writing forms to develop writing skills	Use parts of speech and tenses correctly in sentences
Develop sense of language appreciation		Respond effectively to comprehension questions and in a variety of ways	Use an effective, appropriate, imaginative and varied vocabulary and show in practice the use and understanding of figurative language, proverbs and idioms
Recognize implicit meaning. Interpret and discuss literary devices in the spoken language		Develop imaginative and personal writing skills	
Use, understand and identify gesture, body language and emotional aspects		Recognize, interpret and discuss literary texts and devices in the written language	
			Attempt and employ successfully a variety of sentence structures
Extracted from Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum (2002)			

In the Namibian context, first languages are part and parcel of the national heritage of Namibians, who use these languages as important means of communication and self-expression. The syllabus is therefore striving for the promotion of awareness of the value of one's own language in relation to those of others. Providing a favourable pedagogical environment and approach to learner-centered education is needed to create such attitudes.

5.3. Assessment Approaches in the Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum

Figure: 3   Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Assessment Weights

Continuous Assessment Weights 50%		Summative Assessment Weight 50%	
Reading and Directed Writing	50%	Reading and Directed Writing	60%
Continuous Writing	30%	Continuous Writing	20%
Oral/Aural	20%	Conversation	20%
Total	100 ÷ 2 = 50%	Total	100 ÷ 2 = 50%
Extracted from Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum (2002)			

In a learner-centered education (LCE) approach, assessing the progress and achievements of each learner continuously is an integral part of the classroom teaching and learning process. The main purpose of assessment is to get as reliable a picture as possible of the progress of the learners in terms of achieving the basic competences of the syllabus (Pilot Broad Curriculum 1996). The assessment of each learner's ability has to cover all domains; reading skills, directed writing, continuous writing, listening and speaking. Assessment of language usage has to be integrated across the domains. In Grade 10, external summative assessment related to the objectives and basic competences of the syllabus have to be conducted. A variety of questions have to be used to test a broad range of skills. This summative assessment consists of the continuous assessment and final written examination. Both forms of assessment are worth 50% (Grade 8-10 Curriculum 2002:28). Learner-centered education rejects the view that a learner is an empty vessel, which must be filled with specific amounts of knowledge before going on to another stage. It views the learner as an active, inquisitive human being, striving to acquire knowledge and skills to master his/her surrounding world (Education for All 1993). It presupposes that all children can learn and develop given the right circumstances. Based on that the fact that learners have a major role to play for the accumulation of their continuous assessment marks and teachers have to act as facilitators, scalffolders and supervisors.

5.4. Issues related to Mother Tongue in the Namibian Context

5.4.1. Namibian National Language Policy (NNLP)

Language is the area of learning that unlocks the whole of the broad curriculum (Pilot Curriculum Guide for Formal Basic Education 1996). According to Bamgbose's (2000) study, language skills and literacy have to be developed, first in the mother tongue then transferred into English, the second language. This demands that the mother tongue must be enriched and intense both in its own right and form a solid basis for skills transfer to English, the medium of instruction. Limited language skills inhibit learning, where

language proficiency facilitates learning. If learners are to be able to develop their cognitive, social and practical skills in increasingly complex ways through questioning, narrating, discussing, analyzing, interpreting and creative writing, they need to do this in their mother tongue (Grade 8-10 syllabus: 3).

The mother tongue plays a critical role in concept formulation and development (Bamgbose 2000) because learners understand it best. Teaching and learning of the mother tongue cultivates permanent critical habits and promotes creativity among learners (Grade 8-10 Curriculum 2000). Therefore, there is a great need in our present Namibian National Language Policy (NNLP) to devote a lot of energy and effort towards upgrading mother tongue. The skills and competencies acquired in mother tongue will help learners to study English, the second language, more successfully. There is much needed to improve the present situation that confronts us. The NNLP needs to put more emphasis on the teaching of mother tongue, especial in the Lower primary Phase (LPP).

It has been suggested that schools or school boards should choose the medium of instruction, in consultation with regional education office (Namibian Language Policy 1993). Most school principals and teachers who are not in favour of Namibian mother tongue and local languages, especially in towns, have influenced poor parents to choose English as a mediun of instruction from Grade 1. Vygotsky (as cited in Scott, et al 1997:66) described language as a vital instrument for the development of thought. Though he did not mention mother tongue directly, the best language to develop thinking is the language the child can understand well, in most cases, the mother tongue. If mother tongue is sustained, this could also contribute to the better teaching and learning of the second language, English.

5.4.2. Oshindonga Grade 8-10 Teachers and Curriculum Development

Teachers are viewed as important agents of change in the reform effort currently under way in education and thus are expected to play a key role in changing schools and

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classrooms (MBESC 2003). Paradoxically, however, teachers are also viewed as major obstacles to change because of their adherence to outmoded forms of instruction that emphasize factual and procedural knowledge at the expense of deeper levels of understanding (Prawat 1992: 354). Prawat is trying to tell us that teachers are the most important agents of education reform. At the same time they can also be obstacles that impede the whole reform process if not well informed. Teachers therefore, need to be informed about the education reform process and become important participants in curriculum development. This represents an important shift in the reform strategy from top down control to teacher empowerment.

Teacher empowerment implies professional authority, particularly as it relates to issues of curriculum and instruction (Prawat 1992). This assumes that teachers become empowered so that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and status to significantly participate in decision relations relating to important educational matters in all areas and levels of education and to be able to help learners to cultivate more advanced and specialized levels of existing skills, as well as to be able to help learners' personal development and understanding (Oshindonga Curriculum 2002:3). Towards Education for All ... (1993:122) stipulates that classroom teachers are required to play a central role in an effective process of curriculum and materials development, to implement the curriculum in classroom settings, and to monitor the curriculum by examining how its general objectives are translated into specific activities in their own classrooms. They are the primary sources of information about the viability and feasibility of the curriculum and material. Swarts (1999) has emphasised the importance of teacher' participation in curriculum development, indicating that it empowers them to become reflective practitioners. In developing the professional awareness of the causes and consequences of activities in the classroom through research on their own situation when teachers decode theory into practice they gain a deeper understanding of their context and practice and bring this understanding to bear on the improvement of their teaching. The empowered teacher is engaged in reflective thinking when s/he can describe what s/he does, explain the meaning of what s/he does, understands how s/he comes to be as s/he is and is able to identify what s/he might do differently.

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Though classroom teachers are central to an effective process of curriculum and materials development and they have to involve in curriculum development throughout all its stages (Education for All 1993:122), in Namibia context, only Advisory teachers (ATs), Teacher Educators (TEs), language experts from the community, University of Namibia and language authors have dominated the Oshindonga Curriculum Committee (OCC) since 1990.

6. Analysis of "In-Situ" Class visits and Workshop results

6.1. "In-situ" Observation

In this section, I analyzed the implementation of the Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum based on my classroom visits and workshop I conducted. According to my 'in-situ' observation, I have learned from learners' activity books, teachers' lesson plans and Oshindonga lesson observations that most teachers do not emphasize the teaching and learning of language usage and structure. Instead, they focused more on continuous writing. But again in continuous writing, they concentrate much more on content and styles and thereby ignore grammatical usage and language structure that is stated as an important principle that should be kept in mind (Oshindonga Grade 8-10 Curriculum 2002:4). Mother tongue speakers in the Junior Secondary Phase (JSP) should already have mastered a significant level of language and grammatical skills in the Lower Primary Phase and Upper Primary phase, but as indicated below they have not.

Most JSP teachers have assumed that learners have already adequately gained all grammatical usage and language structures from previous phases; therefore, they do not see the necessity of emphasing this domain in their teaching. Further to this, subject curricula at UPP, which is supposed to prepare learners for JSP were not reformed until 2000. As a consequence, Grade 10 & 12 external examiners and markers have observed considerable problems in basic language usage and grammatical structures (JSC and

H/IGCSE Examination Reports 2000 and 2001). Other issues and problems in the implementation of the curriculum noted were as follows:

- Lack of continuous writing teaching skills among teachers
- Lack of continuous writing skills among learners
- Lack of orthographical knowledge among teachers and learners
- Lack of knowledge and understanding of LCE and its approaches
- Continuous assessment (CA) approaches are very challenging
- Lack of literature teaching skills and approaches
- Lack of parental involvement
- Lack of validity and reliability regarding learners' CA marks
- Lack of qualified teachers, resources and facilities
- Lack of proper supervision of the school management team
- No marketing of the language in the education sector and community at large
- Lack of learners' and subject teachers' intrinsic motivation
- Lack of learners and subject teachers' extrinsic motivation
- Lack of creativity, professionalism and self-confidence among teachers
- Lack of professional development courses for Oshindonga teachers
- Lack of skills to develop school based scheme of work
- Lack of skills to construct constructive learners' activities

6.2. Workshop 1 Data Presentation and Analysis

The main objective of Workshop 1 was to introduce the revised Grades 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum. The Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum is a continuous syllabus from Grade 8 leading to Grade 10. It is striving at the promotion of awareness of the value of one's own language in relation to those of others. Workshop 1 was designed to involve teachers in participatory activities. The activities were designed in such a way that data could be collected for this study. Workshop 1 findings have been summarized in the

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following five boxes according to the activities used during the workshop and analysis follow immediately after each box.

Figure 4
Box 1: Oshindonga Grade 8-10 Workshop 1 Teachers Responses

Activity 1: Similarities and Differences between old and new Grade 8-10 Curriculum	
Old Syllabus	**New Syllabus**
• Promotes teacher-centered education • Promotes disintegration of subjects knowledge • Promotes grammatical structure only • Literature were only meant for reading skills • Promotes summative assessment	• Promotes learner-centered education • Promotes integration of all subjects knowledge • Promotes broader perspective of language domains • Promotes analytic, critic, synthetic, argumentative, creativity and drawing of inferences skills through literature analysis • Promotes all types of assessment

This box reflects Workshop 1 activity 1. The question was designed to let teachers reflect back to the old syllabus they had used. In this box, I attempt to outline their response to the question. Responses in activity 1 reflect how teachers see and can identify the differences between the old and new syllabuses. The new syllabus promotes many skills and it requires a lot from teachers. Learner-centered education and continuous assessment are the key areas that bring observable changes in the new syllabus. Consequently, teachers' teaching and learning styles and assessment approaches have to change to embrace learner-centered education, continuous assessment approaches, integration of all subjects' knowledge, broader perspective of language domains, promote analytic, critic, synthetic, argumentative, creativity and drawing of inferences skills among learners through literature analysis.

Figure 4
Box 2: Oshindonga Grade 8 –10 Workshop 1 Teachers Responses

Activity 2: Syllabus Structure
❖ The structure is clear and well articulated. ❖ Table of contents is clear if compared to the old one. ❖ Differences between aims, goals, skills, objectives and competences are all clarified. ❖ Four language domains and their relevant aspects are well defined. ❖ Instructions of how to use the syllabus, philosophy underpinning the syllabus and assessment approaches are all given and explained if compared to the old one.

The activity was designed to let teachers explore the new syllabus by paging through and seeing how the new syllabus is structured. If they understand the structure of the syllabus, it will help them to follow the syllabus content. In this section I attempt to outline their responses. Activity 2 responses reveal the way the new syllabus is structured when compared to the previous one, which was a fourteen-page document developed in 1993. There was no inclusive clarification of broad aims, objectives, goals, competences and domains as in the new one. African language advisory teachers developed it as a support document to teachers after independence. Nevertheless when NIED started operating in 1990, they were not yet ready to develop Grade 5–10 curricula as the reform process started with lower primary phase.

Figure 4
Box 3: Oshindonga Grade 8 – 10 Workshop 1 Teachers' Responses

Activity 3: How LCE should be promoted in teaching and learning four language domains?
❖ If learners working in groups
❖ If learners share their work with other fellow learners
❖ If learners share information in groups
❖ If helping each other in groups
❖ If they do group projects
❖ If they share text books
❖ If learners help each other

The question was meant to let teachers analyze each domain in groups. LCE was given as the leading aspect. By being given a specific aspect to focus on, obliged them to study the domain thoroughly. Activity 3 responses disclose how teachers interpret and understand learner-centered education. Their responses reflect learner-centered education as merely group work. However the concept of learner-centered education has a central position in the Namibian reform. Therefore, teacher's approaches to teaching and learning should be learner-centered, which means the following:

- The starting point is the learner's existing knowledge, skills, interests and understandings, derived previous experiences in and out of school,

- The natural curiosity and eagerness of all young learners to learn to investigate and to make sense of a widening world must be nourished and encouraged by challenging and meaningful tasks,

- The learner's perspective needs to be appreciated and considered in the work of the school,

- Learners should be empowered to think and take responsibility not only for their own, but also for one another's learning and total development,

- Learners should be involved as partners in rather than receivers of educational growth (Education for all 1993:60)

Figure 4
Box 4: Oshindonga Grade 8 –10 Workshop 1 Teachers Responses

Activity 4: General issues impeding the implementation of LCE and Grade 8-10 Curriculum as a whole
• Lack of knowledge and understanding of LCE and its approaches
• New Assessment methodology is a challenge
• Lack of literature teaching skills
• Lack of qualified teachers
• Lack of resources and facilities
• Lack of support from other colleagues
• The subject is not respected by some teachers, learners and parents
• Lack of learners and subject teachers' interior motivation
• Lack of learners and subject teachers' exterior motivation
• Lack of creativity, professionalism and self-confidence among teachers
• Lack of support from the region or AT
• Lack of professional development for subject teachers

The question was to act as teachers' needs assessment for the researcher. Activity 4 shows general issues related to the implementation of the Oshindonga Grade 8–10 Curriculum. A variety of issues emerged from the workshop participants but the key ones are lack of knowledge and understanding of learner-centered education and its approaches, new assessment methods, lack of skills in teaching literature, lack of resources and facilities, lack of creativity, professionalism and self-confidence among teachers. Though the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of school depend to a large extent on teachers (Education for All 1993), workshop participants identified these problems as obstacles to implement the curriculum successfully.

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Efficient learning requires teachers who are not only competent in their subjects' but who can also respond creativity to new situations (Education for All 1993:76), but in my experience there is a lot that needs to be done to develop teachers with better understanding of learner-centered education and its all approaches. I believe that insufficient understanding of LCE as reveled in box 3 may also contribute a lot. It is a reality that in group-work learners are exposed to a situation where they should share their understandings, share information, help each other and do group projects, but broader knowledge on learner-centered education and continuous assessment approaches need to be extending to teachers. One important learner-centered education and continuous assessment expertise that teachers need to have is the aptitude of applying critical inquiry and reflective practice.

Figure 4
Box 5: Oshindonga Grade 8–10 Workshop 1 Teachers Responses

Activity 5: Suggestions from participants
❖ New assessment and LCE trainings are seriously needed ❖ Training on how to teach literature needs the attention of the AT ❖ Provision a variety of in-service training programs, BETD is not admitting all of us ❖ Supplying teaching and learning resource to schools ❖ School management must treat all subjects and teachers equally ❖ Other teachers and learners must be informed to respect the subject ❖ Other subject teachers and learners must develop interior motivation and positive attitudes towards the subject ❖ Outsiders, such as colleagues at school, parents, community members, inspectors of education and regional officers could give exterior motivation and develop a supportive spirit ❖ Subject teachers could involved in various regional and national activity to build up their professional development

The question was given to probe participants' ideas and insight towards improving the situation. The ideas collected formed part of the recommendations of the study. Activity 5 responses reveal suggestions made by workshop 1 participants. It is a fact that efficient learning requires teachers who are not only competent in their subjects but who can also respond creatively to new situations (Education for All 1993:76). I believe that problems mentioned in box 4 also contributed a lot to the understanding of learner-cantered education that needs to be known by teachers.

6.3 Workshop 2 Data Presentation and Analysis

Assessment methods are a crucial part of any subject curriculum. In the previous education system, assessment and evaluation were generally regarded as the sole measure of success for individuals and programs. They were used as the sole tool for assessing and evaluating progress with the emphasis on success versus failure. Immediately after independence, continuous assessment was introduced to go hand in hand with the reform paradigm shift. Toward Education for All ... (1993:123) reveals that assessment should stress the idea of concept formulation, analytic skills, and the ability to integrate diverse understandings, generating new ideas and give learners opportunities to demonstrate what they know. During the last two weeks of June 2002, I engaged in monitoring Grade 8–10 learners' continuous assessment marks. The main aim of the monitoring was to investigate the extent to which Grade 8–10 Oshindonga teachers are conducting continuous assessment during the teaching and learning process. Workshop 2 findings have been summarized in the following three boxes as according to part A-C of the questionnaire used to monitor teachers' work (see Appendix B). Part D was not seen as relevant to the study as it served only to supply me with background information, so I did not present it. The analysis of each part is followed immediately after each box.

Figure 5: Workshop 2: Monitoring of Grade 8 -10 Learners' CA Marks: teachers = 103
Box 1

Part A: Teacher' daily preparation	No. of Teachers
❖ Teachers brought their daily lesson plans	103
❖ Lesson plans include full preparations from January – June	50
❖ Lesson plans include teachers' responsibilities	10
❖ Lesson plans include valuable learners' cooperative activities	9
❖ Lesson plans include appropriate teacher's self-reflection	7
❖ Lesson preparations reflect the teaching and learning of all domains equally	71
❖ Lesson preparations done in accordance with the syllabus	14
❖ Lesson preparations done in accordance with scheme of work	0

The question was designed to compare the connection between teachers' lesson preparations and learners' activities (see box 2). This box reveals information on how Grade 8–10 Oshindonga teachers prepare their daily lesson plans. Each participant managed to bring his/her daily preparation as it was requested in the invitation letter, but

the extent to which their lesson plans were prepared differed. Few teachers do lesson preparation regularly, 50 teachers revealed this. Even for those who have done their lesson and preparation regularly, there is no correlation between teachers' lesson preparation and learners' activities. At the end of most lesson plans, learners were given homework, but these tasks do not exist in learners' workbooks. Explanations given by teachers are that some of the tasks were done on loose papers. Notwithstanding that, those loose papers were supposed to be filed or kept safely because they are needed to give evidence of CA marks given to learners.

Few teachers think of their responsibilities as facilitator, scaffolder and supervisor during the teaching and learning process, especial during group work. Teachers' lesson plans reflect their level of how they understanding group work. From these lesson plans it was revealed that during group work, teachers are just relaxing. Equally, none of the teachers have seen teacher's self-reflection as a vital element of lesson's successes or failure, though it is believed that self reflection assists teachers to reflect back on a lesson's success or failure. Learners' activities that were developed did not expand cognition. Most of them are always in the same mode a focus on the same skills. Lesson plans reflect that teachers are having a problem of integrating all four languages domains in one lesson plan. They are still trying to teach each language domain as separate aspects. This tradition continues from the old teaching and learning styles. Despite the fact that it is the responsibility of each teacher/school to develop a scheme of work, none of the teachers/schools have shown up a proper scheme of work therefore one can conclude that most lesson preparations monitored were not in accordance with the syllabus that was introduced and interpreted in February 2002. The syllabus requires inclusion of all languages domains in one lesson plan see Appendix D. It also requires learners' activities that expanding a broader learning, and teachers to act as classroom facilitator, scaffolder, supervisors, researcher and reflective practitioner (Grade 8–10 Curriculum 2002).

Figure 5: Workshop 2: Monitoring of Grade 8 – 10 Learners CA Marks: Teachers =103 Box 2

Part B: Learners' Activities Books	No. of teachers
• Teachers gave enough composition writing activities	98
• Teachers gave enough friendly letters writing activities	102
• Teachers gave enough other long pieces writing activities	20
• Teachers gave other short pieces writing activities	13
• Teachers gave enough other kinds of letters writing activities	43
• Teachers gave enough grammatical related activities	17
• Teachers gave enough numeric and graphs related activities	9
• Teachers market learners' activities regularly	59
• Teachers marked learners' activities intensively	29
• Teachers work regularly checked by HOD / Principal	25

The question was designed to compare the relationship between learners' activities and learners' marks accumulated in continuous assessment forms (see box 3). This box reveals information of how Grade 8–10 Oshindonga teachers gave learning activities to learners. In the first case, learners' activities books reflect composition and friendly letters as the only important dimensions to teachers. Most teachers gave more than two composition and friendly letter tasks. But learners' workbooks revealed that the way tasks have marked is not comprehensive. The majority of teachers did not show learners' weaknesses nor was advice given on how they could improve. Though compositions and letters can also be referred as long written pieces, Grade 8–10 Oshindonga Curriculum (2002) emphasis the need for reports, curriculum vitae, speeches, testaments, dialogue, etc as other long written pieces while advertisements, greeting cards, birthday greetings, messages to the radio, filling of forms, etc are short written pieces. Long and short pieces are some of the additional tasks of the new syllabus when compared with the old one. In the old syllabus, only composition and letters were given the priority. Looking at the monitoring result, long and short pieces were given less attention. Learners' work monitored reflected lack of knowledge among teachers when it comes to the teaching and learning of other long and short written pieces. The second point emphasised in these results was the teaching and learning of grammar. Grade 8–10 Curriculum (2002: 4) states:

" An important principle that should already have been kept in mind is that the mother tongue speaker in the Junior Secondary Phase (JSP) has already mastered a significant level of language skills in the primary school phases and is therefore more efficient ".

Because of this principle, most Junior Secondary Phase teachers have assumed that learners have already adequately gained all grammatical usage and language structures from previous phases; therefore, they believed that they did not need to emphasize this domain in their teaching any more. Unfortunately, that was not the case because as I have already mentioned, subject curricula at Upper Primary Phase, which is supposed to prepare learners Junior Secondary Phase had not been reformed until 2000. Therefore only few teachers gave grammatical related activities.

Thirdly, the world has become a global village through the many ways of providing information. Literacy, oracy, numeracy and graphic literacy are shown as the four modes of communication. Graphic literacy is the ability to communicate through the use of symbols other than letters and numbers and is increasingly important in our technologically oriented world (Wilmot 2003:10b). Learners' activities books reflect that the teaching and learning of numerics and graphic are aspects that receives less attention even though it is clearly stipulated in the curriculum that, *learners be able to describe intelligibly pictures, graphs, maps, charts or scenes* (Grade 8–10 Oshindonga Curriculum 2002:6).

There is no indication of how these aspects were taught and assessed. Enough opportunities should be provided to learners to communicate through numbers and graphics, including the interpretation of statistics, maps, graphs and charts, as well as to involve learners in constructing graphic representations using statistics and other dimensions of numeric. This indicates that teachers do not understand the importance of language integrated with other subject related knowledge. This gives the impression that most Oshindonga subject teachers are not yet well informed about the integration method

as one of the new language curriculum aspects, which are promoting teaching and learning the language across the curriculum of learner-centered education approach.

The last observed point in this box was marking and monitoring of teachers' work at school level. Almost a half of the teachers monitored are not marking learners' work regularly. It is very discouraging if learners receive back their tasks unmarked. I cannot even imagine how these teachers explain it to their learners. These teachers' attitudes are influenced by many factors. Two central ones are lack of parental involvement and lack of proper supervision by the school management team. Most parents in the Oshikoto region are illiterate and they do not have that much understanding of the value of education. Then if these two education stakeholders are not meeting their educational responsibilities effectively, then teaches will feel free and will renege on their responsibilities.

