

**TEACHER EDUCATORS' INTERPRETATION AND PRACTICE OF
LEARNER-CENTRED PEDAGOGY: A CASE STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to understand how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practice the learner-centred pedagogy underpinning the Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD) program. In order to achieve this objective, a case study approach was adopted, qualitative-interpretive in orientation and drawing upon interviews, naturalistic non-participant observation and document analysis.

Bernstein's theory of pedagogy – in particular his notion of recontextualization – offered ideas and concepts that were used to generate and analyse data.

The data indicated that, at the level of description, teacher educators interpreted learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on weak rules of regulative discourse, or a weak power relation between themselves and their student teachers. The weakening of the rules of regulative discourse and the waning of educator authority were indicated in the interview narratives, which evoked a pedagogic context characterized by a repositioning of the student teacher from the margins to the centre of the classroom, where he or she enjoyed a more active and visible pedagogic position. Contrary to the disempowering dynamic within classroom practice under the apartheid dispensation, the repositioning of the student teacher suggested a shift of power towards him or her. Similarly, the identification of the teacher educator as a *facilitator*, which featured prominently in the interview narratives, further suggested a weakening or diminishing of the pedagogic authority of the teacher educator. With regard to rules pertaining to the instructional discourse, the data revealed an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on strong framing over the selection of discourses, weak framing over pacing, and strong framing over sequencing and criteria for evaluation.

When correlated with the interview data, the data generated through lesson observation and teacher educator prepared documents such as lesson plans revealed a disjuncture between teacher educators' ideas about learner-centred pedagogy and their practice of it. Contrary to the interviews, lesson observation data revealed that teacher educators implemented learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on strong internal

framing over rules of the regulative discourse. Data further indicated strong internal framing over the selection, sequencing, pacing and evaluation. The study concluded that while some teacher educators could produce an accurate interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy at the level of description, most of them did not do so at the level of practice. Findings revealed structural and personal-psychological factors that constrained teacher educators' recontextualization of the new pedagogy. A narrow understanding of learner-centred pedagogy that concentrated only on changing teacher educators' pedagogical approaches from teacher-centred to learner-centred, while ignoring structural and systematic factors, tended to dominate not only the interview narratives but also official texts. Learner-centred pedagogy was understood as a matter of changing from teacher-centredness to learner-centredness while frame factors, for instance regarding the selection, pacing or sequencing of discourses, still followed the traditional approach.

The study recommends the adoption of a systematic and deliberate approach to address the multiplicity of factors involved in enabling teacher educators to interpret and implement learner-centred pedagogy at the micro-level of their classrooms.

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Finally, I wish to thank my family and all my friends for their support and encouragement.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Clementine and my children, Maria, Nyambe, Salufu and Neta.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any university for a degree.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping strokes, positioned above the 'Signature' label.

Signature

15 December 2008

Date

Make your own notes,
NEVER underline or
write in a book.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACTET	Advisory Council on Teacher Education and Training
BETD	Basic Education Teachers Diploma
CCE	Caprivi College of Education
CCG	Curriculum Coordinating Group
CIDA	Canadian International Development Authority
DFID	Department for International Development
EDU	Education Development Unit
ELTDP	English Language Teacher Development Project
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Program
ETP	Education Theory and Practice
GRN	Government Republic of Namibia
IFESH	International Foundation for Education and Self-Help
ITTP	Integrated Teacher Training Program
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MBEC	Ministry of Basic Education and Culture
MBESC	Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture
MHETEC	Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation
MECYS	Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAMAS	Namibia Association of Norway
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
OCE	Ongwediva College of Education
ODA	Overseas Development Authority
OPD	Official pedagogic discourse
ORF	Official recontextualising field
UNIN	United Nations Institute for Namibia
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNISA	University of South Africa
PRF	Pedagogic recontextualizing field
RCE	Rundu College of Education

SWAPO South West Africa People's Organization
SIDA Swedish International Development Authority
TERP Teacher Education Reform Project

CHAPTER ONE

NATURE, SCOPE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Taking its orientation from the key notion of recontextualization within Basil Bernstein's theory of pedagogy, this research is a case study of how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practise the learner-centred pedagogy underpinning the Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD) program. In this chapter, I outline the background to the study, its objectives, research questions, significance and organization.

1.2 Background to the study

Situated in the south-western part of Africa, the Republic of Namibia spans a geographical area of 825, 418 km² and has a total population of 1, 820, 916 (Namibia, 2008, p. 1). It borders on Angola and Zambia in the north, Botswana in the east and South Africa in the south, while the Atlantic Ocean washes its western coastline. Although the territory has endured two colonial regimes (Germany from 1884-1915 and South Africa from 1915-1990) neither of these paid any significant attention to the education of the indigenous inhabitants (Ndilula, 1988, p. 388; Ellis, 1988, pp. 402-406; Melber, 1988, p. 407).

It has been suggested that, having no interest in the provision of education to the Namibian people, and with their insatiable greed for Lebensraum, the Germans concentrated on seizing the land, which led to the displacement or extermination of indigenous communities. Such provision as was made for native education was left entirely in the hands of missionaries (Department of Information and Publicity, SWAPO [South West Africa People's Organization] of Namibia, 1981, p. 15; Cohen, 1994, p. 64; Angula & Lewis, 1997, p. 234; Storeng, 2001, p. 9). Nevertheless, the German

administration ensured that it retained control over the vision and philosophy of this education. According to Angula and Lewis (1997),

The German administration did, however, exercise influence to ensure that the kind of training made available served the needs of the masters of the country: a source for their servants and labourers. African education was designed to keep them inferior and to avoid inculcating such mischievous and intolerable ideas as democracy, the brotherhood of man, human freedom and the like. (p. 234)

It is further argued that in order to serve the needs and interests of the German colonial masters by producing servants and labourers who possessed the appropriate social qualities and attitudes, mission education concentrated on “instilling the values of obedience, order, punctuality, sobriety, honesty, diligence and moderation” (Cohen, 1994, p. 67). Moreover, propelled by the self-proclaimed duty to convert and civilize the African, mission education did not go beyond teaching of the basic literacy necessary for reading the bible, hymn books and other evangelistic literature (Cohen, 1994, p. 67).

In 1915 South Africa, as part of the Allied Forces, conquered the territory and the Germans surrendered (Angula & Lewis, 1997, p. 234). But far from improving the status of education, the shift of colonial power to South Africa further exacerbated the situation by entrenching ethnically and racially segregated education systems for blacks, coloureds and whites (United Nations Institute for Namibia [UNIN], 1984, p. 4). The three education systems were unequal, differing in both quantity and quality, with education for whites being of superior quality, followed by that for coloureds and, lastly, that for blacks (Department of Education and Publicity, SWAPO of Namibia, 1981, p. 151; Storeng, 2001, p. 42; Ndilula, 1988, p. 391).

Education not only served to perpetuate disparities in educational provision among the various ethnic and racial groups, but also became “part of the politics of exclusion and oppression of the majority of Namibians” (Pomuti, LeCzel, Liman, Swarts & Van Graan, 2003, p. 9). The racially and ethnically segregated education system ensured privilege for the white minority and strengthened their political authority and economic base (Pomuti,

et al., 2003, p. 9). As for the indigenous communities, the apartheid establishment introduced Bantu education that aimed to ensure a cheap black labour force in the Bantustans or homelands, as Angula and Lewis (1997) maintain:

Bantu education, organized and administered by the ethnic authorities known as administrations, was aimed at the subservience and subjugation of the Africans on the one hand, and inculcation of racial bigotry on the other. Apartheid education has negated the concept of education. Apartheid education has been de-humanizing, manipulative and divisive. This effect was accomplished by differential curricula, access to further studies, teacher training opportunities, salary scales, job opportunities within the education system and per pupil expenditure as reflected in the physical facilities and the distribution of subject advisors, inspectors and qualified teachers. Bantu education was financed unequally across the ethnic administrations. At the time of independence in 1991, per pupil expenditure by the Administration for Whites was eight times that of the Owambo Administration, the administration serving the largest ethnic group. (p. 234)

Consequently, at independence, Namibia's teacher education, and education in general, largely reflected the segregationist and divisive tendencies of the apartheid era (Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], 1993, p. 78; Angula, 1999, p. 10). Consistent with apartheid segregationist policies, white teachers were trained at Windhoek Teacher Training College, coloureds at Khomasdal Teacher Training College, and blacks at the Ongwediva, Rundu, and Caprivi Teacher Training Colleges, as well as at the Academy for Tertiary Education in Windhoek (Swarts, 1999, p. 31). Established in 1980, the Academy for Tertiary Education was a university college created by apartheid South Africa in order to counteract the fact that SWAPO, through the United Nations Institute for Namibia (UNIN) based in Lusaka, was able to provide university tertiary education to exiled Namibians, an opportunity non-existent within the country for non-exiled Namibians (Cohen, 1994, p. 171).

Despite claims of autonomy, the Academy for Tertiary Education remained a conduit for the delivery of degrees and diplomas of the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria as it did not have the university status to confer its own degrees and diplomas (Cohen, 1994, p. 171). This situation notwithstanding, the Academy for Tertiary

Education became the 'mother' institution under whose academic authority the three northern colleges of Ongwediva, Rundu and Caprivi operated (Cohen, 1994, p. 173). These satellite campuses enjoyed very little professional autonomy as their teaching and learning were confined to the study guides tailored for them by the Academy. The ideological and epistemological orientations that underpinned the writing of these study guides were seen as largely reflecting conservative Afrikaner ideologies of segregation and white domination. As Cohen (1994) has observed:

Many of the staff of the University's education faculty were graduates of the more conservative Afrikaner universities in South Africa, which called into question the ideological and epistemological context of the Faculty's educational theory and practice. Several academics at this establishment saw it as dominated by Afrikaner Nationalists who operated in support of the Verwoerdian dreams of segregation and white domination to the detriment of the interests of Namibia. (p. 178)

The situation at the three northern colleges was further exacerbated by the fact that they were not "real" colleges but "secondary schools with teacher training wings" attached to them (Dahlström, 1999, p. 49). The National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) observed that this situation imposed serious physical and professional constraints on teacher education as both prospective teachers and school learners shared the same facilities and teachers and received similar treatment from the school (NIED, 2000, p. 8). In contrast, the Windhoek Teacher Training College, which was an all white college, enjoyed the status of a well-established college with the Rand Afrikaans University in South Africa exercising guardianship over its cultural, ideological and academic affairs (NIED, 2000, p. 9). Situated in a former 'whites only' suburb called Pionierspark in Windhoek, Windhoek Teacher Training College remained "a luxurious show-piece strictly reserved for whites" (Cohen, 1994, p. 139; NIED, 2000, p. 8). With a small number of white Namibian students enrolling at Windhoek Teacher Training College (110 students enrolled in 1979), the College's boarding capacity of 500 students, together with an academic capacity of 2000 students remained underutilized (Cohen, 1994, p. 139). In order to get sufficient numbers of students to fill the underutilized space, white children aspiring to become teachers often had to be shipped in from South Africa to

complement the limited numbers of students drawn from within the Namibian white community (NIED, 2000, p. 8).

In 1994, a decision was taken by the new Government to relocate Windhoek Teacher Training College to a former suburb for the coloured ethnic group in Windhoek called Khomasdal and to merge it with the Khomasdal Teacher Training College for the coloured ethnic group. Similarly, in the move to fully utilize the underutilized space and facilities, a decision was taken to relocate the newly established University of Namibia to the former campus of Windhoek Teacher Training College in Pionierspark. However, after its relocation to the new campus, and its merging with the former Khomasdal Teacher Training College and subsequent desegregation, white students fled the institution. Equally, only a few white staff members from the former dispensation opted to stay.

Not only were there separate institutions of teacher training for the various racial and ethnic groups, but student teachers in these institutions “did not follow the same preparation path” as the various teacher training programs had “different entry requirements, scope, duration, organization and focus” (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 78). Also to be noted is that programs offered at these teacher training colleges, especially at the three northern colleges, “conformed more to a certification process than to a genuinely professional learning process, with the result that student teachers learned to demonstrate a narrow range of contrived competencies in order to be favourably assessed as a teacher” (Swarts, 1999, p. 31).

Most of the courses offered at the three northern colleges remained archetypical of the Bantu education-style special programs specifically designed for black teachers (Nyambe & Griffiths, 1998, p. 39). The courses offered at these colleges ranged from the two year *Lower Primary Teachers Certificate (LPTC)* and the *Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC)* to the *Education Certificate Primary (ECP)*, and during the transition period, just after independence, the *National Education Certificate (NEC)* and the *National Higher Education Certificate (NHEC)*.

In addition to admission requirements that were as low as Standard 2 (fourth year of schooling) in some of the courses, graduates from these programs lacked the academic foundation necessary for the pursuit of meaningful professional studies in teacher education (Cohen, 1994, p. 177). Adding to this, the heavy emphasis put on a recall type of examination and study guides stifled independent thinking and problem solving abilities among the student teachers (Callewaert & Kallos, 1992, p. 16).

At independence, the re-evaluation and reconstruction of the education system occupied a central position in the process of societal transformation. The entire education system had to undergo a major overhaul in line with the post-apartheid political imperatives of access, equity, quality and democratic participation (Pomuti, et al., 2003, p. 9). These goals necessitated a paradigm shift from a content-based and teacher-centred system for a few to a learner-centred system for all (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 6). This in turn called for a completely new teacher education program that differed radically from the ones that were offered under apartheid. Based on a philosophy different from apartheid teacher education, the BETD was introduced at Namibia's four colleges of education in January 1993 to replace the Bantu education-style programs that were offered under the previous dispensation.

The BETD is a national three year program that prepares teachers to teach in grades 1 to 10. As will be elaborated on in subsequent sections, the BETD is based on the national goals of education in Namibia, namely: access, equity, quality and democracy. The program consists of a common core for all students with opportunities for specialization in relation to phases of schooling and subject areas. Teaching and learning in the program seek to strike a balance between professional insight and skills, and subject knowledge. The BETD is underpinned by a learner-centred pedagogy, a democratic pedagogy characterized by learning as an interactive, shared and productive process (Namibia. Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture [MBESC] & Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation [MHETEC], 1998, p. 2).

1.3 Statement of the research problem

Soon after independence, Namibia witnessed an unprecedented proliferation of policy documents by the newly elected Government, all geared towards undoing the apartheid legacy of an inferior education system and charting new directions for the post-apartheid educational transformation. First to appear on the educational reform landscape was the policy document: *The national integrated education system for emergent Namibia: A draft proposal for education reform and renewal* (Namibia. Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport [MECYS], 1990a). This policy document set the stage for educational change in Namibia by outlining strategies for integrating the eleven racially- and ethnically-based education systems. Another policy statement followed, *Education in transition: Nurturing our future – A transitional policy statement on education and training in the Republic of Namibia* (Namibia. MECYS, 1990b), which gave further guidance to the educational reform process.

Later in the year, a third policy directive was issued: *Change with continuity: Education reform directive* (Namibia. MECYS, 1990c). This policy document outlined the broad framework for educational management and policy evolution. Another milestone in the transformation of Namibian education was the release of the policy document *Toward education for all: A development brief for education, culture and training* (Namibia. MEC, 1993). Not only did this document outline the vision for education in Namibia but it also stated the major goals of the newly established education system as well as its philosophical underpinnings. The policy document covered a wide spectrum of issues in the provision of education in Namibia, ranging from teacher education, formal basic education and senior secondary education to adult and non-formal education.