Figure 5: Workshop 2: Monitoring of Grade 8 – 10 Learners CA Marks: Teaches = 103
Box 3

Part C: Filling of Continuous Assessment Forms	No. of Teachers
• Teachers used the correct CA form	97
• Learners' CA marks corresponding with learners' activities	35
• Learners' CA marks corresponding with teachers' preparations	24

As I have mentioned in the previous analysis, this question was designed to confirm the relationship between part A and B (box 1 & 2). A large number of teachers used the correct CA forms (see appendix E). Looking at learners' marks accumulated in these forms, they scored high marks. The reflections tell of a high degree of learning that took place. No column was submitted without a mark. It seems that learners have done every activity as the CA form requests it. But if marks are compared with the actual learners' activities done, there is no correlation. The same results occur if compared with teachers' lesson preparation. This can create a spirit of distrust towards teachers' CA marks and one may possibly make a conclusion that the marks were fabricated. The compilation of continuous assessment marks is an official responsibility. The broad curriculum (1996: 34) states:

"In the Junior Secondary Phase (JSP), continuous assessment, including tests, may count no less 33% and no more than 50% towards the final year grade. The same applies to weight of continuous assessment marks and examination for each subject".

The National Institute for Education Development (NIED) and Directorate of National Evaluation and Assessment (DNEA) have developed reservations about teachers work; therefore the two institutions revised the weighting of all end of the year CA marks (NIED 2000).

7. The Context in which the Oshindonga Grade 8 – 10 Curriculum is presented

This section of the paper analyses the context within which the curriculum is presented. The analysis serves to highlight the problems that emerged in my analysis of the implementation of the curriculum. Three issues I explored are: teachers' qualifications and gender imbalances, allocation of teachers to teach the subject, and subject teaching and learning resources.

7.1. Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum Subject teachers' Qualifications

Ndeutepo's (1999) study revealed that most Oshindonga teachers are still "textbook slaves" and they are struggling to become reflective practitioners. They cannot utilize what is available; they therefore are not able to actually help learners effectively. They are unable to apply a variety of teaching and learning methods and turn their classrooms into a community of inquiry. My analysis perceived that the issue still exists. Most Grade 8–10 Oshindonga subject teachers lacked skills or the characteristics of being reflective teachers. To a certain extent, this situation has been influenced by teachers' qualification status. The following figure illustrates Grade 8–10 Oshindonga teachers'

qualification status covered by this study in four educational circuits: Omuthiya, Onyaanya, Onathinge and Oshigambo in Oshikoto Region. It also reflects the gender composition of the teachers.

Figure 6: Grade 8 – 10 Oshindonga 2002 Teachers' Qualifications and Gender = Teachers 87

Teachers qualifications	Number of teachers
University Qualification, e.g. B. Ed, HED, PGED	2
College graduate, e.g. BETD	30
Undergraduate, e.g. ECP. LPTC	35
African Language Education Diploma	13
Unqualified teachers	7
TOTAL	87
Females	72
Males	15
TOTAL	87

It is difficult for underqualified teachers to apply learner-centered education approaches and develop the needed professional skills, if not trained to do so, though most of these skills are gained from daily classroom experiences. Their qualification status cannot help them to have a broad knowledge and understanding that relates to the teaching of first language. If that is the reality, then what else should teachers do other than preserve the status quo? According to UNAM, Faculty of Education, Centre for External Studies, about 150–200 teachers have registered for the Diploma in Education for African Language each year, since the course was introduced in 1994. According to the Oshikoto Region Statistics Office, most teachers who obtained this diploma are not teaching Oshindonga, but have taken the course to improve their salary category. Most Namibian teachers are under pressure of the MBESC qualification policy, which forces them to upgrade their categories. The policy from the ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC) states the following:

"…Grade 12 serving teachers holding a teaching certificate and a minimum of five (5) years teaching experience and upgrading his/her qualification will be given seven (7) years (2001-2007) to complete their upgrading, … grade 10 serving teachers holding a

teaching certificate with a minimum of five (5) years teaching experience and upgrading their qualifications will be given seven (7) years to finalize their upgrading program,

'…underqualified teachers holding a grade 12 certificate and a minimum of five (5) years teaching experience and currently upgrading their qualifications through a recognized institutions will be given seven (7) years to finalize their upgrading programs…' (MBESC 1999:1).

It is therefore clear that most teachers are just taking the chance to improve their category with such a diploma. Without a thorough study, we can simply jump to the conclusion that we have enough specialist teachers teaching Oshindonga. In 2002, at the University of Namibia, only one final year student is doing Oshindonga, whilst in the first and second year, there are fewer than ten students all together who are registered for African Languages: Oshindonga, Otjiherero and Khoekhoegowab. At the Polytechnic of Namibia, only 8 students were registered for Oshindonga at all levels. While at the Ongwediva College of Education (OCE) only 67 student teachers were interested and registered to specialize in teaching Oshindonga in Grade 5–10 (Ausiku 2002: 2). This situation also threatens the future vision of teaching and learning Oshindonga as a first language in Namibia.

7.2 Gender imbalances in allocation of teachers to teach
   Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum

Most teachers teaching Grade 8–10 Oshindonga subject are females (see figure 6). According to females teachers interviewed, their concern was that they are undermined when it comes to the allocation of subjects to be taught. This has never been done in accordance with one's area of specialization. Most teachers, especially young female and male teachers do not like to teach Oshindonga. They believed teaching one's mother tongue is seen as inferior position as it does not require the use of English.

In the Oshikoto Region, most Grade 8-10 subject teachers are not only female but are underqualified teachers too (see figure 6). According to the interviewed teachers, most of them were undemocratically forced to teach the subject since no one else would teach it. How do you expect that kind of teacher to teach the subject effectively? Will this teacher be able to encourage learners to enjoy, show appreciation, and instill pride in their own language as cited in the subject curriculum?

In such a situation the practice of democracy is not demonstrated too. Democracy must not be simply a set of lessons in our schools but rather a central purpose of our education at all levels. To teach about democracy, our school management must practice democracy though that is not to say that every decision in a school must be subjected to a vote (Avenstrup 2002). We need to practice real democracy in our schools if we are serious about the process of changes and reforms in Namibia. Namibian education philosophy has a broad social responsibility to address gender issues. The Namibian Broad Curriculum is also designed in the sense that it should help teachers and other educators to develop gender conscious practices that identify not only gender inequalities in our society, but also the assumptions and the institutional framework that makes those inequalities seem normal and therefore acceptable. But if teachers themselves are not practicing gender balances in the eyes of learners, how should they educate learners about hidden curriculum concerning life skills and be able to develop self-respect and confidence in learners to study their own mother tongues?

7.3. Grade 8–10 Oshindonga Subject Teaching and Learning Resources

In 2000, I conducted a small-scale research on the provision of Oshindonga prescribed textbooks to schools. The findings revealed that there is a serious lack of teaching and learning support materials, as well as subject textbooks. Learners interviewed confirmed that they share textbooks and materials; there are generally 3-5 learners per book. Most Junior Secondary Phase schools are in rural areas where basic facilities such as libraries are very rare. This means that most subject teachers and learners are not exposed to the

world of reading. If they had libraries, it would help them to read extra books to supplement their experiences and the few resources that they have at their disposal.

On the other hand, most subject teachers do not make any effort to use other available materials, such as local newspapers or information posters to attract and capture the interest of learners. Most teachers still believe that the only teaching and learning aid they are able to use is the prescribed textbook. Most subject teachers are not innovative enough to be able to use the available resources creatively. Ndeutapo (1999) observed the inadequacy of teaching and learning resources in many schools as a contributing factor to the lack of success of the curriculum. Because of shortages of funds, only a few prescribed books are ordered each year. In such conditions, learners cannot be assisted very much.

8. Synthesis

Among the Grade 8–10 Oshindonga teachers, only some teachers have an initial teacher qualification, which prepares them for teaching the subject, as the subject curriculum requires. Teachers are not always effective in relation to changing their understanding and classroom practices as shown in the analysis of the implementation. In many schools, learners receive a narrow range of skills. Teachers ignore teaching some important language domains. Furthermore, poor and insufficient teaching and learning/support resources are key obstacles impeding better curriculum outcomes. These problems impede effective teaching and learning of the subject. Issues such as these have also decreased teachers and learners' interest in teaching and learning Oshindonga as a first language. Most Grade 8–10 Oshindonga teachers are products of the old system of education with its own theory of teaching/learning. Avenstrup (2002: 23) suggests that a competent teacher can take a strong behaviorist curriculum and syllabus, and the resulting materials, teach it in a social constructivist mode and produce improved outcomes. This means that although most Grade 8–10 Oshindonga teachers are

behaviorist by training, if they become competent enough, they can still produce improved outcomes.

In Namibia 10 years after Independence, it seems like the examination system has not yet freed itself entirely from the former curriculum and a narrower range of skills is stressed rather than all aspects of Oshindonga Curriculum as a whole. Again, we depend heavily on final written examinations, especially in Grade 10 and 12, just like as in the past. Therefore, the analysis found that most Grade 8–10 Oshindonga teachers teach towards examinations not for insightful learning and understanding. As a result, learners are not provided with sufficient opportunities to actively participate in construction of language knowledge in a range of ways, because they never go into depth in fields of learning, both conceptually and practically. This affects the way continuous assessment is conducted. Most activities designed for continuous assessment purpose are tests, although continuous assessment is supposed to assess skills that cannot be assessed during examination. The ways learners are continuously assessed does not constitute effective learning but rather the reproduction of examination procedures. Structures of question papers have been the same since independence. Examiners have been forced to follow the same question styles or formats. Only limited skills or competences are tested each year. For example, if learners were asked to write a letter to their fathers last year, then this year they will be asked to write a letter to their mothers or sisters. The basic skill (how to write a friendly letter) is just the same. This kind of examination practice has negatively encouraged some teachers to follow the same examination structures or styles in their classroom assessment activities with the belief that they are preparing their learners for final external examinations. When will other skills and competences be taught and get tested? Learners need to capture the full range of skills at all levels of competences. To achieve this, a variety of assessment practices need to be utilized in a continuous feedback into the teaching and learning process because if the end of the school year does mark the resting point of a cycle of learning, some form of retrospective statement of progress and achievement is useful (Avenstrup 2002:27).

One of the basic tenets of education reform in Namibia is gender equity. Each and every learner should be empowered to learn to the best of his/her ability. However, this research has shown how female teachers are deliberately and consciously discriminated against in the teaching of Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum.

9. Conclusion

Curriculum is a strategy for cooperation in which both teachers and learners have important roles but teachers are central to an effective implementation of curriculum because they are the principal interpreters and implementers of the curriculum in the classroom settings, curriculum monitors by examining how its aims, goals and objectives are translated into specific activities in their own classroom, and they are the primary sources of information about the viability and feasibility of the curriculum (Education for All 1993). This study aimed to explore the situation in which the Grade 8-10 Oshindonga curriculum is implemented. A variety of issues, problems and challenges have been expressed. As a subject advisory and a researcher, I have been informed and alerted by the findings of the study. This study reveals major obstacles that are impeding the effective implementation of the curriculum, such as lack of qualified teachers, resources and facilities, and lack of professional skills. It has also exposed me to other subject needs such as the need to do curriculum interpretation workshops, to train teachers on various curriculum aspects e.g. assessment, learner-centered education and give training on critical inquiry and reflective practice. Finally, the study has informed me on a variety of research potentials that have formed a fundamental core of the final research paper of the portfolio.

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THEORIES INFORMING THE NAMIBIAN EDUCATION REFORM PROCESS

Table of Contents

Abstract

Different philosophers have different perceptions and interpretations regarding the aspects of knowledge. They base their perceptions upon particular epistemologies or theories of life and views of humanity, and employ particular research methods to study the phenomena at hand, and, as a result come to different conclusions. So far there are two important philosophical paradigms that are used to view what knowledge is and how it should be acquired. The differences in the two paradigms flow from the fact that specific theories emphasize certain components or constituents of knowledge at the expense of others. The impression may be created that these different paradigms contradict each other, but rather each is merely endeavouring to reveal the essentials of realities and contributes in its own right towards a better understanding of various fundamental principles and worldviews.

1. Introduction

This philosophical conceptual analysis has three main aims. To understand knowledge as an important theoretical domain of behaviorist and constructivist theories, to understand how the two theories view knowledge and its acquisition and to gain understanding of how theories inform practice. In the first section of the analysis I have presented the theoretical nature of behaviourism, its philosophical trends, its influences on curriculum development and finally, its critiques. In the second section, I have again presented the theoretical nature of constructivism, its philosophical trends, its influences on curriculum development as well as its critiques. It is important to understand that analyzing the two educational theories is not meant to find the one that is better than the other, but rather to find how they are playing a major role in knowledge viewing, construction and acquisition.

2. Behaviourist Theory

Behaviourism has often been classified as more of a specialized psychological theory than a systemic philosophy that has been given increasing attention and acceptance in the field of education, so in many instances it has extended into areas ordinarily considered the domain of philosophy (Ozman and Craver 1986). Behaviourism is not a single theory. It has roots in several philosophical traditions (Ozman and Craver 1986). It has been drawn from the branches of realism, materialism, positivism, and logical behaviourism (van Harmelen 1995).

2.1. Realism

Realists believed that there is no internal reality, what is real is external, factual, and observable behaviour (Ozman and Craver 1986: 164). From the realists point of view, each individual does not internally determine human personality, but it is the behaviour patterns developed through environmental conditioning that determine human personality. Through patterns of reality, behaviour can be shaped and observed.

Behaviourist theory's connection with realism is primarily linked to the belief that human nature could be explained by means of observable behaviour that is influenced by environmental conditions (Ozman and Craver 1986). Behaviourism is related to realism largely in terms of the realists' thesis of independent reality that is similar to the behaviourist belief that behaviour is caused by environment conditions, hence Bacon (1561-1626) in his efforts to develop an inductive method, held that behaviourists must reject indubitable dogmas in favour of an inquiry approach that seeks meanings, cease accentuating the mind and consciousness as the causal agent of behaviour (Ozman and Craver 1986:164).

2.2. Materialism (Naturalism)

According to Ornstein and Levine (1989) materialists are concerned with examining human nature, they view the world as an ultimate reality, and everything can be explained in terms of natural laws. The human being in their view responds to external stimuli. Behaviourism is indebted to the materialistic philosophy of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) who adopted Descartes, Galileo, and Keplers' views, such as a "physical universe" and compared life with a machine, in the sense that it is operating according to its own natural laws (Ozman and Craver 1986:165). For Hobbes, all human's thinking is 'motion' while body is 'matter'; hence Behaviourism's close affinity with materialism lies in the belief that actions occur in certain objectively describable and predictable ways (Ozman and Craver 1986).

In his conditioning studies, Pavlov (1849-1956) showed how both realism and materialism are related; bodily response is not based on something mental but the response is made on the basis of conditioning, and conditioning is explained by external circumstances (Ozman and Craver 1986). In his contribution, Watson (1878-1958) argued that the brain is only a part of the nervous system and not the seat of mind or consciousness or a self-active entity, this is in line with the materialistic view. He rejected the mentalist notions of mind and consciousness.

In other words he rejected concepts such as purpose, feeling, satisfaction, and free will because they are not matter that can be controlled, observed, or measured. Watson investigated and experimented with how people can be conditioned through conditioning their environment. He believed that the environment is the primary shaper of human behavior, and he maintained that if he could control the human environment, he could then control and engineer a person into any kind of person desired through conditioning and controlling that person's environment (Ozman and Craver 1986:168).

2.3. Logical Empiricism

Logical empiricism is a philosophical thesis concerned with the correct analysis of statements about the mental or 'psychological' statements. The central idea here is that statements which purport or appear to be about happenings in a private mental world can be analysed or translated into statements about overt bodily, publicly observable behaviour, or dispositions to behave in a particular way (Pinchin 1990:99). According to Aspin (1995:21), it is the theory that regards experience as the only source of knowledge. Aspin (1995) further explain that this view developed from the work of Francis Bacon (1561-1626), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1676) and John Locke (1632-1704). In this theory experience refers to the data one receives through various sense organs, such as touch, sight, hearing, and the inner sense providing the recipients of such data with evidence of the existence of a world of real objects (Aspin 1995). John Lock (1632-1704) and David Hume are two major philosophers who influence this theory. The logical empiricists wanted an account of the growth of human ideas and knowledge that was grounded only in human experience through the evidence of senses and inner feelings, combined into meaningful concepts, such as association. Locke's central thesis is that all knowledge comes from experience (Aspin 1995:24).

Locke's central idea is that all our knowledge derives from experience and he maintains that mind is like an empty cupboard or a blank sheet of paper (Aspin 1995:24). This has much in common with the thinking of Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) who maintained that at birth there is nothing in the mind (Aspin 1995:24). In other words, this means that the structure and content of the human mind is the product of experience and that knowledge is founded in experience. Logical empiricists believed that the only path to knowledge is through investigation procedures, techniques, and requirements of the "hard sciences" (Aspin 1995:30). In this way, logical empiricists stress the use of science and its application to all enquiries, including those concerning human beings, human nature, human behaviours, and how humans relate with others or with the natural world that surrounds them. Logical empiricists also stressed the principle of verifiability (Ozman and Craver 1986) where facts of behaviour have to be accurately reflected. These

theorists also believe that philosophical theory needs to be developed through critical and logical sciences. For example, if the philosopher is to uphold his/her claim, that claim must not be based on speculation. It must be a final clear, precise and consistent clarification, a logical analysis of meanings, and the only way to do this is through scientific method (Aspin 1995:32-33).

Behaviourist theories view the concept of knowledge from the point of view of how human beings reason. Because they believe that they cannot see inside the mind, they claim knowledge is external to the human mind. Knowledge should be acquired through discovering, observation, experimenting, and explanation based on causation (Aspin 1995). Behaviourist theories claimed that all genuine knowledge is based on sense-experience and can only be advanced by means of observation and experiment (van Harmelen 1995). Hence something can only be true if you can measure, test and prove it through scientific reasoning. They further argued that knowledge is equated with facts that represent the individual parts into which knowledge can be reduced. Skinner's thinking has dominated later behaviourist theory and expanded the ideas of early behaviourists such as Watson. Skinner's contribution to behaviourist theory included the idea of operant conditioning. In this way he attempted to address the criticism against human beings being shaped only by their environment (van Harmelen 1995).

A further link between logical empiricism and behaviourism originates from the work of August Comte (1778-1857) who was one of the prominent sociological early positivists. His interests were based on the reformation of society through applying scientific, recognized, systemized, measurable, observable principles, laws, and behaviours in order to reform, condition and change society into a positive social order. Comte's thought influenced subsequent thinkers to use science in devising social laws, order, policy and principles. Contemporary positivists believe in the use of accurate, logical, and correct linguistically phrasings and structure in scientific investigations when constructing knowledge (Aspin 1995). They advocated what is called the "principle of verifiability" (Ozman and Craver 1986). This principle maintains that no statement should be taken as truthful unless it can be verified empirically or is at least capable of being verified

(Ozman and Craver 1986:6). They promoted language and thought that was more controllable and rigorous. Therefore, for positivists the achievement of clarity is the only possible aim of philosophical enquiry (Aspin 1995: 32).

The connection between early and logical/contemporary positivism with behaviourism is that behaviourists also seek more accurate language frameworks that reflects the facts of behaviour to them. For example, if the behaviourist speaks of "conditioned" or "reinforced behaviour" or "repertoire of behavioural response" or "operant conditioning", they seek to avoid speculative theories. The principle maintained that only sentences that may properly and validly attract the philosopher's attention are the analytical propositions of logic and the empirical propositions of scientific enquiry (Aspin 1995:29). It was on the basis of this doctrine that Hume and his followers were to reject speculative metaphysics and any other similar attempt at producing, a transcendent account of the nature of reality as being philosophically meaningless (Aspin 1995:29).

3. Behaviourism and Curriculum Development

Referring to Sutherland's analysis, behaviourism at that time was regarded as one of the most optimistic theories in education; hence its techniques of detailed analysis have been recommended in deciding what the syllabus is to be in school subjects. They have produced the 'behavioural objectives' approach to curriculum planning (Sutherland 1988:100). Scientific methods were the only tools regarded appropriate in constructing knowledge, (Garforth, as cited in Aspin 1995:27) and scientific knowledge was regarded as the only reliable form of knowledge (Tylor and Williams1993: 4), thus instead of having a vague general statement of topics to be 'covered' in a series of lessons, curriculum experts have to think precisely what changes should be apparent in learners' behaviours after the course has been taught (Sutherland 1988:100).

Behaviourists similarly advocate the use of inductive reasoning to arrive at general propositions. Behaviourist philosophy was increasingly implemented in many fields of

contemporary life, politics, economics, and other social organizations, such as education. Scientific attempts have been made to apply some behavioural principles in an education context. "… *if we want to understand human beings, behaviourists argue, we should concentrate on their behaviour, on what they actually do, rather than interpret them according to our own experience or even according to their verbal statement"* (Sutherland 1988:89). Behavioural education viewed as the agent that was considered to result in changes in children's behaviour, hence the principle of conditioning was employed. Behaviourists believed if education were scientifically oriented, it would be easy to control, observe and bring about desired changes in behaviour (van Harmelen 1999b).

In the scientific view, knowledge is identified as universal truths (van Harmelen 1999:13a). Therefore the scientific curriculum was determined by the 'experts' who seem to have access to these universal truths and who are then given the power to select which of these truths ought to be required, when they ought to be acquired, and by whom (van Harmelen 1999:13a). The classical behavioural curriculum model was based on passive responses from learners. It was seen as a tool for bringing changes in behaviours that have occurred either as a result of a direct response to a stimulus originating in the environment or as the result of the reinforcement. It has been also viewed as a set of "recipes" to be followed (van Harmelen 1999:13a) that would help to make schooling a scientifically observable and measurable endeavour (van Harmelen 1995:52). It was intended as a uniform approach that expected all learners in different situations to learn exactly in the same way those same universal truths. It was rigid, since it expected all teachers to follow it without deviating from the recipes. The behaviourist curriculum with its pre-planned lists of objectives and recipe content is designed without input by the teachers who have to deliver it, making schooling a scientifically observable and measurable endeavour (Stenhouse 1981).