Other policy documents, directives and policies to be released during this decade, as Namibians endeavoured to conceptualize the way forward regarding the reform of education, included *The Basic Education Reform Initiative, Language Policy, Junior Secondary School Curriculum Reform, Teacher Education Reform and Development, Development of Adult and Non-formal Education, Reform and Development of*

Examinations and Assessment Procedures, Development of the National Institute for Educational Development, The Education Bill as well as the *Policy establishing the National Commission for UNESCO* (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 4).

In addition to the proliferation of policies, the decade also witnessed heightened activity in the form of conferences, seminars, symposia and consultations, all seeking to solicit general public input on policy as well as to promote policy understanding. Furthermore, several studies were commissioned to investigate the state of education in the country with reference to specific issues such as teacher education. The first decade of independence was indeed preoccupied with trying to chart the way forward for the provision of education to the Namibian nation.

Policy production in newly-independent, post-apartheid Namibia has been driven by the political imperatives of democratization, societal transformation and reconstruction. However, while policies have been formulated at the macro-level of the Namibian education system to direct the reform process, little, if any, research has been done on how and to what extent these policies have been interpreted and implemented at the micro-level of pedagogic practice. Yet, as McLaughlin (1998, p. 72) has argued, “what actually happens as a result of a policy depends on how policy is interpreted and transformed at each point in the process, and finally on the response of the individual at the end of the line”. Therefore, the nature, extent and pace of change is, by and large, dependent upon the interpretation and practice of the policy in question by an individual teacher at the micro-level of pedagogic practice.

As will be elaborated on in subsequent sections, Bernstein (1990, 1996, 2000) offers perspectives for understanding the policy process by locating it within the fields of production, recontextualization and reproduction. The policy process is particularly illuminated through the recontextualization process that takes place as policy is selectively appropriated, simplified and transformed (interpreted) for use (practice) in a new context. Bernstein (1990, p. 61) highlights policy recontextualization as a process that entails the interpretations, tensions, struggles, transformations and ideological

screening and contestation by various groups, agencies and agents, as policy moves through a differentiated system based on a social division of labour.

The present study seeks to investigate how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practise the learner-centred pedagogy that underpins the Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD) program. The central research question is:

- How do teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practise the learner-centred pedagogy that underpins the BETD program?

In order to address this research question, the study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To describe with a view to understanding:
 - how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret learner-centred pedagogy at the level of description;
 - how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education practise learner-centred pedagogy at the micro-level of pedagogic implementation;
2. To examine the extent to which teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy suggest possession of the ground rules necessary for them to become recontextualizers of learner-centred pedagogy.

Over the past seventeen years of Namibia's independence, I have actively participated in the reform of Namibian education, first as a college lecturer, then a college vice-rector, later, a college rector, and now, a deputy director at NIED responsible for, among other matters, pre-service and in-service teacher education. Through my active involvement in facilitating classes, providing leadership, participating in curriculum meetings, workshops and conferences, as well as occasionally writing in the *Reform Forum* (a journal for educational reform in Namibia), I have not only come to experience the confusion,

tension and frustration associated with the current reform process in Namibian teacher education, but I have also developed a special interest in trying to understand how teacher educators interpret and enact the learner-centred pedagogy which informs teacher education in Namibia. This study is, therefore, important, in the sense that it has real-life relevance to me as an educator in Namibia.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study is the first of its kind in the Namibian context to use Bernstein's ideas and concepts as a theoretical framework for generating the insight required for a deep understanding of teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. The study provides new perspectives on Namibian teacher education reform. In addition, the study is more than timely as it was begun at a time when Namibia, within the framework of the newly crafted Education and Training Sector Improvement Program (ETSIP), was in the process of embarking upon the reform of teacher education.

Furthermore, this study is significant in that it draws upon Bernstein's ideas and concepts to provide new theoretical perspectives on Namibia's attempts to understand what learner-centred pedagogy entails. In particular, the study has generated new perspectives for understanding learner-centred pedagogy in the Namibian context by illuminating the internal rules of pedagogic practice as well as the classification and framing values that underpin learner-centred pedagogy as an invisible pedagogic practice.

The study has further enhanced the understanding of learner-centred pedagogy in the Namibian context by elucidating the recontextualization process, the process by which official policy moves from its point of production to its point of implementation. The study is also significant in the sense that it offers perspectives for understanding the structural and psychological factors that shape and frame teacher educators' recontextualization of policy, that is, their interpretation and practice of policy at the micro-level of their classrooms.

In the following section, I present an outline of the organization of the study.

1.5 Outline of the study

This study is organized into nine chapters as follows:

Chapter One: Nature, scope and organization of the study

In chapter one, I outline the background to the study, the research question, its significance and organization.

Chapter Two: The routes of and routes to learner-centred education in Namibia

This chapter begins by analyzing the theoretical roots of learner-centred education, followed by an analysis of the routes to learner-centred education in Namibia, that is, an overview of its history in Namibia, its principles and key features, its theoretical underpinnings as derived from constructivism and progressive education, as well as its critique. In order to achieve this objective, I analyze learner-centred pedagogy as presented in Namibian policy documents, in curricula and syllabuses and teaching material, as well as literature on learner-centred pedagogy.

Chapter Three: Major forces that shaped the reform of teacher education in post-apartheid Namibia

In this chapter, I provide a contextual profile of Namibian teacher education reform. In particular, I critically discuss the major forces that shaped Namibian teacher education reform and the structures and processes that emerged after independence in order to facilitate the reform process.

Chapter Four: Theoretical Framework

Chapter four explains how I worked with Bernstein's ideas and concepts to transform chapters two and three into a theoretical frame work for the study. The chapter elucidates how I was able to use Bernstein's ideas and concepts methodologically and theoretically to generate insights necessary for understanding how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practise learner-centred pedagogy.

Chapter Five: Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the research orientation of the study, that is, its ontological, epistemological and methodological orientations. The chapter further discusses the research method that was adopted for the study, the methods for generating data, sampling procedures, issues to do with accessing the research site, data analysis, ethical issues, and procedures adopted to ensure the quality of the research.

Chapter Six: Teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy: the descriptive level

In chapter six, interview data and data generated through policy documents are examined in order to understand how teacher educators interpret learner-centred pedagogy at the level of description, that is, at the level of being able to tell what learner-centred pedagogy is.

Chapter Seven: Teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy: the implementation level

Chapter seven examines data generated through lesson observation and teacher-generated documents in order to understand teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy at the implementation level.

Chapter Eight: Contextual factors that constrain teacher educators' recontextualization of learner-centred pedagogy

In this chapter, contextual factors that constrain teacher educators' recontextualization of learner-centred pedagogy are identified and discussed.

Chapter Nine: Synthesis of main findings and conclusions

Chapter nine presents a synthesis of the main findings and conclusions.

1.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the nature, scope and organization of the study. The next chapter discusses learner-centred pedagogy from a Namibian perspective – its historical origins in Namibia, its underlying principles, key features and critique.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROOTS OF AND ROUTES TO LEARNER-CENTRED EDUCATION IN NAMIBIA

2.1 Introduction

As has been widely documented, pedagogic practice in apartheid Namibia was underpinned by an authoritarian system of instruction that supported teacher dominance and learner passivity (Ndilula, 1988, p. 392; Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 10; Rowell, 1995, p. 3). It is further argued that not only did the nature of classroom interaction stifle the development of independent thinking and problem solving strategies among learners but that it also emphasized the learning of meaningless bits of information (MECYS, 1990, p. 8). The achievement of political independence in March 1990 paved the way for the dismantling of pedagogical practices entrenched in Namibian classrooms over decades of colonial and apartheid education. Transformation at the micro-level of pedagogical practice called for a radical shift in the features of classroom teaching from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness. According to MECYS (1990):

In a democratic Namibia teaching should aim towards:

- (a) an emphasis on the democratic pedagogy which inculcates the democratic and enlightened outlook of man; his culture, history and traditions;
- (b) a methodology which promotes learning through understanding and practice directed towards autonomous mastering of living conditions;
- (c) a general reorientation of the organization of school work with the view to fostering the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills by all pupils within a set time limit and continuously assessed learning outcomes. (Namibia. MECYS, 1990, p. 8)

As will be elaborated on in subsequent paragraphs, learner-centred pedagogy, underpinned by emancipationist and liberation ideals, was adopted as part of a much

broader political imperative to transform, democratize and humanize teaching and learning in post-apartheid Namibia.

This chapter critically examines the case for learner-centred education as adopted by the Namibian education reform program. The chapter begins by discussing and analysing the theoretical roots of learner-centred education. This is followed by an analysis of the routes to learner-centred education in Namibia, its embeddedness in the Namibian education for all policy, its principles and key features, as well as its critique. This involves an examination of Namibian policy documents, curricula, syllabuses and teaching materials, as well as literature on learner-centred education.

As a philosophical orientation, learner-centred education not only has ontological implications (views about reality) and epistemological implications (views about knowledge), but also gives rise to a particular pedagogy (i.e. learner-centred pedagogy). The phrase “learner-centred education” is used in this study to describe the philosophical orientation that underpins post-apartheid education in Namibia, while “learner-centred pedagogy” is a pedagogical approach informed by learner-centred education. Learner-centred pedagogy thus refers to “what counts as a valid transmission of knowledge” (Bernstein, 1971, p. 47) within learner-centred contexts.

In the following section, I discuss and analyse the theoretical roots of learner-centred education.

2.2 The theoretical roots of learner-centred education

Learner-centred education is “a world-model of teaching” (Storeng, 2001, p. 209) that has been adopted in many parts of the world. O’Sullivan (2004, p. 585) observes that in the United Kingdom, where until recently it has been the dominant approach to teaching and learning, learner-centred education was widely adopted in the 1960s following the 1967 Plowden report. He further notes that it has been adopted in most of the Western world and in developing countries. In most cases, learner-centred education has emerged out of

discontent with traditional educational practices (Dewey, 1938, p. 18; 1964a, p. 3; Meier, 2005, p. 76).

Learner-centred education traces its origins to various theoretical initiatives including, among others, the progressive education movement of the early 1900s, the work of Carl Rogers in the mid- and late 1960s (Reynolds, 2000, p. 1), the work of Paulo Freire in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the constructivist model of education. Learner-centred education is informed by principles and practices erected upon these foundations, principles and practices that accord the student an active, visible and central position in the pedagogic process. Learner-centredness entails teaching that “emphasizes what the student should know, understand, do and be able to become”, as opposed to what the teacher educator should achieve (Meier, 2005, p. 78). While acknowledging the teacher’s central position in the teaching/learning process, this principle accords the teacher educator a non-authoritarian but active position as a guide, initiator, observer, advisor and facilitator of students’ learning activities (Coetzer, 2001a, p. 36; Richardson, 1997, p. 5). The facilitative role is elucidated as follows:

The role of the teacher in this process is to give the students centre stage in the classrooms, providing a setting in which the students play an active, inquiring role in their own learning. Teachers act as coaches, or mentors, building bridges between their students’ individual interests and understandings and the common skills and knowledge society expects them to acquire. In order to do this, teachers formulate general plans about what they will teach. They avoid fixed recipes and time-tables for their lessons and don’t feel compelled to have a thorough knowledge of everything that will arise in the course of the study. Rather they allow themselves to learn along with their students, and they try to maintain enough flexibility to let students’ responses shift their teaching, alter the content, drive instructional strategies, and generate new learning. (Falk, p. 26)

Furthermore, learner-centred education is informed by the principle of democracy that underpins the progressivist, constructivist and Freirean models of education. Central to the principle of democracy is the freedom of the student from control by an external authority (Dewey, 1964b, p. 170; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994, p. 7). This principle values

the individual needs and interests of the student and thus accords the student a strong voice in the design and implementation of the teaching and learning process (Stears & Malcom, 2005, p. 23; Coetzer, 2001b, p. 83). The interests and life-world of the student form the basis of the curriculum, and students are actively involved in determining the content of education (Meier, 2005, p. 77). This principle evokes an emancipatory vision where students take control of their own learning, and are seen as active, creative and self-regulatory (Taylor, 1999, p. 108).

Sharing the goal of democracy is the Freirean liberationist and emancipationist pedagogy which, as Wilmot (2005, p. 63) has argued, is “a non-authoritarian participatory pedagogy” that calls for a radical move from the “banking mode of education” to “a critical democratic pedagogy for self and social change” (Freire, 1970, p. 53; 1973, p. 13; Shor, 1992, p. 15). From a Freirean perspective, such a pedagogical approach has great potential for producing teachers who are “critical transformative intellectuals” capable of critically interrogating the ethical and moral underpinnings of education provision (Freire, 1973, p. 37; Hill, 2003, p. 42).

Learner-centred education is further rooted in the principle of activity-based education as advocated by the progressive, Freirean and constructivist models of education. This principle entails pedagogic practices that ensure students’ involvement, participation, freedom of activity and expression, and independence of learning and problem solving (Meier, 2005, p. 77). In order to facilitate effective teaching and learning, students should be taught by eliciting their active and cooperative participation in learning activities (Dewey, 1964b, p. 171; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994, p. 8). The principle of activity calls for a situation where “learners are active, inventing and contributing original ideas as they interact with subject matter, teachers and peers and apply creative and critical thinking to problem situations” (Coetzer, 2001b, p. 82).

Learner-centred education is further informed by the constructivists’ anti-behaviouristic stance that is critical of stimulus response-based learning. More particularly, learner-centred education draws on Piagetian work in cognitive psychology and Vygotskian work

in social constructivism, which are all anti-behaviouristic theories of learning. While the Piagetian approach sees learning as an individualistic cognitive process in which students are engaged in reconstructing their existing understandings by restructuring their cognitive maps, the Vygotskian approach, on the other hand, sees learning as a process that depends on social interactions (Richardson, 1997, p. 4; Mathews, 2003, p. 2). The Vygotskian approach argues that it is within this social interaction that cultural meanings are shared within the group, and then internalized by the individual. Constructivist theories of learning not only underpin learner-centred pedagogy but also represent a radical departure from the traditional view of knowledge and knowing, in terms of which knowledge was seen as a fixed quantity of content that could be transferred to a student (Anthony, 1996, p. 349; Fosnot, 1996, p. ix; Ambrosio & Caulfield, 2004, p. 20). These theories advocate a view of knowledge and knowing that positions the student teacher as an active participant in determining the content of the knowledge that s/he is acquiring.

Thus learner-centred education is *rooted in* the constructivist, progressivist and Freirean models of education, and informed by principles and practices drawn from these models. In the next sections, I discuss the *routes to* learner-centred education in Namibia, its embeddedness in the Namibian 'education for all' policy, its key features, and a possible critique of it.

2.3 The routes to learner-centred education in Namibia

2.3.1 From *Kwanza-Sul* to post-apartheid Namibia

SWAPO educational activities in exile constituted one of the key routes to learner-centred education in post-apartheid Namibia. An example was the educational activity taking place in *Kwanza-Sul*, a SWAPO refugee camp in Angola. Despite persistent threats posed by the raging war of liberation in the surrounding mountains, *Kwanza-Sul* provided opportunities for exploring new ideas and alternatives in teacher education. Angula (1999) observes:

The Namibian exile schools provided the liberation movement with the opportunities to try out policy options, to identify problematic issues and to define parameters for educational change. This was the starting point for undoing apartheid in education and training. (p. 15)

The search for alternative pedagogical approaches in teacher education drew its impetus in part from the fact that many Namibians who acted as teachers at the Namibian school in *Kwanza-Sul* were not trained teachers and were basing their classroom approaches on their own Namibian school experience (Dahlström, 1999, p. 50). Hence, teaching and learning at the school in *Kwanza-Sul* reflected pedagogical practices that were antithetical to the political values and aspirations of the SWAPO liberation movement.