In this behaviourist kind of curriculum, teaching was seen as a process of transmitting facts, the static, fixed and unchallenged "truths" (van Harmelen 1999:10a) from the know-all-teachers to the passive, receptive children. In order to acquire this knowledge

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and to do well in studies, the learners must passively memorize the content facts. What are at work are factual recall, repetition, rote learning and one right answer. A right student response to a teacher or textbook question is an evidence of student thought and learning. Right responses are sought by teachers and rewarded with praises and points (Cornbleth 1987:194). The other important dimension of the behavioural curriculum is Piaget's stages of learning. This learning theory embodied the belief that mental growth consists in the child moving from simpler to more complex systems of logical operations (Bruner 1996:4). The teaching techniques of transmission are employed by teachers to pass such truthful knowledge on, with learners not expected to question what they have to learn. Such a teaching and learning situation leads to the conclusion that the teachers are the ones "who know" and the children as ones who "do not know". The picture of the children is that of empty minds. Teachers conditioned students to sit up straight and to be quiet through looks, grades, and tokens/rewards, and physical/corporal punishment. Extrinsic reward was more emphasized than intrinsic motivation.

The real purpose of education in a behaviourist context is not to have the teachers or instructors perform certain activities, but to bring about significant changes in the children's patterns of behaviour. It becomes important to recognize that any statement of objectives of the school is the statement of changes to take place in the students (Taylor, as cited in van Harmelen 1995). What are classified are the intended behaviours of the student, the ways in which individuals are to act, think or feel as the result of participating in some units of instruction (Stenhouse 1981:57).

4. Behaviourist Critique

Aspin (1995) presented some critiques about the principle of verifiability by positivists and the scientific method by logical empiricists. Popper and other adherents of evolutionary epistemology opposed the idea of verifiability and knowledge construction by means of the scientific method. They argued that the verifiability criteria are ambiguous and that they cannot even meet their own test. The other doubts are related to

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the concept of truth and the explanation of the precise nature of the relationship between sentences and the situation to which it refers. They also opposed the unification of science and observation. They believed that experience cannot be based on science and acquiring knowledge through experience has nothing to do with science.

Van Harmelen (1995) analysed behaviourist theory and noted some key weaknesses. These include the idea and the notion of causality. For although many things are linked through cause and effect, many things are not. It is therefore not possible to justify all knowledge on this basis. When it comes to teaching and learning based on behavioural theory, analysts also challenged the notion of learning occurring in clearly defined steps and thinking as something that is composed of discrete skills that exist in a hierarch and thinking is recursive rather than linear or hierarchical (van Harmelen 1995:63). Stenhouse (as cited in van Harmelen 1995:64) criticized the basic morality of the behavioural thesis that essentially objectifies the learner and he suggested organizational as the power of the objectives model.

Ozman and Craver (1986:176) provide another critique directed at behaviourists, in particular, Skinner. Skinner did not see education and conditioning as two different things. He does not feel that the mind is free to begin with. But according to Ozman and Craver, education presumably represents a free mind being exposed to ideas that one may look upon critically and accept or not accept, whereas conditioning is seen to represent the implementation of certain specific ideas in the pupil's mind with or without his critical consent. Behaviourists believed that whatever kinds of critical judgment or acceptance of ideas students make are already predicted by ideas with which they have been previously conditioned.

Cornbleth (1987) also criticized behaviourist's belief in one right answer. She argued that right answers do not necessarily demonstrate student's learning and subject matter knowledge or thought. They are typically answers to simple knowledge recall or memory questions. This practice tends to encourage rote memorization rather than thinking things through. Based on Piaget's stages of cognitive development and styles of learning,

Cornbleth foresees the danger in categorizing students according to their presumed development level or their presumed learning or cognitive styles. The danger lies in the category labels and in the school practices that are based on such labeling. Cornbleth's belief is that labels are neither neutral nor helpful to teaching and learning.

5. Constructivist Theory

As the perception of knowledge, its constituents, and how to acquire it has changed over time, so has the range of theories changed, theories we select now are applied also to specific contexts. Many of these new ideas were often critical or even oppositional to previous ideas. But at the same time, they drew on the experience gained from previous practice, often leading to a mixture of ideas influencing each other at different times. This is particularly true of constructivist theory. Constructivist theory can be summarized as a philosophy that holds that people ultimately construct their own knowledge that then resides within them, so that each person's appropriation of knowledge makes as them. Like the behaviourist theory, constructivist theory is also made of various branches such as radical, social, and critical constructivism. In this section, I am going to analyse what these differing approaches have in common with the basic principles of constructivist theory.

5.1. Radical Constructivism

Radical constructivists draw strongly on Piaget's cognitive theory and argue that knowledge involves active individual and personal processing of information that has to "fit" reality rather then "match" reality' (Bodner 1986:874). This means that individuals might have the same knowledge and they can apply that same knowledge into different situations to fit in with their individual solutions. Radical constructivists therefore believe that knowledge is good only if and when it works, as well as if and when it allows

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people to achieve their goals (Bodner 1986:874). For Radical constructivists, knowledge is viable when it works and stands up to the needs of experiences. Knowledge is constructed in the mind (Bodner 1986:874) and it is personal. An individual who sees the world through his/her own personal, individual and isolated experiences constructs it. Radical constructivists did not take into account the context of learning and the way in which culture and language shape learning as much as the next group of theorists.

5.2. Social Constructivism

Social constructionist inquiry is principally concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world in which they live. It attempts to identify and explain common forms of understanding as they now exist as they have existed in prior historical periods and as they might exist should creative attention be so directed (Gergen 1985: 266). The social constructivist model of the world is that of a shared social reality (Ernest 1993:2). Making sense is a social process (Bennett and Dunne 1994:51). There are social processes in creating knowledge, therefore a socially constructed world is created and formed by the shared experiences of all participants. Gergen (1985: 267) says that the process of understanding is not automatically driven by the forces of nature, but is the result of an active, cooperative enterprise of persons in relationships. This world is always socially constructed and modified to fit ontological reality (Ernest 1993), and to pre-structure it according to socially accepted assumptions can never give a *"true picture"* of it (Ernest 1993:3). In his contribution, Ernest mentioned that social constructivist theory regards individual subjects and the realm of the social as indissolubly interconnected. Human subjects are formed through their interactions with each other as well as by their individual processes. Thus, there is no underlying metaphor for the isolated individual mind. Instead, the underlying metaphor is that of conversation, comprising persons in meaningful linguistic and extra-linguistic interaction. Mind is seen as part of a broader context and the social construction of meaning (Ernest 1993:2).

Gergen (2001:123) explained that social constructivism finds a much closer ally in ideas that can be termed social constructivist. By social constructivism, we delineate a body of work in which both cognitive processes and the social milieu are pivotal. He further explained that social constructivism would also be represented in the educational work where the relationship between teacher and students is central to the educational process. This social context is complex and is an organized social form of life depending on a variety of aspects, e.g. persons, interpersonal relationships, and material resources. Through social life, people acquire a framework for interpreting experience, and learn how to negotiate meaning in a manner related with the requirements of the culture. Hence (Wood 1988:8) put a great emphasis on the role of language, communication and instruction in the development of knowledge and understanding. Social constructivists believe that processes that underlie intelligent and adaptive thinking are communicative. Vygotsky, who has influenced the thinking of social constructivism, placed instruction at the very heart of human development. Wood (1988) further quoted Vygotsky's idea of putting language and communication at the core of intellectual and personal development. Vygotsky stressed the way in which culture forms and transforms the child's development. This brought constructivists to the position that the process of understanding is the result of an active, cooperative enterprise of persons in relationships (Gergen 1985:267).

Bennett and Dunne (1994:52) set far more stress on the importance of the social setting in learning. In their words, learning in most settings is a communal activity, a sharing of the culture. It is not just that everyone must make his/her knowledge in his/her own, but that s/he must make it his/her own in a community of those who share his/her sense of belonging to a culture where language has to play a role. Since knowledge is socially constructed, the acquiring of knowledge needs to make meaning. New knowledge builds on the existing knowledge gained through social interactions. Hence constructivists believe that knowledge is not a product of induction or of the building and testing of general hypotheses (Gergen 1985:266).

Knowledge is achieved when the mind attains its own satisfaction by corresponding to objective reality. Each form of knowledge involves the development of creative imagination, judgment, thinking, communicative skills, and so on, in ways that are peculiar to them as a way of understanding experience. Social constructivism is therefore principally concerned with explaining the processes by which people come to describe, explain or otherwise account for the world in which they live.

5.3. Critical Constructivism

Linser (2004:1) describes critical constructivism that it deposits that all theories are for someone and for some purpose. Critical theorists seek to demonstrate the connection between knowledge and practice, fact and value, and make connections between the knower and the known. Recognizing knowledge is not neutral but constitutive of interest the objective is to provide a critique of traditional problem-solving positivism with a commitment to emancipation and new forms of international community conducive to freedom, cooperation, and peace. He further explained that it is the new theory that looks at constructivism within a social and cultural environment, but adds a critical dimension aimed at reforming these environments in order to improve the success of constructivism applied as a referent.

For further explanation, Giroux (1983) described critical theory as the kind of theory that engages directly with real problems, using them as both the subject and justification for it's theorizing. It seeks not simply to explain those problems, but to provide the means of resolving them by enabling people to gain more control over their own lives. It helps today's educationists to enlarge their understanding of how they may rationally justify educational action, by explaining the origins of everyday practices and problems, offers replies to those questions which ask what should be done, and enables change towards better relationship for a more just and rational society.

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Taylor and Williams (1993) expanded the idea of critical constructivism as a social epistemology that addresses the socio-cultural context of knowledge construction and serves as a referent for cultural reform. It criticizes the relativism and radical constructivism that identifies the learner as an isolated identity. Critical constructivism focuses on issues of power that operate within radical constructivism and emphasis the unequal power relationships that exist where learning is not subjected to a critical analysis only possible in a social setting. According to Habermas' theory (Taylor and Williams 1993) a communicative action domain establishes dialogue oriented towards achieving mutual understanding. Taylor and Williams (1993) further described Harbermas as one of the philosophers who is further influencing the constructivist theory for the development of a critical constructivist perspective that is based on the communicative action domain. The domain is intended to engage both teachers and learners in forms and endeavours for open and critical discourse. Harbermas argued that knowledge construction should be based on three cognitive interests: technical, practical, and emancipatory. These cognitive interests give rise to the three distinctive forms of knowledge-constitutive (action) empirical (analytic), historical (hermeneutic) and critical, respectively (Taylor and Williams 1993:6).

To sum up the constructivism theory, I would like to highlight some key common principles of constructivism. Constructivism branches have a lot in common; "... *knowledge is not passively received but actively built up by the cognizing subjects*" (von Glasersfeld, as cited in Ernest 1993:1). Knowledge is a concept that includes information, concepts, skills, values, and attitudes. We ought not to equate "facts" or information with knowledge, because this is a very narrow and incorrect interpretation of the concept of knowledge, (van Harmelen 1999:3a). Knowledge is constructed in the mind of the person (Bodner 1986:873). So knowledge does not simply mirror and reflect what we are told or what read. People construct knowledge for themselves, look for meaning and will actively try to find regularity and order in the events of the world.

Bodner (1986) supports von Glassersfeld who described knowledge as a search for a fit and rather than a match with reality. Knowledge is good if and when it works and if and

when it allows us to achieve our goals. The assumption of knowledge is that of being a result of a life-long constructive process in which we try to organize, structure, and restructure our experiences in the light of existing schemes of thought, and thereby gradually modify and expand these schemes. This is also valid in the sense of critical and social constructivists because they are also emphasizing the construction of interconnected knowledge that gives solutions to social issues. *Knowledge construction is a communal activity, a sharing of the culture (Brunner, as cited in* Bennett and Dunne 1994:52). This implies that knowledge and understanding does not come through passivity and not sharing any experiences. It is an understanding, application, social endeavour with language and communication enhances it.

The theory differs from other theories in the natural sciences. Most constructivist texts reject the features of scientific explanation. The theory holds that scientific approaches to the study of human society are at best ill conceived, at worst irrelevant or distorting, because constructivists believe that the use of scientific methods and assumptions of the natural sciences in the study of society is to hamper the pursuit of truth (Giroux 1983:4). They argue that in human affairs all facts are socially constructed, humanly determined and interpreted, and hence subject to change through human means. In education, constructivists refer to notions such as achievement, failure, progress, and ability as neither objective, nor natural, nor disinterested terms.

6. Constructivism and Curriculum Development

Constructivists emphasized that learning takes place only if learners understand and can demonstrate or apply that understanding to their own contexts. Learning then takes place through a process in which learners are increasing their understanding. This learning process takes place within a variety of social settings, namely, at homes, schools, hospitals, meetings, spots, cultural events, etc. *Knowledge constructing is a communal activity, a sharing of the culture (*Brunner, as cited in Bennett and Dunne 1994:52). This implies that understanding does not come through passivity or rote learning.

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Characteristics of good learning are; learning for and as understanding and application and recognize that learning is a social endeavour with language, and communication that enhances it.

In relation to curriculum reform, a critical constructivist perspective adopts not only the radical and social constructivist perspectives on learning, but also addresses the ideology that governs the curriculum. It aims to combine practical and emancipatory curriculum interests and focuses pedagogical attention on the nexus between the subjective and inter-subjective constitution of the classroom-learning environment (Taylor and Williams 1993:14). Therefore in schools, good curricula should focus on the conceptual understanding and the development of skills, values, and attitudes. Curricula influenced by constructivist theory brought the shift away from the traditional curriculum that has primarily focused on factual recall through rote learning. The shift is towards questions based on the cue words that ask how, why, account for, explain, consider, how, etc. These are the kind of questions that motivate learners to think critically. Combinations of methods are accepted as more usefully applied in response to diverse educational teaching strategies. A balanced range of method is used in differing contexts teaching and learning situations. This also implies that directed interactive methods where the teacher shows, instructs and tells within practical and problem situations need to be balanced with more experiential approaches. Learners' initiative in finding meaning, problem solving and taking action is supported with methods that enable individual and cooperative effort to develop greater action competence.

Bennet and Dunne (1994) claimed that children as social beings play and talk with one another and learn through interactions with parents and teachers. Adopting conversation as the underlying metaphor of social constructivism gives pride of belongingness as a human being and use of language in the account of knowledge construction. In the works of Vygotsky on symbolic interaction and activity theory, language is regarded as the shaper and the product of individual minds (Vygotsky, as cited by Bennet and Dunne 1994:52). Vygotsky (1896-1934) claimed that a learner gains knowledge often in interactions with more *"knowledgeable others"* (Bennet and Dunne 1994:52). These

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"knowledgeable others" can be anybody, namely, peer, siblings, teachers, parents, grandparents, and so on. For Vygotsky, the foundation of developing knowledge is cooperation and the basis of that success is language and communication (Scott et al 1997). He increasingly recognized that much teaching and learning takes place directly through the medium of instruction.

To review constructivism to education, I refer to Fosnot, where she sums up general principles of teaching and learning derived from constructivist theories:

- Learning is not the result of development; learning is development. It requires invention and self-organization on the part of the learner. Thus teachers need to allow learners to raise their own questions, generate their own hypotheses and models as possibilities and test them for viability.

- Disequilibrium facilities learning. Errors need to be perceived as a result of learners' conceptions and therefore not minimized or avoided. Challenging, open-ended investigations in realistic, meaningful contexts need to be offered, thus allowing learners to explore and generate many possibilities, both affirming and contradictory.

- Reflective abstraction is the driving force of learning. As meaning-makers, humans seek to organize and generalize across experiences in a representational form. Allowing reflection time may facilitate reflection abstraction.

- Dialogue within community engenders further thinking. The classroom needs to be seen as a community of discourse engaged in activity, reflection and conversation. The learners are responsible for defending, providing, justifying and communicating their ideas to the classroom community.

- Learning proceeds toward the development of structures. As learners struggle to make meaning, progressive structural shifts in perspective are constructed.

(Fosnot 1996:29)

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7. Constructivist Critique

Constructivist theory, in most cases, has now been regarded as far superior to the wooden and limiting (Matthews 1992:1) behaviourist theory of mind and learning, as one of the major influences in present day education curriculum, inspires many education curricula reform programs, infuses textbooks, commended as the theoretical foundation for education curricula, the subject of major international conferences and numerous journal articles, and the foundation of many teacher training courses; it also has its epistemological errors that need to be considered. Let us look at some of them.

The way knowledge is constructed in this model is criticized because radical constructivists believed that each of us constructs knowledge that 'fits' our experiences (Bodner 1986:873). This statement has a two-fold critique. Critics suggest firstly that theories are not proved through experiences, but through experimental evidence and, secondly, radical constructivists emphasize individualization and personalization, the individualizing and personalizing of knowledge construction can lead to privately constructed worlds, which have no bearing on reality. Constructivist's argument presents the world and human beings as 'personalised and idiosyncratic' (Bodner 1986:873). Such a view makes it hard to establish a social basis for interpersonal communication, for shared feelings and concerns, let alone for shared values as socialists suggesting knowledge constructed socially.

What evidence do we have that knowledge is constructed to "fit" rather than *"matches"* reality? Bodner (1986) has tried to shed light on the issue of knowledge that has been interactively constructed. Knowledge *"must fit"* reality (Bodner 1986: 875). He further explained that evidence for the constructivist model is based on the fact that we do not perceive sensory information unless or until we learn to coordinate this information into a cognitive structure or scheme. To acquire knowledge meaningfully, individuals must choose to relate this new knowledge to relevant concepts and propositions they already know. This is in contrast with the behaviourism model that believes that new knowledge

might be acquired simply by verbatim, memorization and arbitrarily incorporated into a persons' knowledge structure without interacting with what is already there.

Construction is a process in which knowledge is both build and continually tested (Bodner 1986: 875). Individuals are not free to construct any knowledge but their knowledge must be viable. It must "*work*" and it must stand up to the constraints of our experiences. "…when some 'fit' is achieved, the selected 'mini theory' is modified to incorporate to the new experience", (Appleton 1993:269). The concepts, ideas, theories, and models we construct in our individual minds are constantly being tested as a result of experience, and they survive in a pragmatic or instrumental sense only as long as they are useful, as long as they are more appropriately explains our experiences.

Substantial, Davson-Galle (1999) presented his argument interested on lack of learning scientific knowledge in the constructivism curriculum. Traditionally, science education emphasizes to help learners to understand the universe of which they are a part; to have some knowledge of what there is and what is like and of how to find out about their chances of knowing some substantive science content and its methods, thus (Davson-Galle 1999) believed that scientific methods are the most appropriate for inquiring into scientific thought. He further argued that the introduction of learners to the sophisticated conceptual repertoires and theses that have been generated within scientific is important if learners are to have a chance of sharing some of the best thought through theories that humanity has collectively generated.

Finally, Ernest (1993) identified some weakness of radical constructivism. He argued that the individualistic emphasis of radical constructivism leads to some significant weaknesses (Ernest 1993:4). Its cognizing subject appears to be near-hermetically sealed in a privately constructed experiential world of its own. Its representations of the world and indeed of other human beings are personal and idiosyncratic. According to Ernest, he believed that such a view makes it hard to establish a social basis for interpersonal communication, for sharing feelings and concerns, let alone for shared values. It can also lead to an overly child-centred progressivism.

8. Differences between Behaviourism and Constructivism

In this section I would like to highlight some differences between the two theories, particularly in curriculum development. Behaviourists emphasize the transmission of education where knowledge is required through the passive memorization of facts. The learners' correct responses to the teacher or textbook questions are regarded as evidence of true learning. Cornbleth (1987) has challenged those behaviorist assumptions from the perspectives of constructivism. She discovered that right answers do not necessarily demonstrate learners are learning. Learners may just be repeating or memorizing what they already know. Nor do right answers necessarily demonstrate subject matter knowledge or thought. The right answers that are valued by behaviorists typically tend to encourage rote memorization rather than critical thinking.

Unlike behaviorists who would define learning as a passive process, constructivists view it as a process of active participation in which learners intellectually hold ideas or schemes that they use to make sense of their everyday experiences. Learning involves interaction, collaboration, elaboration, extension, and even modification of their schemata. This process is one by which learners actively make sense of the own contexts by constructing meanings. Unlike behaviourism where learners are empty-headed, here they must make meaning, connecting their prior knowledge, experiences and ideas to the arising situations. Therefore meaning making, in Vygosky's view, requires language.

The traditional view of knowledge sees the mind as "empty cupboard" or "blank sheet of paper" or a "blank box" in which no one knows what is happening. In his words, (Bodner 1986:874) says: each of us knows what is going on in our minds; but we cannot guess about the relationship between our mental structures. The mind is the centre of our humanity and we cannot learn without it. One cannot plan without knowing the consequences of the plan when it comes to the relationship between the plan and the environment. Bennett and Dunne (1994) argued that what children learn in the classroom depends to a larger extent on what they have already known. Irrespective of their ages, children have some knowledge and some conceptions of the classroom topics they are

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faced with, which they have acquired from books, televisions, talking to parents and friends, visits to places of interests, previous work in school, interaction with community events, cultural events, and so many others. In other words, children are not empty-headed; they have spontaneous knowledge, incomplete and hazy ideas, or partial schemata in their minds.

Knowledge is not static, fixed, truth nor value-free as behaviorists think. Knowledge changes and develops all the time. It is always relative to a situation and therefore to everyone who experiences it (Griessel et al 1993:186). Any knowledge that we construct depends on the social forces, on what is available at what particular time of a particular place, and on its values and attitudes of this particular society. It is as well determined by the social interactions of that particular society, the political and economic conditions that are prevailing at that time.

In my own example, in Namibia today, politicians and current historians are campaigning to have President Sam Nuuyoma's recently launched autobiography *Where others Wavered*, as an integral part of the history curriculum. The belief is that it is an important historical account that Namibian learners need to know. They refer all these counts of knowledge as more important as they allow learners to see the past and think of the future, their place in the whole world prevailing social values, attitudes, political and economical conditions. Recent curriculum developers are emphasizing the learning of Business Management, Economics, Science and Mathematics. This is because in today's society, self-reliance and self-employment are targets. HIV/AIDS, addressing the gender imbalance, Environmental Education, Population Education, are just few of the challenges we face in contemporary Namibian society. These are new challenges that require addressing in today's curricula development because we construct knowledge depends on the social forces, on what is available at what particular time of a particular place, and on its values and attitudes of this particular society. It is as well determined by the social interactions of that particular phenomenon.

9. Conclusion

This paper has focused on the philosophical basis of behaviourism and constructivism. The ideas of both behaviourists and constructivists have made an important contribution to give me better understanding as curriculum developer and have had a great impact on curriculum development in the Namibian context. Current wisdom holds with constructivist approaches, primarily because of the powerful contribution made by the cognitive sciences and theorists to our understanding about the processes of learning.

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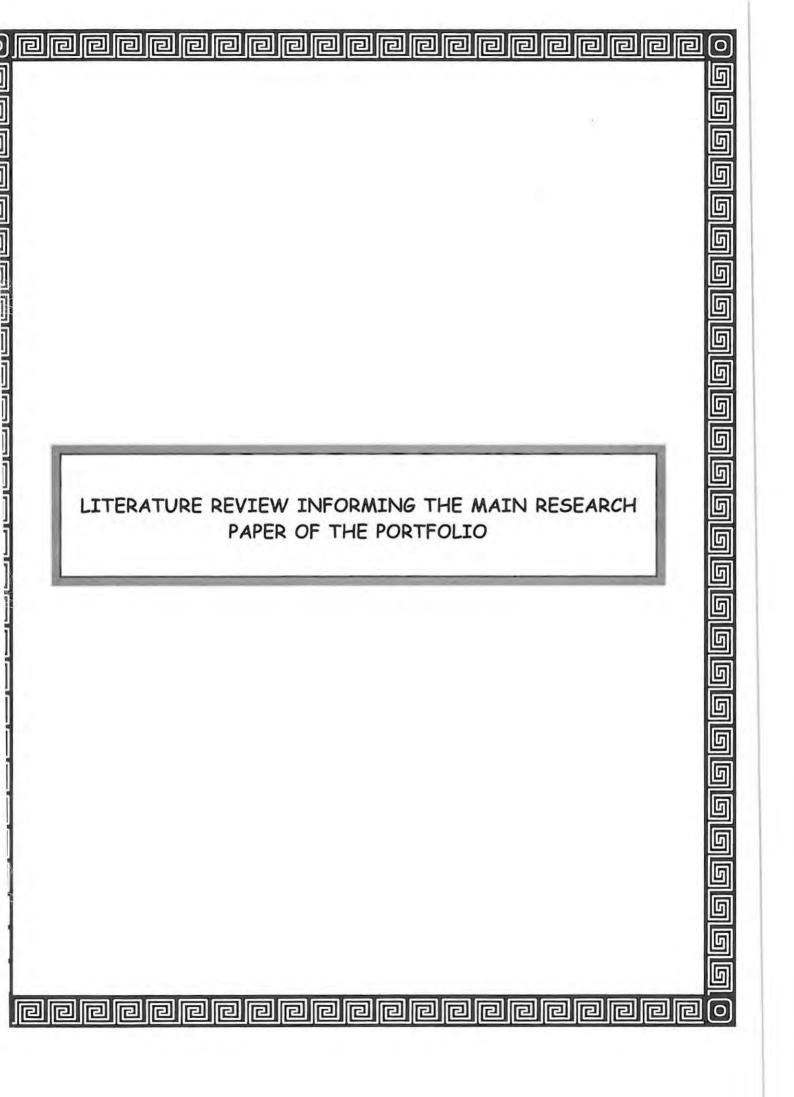
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LITERATURE REVIEW INFORMING THE MAIN RESEARCH
PAPER OF THE PORTFOLIO

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

The literature review presented in this paper served to inform my main research paper related to teacher's professionalism. The focus of the research was on the teacher as a reflective practitioner. This is in line with the Namibian Education Policy, which identifies reflective practice as the heart of teacher professionalism. In this paper I explored a variety of views related to the notion of professionalism in teaching. I have also focused on views related to teacher's professional development both on macro and micro levels. These views provided a clarification and an underpinning framework on which to base my analysis of reflective practice as professionalism in education.

2. Views of Professionalism

In this section, I examine definitions of the term *'profession'* as explained by several authors. Engvall (1997:50) has defined *"professionalism"* as an ideal to which individuals and occupational groups aspire that distinguishes them from other professionals. When *"professional"* is applied to teachers, it means a member of an occupation with a recognized professional status, (Brandt, as quoted in Engvall, 1997:52). Howard (1995) has defined *" professional development"* as a continuous cyclical process of reflection on professional action. Eraut (1995) has analyzed how teachers themselves gave the term *"professional"* different meanings in different contexts, referring as appropriate to professional conduct, professional status, professional quality, professional judgments and professional responsibilities.

In his words, Loughran (1996) has reviewed a *"professional reflective practitioner teacher"*, as an open-minded teacher who has the abilities to consider classroom problems in new and different ways and to open new teaching and learning approaches and new educational ideas and thoughts. The reflective teacher is always ready to listen to more sides than one and is an active listener, prepared to hear thinking that may be contrary to his/her own, admitting that a previously held belief may in fact be wrong.

As I have gone through these ideas, I have found that they overlap with each other, and for the purpose of this study they are important because they are leading to what I want to investigate, a postmodern teacher's professional practices in the classroom that Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) have labled 'postmodern reflective practitioner teacher's professionalism'. Calderhead (1988) characterizes this professionalism as practical knowledge, a knowledge that is directly related and applicable to coping with real life situations, and is largely derived from a teachers' own classroom experience. Hoyle and John (1995) and Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) referred to this professionalism as an extended professionalism that is largely acquired through participating in a wide range of professional development activities, including attending in-service courses or workshops, visiting other institutions, and co-operating with colleagues.

I have also found that there is no clear consensus about the precise set of characteristics defining *"teaching professionalism"* from the many analyses that I have read. What is meant to be professional, to show professionalism or to pursue professionalism status is not universally agreed on understood by all recent scholars. Essentially, then, the definitions of all related terms concur that *'profession'* refers both to a state of attainment that allows an individual to be called a *'professional'* and that this is prefaced upon specialized knowledge and intensive academic preparation; and that it also refers to the group of people who make up the profession. But beyond this, what counts as professional knowledge and professional action in teaching is open to many different interpretations. For the purpose of this analysis, I would like to define *"teacher professionalism"* in my own words:

> *"It is the recognition and utilization of the combination of theoretical and empirical knowledge, collective organization, skills, practical experiences and standard competences that the teacher has continuously accumulated and learned from sharing and team-working with other professionals over a long period of the teaching and learning process."*

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A second feature of professionalism is surely that of empowerment. Carl (1995:1) defined 'teacher empowerment':

> " Teacher Empowerment is that process of development and growth through which a teacher goes which enables him/her to take independence decisions and to act autonomously with a view to making a contribution towards the development of her particular environment (school or classroom). This process is coupled with the development of applicable skills, attitudes and knowledge within a positive and democratic climate. This teacher is therefore regarded as professional in her own right as she is able to make a contribution to change through her particular power. "

Although the emphasis in the definition of " teacher empowerment" is more focused on the teacher's self-directed power, one can still argue the interrelationship between teacher professionalism and teacher empowerment. The teacher needs some autonomous power to make her educational decisions in some cases, such as, interpreting the subject curriculum according to his/her classroom context, deciding on appropriate teaching and learning approaches, materials, what to teach, when, how, where and why.

Carl (1995) stated that it is a vital fact that teachers have to get that professional freedom; otherwise they will probably regard the syllabus as a recipe from which one may not deviate. Eraut (1995) has further elaborated that these professional decisions can be successful if the teacher has been empowered with significant educational foundation and understanding of her learners' needs and their political, social, and economical contexts.

The profession of teaching has changed greatly since the early twentieth century. Teachers are no longer passive objects manipulated by policy-makers. Spring (2000) suggests that they are now eager to be actively involved in all educational and curricula development processes for improving their professional status. From this sense, as a professional reflective practitioner, a well-informed and empowered teacher has to make

informed decisions in the teaching and learning situation based on practice and wider knowledge.

3. Philosophical Trends in Teacher Professionalism

As I have already mentioned, there has been no clear consensus about the precise set of characteristics defining *"teacher professionalism"* and there have been debates among scholars in the teacher professionalism area, if *"teaching"* can be a *"profession"* or not. Some academics have argued in favour of the positivist's view of profession. For positivists, professional activity, in general, consists of solving problem by means of applying scientific theory and practice (Schon, as cited in Parker 1997:11).

If education is to become a profession according to this view, its practitioners must strive to achieve universal consensus about the ends (goals) of education and about the teaching and learning techniques necessary for bringing about these ends (goals), all of this being grounded in a demonstrable knowledge base, which also commands universal, rational assent, and housed within institutions, whose structure enables the techniques to be accurately assessed (Parker 1997). Based on the positivist's conception of professional expertise, (Parker 1997), has argued that in so far as teaching tolerates conflict over its aims or disagreement about its proper teaching and learning techniques, it prohibits itself from being entitled to the status of profession. The other rationale that (Parker 1997) has used for his argument is that teachers as agents of the education system cannot act as the guarantors of the truths of the education system as a profession, because their activities take place in contexts which are simply too various to assume teaching against their personal understanding.

Simultaneously, other scholars have been debating from the postmodern perspective. They have argued the importance of educational research in terms of how we might best investigate teaching as profession and teacher professionalism within these recent changing social contexts. Towards postmodern professionalism, Goodson and

Hargreaves (1996) have analyzed five different discourses: flexible teacher professionalism, practical teacher professionalism, extended teacher professionalism, and complex teacher professionalism. These discourses have emerged in the postmodern age and are characterized by the increasing organizational complexity, economic flexibility, and scientific and moral uncertainty on a scale of global proportions (Goodson and Hargreaves 1996).

Alongside the clamour for technical competence and subject knowledge that has been widely advocated by positivists as being essential to teaching standards, Goodson and Hargreaves (1996:21) have suggested principles that teacher professionalism should assume in a complex postmodern age. These principles are that teacher professionalism should increase:

- opportunity and responsibility to exercise discretionary judgments over the issues of teaching and learning in the classroom, curriculum and care that affect one's learners;
- opportunities and expectations to engage with the moral and social purpose and value of what teachers teach, along with major curriculum and assessment matters in which these purposes are embedded;
- commitment to working with colleagues in collaborative cultures of help and support as a way of using shared expertise and experience to solve the ongoing problems of professional practice;
- occupational heteronomy where teachers work authoritatively yet openly and collaboratively with other partners in the wider community (parental involvement) who have a significant stake in the learners' learning;
- commitment to active care service for learners;
- self-directed search and struggle for continuous learning related to one's own experience and standards of practice.

Eraut (1995) argues philosophically that it is impossible for all teachers to have those professional competences. Eraut argued that there are some teachers who have those
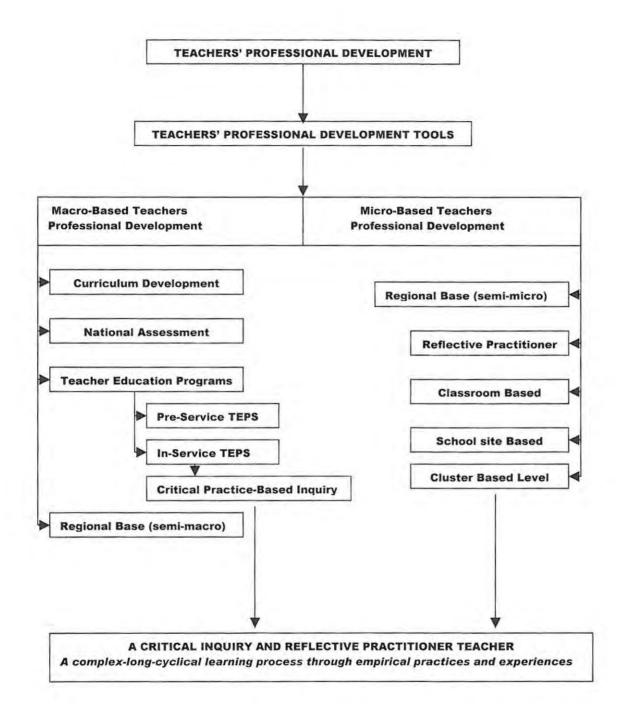
competences, but never make use of them. Furthermore, Eraut (1995) has observed that professional planning and making decisions according to learners' needs are fundamental aspects to professional practices in the classroom. Being a professional reflective practitioner, the teacher will be able to use his/her artful skills to help his/her learners in meaningful ways thus leading to genuine understanding (Dewey, as cited in Loughran 1996). Despite those skills, the teacher will also start developing an attitude of open-mindedness towards his/her colleagues and in his/her classroom and he/she is able to supply conditions that will arouse intellectual responses from learners. Prawat (1992) described these attitudes as teacher empowering. The empowered teacher with open-mindedness is well able to think critically about teaching and leaning. These attitudes will then create new opportunities for her to grow professionally and change.

4. Professional Tools for Professional Development

When talking about teachers' professional tools, one should consider, according to Loughran, (1996) a variety of aspects such as social relationship, trust, independence, purpose, engagement, challenging, modeling, reflection, risk-taking, teacher education programs, involvement in subject curriculum development, subject knowledge, classroom managing, assessment approaches, research work, critical reflection, and teaching and learning approaches. Carl has grouped these aspects into two categories: macro and micro teachers' professional development tools (Carl 1995). At the macro level, all national activities are included, such as Teacher Education Programs and teachers' involvement in Subject Curriculum Development, activities related to National Assessment, and Regional workshops and training. At the micro level teachers' involvement in activities such as a self-developer, initiator and innovator and their professional teamwork at school and at the cluster level has to be considered as a form of teachers' in-service professional development. The diagram below provides a synthesis of professional development on both macro and micro levels.

Figure 7: Levels of Professional Development

TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Macro-Based Teachers Professional Development

Micro-Based Teachers Professional Development

Curriculum Development

National Assessment

Teacher Education Programs

Pre-Service TEPS

In-Service TEPS

Critical Practice-Based Inquiry

Regional Base (semi-macro)

Regional Base (semi-micro)

Reflective Practitioner

Classroom Based

School site Based

Cluster Based Level

A CRITICAL INQUIRY AND REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER TEACHER
A complex-long-cyclical learning process through empirical practices and experiences

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a) Macro-Based Teacher's Professional Development

Macro based development has much to do with teachers' involvement in national activities such as: teacher education programs, part-time further studies, curriculum development, and external assessment at the regional level. In the Namibian context macro level professional development occurs at the national level through the National Institute for Educational development (NIED).

i) Teacher Education Programs/Curricula

Northfield and Gunstone (1997) argued for the teacher education curriculum as the starting point that has to focus teachers' professional life-long learning about the teaching and learning process. In order to understand the foundation of teacher professional development, it is important to review teacher education programs. Teachers' classroom knowledge and experiences must begin with Teacher Education Programs where student teachers should be provided with conditions to experience and learn teacher professionalism as part of their teaching and learning roles. Northfield and Gunstone (1997) have argued the need for assessment approaches that are beyond what is taught, and include assessment of quality of understanding, experience, and professional knowledge that have been achieved by student teachers throughout their education program.

Since this paper is more focused on teachers' professional practices in the classroom, under this section I have selected to focus on Critical Inquiry and Reflective Practice in the classroom as tools for teachers' professional development. Reflective Practice in the classroom is characterized by Howard (1995) as a professional self-development tool through collaborative interaction with other professionals and is intended to provide equity of access to professional development appropriate to each practitioner's level and needs as it is based on scaffolding in a social interactions context for self-development.

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He has also defined professional development in relation to in-service development as a continuous cyclical process of reflection on professional action.

Based on that definition, there is an essential way for teachers to help themselves change and improve what they do in the classroom this is emphasised by Pomuti, in Critical *Practice-Based Inquiry* (Pomuti et al 1998). The notion of Critical Practice-Based Inquiry is central to classroom effectiveness. This aspect is intended to enable in-service teachers to explore different teaching and learning environments from a learner-centered and contextual perspective, and to create a personal knowledge base about teaching and learning. It helps teachers to initiate, innovate, create and develop practical knowledge and relevant skills conducive to classroom context and educational and social change as a whole. By means of this inquiry, teachers are developing their capacity to constantly update their knowledge, skills and understanding, and by analyzing their own practice to get more understanding thereof and by comparing with others at their own school and elsewhere what they have thought and done in their classroom. It is also to sensitize teachers to the view that knowledge is not static, but it is a process that is informed by critical investigative praxis.

Studying the Namibian Teachers Education Program's objectives (BETD 1993), much correlation has been found with what has been mentioned by various academics on teacher education and professionalism. Hence, what is expected from Namibian teachers to be professional reflective practitioners in their daily classroom practices is not something new. Namibia needs professional teachers whose commitment and sense of responsibility, knowledge, and skills will raise the quality of education in the entire country (Towards Education for All 1993).

Each teacher should be fascinated and eager to develop her professionalism and keep a record of her professional skills because that will help her to build up her strong confidence in her own daily teaching and in learning, understanding, experiences and classroom based knowledge. The Namibian Teacher's Programs, (BETD 1993), has introduced Action Research as an avenue for promoting critical inquiry and reflective

practice. Mayumbelo and Nyambe (1999) have affirmed the use of critical practice-based inquiry and reflective practice in the BETD as the official strategy to educate teachers who are critical, inquiring, and reflective professionals. It is one of the professional themes in the BETD programs.

ii) Curriculum Development

By involving teachers in curriculum development, teachers are professionally strengthening their professional understanding at the national level. At this level, teachers' involvement in activities such as broad curriculum development and subject curriculum development means the teacher is gaining professional skills. The professional teacher needs to have at her disposal broad and specific subject curricula skills and knowledge that enable her to be effectively involved in the classroom (Carl 1995). In this connection, Carl has raised an important point. He stated that whenever there is talk of curriculum development, the teachers' role and involvement therein of necessity comes to the fore.

As a process of teacher's professional development, Carl further elaborates; each teacher needs to be involved in curriculum development activities. This involvement will in some instances be of a more direct nature and in others of a more indirect nature, for example, by being interviewed, by filling questionnaires, through professional consultations, feedback before and during the designing phase and through greater participation during implementation. The core aspect which I can see raised from Carl's point of view is that a teacher must not be just a mere curriculum implementer, but a development agent who is able to develop and apply the relevant curriculum dynamically and creatively.

Through teacher participatory involvement in curriculum development, the teacher is professionally empowered by gaining a broader knowledge, understanding of educational views and issues, and to have a positive teaching and learning aptitude and educational

relationships. It is only the professionally empowered teacher who has been involved in curriculum development who can eventually gather valuable insights in regard to defects in the curriculum, such as the practical feasibility thereof, the degree of difficulty of the contents for the learners of particular age groups, and the realization of objectives within the allowed time schedule, and the unclear formulation of the curriculum. Tanner and Tanner hold views that whatever the level which the principle of teacher involvement is manifested, it is very probable that this opportunity for teacher participation in curriculum development may lead to greater professionalism and empowerment (Tanner and Tanner, as quoted in Carl 1995:245).

b) Micro Based Teacher's Professional Development

This level involves the empirical experiences and involvement in activities such as the teacher as a self-developer, reflective practitioner as well as teamwork at the school and cluster or regional (semi-micro) level.

i) The teacher as a Professional Reflexive Practitioner

In looking at the teacher as a self-developer, Huddleston and Unwin (1997), among others, have related this aspect to the skill of the reflective practitioner. They have argued that reflection is a natural part of human life, but for the professional teacher, structured reflection is the practice that provides a framework within which the professional teacher can examine his/her teaching and learning strengths and weakness and identify strategies for improvements (Huddleston and Unwin 1997). In addition, the professional teacher can use reflection as a bridge to help span what is often regarded as a gap between the reality of their practices as teachers and theoretical models and concepts put forward by academics who research education.

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Eraut has further elaborated that a professional reflective practitioner needs to have meta-processing skills such as assessing, evaluating and controlling (Eraut 1995). These skills concern, first, how they assess the impact of their actions and evaluate their personal practices in the classroom. Then, second, how they make use of this information to modify or rethink their decisions and work patterns. These are opportunities for the teacher to critically and analytically think about what is taking place and what the options are, if necessary. With these skills, teachers will be able to actively search for the improvement of their daily practices in the classroom. Hence then, to some extent, at a planning stage, if teachers' critical reflections turned into ideas for research projects, then those reflections can be sharpened and scrutinized and can lead to real and worthwhile policies for improving our educational practices. Dewey has suggested six tools for critical reflection; teacher and learners' journals, teacher personal recorded teaching video types, colleague observation, teacher and learners' portfolios, learners' profiles, and teacher-leaner-teacher evaluation (Dewey 1999).

The teacher-learner-teacher evaluation tool defined by Dewey:

> *When a teacher reflects on his/her daily classroom practices by involving his/her learners in the reflection process as evaluators. What learners have to say about themselves and about their teacher provides teacher and curriculum developers with most significant information* (Dewey 1999: 49)

If teachers can give voice to their learners' experiences and accept their educational criticism, then they will have a better understanding of their daily practices and they will only be providing the desired knowledge to their learners. Putting together the two sets of reflection notes create a much more meaningful critique of the lesson than if a teacher simply had access to just her personal account. It is therefore, the responsibility of the teacher to create a supportive atmosphere in which the learners' reflection process can take place (Dewey 1999). Dewey has further explained that as a daily routine, the professional reflective practitioner teacher needs to record newly acquired knowledge, understanding and skills which are important to him/her, keep commentaries on

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professional development as s/he progresses through the year, keep commentaries on the interesting issues and concepts which arise out of his/her professional experiences and finally keep records of all responses to critical incidents that happened in the classroom for future references.

ii) School Based Teachers' Professional Teamwork

Teacher's professional development at the school site is influenced from the side of school leadership, teacher and teacher networking and from an individual teacher's performances in the classroom. Carl has confirmed that there is a clear relationship between the standard of school leadership and the growth of teachers' professionalism (Carl 1995). The school democratic climate and positive culture is conducive to the stimulation and influences the teachers' commitment to and assumption of the relevant values, teachers' loyalty to the school and the standard of productivity.

From that sense, the school principal's main objective should be to democratize her school. He/she needs to be self-actualized, accessible to her staff, to have good communication skills, to build on the strengths and energies of her staff members and utilize them and make provision for maximal growth and development on the part of both her staff and herself. This involves the respecting and consideration of every individual teacher's point of view and every individual teacher's expertise. This not being the case the following can easily happen as stated by Bernd:

> *It is very likely that teacher professionalism loses its effectiveness, if the teachers do not have an instructional leader to keep them on track, allow them to work in collaborative and cooperative with subject colleagues, share ideas and experiences with others, be well informed, and involve them in all school and extra-curricular decisions and activities* (Bernd, as cited in Carl 1995:1).