It was in the context of these tensions and contradictions, between the pedagogical practices of teachers in *Kwanza-Sul* (which largely reflected the prevailing classroom situation back home in apartheid Namibia) and SWAPO's ideological vision of transforming a society built on domination and inequality into one built on democracy and social justice, that the search for alternative pedagogical practices based on learner-centred education first began. The search for alternative practices at the Namibian school in *Kwanza-Sul* culminated in a three-year full-time pre-service teacher education program for primary school teachers in exile, the *Integrated Teacher Training Program* (ITTP) (Dahlström, 2002, p. 95).

With Swedish financial and technical support, concepts and principles underpinning learner-centred pedagogical approaches were explored and tried out through the ITTP program offered in *Kwanza-Sul*. Thoroughly imbued with the SWAPO liberation ideology of solidarity, freedom and social justice, the ITTP was informed by principles of student-centeredness and democracy, integration and function, production, and reflective and inductive methods (Dahlström, 2002, p. 96). It should be noted, in this regard, that the ITTP program constituted the model upon which post-apartheid teacher education reform for basic education would be based; as Cohen (1994) puts it:

Since the program [the ITTP program] focused on improving the professional quality of a small number of teachers from *Kwanza-Sul*, its contributions to the overall teacher output was not great. *Nevertheless, it provided a model for an alternative form of teacher training in independent Namibia* [emphasis, mine]. (p. 243)

A similar observation is made by Swarts (1999):

Many of the innovative ideas and principles underpinning the ITTP were incorporated into the design of the reformed teacher education program for basic education. (p. 38)

Operating for about two years after independence at the Ongwediva Teachers' Resource Centre and in a few neighbouring primary schools in the Ongwediva area, the ITTP program was officially phased out in 1992 with the implementation of the BETD in 1993. In terms of its philosophical and ideological principles, the BETD was modelled largely upon the ITTP, with both programs subscribing to ideals of learner-centeredness and democracy, integration and production, and educational reflection and critical constructivism (Dahlström, 1999, p. 50). Also worth noting is that Swedish technical support to SWAPO in exile continued during the reform of teacher education in post-apartheid Namibia, and during the introduction of the BETD in particular. This helped to ensure a carry-over into the BETD of the philosophical and ideological ideals of the ITTP.

In the foregoing discussion, I have outlined how SWAPO educational activities in exile constituted one of the key routes to the adoption of learner-centred education in post-apartheid Namibia. In the next section, I describe the inception of learner-centred education in post-apartheid Namibia.

2.3.2 The 1991 Etosha Conference: Toward learner-centred education

While learner-centred pedagogical approaches were first adopted and tried out through SWAPO's educational activities in exile, it was at the 1991 Etosha Conference that learner-centred education was widely advocated as the philosophical approach that would

underpin teaching and learning in post-apartheid Namibian classrooms. Held in Namibia's biggest game park, the Etosha Game Park, the 1991 Etosha Conference was the first full-scale national consultative conference held in Namibia concerning educational reform for basic education (Nujoma, 1991, p. 1). Learner-centred education as the way to go for post-apartheid Namibian classrooms constituted the hinge around which the conference deliberations revolved. In his address to the Conference, Sam Nujoma, who at the time was the President of the Republic of Namibia, said the following about learner-centred education:

The special emphasis that I believe is guiding the deliberations in this conference is that education must be child or learner-centred. The Namibian basic education must support the actual process of individual learning, rather than continue the colonial teacher-centred Bantu education, with an emphasis on control, rigid discipline, parrot-like learning, and negative assessment principles [emphasis, mine]. (Nujoma, 1991, p. 5)

While experiences from other countries that had implemented learner-centred education were shared at the Conference as a way of strengthening the advocacy of the new pedagogy, conference participants worked in groups to identify areas of strength and concern, and to propose reform agendas. The Etosha Conference was followed by several policy statements that not only prescribed learner-centred pedagogy as the official pedagogy in Namibian schools but also attempted to explicate what the new pedagogy entailed. As will be elucidated in subsequent sections, the policy document *Toward Education for All* (MEC, 1993) served as the centrepiece in the advocacy and explication of learner-centred pedagogy.

It is worth noting that the route to learner-centred education was obliged to traverse rugged pedagogical terrain involving tensions, conflicts, resistance and criticism (as is discussed in section 3.7). The ruggedness was aggravated by the policy of National Reconciliation that dictated the socio-political context within which the post-independence reform initiatives were implemented. Adopted shortly after Namibia's independence, the Policy of National Reconciliation did not only provide for the retention

of conservative government bureaucrats from the former apartheid regime, but also meant that reform initiatives could only be delivered in an atmosphere characterized by compromise, gradualism, continuity and negotiation, and hostile to political radicalism.

Craig, Kraft and du Plessis (1998) have summed up the situation as follows:

Apartheid policies have been discontinued by the new Ministry of Education. However, under the policy of National Reconciliation, those who worked for the apartheid regime have job protection. One of the consequences of this policy was the mediation of the educational policy that was developed by SWAPO in exile. In teacher education, this meant that the philosophy and approach of the Integrated Teacher Training Program (ITTP) would have to be transformed to provide conservative educators with a more palatable teacher education program. Conservatives were concerned that programs such as the ITTP were lowering standards because of their focus on critical inquiry, production, and professionalization rather than the academics of becoming a teacher. (p. 34)

In the next section, I outline how learner-centred pedagogy is conceptualized in the Namibian context.

2.4 Learner-centred education means education for all

The 1990 World Conference on education for all which was held in Jomtien, Thailand, coincided with Namibia's independence. As a result, Namibia subscribed to the "World Declaration on Education for All" and the "Frame-Work for Action" adopted by the Conference (Angula, 1999, p. 8). Thus education for all was both entrenched in the Namibian Constitution as a basic human right, and constituted the vision that underpinned post-apartheid education reform (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 3).

According to the policy document, *Toward education for all* (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 7), apartheid schooling, through its examination and testing mechanisms, acted as an instrument for sorting and selection that effectively eliminated the majority of learners and allowed only a small elite to continue. Education was therefore for the few, in blatant contradiction to the philosophy of education for all.

In contrast, learner-centred education in post-apartheid Namibia means education for all. Learner-centred education is supposed to foster successful learning for all learners by taking each learner's existing knowledge, skills, interests and understanding – derived from previous experience in and out of school – as the starting point for each lesson (NIED, 1999b, p. 4; Namibia. MECYS, 1990, p. 8). Instead of focusing on weeding out or failing certain learners, learner-centred education is supposed to promote successful learning for all learners. Learner-centred pedagogy is, therefore, inextricably embedded in the Namibian education for all policy. This perspective on learner-centred education is encapsulated in the following statement:

Where formal education is primarily concerned with sorting and selecting students, it makes sense to concentrate on weeding out those who do not do well or who seem unlikely to do well in the future. Where education is for all, however, schools and other programs must focus on facilitating success. Pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment must all be designed to permit, encourage, and support successful learning. When more than a few learners do not succeed, we have failed as educators. (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 8)

Learner-centred education as education for all includes not only the physical expansion of access to schooling but also the provision of quality education to ensure successful learning. It means adopting learner-centred pedagogical approaches where “pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment must all be designed to permit, encourage, and support successful learning” (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 8). Regarding this dual understanding of education for all, as including pedagogical issues as well as access in terms of physical facilities, Zeichner (2005) argues:

In addition to the worldwide focus on providing greater access to education and enough qualified teachers in school to accommodate the expanded access, throughout the world there have been many calls to improve the quality of education received by all pupils and to ensure that this high quality education is equally available to all in a society and is not dependent on one's ethnic background, gender, religion, or place of residence. *This dual focus on educational access, and quality for all, at least in the rhetoric [sic] of educational reform represents a clear shift in*

the definition of education for all that initially focused only on access for pupils and on increasing the numbers of teachers in schools [emphasis mine]. (Zeichner, 2005, p. 10)

Education for all and learner-centred education in Namibia are inextricably linked. Learner-centred education is not only deeply embedded in the education for all policy, but actually means education for all, in the sense that it seeks to ensure successful learning for all learners by providing each learner with an environment conducive to learning that takes into account the learner's own experience.