Sullivan (1998) has furthermore suggested that advance planning by every teacher is a feature of professionalism. He stated that an effective professional teacher must have a clear plan for the year's work. The professional teacher has to plan and arrange for all materials and outside/inside activities required throughout the year and discuss it with the school principal and other colleagues for the whole school development plan. With an effective year plan and a strong interconnected plan, the teacher can give herself a direction, a way to begin, a feeling of control and a basis for evaluating her choices, but as Carl warns, this is not a "script" (Clark 1992:81). To sum up what Sullivan and Clark mean by a strong interconnected educational plan with all other educational plans, I have illustrated their idea as from Namibian context.
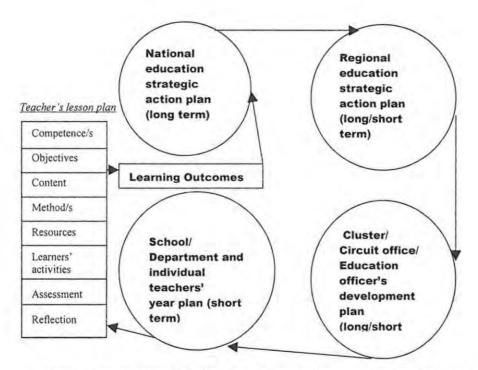

Figure 8: Interrelationship between national education strategic plan and teachers' daily plans

In this illustration, I have shown how the Namibian Education Plan of action has to be done. All Namibian education stakeholders have to follow the plan and see where they can fit. The Ministry of Basic education, Sport and Culture has set up a five years (2001-2005) National Strategy Action Plan. Each of the thirteen educational regions has then to draw its annual regional strategic action plan for its priorities based on the ministerial

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priorities. Each circuit, cluster and regional education officer in the region has to draw up annual strategic plans based on the priorities of the region. Then schools and departments at school level have to develop annual strategic plans based on the priorities of the cluster, circuit and region as a whole. Lastly each teacher is supposed to plan her annual plan based on school, cluster and circuit activities. Teachers have to base their daily/weekly lesson plans, teaching approaches, learners' activities, learners' assessment, and their self-reflection on their annual plans. It is teachers, schools, clusters, circuits and regional plans implementation that will feedback to the ministry for reviewing, reflecting and re-planning again.

iii)   Classroom Based Teacher's Professional Development

Thiessen has viewed the classroom as the environment in which teacher and learners form, make sense, of and adapt to their development experiences (Thiessen 1992:88). It is where teachers and learners learn and where most teachers have most influence, and where they have most at stake. If the teachers are to develop their professionalism, they can do it in three different modes; alone, with other teachers and with learners. The third mode is more focused and connected to the classroom practices and experiences that they share with learners. With professional independence in the teaching and learning process, teachers must accept the responsibility of ensuring that they are in fact adequately developed professionally and they act freely as a facilitator, co-learner and scaffolder to make learners realize that they not only have a share in their own learning process but in the learning process of others as well.

One of the recent innovations in the Namibian education sector is the mainstreaming of special needs learners. Our Namibian teachers need professional skills to know how to manage classrooms that include learners with special needs. In relation to the issue of special needs learners, Sullivan (1998) has emphasized that the other important professional responsibility of a teacher is to monitor the learning progress of each learner.

It is important to know each learner's strengths and weaknesses and to use and develop effective ways of assessing learners' skills firstly, so that their learning progress or lack of it can be identified and secondly so that structures and strategies for each learner to acquire further knowledge can be created, with the idea that each learner is different.

In the classroom, teacher and learners alike are learners whose development depends on the interaction of their experiences, and learning can only happen by attending directly to their interdependent development, because they both have most direct influences on, and the most at stake in, what happens in the classroom. Thiessen has elaborated that teacher and learners should reflect the actions of their classroom, focusing on the improvement of themselves as learners and evaluating the personal, educational, and social implications of their changing practices (Thiessen 1992). It is, therefore, an important fact that the teacher should keep all records of classroom interactions with learners for his/her professional biographies.

iv)   Cluster Based Teachers' Professional Teamwork

Teachers learn from each other and cite fellow teachers as the most valuable source of professional development (Thiessen 1992:94). Cluster based professional teamwork is characterized by Goodson and Hargreaves as a flexible professionalism tool. It is another strategy that should develop the sense of shared professional community and culture of collaboration among a particular group of teachers in a particular subject area (Goodson and Hargreaves 1996). At the cluster center, subject teachers should come together and form an active professional participatory group. By involving himself in cluster center activities, a teacher may effectively contribute to the effective implementation of the broad/subject curriculum, professional development and contribute to the process of his/her empowerment.

Carl has suggested some specific activities that subject teachers can do at their cluster meeting:
- Reading subject-orientated magazine/journal articles;

- Writing subject-orientated magazine/journal articles;
- Prepare the submissions of subject-orientated discussions points to the subject Advisory Teacher;
- Discuss the extension of subject literature in the cluster center resource/library;
- Discuss the development and utilization of subject supplementary materials;
- Writing subject textbooks;
- Active linking up on occasion with subject Teacher Resource Centre, Advisory Teacher, nearly by College/University lecture or with subject group at other cluster centers, where subject matters will be discussed;
- Identification of channels for possible subject syllabus/curriculum amendments and remaining in touch with syllabus' latest trends, developments, instructions and requirements of the subject;
- Supporting each other on how to do learners' continuous assessment, regular self-evaluation and critical reflection.

(Carl 1998:261)

In the Namibian context the infrastructure for teacher development is based on both macro and micro level. But micro level is the important one; therefore teacher in-service programs and clustering system have been introduced. In 1996 a new system of clusters was introduced to the Rundu Education Region. By 2002 all schools in Namibia were clustered into clusters. In August 2003, gradually, the clustering system was official launched in all thirteen-education regions country wide to accommodate all the needs for grouping schools in one stable framework. One main objective of the clustering system in Namibia is to develop professionalism among teachers by means of:

- Improving the quality of teaching and learning
- Improving the management of education in several ways
- Empowering education stakeholders at ground by bringing them together
- Breaking isolation and encouraging networking
- Improving efficiency

- Decentralizing decision making
- Promoting community involvement
- Opening up communication channels
- Promoting teamwork
- Allocating staff effectively

　　　　　(Dittmar et al 2002:11-20)

5. Conclusion

The literature review paper has focused strongly on professionalism in education as closely linked to empowerment in the sense that Prawat (1992:356) uses the notion of epistemological empowerment. The conversation with self and setting that Prawat refers to is the heart of reflective practice leading to both incrusts professionalism and a great degree of autonomy. In the Namibian context the need to develop reflective practitioners is integral to education policy. The question remains as to how well this policy is understood and translated by our teachers.

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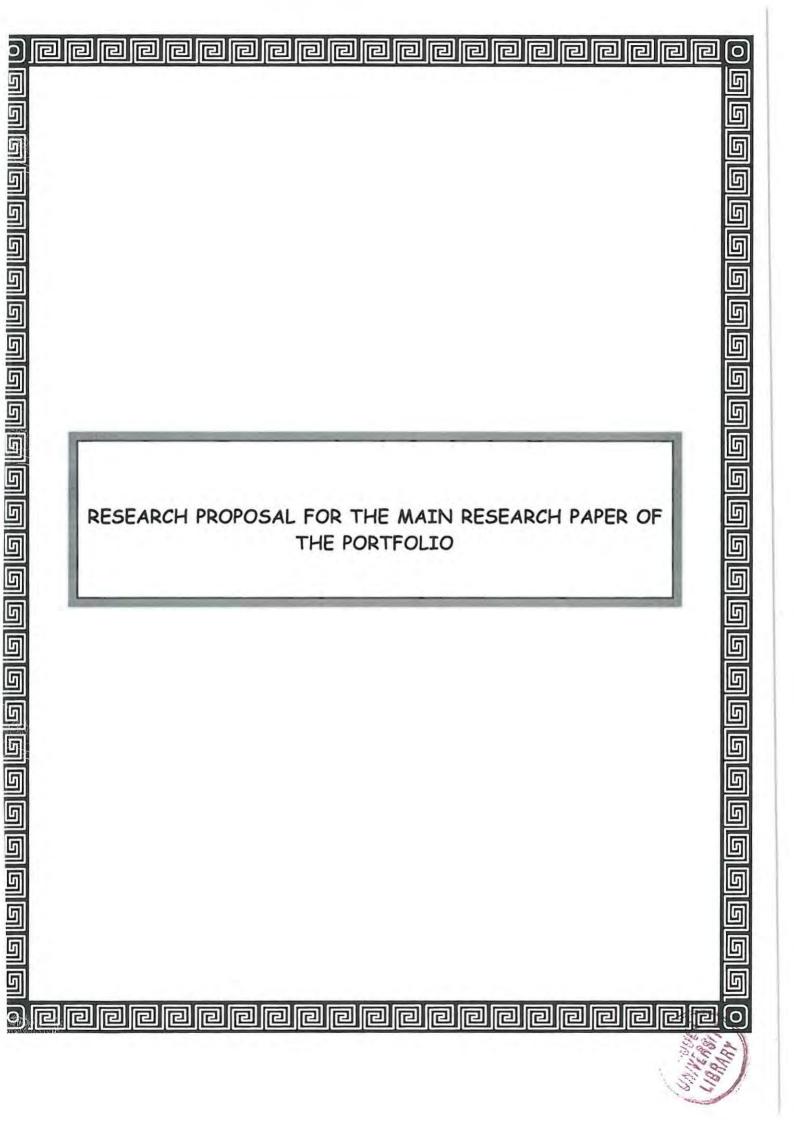
RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR THE MAIN RESEARCH PAPER OF THE PORTFOLIO

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1. Field of study

This research proposal presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Master of Education in General Education Theory and Practice

2. Research Title

The Effectiveness of Critical Inquiry and Reflective Practice in the Classroom: A Case Study of Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) Pre-set Postgraduate Teachers.

3. Research Context

At Namibian's independence in 1990, 36 percent of all Namibia's 13, 000 teachers had no professional training, a serious problem for education, which is a major engine of national revival (Pomuti and Howard 2001:102).   It became clear that there were not enough qualified teachers to meet the demands of the newly independent country. As a result, in its national policy document that translates its philosophy of education into concrete implementation, the need to educate new teachers was emphasized (Towards Education for All 1993:76).

Consequently, in 1993, the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD), a three-year teacher education qualification was developed and implemented at the four Namibian Colleges of Education. In Norlander-Case et al (1999:25) a growing number of teacher preparation programs in the United States have explicitly committed themselves to preparing teachers who will be "reflective practitioners". In Namibia, the BETD program has introduced a critical inquiry and reflective practice aspect and it has been adopted in the BETD program as the official strategy to educate Namibian teachers to be critical, inquiring, and "reflective practitioners" (BETD Broad Curriculum 1993:4). Action

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Research has been selected as the key tool and an avenue for promoting critical inquiry and reflective practice among BETD student teachers.

Some of the initial assumptions and predictions of the critical inquiry and reflective practice aspect are to encourage student teachers to investigate their own teaching and learning environments, promote the establishment of research support groups, engage in educational and social transformation through cooperation with others, promote participatory research through democratic processes, and promote professional growth through the process of educational research. Through this way of training, it is believed that Namibian teachers can change and improve what they are doing in the classroom and help themselves to implement professional practice.

The notion of critical inquiry and reflective practice is central to classroom effectiveness. Pomuti, et al (1998) explained that this aspect is intended to enable teachers to explore different teaching and learning environments from a learner-centred and contextual perspective. It helps teachers to initiate, innovate and develop practical knowledge and relevant skills conducive to the classroom context as well as educational and social change. By means of critical inquiry, teachers are developing their capacity to constantly update their knowledge and skills by analyzing their own practice and by comparing with other teachers at their own school and elsewhere what they have thought and done in their classrooms. It is also to sensitize teachers to the view that knowledge is not static, but a process that is informed by critical investigative praxis.

4. Research Goals

The area of my research is teacher professionalism. Since teacher professionalism is a broad area I will focus my study on a critical investigation on the implementation of critical inquiry and reflective practice skills by the professional teacher in the community of inquiry classroom. To do this study, I have based my assumptions on the BETD critical inquiry and reflective practice. If the BETD student teachers have gone through

a process informed by a social constructivist teacher education program, then they should to a certain extent apply the theory of critical inquiry and reflective practice. The aim of this study is:

- To investigate the effectiveness of critical inquiry and reflective practice in improving the quality of teaching and learning;
- To investigate how BETD Pre-set postgraduate student teachers autonomously turn the theory of critical inquiry and reflective practice into practice in order to turn their classrooms into communities of inquiry.

5. Research Methodology

There are two broad paradigms (approaches) to educational research. The first is based on the scientific paradigm; this approach rests upon the creation of a theoretical framework that can be tested by experimentation, replication and refinement (Cohen and Manion 1994:106). The second is based on the constructivist's paradigm; this qualitative approach is intended to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction. It is largely an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing and classifying the object of study (Crosswell 1994). Based on that explanation, my study is qualitative research that will utilize the interpretative case study design under which I will seek information by means of interaction with BETD postgraduate teachers.

The primary setting of my research will be the Oshikoto Educational Region. Key participants to be involved in this study will be ten BETD Pre-set postgraduate teachers with at least three years experience, teaching various subjects in Grade 8-10. I have decided to work with teachers of various subjects, because I want to get information from a broad perspective. Participants will be encouraged to exchange views based on their classroom experiences. This will help me to find out how critical inquiry and reflective practice theory is implemented.

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Research techniques are defined as the steps that involve setting the boundaries for the study, selecting of data collection tools such as observation, interviews, documents ("desktop") and visual materials review and analysis, and establishing the protocol when collecting information (Crosswell 1994:149). During my study, I will use individual interviews, questionnaires and focus group interviews as key tools. For the focus group interviews, the interview instrument will be individual and group activities. I will also develop research themes under which I will develop various research questions. These themes will help in capturing, patterning, and generating related information.

Research data analysis is defined as the process that involves the classifying of collected data into certain segments, codes, headings, subheadings, categories, themes, patterns, feelings, vocabulary, meanings, ideas and schema (Crosswell 1994). During this intensive process of reading and analyzing the data, I will make sure that I have read my data to be able to formulate logical segments, codes, headings, subheadings, categories, themes, patterns, feelings, vocabulary, meanings, ideas and schema as they emerge from participants.

6. Research Ethics

The selected research approach advises qualitative researchers to proceed ethically and morally without threatening the validity and reliability of their research endeavors (Cohen and Manion 1994:347). I have selected some important ethics that are relevant to my study and need to be considered:

Informed consent: The Regional Director will be informed. The selected participants will be informed well in advance that their involvement in this study is voluntary at all times. After that participants' responsibilities, rights, needs, values, wishes and desires will be considered and respected, because what I should respect is that those teachers who agree to take part in the study will do a favour to me.

- *Access and acceptance:* An official request will be needed to gain access to participants. I will try to follow the right procedures for getting access and permission to interact with participants.

- *Anonymity and confidentiality:* No participant's name, identity, or personal views will be revealed or publicly known.

- *Protocol as a researcher:* I will try to be honest in accepting and taking participants' information as it is, rather than change it according to what I want or according to what fits my personal desires. I will be honest with other's accounts and points of views; especially those that will allow me to make amendments, enhance fairness, relevance and accuracy of my study's information.

7. The Research Validity and Reliability

The qualitative research approach has no single stance or consensus to determine the validity and reliability of qualitative research (Crosswell 1994), but the important aspect that determines and verifies the validity, are the ethics, triangulation (using a variety of research methods in a circulation of reflection process), reliability, reflexivity, and trustworthiness of the research procedure that has been used, applied, implemented and followed during the conduction of that specific study. To improve the end product of my study, I will try to make sure that I have selected appropriate and relevant research techniques, setting, participants, methods, intensively involved in my research data analysis, follow the accepted and understandable researcher protocol, and finally, consider research ethics and morals. I will also try to avoid things like, misconceptions, inaccuracy of terms or words, and generalization of research findings.

8. The Research Constraints and Limitations

As I am an Advisory Teacher, it is possible that some of my participants might feel threatened. They might feel uncomfortable to express their views freely. To solve the problem, I have to make myself clear by informing them what I am really doing and why. Time can be also foreseen as a limitation. Since I am doing my study simultaneously with my official work, it might be possible that in some cases I will be forced to neglect my studies in order to conduct and complete my official duties.

9. The Research Paper

Each qualitative research ends with a product that has emerged from data analysis. The big question is: To whom will this product be disseminated? Teachers who want to improve and uplift the utilization of critical inquiry reflective practice in the classroom will use this research product. It will also form a starting point for qualitative researchers interested in studies of the same topic. It will also inform the BETD curriculum developers to improve critical inquiry and reflective practice training strategies.

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MAIN RESEARCH PAPER OF THE PORTFOLIO

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Abstract

Critical Inquiry and Reflective Practice is one of the key aspects of the Namibian Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) curriculum. This aspect is meant to educate Namibian aspirant teachers in becoming critical inquiry and reflective practitioners. Hence, this study adopted a qualitative approach to look at the extent to which postgraduate teachers autonomously apply the theory of critical inquiry and reflective practice (CIRP) in their practice in order to turn their classrooms into communities of inquiry (Fisher 1998:39). Interviews, questionnaires and group discussion were the research tools used mainly to collect data from Basic Education Teacher Diploma postgraduates. Participants were encouraged to reflect on problems hindering them to deliver quality education, on strategies that were used to educate them about critical inquiry and reflective practice and on the extent to which they are applying critical inquiry and reflective practice into practice. Findings make the distinction between critical inquiry and reflective practice theory and practice in the classroom. It has also revealed that critical inquiry and reflective practice theory has a very small impact on classroom effectiveness because the interviewed teachers do not significantly apply it in their classroom practices. Hence, micro professional development strategies are favoured if improvement is to be desired.

1. Introduction

"Toward Education for all (1993)" - a development brief for education, culture, and training is a policy document that translates the Namibian philosophy on education into concrete and implementable government policies. It states the purpose of teacher preparation for basic education teachers: Teachers are central to an effective process of curriculum implementation, thus teacher preparation for basic education must first and foremost meet the needs of a professional teacher corps - teachers who have commitment and a sense of responsibility, have an holistic view of the learner, sufficient knowledge of syllabus interpretation, sufficient subject knowledge, knowledge to select content and

methods on the basis of a shared analysis of the learner's needs. Namibian teachers are expected to use local and natural resources as an alternative or supplement to ready-made study materials, develop their own and the learner's creativity, maintain close contact with their communities, assist learners in integrating school and life outside the school, and demonstrate professional skills that will raise the quality of education in the entire country.

As a result, in 1993, a three-year teacher education qualification, Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) was developed and implemented at the four Namibian Colleges of Education for three years of full time study. The program is intended to produce professional teachers who will able to raise the quality of education in the entire country. Norlander-Case et al (1999:25) claimed that growing numbers of teacher preparation programs in the United States have explicitly committed themselves in preparing teachers who will be "reflective practitioners". In Namibia, the Basic Education Teacher Diploma has introduced critical inquiry and reflective as the official strategy to educate Namibian teachers to be critical, inquiring and reflective practitioners (BETD Broad Curriculum 1993:4) and Action Research (AR) was selected to be a key tool and an avenue for promoting critical inquiry and reflective practice in the program where most of Grade 8-10 teachers have graduated. Action Research enables student teachers to:

- Identify problems which affect educational progress,
- Find out the causes of these problems and seek solutions to them,
- Enhance student teachers' curiosity to research on different topics,
- Familiarize themselves with the situation at school especially in the subject areas and be more self-reliant,
- Enable Namibian education practitioners to develop their own research rather than just looking at others' research work

(Mayumbelo 1996: 4)

Based on BETD policy, the main reason for this research was to investigate and assess the extent to which Basic Education Teacher Diploma postgraduate teachers autonomously apply the theory of critical inquiry and reflective practice in their practice in order to turn their classroom into a communities of inquiry (Fisher 1998:39) by which Fisher meant that

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scientific progress depends on the shared inquiry of a larger community of thought, a community that extends beyond the individual thinker and ultimately beyond the boundaries of time and place. In this paper I provide a brief summary of critical inquiry and reflective practice drawing from my literature review. The second section of the paper is an overview of the research methodology employed and then presents my research findings. These are followed by the analysis of the data. In concluding the paper, I focus on lessons learned and make some tentative recommendations.

2. Theoretical Framework of Critical Inquiry and Reflective Practice

Norlander-Case et al (1999:25) claimed that growing numbers of teacher preparation programs in the United States have explicitly committed themselves in preparing teachers who will be "reflective practitioners". In Namibia, the Basic Education Teacher Diploma has introduced an aspect of Critical Inquiry and Reflective Practice (CIRP). Critical Inquiry is the official strategy to educate Namibian teachers to be critical, inquiring and reflective practitioners and Action Research (AR) was selected to be a key tool and an avenue for promoting critical inquiry and reflective practice (BETD Broad Curriculum 1993:4). McKernan (1996:5) assumed that educational practitioners must engage in curriculum inquiry to improve their practice, hence terms such as critical inquiry, reflective thinking, action research, and the teacher as a researcher have recently come to be widely used in a Namibian educational context (Mayumbelo & Nyambe, in Dahlstrom 1999:64). Swarts, in Dahlstrom (1999:42) stressed that educational reform in Namibia will never amount to anything until teachers become inquiry-oriented, skilled, reflective and collaborative professionals. This is the core agenda for teachers' education, and the key to bringing about meaningful, effective reform. Dahlstrom (1996:27) and Dahlstrom, in Dahlstrom (1999:54) provided a rationale for the inclusion of critical inquiry and reflective practice in the Basic Education Teacher Diploma program. He claimed that it is an approach that will:

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- Enable student teachers to explore different learning environments from learner-centered and contextual perspective, and by that create a knowledge base about teaching and learning,

- Enable student teachers to explore new ways to develop the teaching and learning process during school-base studies, and by that create and develop practical knowledge and relevant skills conducive for educational and social change in Namibia,

- Enable student teachers to develop participatory educational practices,

- Enable student teachers to bring a closer relationship between school and society,

- Enable student teachers to learn and develop an understanding of classroom reality,

- Enable student teachers to critically consider the grounds for reasoning and its educational consequences.

The literature review, focusing on teacher professionalism, identified critical and reflective thinking (Fisher 1998:39) as central notions within teacher professionalism. Fisher (1998:39) quoted Dewey's definition of reflective thinking as the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusion to which it tends. It is a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of reasons. Dewey's conception of reflective thinking has influenced many of the leading theorists of critical thinking. They view two concepts; critical thinking is reasonable while reflective thinking is focused on deciding what to believe or do, and to be a critical thinker is to be appropriately moved by reasons (Fisher 1998:40).

The authors explored agreed that reflective practice is at the heart of meaningful changes in an educational context. Beyer and Smith (1998: 40) claimed that reflective practice in education favours creativity and innovation in teaching and learning and leads to the empowerment and autonomy of teachers (Loughran 1996). Loughran suggested that the kinds of tools that promote teachers as reflective practitioners include group discussion with colleagues, the use of professional journals, learner-teacher interactions and critical observation on their own practices. In the Basic Education Teacher Diploma program,

critical inquiry and reflective practice culminates in the carrying out of a small-scale action research projects (BETD Curriculum 1993). The Action Research projects done by student teachers are intended to model a methodology, which as practicing student teachers they apply to their classroom practice. The model of Action Research for reflective practice is promoted by the Basic Education Teacher Diploma program (BETD Curriculum 1993:7) and (Dahlstrom 1996:27) identified a model that covers the three years of the BETD in the following way:

- In year 1, the student teachers will explore critical inquiry through research project in the student main area of specialization. The focus will be on learning how to plan and carry out a research project as well as on enriching the students' knowledge and understanding of the holistic development of the learner through a learner study,

- In year 2, the student teachers will explore critical inquiry through a learning environment such as the classroom, the school, or the community. The focus will be on evaluating the learning environment in order to develop an action plan to support, remedy, or bring about a change,

- In year 3, student teachers will explore critical inquiry through the implementation of the action plan within the same learning environment as year 2. The focus will be on monitoring and reflection on the action taken. The practice-based enquiry will consist of a need, problem or issue identified by the student teacher in the class being taught, a planned intervention to bring about change, monitoring of the extent of change, and an evaluation of the effect of the action taken.

This study focused on identifying the extent to which teachers apply the skills of critical inquiry and reflective practice as required by the Namibian education policy and promoted by the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) program. Part of the research was to explore teachers' understanding and perception of critical inquiry and reflective practice and to identify some of the problems they experienced in implementing the critical inquiry and reflective practice strategies in their teaching profession and classroom situation. It

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was also focused on seeking the suggestions and recommendations from participants as to how the situation should be transformed.

3. Research Methodology

In order to achieve the research goals, I elected to base the research in an interpretative orientation (Cohen & Manion 1994). Located in a postmodern paradigm, the interpretative orientation is essentially a qualitative approach designed to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction. It is largely an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing and classifying the object of study (Cresswell 1994). Based on this explanation, my study is a qualitative research that utilized the interpretative case study design under which I searched for information by means of interaction with grade 8-10 Basic Education Teacher Diploma postgraduate teachers. The office of the Director was informed about the study (see appendix F) and all participants were invited to participate and informed of the permission to proceed with the research. The primary setting of my research was the four educational circuits in Oshikoto Region. Key participants involved in this study were lecturers from the Ongwediva College of Education (OCE) and Basic Education Teacher Diploma postgraduate teachers. Criteria used to select participants were:

- Should be a Basic Education Teacher Diploma postgraduate teacher,
- Should be trained from Ongwediva College of Education,
- Not less than three years of teaching experiences,
- Should be from four educational circuits in Oshikoto Region,
- In case of lecturers, should be a lecturer from Ongwediva College of Education,

Data collection strategies used included focus group discussions, individual interviews and a questionnaire. Teachers who completed a questionnaire were also the participants of the focus groups. The first focus group discussion with seven teachers was held on the 21st May 2003 at Oshigambo Circuit. The discussion covered a three-hour period. On the

same day, teachers were asked to complete a self-assessment questionnaire. The second focus group discussion with three teachers was held on the 22nd May 2003 at Onathinge Circuit. The discussion covered a three-hour period. On the same day, teachers were also asked to complete a self-assessment questionnaire. During group discussions, teachers responded by sharing information of their experiences and gave practical examples. Lecturers were randomly selected and individually interviewed at Ongwediva College Education. The first one was interviewed on the 23rd May 2003 and the second one was interviewed on the 13th of June 2003. The main reason for interviewing lecturers was to articulate strategies they are using to educate Basic Education Teacher Diploma student teachers to do action research. Other supplementary data used in this research was also collected through general discussion with three other Basic Education Teacher Diploma lecturers.

The qualitative research approach has no single stance or consensus to determine the validity and reliability of qualitative research (Cresswell 1994), but the important aspect that determines and verifies the validity of the research includes the ethics, triangulation (using a variety of research methods in a circulation of reflection process) and reliability of the research procedures that have been used. To improve the end product of my study, I tried to make sure that I had selected appropriate and relevant research techniques, settings, participants, and methods involved in my research. Data analysis, followed accepted and understandable researcher protocols, and finally, considered research ethics and morals. I also tried to avoid things like, misconceptions, inaccuracy of terms or words, and generalization of research findings.

4. Presentation of Research Findings

The findings presented on this section are based on the data collected throughout the research process. The analysis presented is based on the critical inquiry and reflective practice questionnaire (see appendix G). In appendix G: activity one, questions 1-4 are not intended for the study and they have not been analyzed. These findings have been

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organized as follows: Part one presents the data and scrutiny of the first activity; question 5-8 of the participants' self-assessment questionnaire. The second part presents the data and scrutiny of the first activity, question 9 of the participants' self-assessment questionnaire. The third part presents data and scrutiny of the activity two. It presents participants' reflection and perceptions of critical inquiry and reflective practice, how they were trained to do action research and gained critical inquiry and reflective practice skills from the college, and reflect on similarities and differences between critical inquiry and reflective practice's theory and practice. The next part presents data of activity three, questions a-b on participants' suggestions and recommendations on how to improve the situation in order to apply critical inquiry and reflective practice effectively. This is followed by the presentation of data of lecturers' questionnaire, questions 1-4 (see appendix H). Lecturers were approached for data triangulation purposes.

4.1 Participants' General Reflections and Self-assessment

The responses in Figure 9 below emerged from activity one, question 5-8 of critical inquiry and reflective practice questionnaire (see appendix G). The activity consists of nine questions varying from structured to open-ended questions. The activity was designed for each teacher participant to assess herself and reflect on her daily classroom experiences and teaching practices. It was also designed to make teacher participants feel comfortable about the discussion. Otherwise, if I started with critical and negative statements, it might lead them to develop negative attitudes about my study.

Figure 9: Participants' general reflections and self-assessment: Teachers = 10

a) I feel confident and comfortable with my daily teaching practices	10
b) I use different teaching and learning approaches	10
c) I use a variety of teaching and learning resources	10
d) I promote learners' performing skills	10

As can be seen in Figure 9, all teachers ticked the "yes" option. I found myself uncomfortable with their responses, especially if I compared them with Figure 10 and Figure 12. Figure 10 is about problems that teacher participants felt hindered effective and smooth teaching and learning in their classrooms, while Figure 12 is about the extent to which teacher participants are applying critical inquiry and reflective practice's theory into practice. I realized that the results would have been more meaningful had I restructured the question by using a scale rather than simple yes or no answer. However, I found responses useful in that they were a measure of teachers' understanding of their practices, particularly when compared to responses to other questions. Teachers' self-assessment gave me a challenge. If they did not assess themselves negatively, though I knew some of their weaknesses, how would I interpret their responses?

4.2. Problems Encountered by teacher Participants in their Practices

The responses in Figure 10 below emerged from activity one, question 9 of critical inquiry and reflective practice questionnaire (see appendix G). Each teacher was asked to mention and list any problem that she felt hindered the effective and smooth teaching and learning in her classroom. It was also aimed to develop the background for Figure 11 and Figure 12. Figure 11 is about teacher participants' reflections and perceptions on action research and its training strategies at the Ongwediva College of Education, while Figure 12 is about the extent to which teacher participants are applying critical inquiry and reflective practice into practice.

Figure 10: Problems encountered by teacher participants in their practices: *Teachers = 10*

a) Lack of disciplinary skills	6 participants
b) Lack of cooperation between old and new teachers	6 participants
c) Lack of subject knowledge	6 participants
d) Shortage of teaching and learning materials	5 participants
e) Lack of parental involvement and understanding the importance of education of their children	5 participants
f) Lack of English proficiency among learners	4 participants
g) Lack of commitment among learners	4 participants

h) Poor and unfair allocation of subjects to teachers	4 participants
i) Group-work: Some learners and teachers do not understand the importance of group work. They feel group work is time to relax or noisemaking. Only few individual learners participating regularly in group work.	
Slow learners benefit nothing from group work.	3 participants
j) Lack of interest in education among learners	2 participants
k) Lack of LCE approach among teachers	2 participants

The responses in Figure 10 reveal five major problems. They have been ranked as follows: *Lack of disciplinary skills among teachers, lack of cooperation between new and old teachers, lack of subject knowledge among teachers, shortage of teaching and learning materials, and lack of parental involvement and understanding the importance of education of their children.* These problems, when compared to the teachers' reflection on the implementation of critical inquiry and reflective practice into practice, Figure 12, provided insights into problems experienced by teachers in the implementation of action research skills as developed in pre-service education.

Inconsistency is one of the identified issues. A teacher who is feeling very confident with her daily teaching responsibility, using a variety of teaching and learning approaches, using a variety of resources and promoting learners' performing skills (interpersonal skills, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, positive criticism, etc) during her teaching process (see figure 9) is the same teacher who does not have disciplinary skills and has no subject knowledge. If they are experiencing various classroom problems, they as critical inquiry and reflective practitioners could utilize action research skills they have gained from the college to come up with plan of action and solve classroom problems.

Secondly, lack of teamwork and joint effort in many schools is a reality. The same problem has been identified during regional panel visits (advisory teachers and inspectors of education together) or when an individual advisory teacher visits schools. Some substantiation given verified that the ground is misunderstood and there are misconceptions between old and new teachers. New teachers, mostly BETD graduates, believe that they are more highly qualified than the old ones, while on the other hand old teachers believe that they have been in the profession for decades. They have enough

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experience in the profession. These attitudes lead to conflicts of interest. Most principals, heads of departments and subject heads are the 'old ones'. Therefore if new teachers want to introduce some new ideas, old teachers interpret it as criticism. For this reason it always ends in conflict.

BETD is not seen as the final formal stage of formal teacher training that develops teacher professionalism, or as the completion of teacher education, rather as an initial step in an ongoing process of teachers' professional growth and development (Education for 1993: 81). Thiessen, in Hargreaves and Fullan (1992:85) claimed that recent approaches to teacher development have centered more in classroom-based teacher development as an orientation, which situates the professional growth of teachers within the daily realities of classroom life. Their professional development is intrinsically connected with the classroom experiences they share with other teachers and learners. Hence, teachers need to learn from each other and respect each other's opinions. The results of this study reveal that some school settings are not conducive when it comes to action research, the avenue of promoting critical inquiry and reflective practice. For effective results, action research could involve teachers, parents and learners themselves; team working and collaborating. Another necessity of critical inquiry and reflective practice is team work. Cranton (1996) suggests that a group of teachers could work together to address research questions about the effectiveness of practice and ways to improve practice. If there no cooperation and understanding between 'old and new' teachers, how could team work become a reality in schools?

Lack of parental involvement is another concern reflected in Figure 10. Though the responsibility for education should be everybody's business and shared widely (Education for all 1993), lack of parental involvement is a serious issue in most Namibian. It is clear that involvement of parents in the school's life is related to greater effectiveness in promoting educational progress (Mortimore et al, as cited in Shinyemba 1999:5). After independence in 1990, the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture introduced a booklet for the main stakeholders in Namibian education. The following are the assumptions about parents' responsibilities:

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o Parents should provide a good environment at home that allows their children to do school work

o Parents should set time every afternoon for their children to do school work at home

o Parents should make sure that there is communication and a positive relationship between themselves and the teachers of their children

o Parents should make sure that there is a positive relationship between themselves and the teachers for promoting, guiding and monitoring the children's progress at school

o Parents should make sure that children are taught at school

o Parents should provide support to their children and to the school they attending

o Parents should be involve in school boards and attend school meetings to freely air their views and suggestions,

o Parents should help with fund-raising activities to improve school facilities,

o Parents should support the establishment of radio programs to address important issues like discipline and value of education and campaign to get parental involvement in education (MBESC 2000: 14).

Many parents are 'educationally illiterate' therefore they are not contributing enormously towards their children's education. In this study 'educationally illiterate' means "deficient in educational matters and understanding". Namibia has a school open-door policy, but parents are not taking part in their children' s education. They are not participating in educational matters for the purpose of improving and developing teaching and learning, discussing their children's work, assisting their children in homework and participating in decision making in the running of school activities. A study made in 2001 on attitudes and work ethics of teachers reveals some reasons why many parents as members of school boards are not fully participating in their children's education. It stated that in practice, school boards continue to play a minor role in school management, as many school board members are not aware of their rights and responsibilities. Many of them expect the school principal to tell them what to do (Nicanor 2001).

The study further revealed that most teachers lack disciplinary skills and subject knowledge. Parents are not involved and teaching and learning materials are in short supply. Teachers are lacking in LCE approaches and team working skills. Nicanor (2001) also found that many teachers have difficulties with planning and preparing lessons, and in making lessons innovative and interesting. Many teachers do not understand how to use, manipulate and implement the various parts of a lesson. Most teachers still use 'chalk and board' as their main teaching and learning aids. This problem is compounded by the fact that a large number of teachers have to teach subjects that they do not have much knowledge about and they lack the necessary support. Consensus has been found, because this study has also identified poor and unfair allocation of subjects to teachers. Most teachers are not teaching according to their field of specialization in which they were trained at the college.

This is an unhealthy learning environment. In such an unhealthy learning environment, there is a culture where learners are loosing learning commitment and interest, lacking English proficiency and lacking sound group participatory. Consequently, in 1999 the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports, and Culture introduced a five years (2000-2004) USA funded project called School Improvement Program (SIP) to increase parent participation in schools, to improve the use of learner centered education and continuous assessment in classrooms and to improve school management (SIP News 2003:1). In 2003 the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports, and Culture also introduced a Cluster system. The system is aiming to improve quality of teaching and learning, improve school management, promote team working and empower education stakeholders, improve education efficiency, improve staff allocation, improve stakeholders training programs, improve parental and community involvement, improve planning and access to schooling and provide a single framework through which a variety of programs and projects can be delivered (Dittmar et al 2002).

4.3. Participants' Reflections on Action Research and its Training Strategies

The responses reflected in Figure 11 below emerged from activity two, question a-d of the critical inquiry and reflective practice questionnaire (see appendix G). Five open-ended questions used during focus group discussion on that specific theme. These questions were aimed to provide participants with an opportunity to reflect back on their perception, understanding, training and practicing of action research at Ongwediva College of Education. The activity is significant to the study as it was aimed to provide the extent to which the participants understand action research and how they were trained to do action research, the avenue for promoting critical inquiry and reflective practice. It was also intended to form a background of Figure 12, which is about the extent to which teacher participants are applying critical inquiry and reflective practice into practice.

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Figure 11: Participants' perception on AR and how they were trained to do AR

a) It is the strongest point of BETD program, but its strategies are the problem both from lecturers and student teachers   **Group1&2**

b) It was not well articulated during the training, due to lecturers who have different views, understanding, perception; their views, understanding, perception and approaches may be based on their educational background, systems and institutions in which they received their tertiary education. Some are serious about Action Research but some are not. This situation forced some student teachers just to copy research work of former college student teachers or from each other
Group 1& 2

c) We have gained few skills, especial how to identify a problem, plan action research, analyze the action research data, apply the action, and write action research reports.   **Group 1& 2**

d) The only way of data collection we have learned from the College is following the learner concerned wherever she/he goes (observation). Sometimes we are forced to follow learners to their homes. This gave us a wrong perception of data collection tools. In the teaching profession, there are many problems where we are not able to apply observation as the only tool of data collection.
Group 1&2

e) But we have learned some skills like working with learners and sharing ideas, because the time we were collecting data, we were informally interacting with learners, colleagues and parents, but the problem was to do SBS at different school each year. **Group 1&2**

f) Most of us have less understanding of what is Action Research where we should gain Critical Inquiry skills. We do not know our expectations as teacher reflective practitioners.   **Group 1**

g) Action Research was introduced to us in a short time, i.e. one week before SBS. During SBS where we practiced Action Research, most of us were not aware of its importance after completion of the BETD course. The SBS time is also short to practice Action Research properly. This is the result of poor explanation of Action Research we received from our college lecturers.   **Group 1**

h) Some of us were not trained to do AR, especial the first and second intakes, some who have done it, have done it in the third year, which is already late. This happened during early 1990s. **Group 1**

i) At the OCE, AR materials are seldom available especial in the library. If they are there, our lecturers did not make proper references for us to be able to do extra reading.   **Group 1**

j) The area where we should select our Action Research topics during SBS was mostly restricted to classroom perspective but not to the broader scope. Less emphasis was placed on other educational areas such as sports, physical training and other extra-mural activities.   **Group 1**

Responses revealed in Figure 11 provided important information about the way teacher participants were trained to acquire critical inquiry and reflective practice skills at the Ongwediva College of Education. It also reflected some concurrence between views of teacher participants and lecturers from the college (Figure 15). Teacher participants mentioned that they were not well informed about the theory and practice of action research and how it could play a primary role in promoting critical inquiry and reflective practice among student teachers. Two lecturers also claimed that Action Research procedures at the college are not well organized. With most lecturers at the college assigned to supervise and guide student teachers when doing their AR practices during School Base Study (SBS), it does not matter whether she is teaching Education Theory and Practice (ETP) or not.

According to the BETD Curriculum (1993), ETP is the core department where student teachers could be provided with necessary theories of AR. In other areas, lecturers are promoting the practice of AR, but it does not mean that they have indispensable knowledge about AR. Mbamanovandu (2000:38) revealed a general concern that the ETP department which is officially tasked with the prime responsibility to prepare student teachers in critical inquiry from year 1 through year 3, was somehow reluctant to do so. He further mentioned lack of broader exposure of lecturers as another obstacle. A broader exposure of lecturers could ensure a holistic view over the student teachers' work and enable them to prepare student teachers in progression for what they anticipate. In such a circumstance, someone cannot expect student teachers to be constructively supported, supervised and guided.

If human resources are lacking at the college, as indicated by one interviewed lecturer, in-house training is supposed to be conducted seriously, not as one interviewed lecturer stated that there is no protocol of coming together and sharing information. The same lecturer stated that they never come together to discuss how to supervise AR, what aspects the supervisors need to consider during supervision, what kinds of guidance the supervisor needs to give, and what necessary support AR supervisors need to provide to student teachers for them to do their AR effectively and gain critical inquiry and reflective practice

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skills. I have also detected a lack of administration and organization for the smooth running of the critical inquiry process. As a result of lack of administration and organization, the research participants mentioned that there was a case where some of them were taught about AR one week before School Base Study (SBS) where they were expected to practice critical inquiry processes.

Teacher participants also realized that there are some lecturers who seem to be more serious about AR than others. Lack of AR references at the OCE was also mentioned as one of the affecting factors. Northfield and Gunstone (1997) alleged that teacher educators (lecturers) are expected to be seen monitoring their own experiences and supporting student teachers in research efforts, forming long-term relationship with their student teachers assisting them to interpret their teaching experiences, demonstrating willingness to work in collaboration with each other, and modeling continual learning.

These data are highly revealing when considered with data in Figure 10 and 12. In Figure 10, participants highlight problems they are encountering in practice, in Figure 12 they explained the extent to which critical inquiry and reflective practice theory is applied into their classroom situation. Both groups of participants highlighted five issues related to the way they were trained. Theoretically, it is very understandable that action research is a BETD vital point but lecturers do not all have the same understanding of the approach. Hence, action research was not well articulated during participating teachers' training due to inconsistent views, understanding, perception, education background and teaching approaches among lecturers. Thus some student teachers gained less action research skills, gained a wrong perception on action research tools because they feel observation is the only action research tool and copy former students' work. If that is the way teacher participants were trained, then the possibility is greater to experience problems as reflected in Figure 10.

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4.4 The Extent to which CIRP Theory is put into Classroom Practice

Responses in Figure 12 below emerged from activity two, questions e of the critical inquiry and reflective practice questionnaire (see appendix G). Participants were asked in groups to discuss ways and the extent to which they use CIRP skills in their classroom situation. It was also aimed to verify the relationship between responses in Figure 10, which is about teacher participants' reflections on problems they have encountered during their teaching practice.

Figure 12: The extent to which CIRP Theory into Classroom Practice

a) None of us have ever tried to formally apply Action Research in the classroom although we have some basic skills to do it. Unless we have applied it informally and unknowingly   **Group 1&2**

b) The BETD program did not exposed us to a variety of classroom case studies, but now in the classroom, we are meeting with a lot of challenges and problems that need a lot of Critical Inquiry skills of how to go about them.   **Group 1**

c) It is time and energy consuming, and possibly costing to implement Action Research. Teachers are still part of community and culture. We have to do traditional work; such as cooking, washing, and work on the mahangu field. The long distance, we have to travel every day.   All of these are impeding us to do Action Research as required.

    Group 1& 2

d) Colleagues at our schools, especial the old teachers are always resistant, criticizing us if we want to introduce something new to them. They do not support us if we want to try new teaching and learning approaches. If you communicate with them about teaching problems and learners learning problems, they deem it as part of negative criticism done against them. Most of them are not open minded to themselves or to their colleagues.   **Group 1**

e) Action Research needs somebody who has its concept clear; otherwise we might misinterpret learners' problems, attitudes or behaviors. Most of us are lacking good understanding about Action Research, it is, therefore, always difficult to try it.   **Group 1**

f) Subject distribution at schools; most new teachers are not allowed to teach the phases they are specialized in, especially if you are specialized to teach Grade 10. Then if you are forced to teach at the level not of your specialist, how does somebody expect me to apply some of those professional skills in such conditions?   **Group 2**

g) As teachers, we know we should be innovative, creative, problem solvers, and independent so that they can meet the aspirations of the syllabus, learners, and community at larger, but lack of skills and work ethics and co-operation is the issue.   **Group 1& 2**

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Responses reflected in Figure 12 were gathered from two unstructured questions used during focus group discussion on that specific theme. The questions were aimed to give an opportunity to teachers to reflect on their daily classroom experiences and practices and try to find out how they could apply critical inquiry and reflective practice skills into practice. Through group discussion, teachers mentioned that most of them are not formally utilizing critical inquiry and reflective practice. They are still more reactive than reflective and more intuitive than rational in their teaching approaches. Time and skills were given as an excuse. They did not critically analyze their practice nor did they critically analyze learners' work, attitudes, behaviours or problems. As it was reflected in Figure 10, there are many problems that are preventing teachers from applying the theory of critical inquiry and reflective theory into practice. Some problems mentioned are lack of action research skills, lack of time, long distances between schools and teachers' residential areas, school management strategies, colleagues' attitudes, work ethics, lack of commitment, traditional work and belief, unfair distribution and allocation of subjects and lack of team working.

There is a correspondence between problems identified by the researcher in the first research paper of this portfolio and those mentioned by teacher participants. One follow up question was asked as to who they think would solve these problems? Most of them have an understanding that it should be teachers themselves. "None, especially an outsider, could easily come and solve our classroom related problems. What we need to do is to become teacher researchers and try to act critically and reflect on our own practices and find our own solutions", one participant stressed. The concept of the teacher as a researcher has been promoted since 1990 for practitioners to become researchers in their own right. In the current climate of change, during 1990s, the concept had and still has the potential to act as a vehicle for enabling reflexive practitioners to investigate collaboratively the key questions and problems that concern them (Huddleston and Unwin 1997). Carl (1995) believed that teachers should also be involved with research activities. It is necessary to extend the pool of knowledge by means of classroom research, especially when changes are envisaged. Research may deal with handling slow learners, gifted learners, the relevance of contents, educational methods, working methods, etc.

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4.5. Improvement of CIRP Theory into Practice: Suggestions from Teacher Participants

Responses in Figure 13 below emerged from activity three, questions a-b of critical inquiry and reflective practice questionnaire (see appendix G). Participants were asked in groups to give their insights, comments and suggestions as to how the situation could be overcome.

Figure 13: Suggestions from teacher participants on how to improve the situation

- We need professional support about how to apply critical inquiry and reflective practice skills and be able to do reflections on our daily practices.
- There is a need to introduce circuit, cluster or school based committees on Critical Inquiry. Professional groups need to be introduced in each school, cluster or circuit that will organize professional development workshops.
- Experts from the Region, NIED, Colleges, and Universities or from any higher learning institution can be called in to share their new knowledge, skills, ideas and experiences with classroom teachers.
- It is our own responsibility to solve our own classroom problems.