In the next section, I discuss how learner-centred pedagogy is embedded in the four goals of the Namibian education system.

2.5 Learner-centred education embedded in the four major goals of education for all

In Namibia, learner-centred education is deeply embedded in the four major goals of education for all, namely: access, equality (or equity), quality and democracy (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 32; NIED, 1999b, p. 4; 2003, p. 5). These four major goals define the principles and substance of learner-centred pedagogy. Underpinned by these goals, learner-centred education is a political agenda driven by the political imperatives of democracy, empowerment, social justice and equity. Learner-centred pedagogy is closely linked to the post-apartheid political vision of societal transformation, emancipation, democracy and modernization. As will be elaborated on in the following paragraphs, the four major goals of education for all reflect the theoretical foundations of learner-centred education as discussed in section 2.2.

The goal of access, for instance, means more than simply physical access to schooling or getting more learners into schools. It also means making knowledge and learning accessible to all learners. In other words *what* they will learn, and *how* they will learn it, has to be approached in a pedagogical manner that allows all of them to develop as fully as possible, and to achieve to the best of their ability. In this way, learner-centred

education is interpreted to mean education that is accessible to all learners. According to the policy document, *Toward education for all* (MEC, 1993), the goal of access entails learner-centred pedagogy as the appropriate strategy for meaningful learning instead of rote memorization and repetition:

At the same time, we must also acknowledge that schools themselves can be barriers to learning. Rote memorization and repetition can stifle curiosity. Punitive discipline can discourage innovation, experimentation and critique. Unchallenged learners become bored, and bored learners lose motivation to follow and join in class activities. When teachers disrespect learners, the learners come to have little respect for themselves. If we are to expand access to education that is meaningful to our people and our country, we must be clear that our focus is on learning and not simply schooling. Schooling without learning may lead to diplomas and certificates, but for many students it also leads to frustrations and self-doubt. Learning, in school or out, leads not only to individual achievement, but also to self reliance, self-confidence, and empowerment.
(p. 34)

The goal of access entails learner-centred education in the sense that teaching that does not challenge learners or motivate them will cause them to lose interest and thereby retard their acquisition of knowledge. Access to learning through learner-centred pedagogy also implies new perspectives pertaining to how learning and knowing are viewed, how the learner is viewed and how the teacher is viewed in the teaching and learning process, and whether these views facilitate access to learning for all. These issues are elaborated on in succeeding paragraphs.

The second goal, equality, is first and foremost based on access. Within the Namibian education system, equality evokes notions of sameness and fairness. In the policy document *Toward education for all* this goal is defined as follows:

The next step is to ensure equality of access [...] *Equality* has to do with sameness, making sure that some children are not assigned to smaller classes, or receive more and better textbooks because of their race or the region of the country they come from. Achieving equality means making sure that children are not excluded or discouraged from the tracks that lead to better jobs because they are girls. An egalitarian school system is one in

which the competence of the teachers, the availability of materials, and the quality of learning do not depend on race, or gender, or family origin [emphasis in original]. (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 35)

Learner-centred education is underpinned by principles of equality and fairness. In learner-centred education, learners are not discriminated against on the basis of their race, gender, ethnicity or academic ability. Learner-centred education connotes an egalitarian school system where learners are treated fairly and without discrimination.

Quality, the third major goal of the Namibian education system, underpins learner-centred education in the sense that it calls for the provision of quality learning for all learners which, in the Namibian context, is understood to be attainable only through learner-centred pedagogical strategies. Quality learning hinges upon issues of whether or not learners are experiencing the sort of stimulating and challenging learning environment achievable through learner-centred pedagogical practices such as learner involvement and participation, relevant learning tasks, and diverse pedagogical approaches (MEC, 1993, p. 39).

Finally, the overarching goal, democracy, implies learner-centred pedagogical approaches in which learners are not only actively involved in the teaching and learning and decision-making processes but are also encouraged to raise critical questions, to inquire and to discuss. This is in stark contrast to traditional practices, where learners were taught to listen, to obey those in authority and not to question adults (Storeng, 2001, p. 23). Democracy as a goal in the Namibian education system implies a learner-centred education approach that calls for the learner's participation and involvement through group-work, projects, their own investigations, debates and discussions. In this regard, the policy document *Toward education for all* states:

A democratic education system is organized around broad participation in decision making. That is not to say that every decision in a school must be subjected to a vote or that the roles of the youngest children in a school must be identical to those of their parents. Rather, it is to be clear that we must work diligently and consistently to facilitate broad participation in making the major decisions about our education and how we implement

them. In schools that are responsive to their communities, parents and neighbours are not regarded as generally unwelcome outsiders. Instead, the schools are organized to enable them to be active participants in school governance, active contributors to discussions of school management and administration, and active evaluators of the quality of instruction and learning. (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 42)

Seen in the context of the goal of democracy, learner-centred education means learner-participation and involvement in the teaching and learning process as well as participation in making major decisions about education and how to implement them. The democratic aspect of learner-centred pedagogy is elaborated by Rowell (1995) as follows:

The final aspect, which is of primary importance in this analysis, is the implication that a democratic pedagogy implies a high degree of participation in decision making by students. This would necessarily have to be accompanied by considerable flexibility in the actual subject-based content, methods of instruction and pacing of instruction. The traditional lock-step methods of instruction where each student works on the same page of the workbook in the same weeks of the term would not support a democratic pedagogy. (p. 7)

In Namibia, learner-centred pedagogy means a democratic pedagogy that is flexible, where teaching and learning is responsive to the learning needs of individual learners in terms of learning content, methods of instruction and pacing.

In the foregoing discussion, I have illuminated how learner-centred pedagogy is embedded in the four major goals of the Namibian education system. In the following section, I discuss the key features of learner-centred pedagogy and its implications for practice at the micro-level of the classroom.

2.6 Key features of learner-centred education

2.6.1 View of teaching and learning

In Namibia, learner-centred education is supposed to be practically oriented, including participatory and observation methods which lead to reflection in and on practice (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 1998, p. 15). Learner-centred teaching is “based on a democratic pedagogy, a methodology which promotes learning through understanding and practice directed towards empowerment to shape one’s own life” (Namibia. MECYS, 1990, p. 8; Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 1998, p. 2). According to the policy document: *Toward education for all* (MEC, 1993) teaching and learning is supposed to be organized in such a way that:

The starting point is the learners’ existing knowledge, skills, interests and understanding, derived from previous experience in and out of school;

The natural curiosity and eagerness of all young people to learn to investigate and to make sense of the widening world must be nourished and encouraged by challenging and meaningful tasks;

The learners’ 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, and;

Learners should be involved as partners in, rather than receivers of, educational growth. (p. 60)

Learner-centred pedagogy, therefore, “presupposes that teachers have a holistic view of the learners, valuing learners’ life experiences as the starting point for their studies” (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 83). As was elaborated in section 2.2, learner-centred pedagogy entails a pedagogic approach where teaching begins with the interests of the learners, their existing knowledge, skills and understanding. And it entails a pedagogic practice in

which the learner's perspective and contributions to the learning process are highly valued.

Furthermore, in learner-centred education, learning is supposed to be interactive, shared and productive, demanding a high degree of student participation, contribution and production (Namibia. MBEC, 1996, p. 23). This has been described in the following way:

Our teaching methods must allow for the active involvement and participation of learners in the learning process. Teachers should structure their classes to facilitate this active learner role. Often that will mean organising learners in smaller or larger groups, or pairs, or working with them individually. It will mean as well using teaching techniques that fit the purpose and content of the lesson and that at the same time encourage active learner participation, for example, explaining, demonstrating, posing questions, checking for understanding, helping, providing for active practice, and problem solving. (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 60)

Teachers are urged, from a learner-centred perspective, to structure their lessons in ways that facilitate and encourage active learner-participation and involvement in the pedagogic process. In addition to active student participation, "teaching is supposed to use a variety of methods, including class visits, demonstration teaching, micro-teaching, team-teaching, group-work, individual study and tasks, seminars, tutorials and lectures" (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 59; Namibia. MBESC & METEC, 1998, p. 15). As suggested above, this pedagogy is flexible and highly individualized in terms of content, methods of instruction and pacing (Callewaert & Kallos, 1992, p. 17).

Zeichner (2005, p. 11) includes the following aspects of teaching and learning in a learner-centred context: respecting the cultural and linguistic resources that pupils bring to schools instead of viewing them as deficits if they are different from the dominant ones; using local materials and natural resources as part of the curriculum and moving away from an over-reliance on commercially produced curriculum material; fostering a higher degree of learner involvement, discussion, and contribution within classrooms; focusing on learner understanding of subject matter and not just on memorization and

rote repetition of isolated facts, and focusing on developing learners' abilities to use knowledge acquired in school in meaningful and authentic life situations.

In learner-centred education, learning with understanding is emphasized as opposed to rote memorization (Johannesen, 1999, p. 23). As mentioned in section 2.2, learning with understanding implies that knowledge is acquired actively through the process of integrating new ideas and experiences with knowledge and skills already possessed (Callewaert & Kallos, 1992, p. 19; Van Harmelen, 1998, p. 5). Hence, earlier knowledge may be invalidated, discarded or transformed through a process of construction and reconstruction.

2.6.2 View of knowledge and knowing

As discussed in section 2.2, learner-centred education draws its theoretical underpinnings from the cognitive theory of learning and other approaches that challenge behaviouristic views of knowledge and learning (Pomuti et al., 2003, p. 13). Contrary to behaviouristic stimulus-response based views of knowledge and knowing, learner-centred pedagogy draws upon theories of learning in cognitive psychology where it is argued that "knowledge is constructed in the mind of the learner" (Bodner, 1986, p. 873; Van Harmelen, 1998, p. 5). True knowledge can only exist when it is constructed within the mind of a cognizing being (Etchberger & Shaw, 1992, p. 411). Thus, contrary to a traditionalist view of knowledge as something existing externally that can be transferred from the teacher to the learner, constructivists argue that knowledge comes into being when someone examines the data and assigns meaning to it. Knowledge is seen not as a static amount of content, but what "the learner actively constructs and creates" (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 1998, p. 15, Johannesen, 1999, p. 19; Pomuti, 1999, 14, Van Harmelen, 1998, 5). This constructivist perspective is illustrated in Namibian official texts as follows:

Basic Education in Namibia, and therefore teacher education for Basic Education, is based on learner-centred principles. *Central to these is the view that knowledge is not a static amount of content but is what the learner actively constructs and creates from experience and interaction within the socio-cultural context* [emphasis, mine]. Teaching and learning in Basic Education continually build on the child's experience and active participation, aiming to make learning relevant and meaningful to the child [emphasis, mine]. (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 1998, p. 15)

In this regard, learner-centred pedagogy draws upon Vygotskian theory, in terms of which learning is seen as a social act and knowledge is viewed as a matter of human construction. Taking language as central to the construction of knowledge, social constructivists argue that "knowledge is constructed through many and varied social settings that learners interact with and in their world and [that] this knowing is articulated, refined and developed further through language" (Van Harmelen, 1998, p. 5).

In order to illustrate the application of constructivist ideas, Homateni (1991) (writing in *The Frontline Teacher*, a quarterly magazine about primary education published by the ITTP program) presents two scenarios that show how knowledge construction can be implemented in practice. In the first scenario, learners are sent out to the surrounding community to observe traditional and modern houses, as follows:

[...] children learn from observation and discussion. The teacher and the children go for an excursion to observe traditional and modern houses. They look at the surroundings and how the houses are built. They compare and discuss the differences in building techniques and material.
(Homateni, 1991, p.19)

After the excursion, learners engage in an exercise of constructing and producing knowledge:

[...] children are sitting in a group discussing what they have seen. They put the information together, make suggestions and form a text. They draw and make models of the houses they have visited. *Finally they put together all their texts into a booklet* [emphasis, mine]. (Homateni, 1991, p. 19)

The view of knowledge within the learner-centred perspective, therefore, demystifies the long-held belief that knowledge production is the exclusive preserve of scientists or ‘experts’ of some kind, beyond the reach of learners. As Homateni’s example indicates, in learner-centred pedagogy, learners can indeed construct knowledge and even produce their own learning materials. In this way, learner-centred pedagogy seeks to break away from a view of the teacher as the sole “supplier of knowledge”, or of the learner as a “passive recipient of knowledge” (Johannesen, 1999, p. 18). Furthermore, learner-centred education takes a much broader view of sources of knowledge that go beyond textbooks, as Homateni (1991) has elaborated:

In Bantu Education children learnt through copying and reproducing texts from books without real understanding. In our new system we want children to learn actively not only from books, but also from other resources for learning, namely themselves and their own experiences, the community and what they can observe there. (p. 18)

2.6.3 View of the learner

In learner-centred pedagogy the learner is regarded as someone who is “active and curious, striving to acquire knowledge and skills to master his/her surrounding world and able to do so under certain circumstances” (Callewaert & Kallos, 1992, p. 17). Far from being treated as a mere recipient of knowledge, the learner is viewed as someone whose rich experiences form the basis upon which a lesson is organized and facilitated:

Even very young children have a store of rich experiences. Building on learners’ experiences is a sound way to stimulate interest and to lead into new and more significant and practical learning. A learner-centred curriculum seeks to do just that: to begin with learners’ interests and experiences and to use them to lead learners toward what is less familiar and not yet familiar. (Namibia. MEC, p. 61)

As was discussed in section 2.2, learner-centred pedagogy repositions the learner as the main pedagogic actor, occupying centre stage in the teaching and learning process. The learner takes responsibility for his/her own learning and that of others and is viewed as

someone who constructs knowledge based on the interaction between his current experiences and past experiences both in school and out of school.

Learner-centred education as a democratic pedagogy views the learner as someone who is highly motivated and enthusiastic, participating not only in the teaching and learning process but also in decision making and implementation. In practice, this will mean a high degree of learner involvement not only in lessons but also in decisions pertaining to planning for learning. This view of the learner as a partner in the teaching and learning process contrasts sharply with the teacher-dominated and authoritarian pedagogy of the past (Rowell, 1995, p. 7). Furthermore, in learner-centred pedagogy, the student is viewed as an inquirer, a problem solver, and as someone who is critical and constantly posing questions to better understand the learning task at hand. It is an emancipatory and empowering pedagogical paradigm.