In their contribution, they have shown that it is their own responsibility to make and bring changes. This is a good understanding among teachers. They have already reflected in the previous section that it should be teachers themselves who solve their own classroom related problems. It is, therefore, from that understanding that they have suggested critical inquiry committees at school, cluster or circuit level. This is a kind of micro-based professional development. Micro-based professional development treats classroom-based, teamwork at school-base, and teamwork at cluster-base all as professional development strategies (see literature review paper of this portfolio). Teacher participants knew that no one, especially an outsider, could easily come and solve their classroom challenges, but that teachers themselves, as a team have to solve their own teaching and learning problems

The main aim of critical inquiry and reflexive practice is not to have teachers who are competent to take over the demands of teaching and learning as these are currently defined and enacted. Rather, to develop critically oriented, compassionate and impassioned,

reflective and socially engaged practitioners who can aid in the process of educational improvement and social change; to encourage critical reflection on their own situations and those of their learners, their futures, and their social possibilities, that leads to actions favouring empowerment of teachers and a commitment to quality education, democracy, equality and autonomy (Beyer and Smith 1998).

Experts from outside can be called in for advice, support, and to share new knowledge, ideas, skills, classroom teaching and learning experiences and trends, as teacher participants suggested. In the Namibian context, outside educational supporters include inspectors of education, resource teachers based at circuit offices, advisory teachers, college lecturers, university lecturers, experienced and competent teachers and curriculum developers from NIED. Occasionally, it can be a professional specialist from outside the country.

4.6. Training of student teachers to do Action Research at the Ongwediva College of Education

Responses reflected in Figure 14 above emerged from critical inquiry and reflective practice questionnaire for Ongwediva College of Education lecturers. Four open-ended questions were used (see appendix H) to extract information. The interview is significant to the study as it was aimed to verify the extent to which the BETD student teachers were educated about action research theory and practice. All teacher participants interviewed were trained at Ongwediva College of Education between the years 1994-2000. I, therefore, find it useful that I make a follow up investigation with lecturers from the same College of Education. Three lecturers were interviewed; one was from the Education Theory and Practice (ETP) department.

Figure 14: CIRP Theory and Practice: Views from OCE Lecturers

Lecturer 1: The AR procedure in OCE is not well organized. During SBS, all lecturers have to supervise and guide student teachers when practicing their AR. This does not matter whether you are teaching ETP or not. ETP is the core subject where student teachers are provided with necessary theories of doing AR. In other subject areas, we are just encouraging and motivating students to apply AR. If I am not teaching ETP, then I have little knowledge on AR. How do you expect me to give constructive supervision and guidance to the student teacher? The other problem is the protocol of coming together and sharing information. We never come together to discuss ways of supervision, aspects to be considered, guidance to be given and kind of help we should render to our student teachers to be able to do their AR effectively, so that they can gain necessary CI skills.

Lecturer 2: Yes, I agree with your participants' statement. It is true that at the OCE, we have a problem when it comes to action research. Most of us do not have clear understanding of AR and its processes. The way we advise our student teachers on AR is definitely incorrect. Normally, we start with the action research process as from year one. In year one and two, student teachers have to engaged themselves with the CI process where each student teacher has to identify one teaching and learning related problem, critically analyze its root causes and its impacts on that specific learner's learning. Then in year three, each student teacher has to plan an action research plan and write a responsive report about the monitoring and identified problem. The serious problem I have identified is that, there are many student teachers and lecturer who do not see the relationships and make connections between what has been done in year one, two and three. The main factor contributing to this problem is lack of schools around the college. Each year from year 1-3, student teachers do his/her school base study at different schools. This places a huge impact on student teachers to follow an issue he/she identified from year 1. She/he cannot apply the issue he/she identified from one school to another where s/he is doing her/his school based study in year 2.

Yes, we have a CIC. This committee used to organize in-house workshops for all teacher educators where we should share knowledge about CI and AR with the emphasis on how we should supervise, support and guide student teachers, but this does not help much. One weak point of that committee is the way they handle student teachers' action research work. For example, they only look at student teachers' work after they have already completed the whole research process. During the process, only various teacher educators supervised student teachers, some with no academic knowledge about CI. We have some cases where a student teacher's research product was not approved because the research proposal was not correct. In such a case, if the supervisor had knowledge on AR then the research proposal could be corrected early. Most teacher educators who are delegated to supervise student teachers have narrow understanding. They approved incorrect or incomplete research proposal. Student teachers are not guided well on how they could critically reflect on their action research processes.

Lecturer 3: She replied: " I do not agree very much with your teacher interviewees' statements, because it depends to the way you asked them, and also on the kind of our former students you have interviewed. There are some students who were at the college with no aims at all. As they were taught, they were not serious with their studies. Now they want to blame us as they are now challenged by classroom situations. I believed, teaching and learning action research at the college is clear."

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Despite the response from one lecturer, the two lecturers' responses show a correlation with teacher participants' responses. The consensuses between the interviewed lecturers from Ongwediva College of Education and interviewed teacher participants' responses allow some conclusions to be drawn. There is a need for the reconsideration of action research supervision and guidance strategies recently used at the Ongwediva College of Education. There is a critical inquiry committee (CIC) at the college, but it does not have much effect. Mbamanovandu (2000) highlighted some key concerns related to this committee. The assistance from the committee was mainly operating at an organizational and logistical level of preparing and distributing checklists and guideline documents to student teachers and lecturers, but it is however regarded as being very shallow, as it is perceived to have lacked both depth as well as breadth about professional issues pertaining to critical inquiry and reflective practice. As a result, the case where the committee identified problems concerning some student teachers' research work, after the student teachers have already completed their action research study was noticed. This led these student teachers not to complete their BETD study. Action research is a process, thus, it should be supervised continuously throughout the process. Mbamanovandu further revealed that more assistance was provided for the first group of lecturers who joined the college at the initial stage of the program, but newer lecturers that joined the college later had lesser help available to them. This assistance was mainly in the form of workshops and inter-college exchange of ideas.

5.   Analysis of Research Findings

The analysis of the research findings is organized as follows: I extracted key issues and themes that emerged from the data presentation because these themes overlapped within the various sections of the data. I have not analyzed the results according to each section as presented in the research findings, section 4. The themes and issues identified will follow.

5.1. Inconsistency in interpretation of CIRP by postgraduate teachers and lecturers

Referring back to Figure 11, most teachers have shown evidence of having some understanding about action research as a vehicle of critical inquiry and reflective practice. But inconsistency, diversity of views, different explanations, interpretation, opinion and guidance among college lecturers caused inconsistencies and different understanding and skills among Basic Education Teacher Diploma student teachers. Some Basic Education Teacher Diploma student teachers understand that critical inquiry and reflective practice and Action Research are two different aspects. Though action research is the vehicle where critical inquiry and reflective practice has to be driven, BETD graduates do not have an understanding of the relationship between the two. This has been caused by the way they were trained, supported, supervised and guided by individual lecturers at the college.

In his study on critical practitioner inquiry, Mbamanovandu (2000) revealed poor organization of critical inquiry and the articulation of its position in the BETD program as the concern at the Ongwediva College of Education related to the implementation of critical inquiry. The study has also revealed general concern that the Education Theory and Practice (ETP) department that was officially tasked with the prime responsibility to prepare student teachers in critical inquiry was somehow reluctant to do so. Other issues regarded as major obstacles in the implementation process of critical inquiry were the lack of a broader exposure of lecturers to what should happen at all the different stages of the students' projects. A broader exposure of lecturers could ensure a holistic view over the students' research work and enable lecturers to prepare student teachers in progression to what they anticipate. The administration and organization of the whole SBS and the resulting effect it has on the smooth running of the critical inquiry process, was a matter of concern.

Mbamanovandu (2000) reflected why BETD postgraduate teachers experience problems in implementing critical inquiry and reflective practice into practice. According to the Ongwediva College of Education Guidelines Critical Inquiry (1999), in the second year, student teachers have to carry out, discuss and write up a series of classroom observations

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related to a selected topic, based on observation of each other in their teaching pairs as the journey of critical inquiry and reflective practice. In the third year, they have to plan and do Action Research. As I have gone through this guideline, I have obtained an understanding that the guidelines are clear, though they do not clearly spell out the assumptions and theories underlining the philosophy that justify the use of Critical Inquiry and Reflective Practice. Given that CIRP is relatively new in the Namibian context, the guidelines as they stand are more appropriate for experienced teachers and teachers who come from a culture of inquiry. According to the data that was collected both from teachers and lecturers interviewed, the interpretation of the guidelines was hampered by the lack of prior experience in this particular strategy. Thus, there is confusion in the minds of teachers because of the lack of shared understanding.

5.2. Critical Inquiry and Reflective Practice: Theory into Practice

During the data presentation process, inconsistent interpretation and understanding was revealed as an issues related to the poor implementation of CIRP into practice. Although interviewed teachers indicated confidence with their general practice, they revealed confusion on their interpretation and understanding of CIRP. These results raise the following two questions: Does it mean that it is not really necessary for a professional teacher to apply critical inquiry and reflective practice skills in order to teach effectively? Does it mean that maybe these teachers are applying critical inquiry and reflective practice skills unknowingly?

Norlander-Case et al (1999:31) mentioned three necessary components of a classroom teacher's reflective practice: Reflective practice *for-action, in-action and on-action*. But the interviewed teachers did not show any evidence of how they do any of these reflections. It is important for teachers to note that reflective practice involves what the teacher does *before* entering the classroom, *while* in the classroom, and *after* he or she has left the classroom. Research would seem to indicate that critical inquiry and reflective practice is the journey towards a high level of reflectivity, where teachers begin to apply

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independent, individual and autonomously decisions about teaching and learning matters. This level also entails the questioning of moral and ethical stances related directly and indirectly to the classroom. Within the Namibian context, critical inquiry and reflective practice includes concern for access, equity, quality, democracy and the satisfaction of important human purpose (Towards Education for All 1993). A teacher engaging in this level of reflection, then, would be able to make decisions that would be beneficial for the long-term development of learners in the classroom and lead to practices favouring creativity, innovative, empowerment, democracy, equality and autonomy of him/herself.

5.3. Lack of Skills to apply CIRP Theory into Practice

Lack of critical inquiry and reflective practice skills among Basic Education Teacher Diploma student teachers is an issue that has came up in terms of practicing the theory of critical inquiry and reflective practice, Figure 12. The diversity of views on how critical inquiry and reflective practice should be developed in student teachers makes it difficult for lecturers to agree on how the pre-service Basic Education Teacher Diploma program can develop reflective practitioners. However Schon (as cited in Loughran 1996:16) suggested three forms of modeling that he proposed as ways that student teachers could learn from their supervisors' practice; the "Hall of Mirrors", "Joint Experimentation" and "Follow Me" models.

Lecturers are supposed to do some of these, especially, to try "Joint Experimentation" and "Follow Me" models. A "Follow Me" model revolves around lecturers as experienced practitioners being able to demonstrate and describe their pedagogical knowledge to their student teachers. A "Joint Experimentation" models revolves around student teachers being encouraged to take the lead in critical inquiry and reflective practice while the lecturers, the experienced practitioners follow the student teachers' line of inquiry, commenting, advising and offering alternatives as the need arises. In this way student teachers could get the assistance early, not as it was mentioned by one lecturer that some mistakes of their student teachers' work are identified at the end of the research journey.

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"... we have cases where some of our student teachers' mistakes were identified after the completion of their research journey, because their supervisors approved the incomplete or incorrect research proposal", and this cost some student teachers their Basic Education Teacher Diploma, one lecturer remembered.

If student teachers happen to learn critical inquiry and reflective practice in such models, they could learn about practice setting by following the experienced practitioners-lecturers. "... Action Research was introduced to us in a short time, i.e. one week before School Base Study..." one interviewed teacher explained. If critical inquiry and reflective practice is to be valued by student teachers as a whole while contributing to their professional development, they must experience it as a logical consequence of learning; not as a general process skill but as an appropriate tool for unpacking and learning from the uncertainties of practice. But how could this happen in a situation where Basic Education Teacher Diploma postgraduate teachers were trained to gain critical inquiry and reflective practice skills?

5.4. Lack of Time to apply CIRP

Lack of time was also central to the thinking of teachers interviewed, Figure 12. They argued that teaching is too demanding and complex to expect them to be very reflective and do action research about their practice. They also mentioned numerous constraints that increase the complexity of their practice such as high teacher-learner ratios, long distances, traditional responsibilities and roles at home and pressure to cover required and broadly defined subjects syllabi. Sullivan (1998: 149) interviewed forty New Zealand teachers about their responsibilities as classroom teachers. He received the same responses that teachers are under pressure to cover the subject syllabus. He commented that with the educational reforms, the extent and range of teachers' roles and responsibilities have increased, and their complexity and variety is a strong argument for the professional status of teachers

During his study, Norlander-Case et al (1999: 44) also developed this hypothesis: It is not likely that many teachers will have the time, resources, or technical background to engage in the more formal critical inquiry and reflective practice activities. But on the other hand, to be a reflective practitioner teacher does not mean to reflect about everything all of the time and being a reflective practitioner is not the way of taking over all teaching and learning demands, but, rather to develop critically oriented and reflective practitioners who can aid in the process of teaching and learning improvements and take actions that favour their empowerment and commitment to democracy, equality and autonomy (Beyer and Smith 1998).

5.4. Lack of teamwork among school stakeholders

Teachers learn much from each other, Figure 12. Most recent teacher development approaches, which build on collegial and collaborative work among educational stakeholders, have become prominent in the school improvement and educational change (Thiessen 1992:94). Referring to Figure 11, I understand that the interviewed teacher participants have gained some basic critical inquiry and reflective practice skills at the College, such as identifying the problem. But the main concern is lacking the skills of critically analyzing its root causes, its impacts on a learner's education, planning the responsive strategy and reflecting on the process. To be able to an apply action plan into practice, team working is one of the essential tools. Teachers, parents and learners have to work together. As part of educational reform, the school and its teachers have to radiate in the role of partners with the community. Teachers act on behalf of the school to provide the community with information about the school and to find ways of making the community part of the school. Teachers may help this situation by developing an appropriate action plan and activities that show that the school respects and value the community's perspectives (Sullivan 1998). But working in isolation is playing a major role in our schools, ... "colleagues at our schools, especially the old teachers are always resistant and criticizing us if we want to introduce new teaching and learning approaches, ... if we communicate with them about teaching and learning problems and learners'

learning problems, they deem it as part of undermining them". Though their arguments depend on the way they were trying to communicate new strategies with their old colleagues, this is something that could be effective if teamwork is utilized.

Cranton (1996) suggested school based discussion groups and collaborative inquiry. School based discussion groups is one of the ways reflexive practitioners could use to reflect on their practice, while school based collaborative inquiry can be viewed as a combination of working with different groups of subject teachers who are concerned about the same teaching and learning problem and do action research to address the issue of interest, such as how to motivate learners or how to evaluate learning. The school based collaborative inquiry team can work together to investigate their own practice, perhaps conducting action research into their practice. This could also be encouraged during teachers' training, because, in the current climate of teamwork and participatory decision-making, avoiding groups is all but impossible.

6. Lessons learned and Recommendations

A variety of lessons have been learned. Of the 10 teachers interviewed, all indicated that they are confident and comfortable with their daily teaching practices, they use a variety of teaching and learning approaches, they use a variety of teaching and learning resources and promote learners' performing skills. At the same time, within teachers who overwhelmingly regarded themselves as hardworking and committed, there is evidence that critical inquiry and reflective practice is not keenly implemented into their teaching practices. They are not thinking about their teaching regularly, thoroughly and systematically – in other words, becoming a reflective practitioner. Reflecting on your teaching is a way of making you aware of how to teach. It is a method of self-assessment. If we do not reflect, we are teaching "in the dark" without knowing if we are effective and if we should modify our teaching (Botes 1994:23). It is a true fact that teachers do reflect

on, or informally think about experiences they have during a day, however there should be a more formal, designated time to consider classroom experiences.

One of the key components for delivery of quality in teacher education is availability of resources. These could either be material or human. This is the first step towards the attainment of quality. Provision of sufficient and relevant resources to meet the education needs is important. Availability of qualified lecturers who are competent constitutes an important element for delivery of an effective education program (Gerwel 1995). But this study concluded that there is lack of critical inquiry and action research references at the college. If they are there, teacher participants interviewed confirmed that they were not well guided to use those references. Mbamanovandu (2000) identified the same proof when he stated that a need for the availability of more recent literature on critical inquiry at the college's library and education development unit was expressed.

The study has also revealed evidence of problems at the level of teacher training. The critical inquiry committee (CIC) is there, but according to the interviewed lecturers, the committee is not effective. Thus, a need has been identified for a broader focus in the in-house professional development-training program of lecturers in terms of exposure to the general principals of a variety of different types of research before focusing on action research. This will assist lecturers to balance their understanding and update themselves with action research processes and its administrative strategies.

The main aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of Critical Inquiry and Reflective Practice in improving the quality of teaching and learning and investigate how Basic Education Teacher Diploma Pre-set postgraduate student teachers autonomously turn the theory of Critical Inquiry and Reflective Practice into practice in order to turn their classroom into a community of inquiry. This study included ten Basic Education teacher Diploma postgraduate teachers and three lecturers only, which is a small sample if compared to the large population of Basic Education Teacher Diploma lecturers and teachers graduate each year from the Ongwediva College of Education. Borg and Gall (1989:58) mentioned several valid reasons for carrying out replication studies. One of

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them is to confirm, disconfirm or check the validity of research findings achieved with a small sample of individuals representing a single population. Based on reasons mentioned by Borg and Gall, the findings of this study invite interested scholars to conduct replication research.

The study also recommends BETD postgraduate teachers to seriously apply the theory of critical inquiry and reflective practice on their own work, not only to understand their teaching and learning practices, but also with the purpose of learning general methods of educational development work and to get a positive attitude towards their role as agents of providing quality education to the Namibian nation. It is hoped that this will encourage and challenge Namibian teachers to not just narrowly focus on classroom issues alone, but that they will address the dialectical relationship that exists between school and society. Thus, Beyer, as cited in Muyambelo (1996:5) claimed that we do better to see education and society as coextensive. Having critical inquiry and reflexive practitioner teachers will also leads Namibia to have reflexive practitioner teachers who critically investigate their own practices and share their insights with other practitioners in order to develop understanding. Having teacher researchers will also promote teachers to become independent agents responding to the vibrant and ever changing environments of their classrooms and society. So doing, research is now seen as an opportunity opening up a whole kaleidoscope of possibilities that will increase conscientisation (Muyambelo 1996:5).

7. Conclusion

The assumptions of critical inquiry and reflective practice in the BETD is to enable student teachers to explore different learning environments from learner-centered and contextual perspective, to enable student teachers to explore new ways to develop the teaching and learning process during school-base studies, and by that create and develop practical knowledge and relevant skills conducive for educational and social change in Namibia. It is to enable student teachers to develop participatory educational practices, enable student

teachers to bring closer relationship between school and society, enable student teachers to learn and develop an understanding of classroom reality, and enable student teachers to critically consider the grounds for reasoning and its educational consequences. In Namibia, the concern for producing teachers capable of playing a significant role in societal transform has been paramount; hence the BETD program was developed.

This study has explored the putting of critical inquiry and reflective practice into practice. The interviewed BETD postgraduate teachers honestly exposed the reality of why they are not applying critical inquiry and reflective practice theory into practice. Though critical inquiry and reflective practice is the key journey towards a high level of reflectivity where reflection should be done for-action, in-action and on-action, various reasons such as inconsistency in interpreting and guidance given by various teachers educators, lack of action research skills, the avenue that could help Basic Education Teacher Diploma teachers to apply critical inquiry and reflective practice theory into practice, lack of time and lack of collegial collaboration at schools were identified as major impediments. However, high teacher-ratios long distances, traditional responsibilities and pressure to cover a required and broadly defined subject syllabi were also mentioned as minor obstacles.

In conclusion, the study placed an emphasis on team working at school, cluster and circuit base that could contributed to a great extend to making teachers more competent and assisting themselves in mastering the applicable critical inquiry and reflective practice skills. Teachers need to acquire the necessary skills through their own efforts. They need professional support from their colleagues that will enable them to be in a position to plan and develop their own work thoroughly. Teachers need to be more conscious of strategies for change, obtain knowledge of recent teachers' responsibilities trends, and acquire basic skills in research work.

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CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

In this section I reflect on some key professional skills I have gained from the program and research processes. The section focus on how I now understand a course portfolio, skills that emerged from the way the portfolio was developed, research management skills I have gained and challenges I have encountered. In the light of the new paradigm and recent trends in assessment, the portfolio has been viewed as an alternative to grading, a means for measuring student learning, and a form of alternative assessment or a strategy for enhancing reflective thinking (Graves & Sunstein, as cited in NEEC 2003:1 Course Material). Murphy & Smith (as quoted in NEEC 2003:1 Course Material) argued that a portfolio is regarded as set of artifacts that represents a range of decisions, while (Dickson & Durfee, as cited in NEEC 2003:1 Course material) regarded it as a record of each student's personal journey and a testament to gain and growth.

The diversity of products that might be labeled 'portfolio' makes a universal definition of a portfolio difficult. The word 'portfolio' can mean anything from a cumulative student's writing folder to a scrapbook of personal items. A portfolio can be a thickly stuffed file of assorted drafts, final pieces, and odd items or a thin, carefully chosen collection of one's best work. A portfolio can include student's work in one subject area over a few months or be the culmination of years of study in a student's entire academic program. Based on the reviewed literature and for the purpose of my discussion, I have adopted the concept of portfolio by Paulson et al.

Paulson et al defined a portfolio as:

> A purposeful collection, selection, and organization of student's work over time that exhibits a complex and comprehensive view of student's performance, evidence of student's self-reflection, learning, efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. It is a collection that includes student's participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, and the criteria for judging merit (Paulson et al 1991: 60-63).

Portfolios take many different forms and have many different purposes. All are valued because they show a rich picture of student development over time. The main objectives of my Master of Education course were to assist me in developing a clear conceptual framework from which to understand and to evaluate the praxis of education in the context of reform and transformation in relation to my own work, from an informed and critical perspective. It was designed in a way that empowers me as a curriculum developer, implementer and monitor to be able to meet the challenges of education reform and transformation in Namibia. It was also designed to help me in developing foundation, practical and reflexive competencies. Based on my course objectives, my portfolio is a collection of research projects that I have produced as part of my coursework for the past two years of my study that conveys evidence of professional and academic growth and development.

2. Research Portfolio

The utilization of a portfolio in this course helped me to enjoy my rights as a student. For example, I was involved in decisions made about how to organize my portfolio. I also was involved in all discussions about judging criteria to be used to assess it and participated in the development or refining of some of the assessment criteria. Throughout the course, I used my portfolio to show evidence of my self-reflection of how I examined my own work and reflected on it to set further goals of my study. Tutors checked these reflections at the beginning of each session. At the end of the course, all reflections were considered to form this final reflection statement.

My portfolio involves my original level of competency and demonstrates the breadth and depth of my individual experience and approach since the time of starting my study up to the time of completing the course. All of my reflections reveal the development that has occurred professionally and academically. It has helped me to look back at my early efforts and compare them with later pieces to see how they have changed. It provided opportunities for me to record information that may be shared with others.

3. Research Management

One major theme that emerges when qualitative researchers talk about their experiences as research writers is that the research process changed them as writers, researchers, and as professionals (Ely et al 1997:330). Based on this statement, I would also like to share with you skills that I have gained from managing various research projects that I have conducted during the duration of this course. These skills aided me towards being a better subject advisor, curriculum developer and monitor of curriculum implementation.

The experience of diving into the qualitative research processes has been one of the most profound and moving experiences that I have encountered during my research processes. I remember struggling to say what I wanted to, but never trusting that my opinion was valuable. During my literature review I met a variety of academic terms. Most terms were used differently; depending upon the author and the kind of research conducted. This brought a lot of confusion during my research life. I asked myself: "How should I know that what I wanted to say is academic and valuable fact? How should I term some of the situations that emerged from my research work? Are those the only academic terms that I have to use or am I free to come up with my own terms?" I wrote, but I always had to back them up with quotes from other people's work. As I have to write for an academic purpose, I felt I needed to write in a more scholarly way, even to the point of making my writing dense and difficult to understand. But later I learned to feel sufficiently comfortable to accept and value my own work and opinion. This whole issue reminded me about Vygotsky's work on language. He believed that language is a vital instrument for the development of thought. I also developed a belief that language is a vital instrument for the development of research work.

Significant knowledge and abilities about how to organize and supervise small-scale subject or classroom-based research, knowledge of how to select research method, methodology, tools, participants context, are all included in what I have learned. At least I am now in a better position for planning, developing and implementing a small-scale research in my own professional context and to do critical evaluation and analysis of

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educational policies. The research work that I have conducted during the course has made me aware and informed me that I should look at Namibian educational issues with new lenses, the lenses of critical thinking and of a reflexive practitioner. I have gained new skills to reflect on the way I have designed and developed and the way I implement and monitored the curriculum. I have also learned that I should be always alert and think critically of long-term consequences of the curriculum I am designing for the people of Namibia.

Data analysis was always a challenge. Some research work, for example (Yin 1994:102) argued that data analysis is one of the difficult parts of case study researches. Many times, researchers start case studies without having the foggiest notion about how the evidence is to be analyzed. Such researchers easily become stalled at the analytic stage. To ease my data analysis process, I considered it early as I was planning my data collection tools. In my literature review paper, I developed a broader understanding about who is a professional teacher. That understanding helped me to develop seven preliminary themes for my research paper: teachers' self-reflections and assessment, problems encountered by teachers since they have entered the teaching profession, teachers' general reflections on strategies used to train them to become reflexive practitioners, the extent to which critical inquiry and reflective practice theory are put into practice, and teacher participants' suggestions for the improvement. It was under those themes that I developed my structured, semi-structured and unstructured data collection questions.

Yin refers to this process of developing preliminary themes as "preliminary data manipulations and making a matrix of categories" under which, at a later stage, the researcher will place evidence (Yin 1994:102). He further expressed his fear of the researcher being ruled by his/her own bias when using this process. Creswell knew this process as well, hence, he emphasized that an experienced researcher only can apply this approach (Creswell 1994:155). I felt confident and comfortable in working with this process although I am a beginner researcher. It was time saving and easy to handle.

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During data capturing, most information could be easily placed under those preliminary themes.

I viewed the research processes that I have gone through not only as a locus for the construction and transformation of me as a student, but also as a means to define, maintain, and transform my professional connection with discursive and knowledge communities. It was also a means to mediate between theory and practice as a way of joining new academic knowledge and eventually as a vehicle for challenging and transforming my professional development. I was equipped and shaped into a reflexive practitioner who can think creatively and critically on educational issues, particularly those that are related to my area of specialist, languages. I got an understanding of how I should evaluate my professional work, theory, and how to test my ideas in practice.

These practices directed me into new channels of inquiry. For example, I have learned that in whatever I am doing, I am researching. Whenever I am visiting my teachers, conducting classroom observation or conducting workshops, I have now realized that these activities are also a kind of research. I have to keep and treat all information collected during these activities as data that can at sometime be analyzed in order to do follow up formal research for triangulation purposes. In this way, I am now getting to understand my teachers' teaching situation better and to be in a better position to advice and assist them. The research processes brought me into a culture of reading, note taking and recording and critical observation. Therefore a professional journal has now become my important tool that I have to keep at all the times.

Objectivity is one of the most cherished ideas of the educational research community. If our research work is accused of being subjective, its status as a source of knowledge sinks slowly into the horizon like a setting sun (Eisner 1993: 49). The research work that I have gone through in this course, has helped me to be objective; to see, accept and analyze data as it is and as from the point of its ontological state, rather to analyze it from the theoretical point of view. For example, during my interviews and group discussions with my participants, I tried to make my questions sound as natural as possible. I altered

my wording to suit the circumstances of the participants and the topic under discussion. I did my best to introduce my query smoothly into the flow of talk. I also tried to seek for concrete and abstract responses; for example, I did not only ask 'what', but also 'why' and 'how'. When I received a reply that contained words or phrases capable of many interpretations (e.g. unfriendly colleagues, inspiring school principals, etc.), I asked for examples of behaviors or situations that would illustrate these terms. This helped me as a researcher to achieve certain knowledge, understanding and view the reality that is different from my belief. We could believe 'something' to be true; but belief and knowledge are regarded as different states of being (Eisner 1993:50).

4. Challenges

During my literature review, the amount of information challenged me. I found myself challenged to make a critical and logical decision on selecting information that was more relevant to what I wanted to study. The second challenge was the way I should use it, summarize and conceptualize it into my study. I have learned that doing a literature review first, before a research proposal, is a challenge. I developed two contrary thoughts about the process. Sometimes I felt, it was good to start with a literature review, because it gives a broader understanding about the research area before selecting the research topic. Sometimes I felt that it gives someone double work, because I was forced to seek some additional sources otherwise the literature review paper is broader and too general if compared to the main research paper of the portfolio.

5. Conclusion

In looking back on my reflection, I can now determine the position I have reached by working through the program. The program supported me to see a broader perspective, than my own conceptualization of educational issues and also framed my perspectives on the constructivist theory currently underpinning most issues in teacher practices, such as

a learner-centred approach, action research, and critical inquiry and reflective practice. It helped me to better understand teachers' perception on critical inquiry and reflective practice, how they apply critical inquiry and reflective practice, problems that are preventing teachers from applying critical inquiry and reflective practice effectively and their ideas of how it could be settled to improve the situation. It was due to this program that I was able to know serious issues that have emerged from the study. Other assumptions from the consulted teachers informed me of the extent to which teachers understand concepts such as, curriculum and critical inquiry and reflective practice. Lastly, I believe that being engaged in such a reflective course was critical to me as an advisory teacher and curriculum developer as I am daily confronted by new educational ideologies, theories and assumptions. I must be equipped with skills which would enable me to critique my own context, if am to become a true master of my own destiny.

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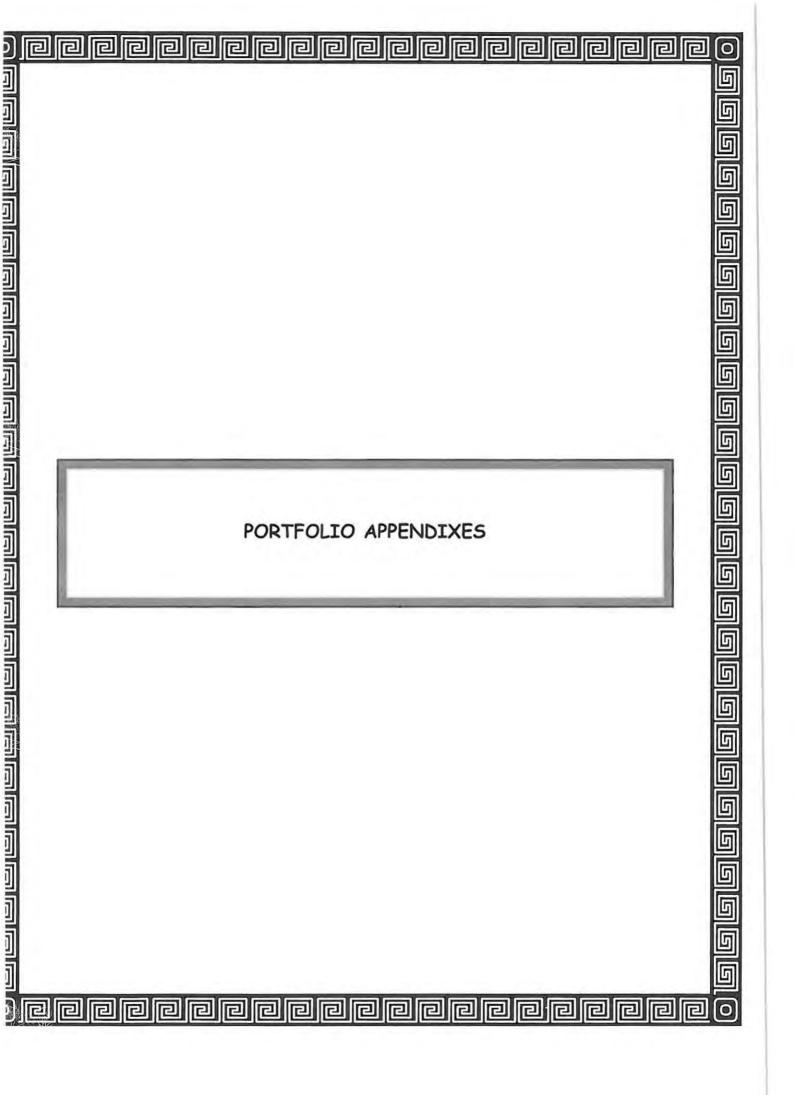
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PORTFOLIO APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Introduction of new Grade 8-10 Curriculum: Workshop 1 Activities Sheet

Looking at the present teaching and learning situation of Oshindonga first language, what similarities and differences can you identify if compared with the past situation? Please reflect your own educational background.

Activity 1:
Reflection on the past
Individual teacher
10 minutes
30 minutes for discussion

Take your syllabus. How do you find the syllabus' structure? **Complicated/Well structured** (Please choose one and elaborate)

Activity 2:
Group Activity
Three teachers per group
15 minutes for discussion
10 minutes per group to report

Take your new syllabus. With your partner, thoroughly scan your component and answer this question: Do you think the syllabus is promoting Learner-Centred Education in that specific domain?

Activity 3:
Pair Activity
Two teachers per group
Each group will scan one syllabus component/domain
15 minutes for component scanning
10 minutes per group to report

In your group, please discuss kinds of teaching and learning approaches does the syllabus teacher have to apply in order to accommodate LCE effectively? Please explain and give practical examples from the syllabus. Design one sample of a well-structured lesson plan that promotes LCE.

Activity 4:
Group Activity
Three teachers per group
30 minutes for group work
20 minutes per group to present

Reflections on general issues that are related to the implementation of Grade 8-10 Oshindonga Curriculum, suggestions and recommendations from participants.
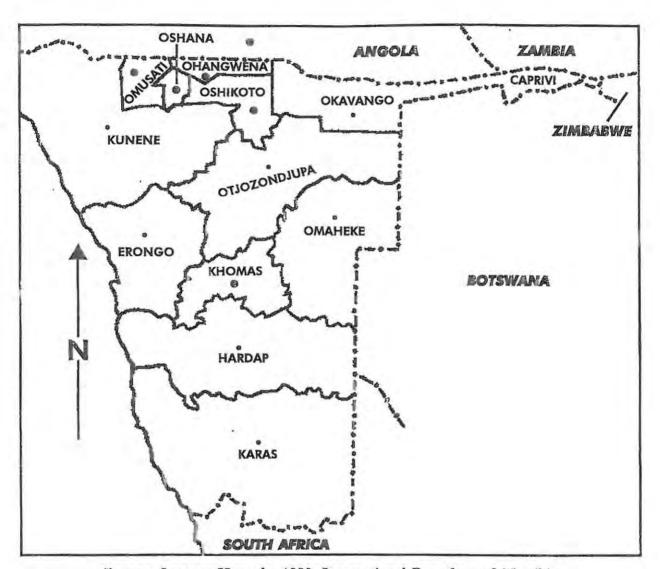
Activity 5
Open-ended activity

Appendix B

Workshop 2 Grade 8-10 CA Evaluation Form

Subject: Oshindonga   Year: ----------------------

Name of school: ----------------------------------   Circuit: --------------------

Name of teacher: --   Grade: 8-10

PART A: Teacher's Preparations	Yes	No
a) Does the teacher bring his/her daily lesson preparations?		
b) Do the lesson plans include all lesson plans as from January?		
c) Do the lesson plans include teacher's responsibilities during lesson presentation?		
d) Do the lesson plans include learners' cooperative activities for CA?		
e) Do the lesson plans include teacher' self-reflections?		
f) Do the lesson plans reflect the teaching and learning of all language domains equally?		
g) Are the lesson plans in accordance with the current syllabus?		
h) Are the lesson plans related to the scheme of work?		

Evaluator's comments on Part A:

PART B: Learners' Exercise Books	Number of activities done by learners
a) How many compositions have learners written?	
b) How many friendly letters have learners written?	
c) How many other long pieces have been written?	
d) How many letters have been written?	
e) How many short pieces have been written?	
f) How many activities related to language comprehension have been written?	
g) How many activities related to literature analysis have learners written?	
h) How many numeric and graphs activities have learners written?	
i) Are learners' activities regularly marked?	
j) Is the teacher's work regularly checked by HOD/Principal?	

1

Evaluator's comments on Part B:

PART C: Filling of CA Forms	Yes	No
a) Do learners' CA marks correspond with learners' activities?		
b) Do learners' CA marks correspond with teacher's lesson plans?		
c) Has the teacher used the correct CA forms?		

Evaluator's comments on Part C:

PART D: Overall Remarks by the Moderator

a) Any good examples from the teacher that can be shared with others?	
b) Any serious weakness that the evaluator has identified?	
c) Any suggestion that the evaluator can suggest as to how this teacher can be assisted?	

Evaluated by:

Name: ---------------------------------   **Date:**   **Place:**

-----------------------------------   ----------------   ---------------------

Recommended by:

---------------------------------------   ------------------   ---------------------

Helena Iitula
Oshindonga Advisory Teacher
Oshikoto Region

Appendix C

Map of Namibia with thirteen Political regions and neighboring countries

(Source: Lazarus Hangula, 1993, International Boundary of Namibia.
Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan)

Note: More people speak Oshikwanyama in these regions   ●

Few people speak Oshikwanyama in these regions   ●

International boundary   ⊲ ━ ━ ▪ ⊲ ⊲ ▪ ▪

Regional boundary   ∿∿∿⌐

Appendix D

OSHINDONGA FIRST LANGUAGE WEEKLY LESSON PLAN

Date: _____

Grade: _____

Duration: _____

Syllabus Objective/s: _____

_____

_____

Syllabus Competence/s: _____

_____

_____

List of all Teaching and Learning Resources/Materials Needed

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Elements of a Lesson	Period 1 Literature	Period 2 Speaking and Listening Skills (Based on Day 1)	Period 3 Continuous Writing Skills (Based on Day 1,2)	Period 4 Reading and Directed Writing	New ideas emerged during the week for future planning
Introductory Activities					
Presentation Steps					
Learners' Activities					
Lesson Reinforcement Activities					
Lesson Conclusion Activities					
Homework/Assessment Activities					
Lesson's General Reflection					

NB: Columns in this form have been minimized to avoid many pages for appendixes, but in the actual form, columns provided enough spaces for the teacher to fill in all necessary information needed for the preparation.

Appendix: E (i)

Subject: Oshindonga   **Teacher: ------------------**   **Grade: 8-9**

Category	Item	Max	TERMS
	Learner's Names		1 2 3 (×6 term groups)
Speaking and Listening	Prepared Topics	10	
	Unprepared Topics	10	
	Term Marks	20	
Reading and Directed Writing	Comprehension Passage	10	
	Comprehension Passage + Grammatical aspects	20	
	Term Marks	30	
Literature	Prose	10	
	Poetry	10	
	Term Marks	20	
Continuous Writing	Compositions	20	
	Compositions	20	
	Short pieces	10	
	Short Pieces	10	
	Term Marks (60 ÷2)	30	
Total	Term Total Marks (A+B+C+D)	100	
	Terms Total Marks (T1 + T2 + T3)	300	
	Total CA Marks	100	

	Skill	Item	Max Marks	Learner's Names
TERM I	Speaking and Listening	Prepared Topics	10	
		Unprepared Topics	10	
		Term 1 Marks	20	
	Literature	Task 1	10	
		Task 2	10	
		Term 1 Marks	20	
	Reading and Directed Writing	Comprehension Passage	10	
		Passage + Grammatical Aspects	20	
		Term 1 Marks	30	
	Continuous Writing	Compositions	20	
		Short Pieces (2x10)÷2	10	
		Term 1 Marks	30	
		Term 1 Total marks	100	
TERM II	Speaking and Listening	Prepared Topics	10	
		Unprepared Topics	10	
		Term 2 Marks	20	
	Literature	Tasks 1	10	
		Tasks 2	10	
		Term 2 Marks	20	
	Reading and Directed Writing	Comprehension Passage	10	
		Comprehension Passage + Grammatical Aspects	20	
		Term 2 Marks	30	
	Continuous Writing	Compositions	20	
		Short Pieces (2x10)÷2	10	
		Term 2 Marks	30	
		Term 2 Total Marks	100	
Total		Term 1 & 2 Total Marks (T1 + T2 ÷2)	200	
		Total CA Marks	100	

Appendix F

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF BASIC EDUCATION & CULTURE: OSHIKOTO REGION

Tel: (065) 240024
Fax: (065) 240315

Private Bag 2028
Ondangwa
NAMIBIA
11 April 2003

Enquiries: Mrs Iitula Helena N.
E-Mail: hitula@mbesc-oe.schoolnet.na

To: The Director
Oshikoto Region

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS IN OSHIKOTO REGION

1. NIED is responsible for the professional development of Advisory Teachers and Teacher Educators. Rhodes University, RSA, has been recommended by NIED as one of the Universities offering courses fulfilling the needs of the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports, and Culture. I am doing Masters of Education from that University.

2. At independence in 1990, 36 percent of Namibian's 13, 000 teachers had no professional training. It was clear that there were not enough qualified teachers to meet the demand of the newly independent country, Namibia. As a result, in its national policy document that translates its philosophy of education into concrete implementation, Namibia had made a call on educating new teachers and enabling them to use new teaching and learning skills, develop new teaching and learning visions, new understanding, and new commitments. Consequently, a three-year pre-service teacher education qualification, the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) was introduced at the four colleges of education.

3. The Namibian Teacher's Program has introduced Action Research as an avenue for promoting *Critical Inquiry and Reflective Practice*. *Critical Inquiry and Reflective Practice* has been adopted in the BETD as the official strategy to educate teachers who are critical and reflective. If that is the way Namibian teachers are being trained, then there is an essential way for them to change and improve on what they are doing in the classroom and help themselves to implement the professional practice.

4. Based on that background, I have decided to conduct a study on the implementation of *Critical Inquiry and Reflective Practice* by BETD Pre-service postgraduate teachers in the classroom. This study is required for the fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Education in General Education Theory and Practice.

5. The permission is therefore requested to conduct a study among BETD Pre-service postgraduate teachers in Oshikoto Educational Region.

With regards,

Helena N Iitula
Masters of Education student
Rhodes University

Appendix G

CRITICAL INQUIRY AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE QUESTIONNAIRE

Activity one: Teacher's general reflection and self assessment

1. School: _____

2. Age: | 20-25 | | 25-30 | | 30-35 | | 35-over | |

3. Years of teaching experiences: | 1-3 | | 4-7 | | 8-10 | |

4. In which years did you attend BETD training: _____

5. I feel confidant with my teaching responsibilities. | Yes/No | |

6. I use different teaching approaches to support and accommodate effective
   teaching and learning in my classroom. | Yes/No | |

7. I use a variety of materials developed by myself, by my learners,
   or by my colleagues. | Yes/No | |

8. I promote my learners' performing skills (interpersonal skills,
   analysis, synthesis, evaluation, positive criticism, etc) during
   my teaching process. | Yes/No | |

9. What are the serious teaching problems you have encountered since you have
   started with the teaching profession? How could you use action research skills to
   overcome some of those classroom burdens and turn your classroom into
   community of inquiry?
   (Answers should be written in a separate provided sheet.)

Activity two: Group work

Teachers' reflection on how they were trained to do action research

The Namibian teacher's program, (BETD), introduced action research as an avenue for promoting critical inquiry and reflective practice. Some basic assumptions and predictions of critical inquiry and reflective practice are to give student teachers opportunities to explore different learning environments from a learner-centred and contextual perspective, to give student teachers opportunities to explore new ways of developing the teaching and learning process, enable student teachers to create a personal knowledge base about teaching and learning and at the same time contributing to the larger collective pool of knowledge in the society, enable student teachers to develop the ability of creating learning opportunities which will enable learners to explore different ways of knowing and develop the whole range of their thinking abilities both within and across subject areas of the whole curriculum, enable student teachers to develop their own understanding of teaching and learning environments and be aware of ways to develop themselves professionally through their own initiative and innovative practices, encourage student teachers to investigate their own teaching and learning environments, promote the establishment of research support groups, engagement in educational and social transformation through cooperation with others, promote participatory research through democratic processes, and promote professional growth through the process of educational research.

    a) What are your perceptions of critical inquiry and reflective practice?
    b) What critical inquiry and reflective practice skills you have gained from doing action research at the college?
    c) What aspects of action research were you most proud of?
    d) What aspects of action research were you not proud of?
    e) Did you discover the relationship between action research you have done at the college and the teaching situation you are now involved in?
       i) What are the similarities?
       ii) What are the differences?

Activity three: Group Work

Teachers' suggestion and recommendations on how the situation could be improved

a) Do you think you need professional support in order to implement critical inquiry and reflective practices effectively?

b) How do you think that professional support should be done and by whom?

(Answers should be written in a separate provided sheet.)

Appendix H

CRITICAL INQUIRY AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE QUESTIONNAIRE

Ongwediva College of Education Lecturers

We have gained few skills, especial on the action research processes... We learned to use one data collection tool – observation ... We were not aware of the relationship between action research and the promotion of critical inquiry and reflective practice... Action research introduced to us in a short time... We were not aware of our expectations as teacher reflexive practitioner... Lecturers at the college have different views and understandings of action research... There are no action research resources at the college, if they are there, lecturers were not guided us to use them effectively...

1. Those are some of the statements made by your former student teachers I have interviewed. What is your reaction against them?

2. What is the procedure of doing action research at your college?

3. Do you have a committee that deals with action research issues and processes?

4. Do you have an in-house professional development program?