2.6.4 View of the teacher

In learner-centred pedagogy, the teacher is assigned a flexible role as an instructor, tutor, counsellor, enabler, mentor and facilitator, and his/her utilization of teaching and learning time includes whole class-teaching, time spent between groups at work, small tutorial groups, individual guidance, and general supervision of tasks and assignments (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 1992, p. 17). Rowell (1995) has elaborated on this view of the teacher as follows:

In a learner-centred pedagogy, the role of the teacher becomes that of mediator of learning experiences in which the learners generate meaning rather than one of transmitter of knowledge to learners. (p. 7)

The teacher is also viewed as someone who assesses learners' needs and interests and plans learning activities that address and build on those interests and needs (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 60). The teacher's role is redefined as he/she comes to see the learner as a partner in the pedagogic process. The redefined relationship between teacher and learner is described as follows:

The teacher-learner relationship in the old pedagogy that is criticized could be characterized as a subject-object relationship. The main issue at stake is to change this relationship into a subject-subject relationship, i.e., changes in both teacher work and learner activities. This implies a shift from a teacher-centred pedagogy to a learner-centred pedagogy. It also presupposes a change in the definition of knowledge coupled to a different view of how knowledge is acquired. (Callewaert & Kallos, 1992, p. 17)

The teacher is seen as a partner with the learner in the teaching-learning process. Learner-centred pedagogy repositions the teacher away from centre stage, but imposes greater responsibilities in terms of planning for and facilitating the pedagogic process. Learner-centred education further views the teacher as a critical reflective practitioner rather than a passive and unreflective dispenser of received knowledge (Mayumbelo & Nyambe, 1999, p. 64).

In the foregoing discussion, I analysed the key principles and features of learner-centred education. In the next section, I consider a critique of learner-centred pedagogy.

2.7 A critique of learner-centred pedagogy

In a developing country context, learner-centred pedagogy is criticized as having a “hidden agenda”, of being “a political artefact” or “ideology” that facilitates westernization and capitalist penetration under the guise of democratization (Tabulwa, 2003, p. 10). It is argued that the keen interest in learner-centred pedagogy by international aid agencies is closely tied to the drive for capitalist penetration of developing countries. Learner-centred pedagogy constitutes the nexus between education and the broader principle of political democratization, which in turn is seen as a condition for capitalist penetration (Tabulwa, 2003, p. 7). As result learner-centred pedagogy has, at least in part, come to many developing countries as a prescription by international aid agencies. This is aggravated by the fact that the pedagogy has been presented as “a one-size-fits-all pedagogic approach, a universal pedagogy, one that works with equal effectiveness irrespective of the context” (Storeng, 2001, p. 34; Tabulwa, 2003, p. 9).

Far from enhancing learning outcomes, it is argued, learner-centred pedagogy seeks to inculcate in schools democratic social relations that are Western-oriented and pro-capitalist. Hence, it is argued that “to date, there is no study that has conclusively established that learner-centredness is necessarily superior to traditional teaching in third world countries in terms of improving students’ achievement in test scores” (Tabulwa, 2003, p. 10).

Further to this, the progressivist political agenda of democracy, empowerment and freedom underpinning learner-centred pedagogy has been criticised as “a call to chaos and anarchy” in schools (Coetzer, 2001a, p. 42). It is argued that these political ideals do not only create “*laissez-faire* circumstances” in schools (Dewey, 1938, p. 21; Gultig, 1999, p. 55; Jaworski, 1994, p. 31; Meier, 2005, p. 88) but also lead to unrestrained freedom, unruly behaviour and a general deterioration of discipline among learners (Coetzer, 2001a, p. 42).

The constructivist and progressivist de-emphasis on the role of the teacher in the classroom, as well as the de-emphasis on the traditional curriculum and the anti-intellectualist stance, have not only robbed teachers of the pedagogic authority needed to achieve critical educational aims but also downplayed serious academic learning (Gultig, 1999, p. 64). Moreover, the anti-intellectualist stance contradicts the economic imperative to produce a highly knowledgeable and skilled labour force needed for global competitiveness by many developing countries (Muller, 2000, p. 28).

Aspects of learner-centred pedagogy such as its anti-intellectualist stance and its de-emphasis on the role of the teacher are also reflected in the BETD program where, in adopting a learner-centred pedagogy, the process of learning (participatory, etc.) has been emphasized at the expense of discipline knowledge. The BETD program has been criticized for downplaying discipline knowledge (see section 3.7). Criticism that BETD teachers show poor command of discipline knowledge illustrates how the shift to learner-centred education has had the reverse effect of disempowering as opposed to empowering

teachers. Like so many well-meaning education reform processes that have been driven by issues of social justice, fairness and equality (i.e. equal opportunities for all), in shifting away from a traditional teacher-centred approach to a progressive approach which puts the learner at the centre, this process has further disadvantaged the very people who were meant to benefit.

In the USA and UK it has been the working class child that has been further disadvantaged, hence the swing back to more traditional education as advocated by the *No Child Left Behind* policy in the USA in recent years (Barrett, 2008, p. 3). In South Africa the adoption of the new Outcomes Based Education and learner-centred education curriculum has had similar effects. The very people that were meant to benefit from the new approach have in fact been further disadvantaged. One of the reasons is an under-specification of discipline knowledge (i.e. content) in the curriculum, the other has been an over-emphasis on the process of learning at the expense of the product (knowledge outcomes of education) (Wilmot, 2005, p. 64). Doing rather than knowing is privileged by learner-centred education. The effect of the BETD curriculum on the teacher in this regard is illustrated by the criticism discussed in section 3.7.

Learner-centred pedagogy has further been criticized for its emphasis on one aspect of learning and lack of emphasis on others. For instance, it is argued that the claim that learning is an active process that excludes passive forms or stimulus-response behaviouristic learning is “misleading” and “untrue”. As Fox (2001) puts it:

Human beings and animals in general, certainly do acquire knowledge of their environments by acting upon the world about them; however, they are also acted upon. We do things and we have things done to us; we act and we react, and clearly we can learn from both types of experience. Many simple forms of habituation and conditioning consist of adaptive reactions, rather than actions. (p. 24)

Therefore, the emphasis on activity-based learning, and the de-emphasis on passive behaviouristic forms of learning, central to learner-centred pedagogy, is unrealistic. Many studies by behaviourists such as Skinner and Thorndike have indicated that organisms do

indeed learn through stimulus response. Fox cautions against the extremist polarization in learner-centred pedagogy that emphasizes one extreme pole of learning at the expense of the other, for instance, activity based learning as opposed to passive learning, or learner-centredness versus teacher-centredness. Too much of emphasis on either the teacher or the learner can lead to prescriptions for teaching which ignore either the learner's needs or the teacher as a valuable and knowledgeable resource (Fox, 2001, p. 25).

Similarly, it is argued, the constructivist view that knowledge is constructed in the mind of the learner rather than innately or passively absorbed highlights one aspect of learning, that is, the extent to which learning is a matter of acquiring and elaborating concepts in opposition to innate or maturational learning. Fox (2001, p. 26) argues, in this respect, that our ability to perceive, to learn, to speak and to reason are all based on the innate capacities of the evolved human nervous system, rather than as a result of knowledge construction. Thus, while the constructivists' view that knowledge is constructed in the mind of a cognizing being (Etchberger & Shaw, 1992, p. 411) claims to offer a theory of the way the individual constructs knowledge, according to Jaworski (1994, p. 29) this view is challenged by an "unresolved learning paradox". Bereiter, as cited in Jaworski (1999, p. 30), presents the unresolved learning paradox as follows:

There is no adequate theory of learning – that is, there is no adequate theory to explain how new organisations of concepts and how new cognitive procedures are acquired. ...To put it more simply, the paradox is that if one tries to account for learning by means of the mental actions carried out by the learner, then it is necessary to attribute to the learner a prior cognitive structure that is as advanced or complex as the one to be acquired.

Therefore, if a learner is to grasp complex concepts and procedures "it would mean that the cognitive structures that allow for this conceptual leap must be in place first" (Jaworski, 1999, p. 30). In other words, the existing cognitive structure of the learner must be more complex and advanced than the new concept to be acquired. This contrasts with the simplistic assimilation and accommodation processes advanced by

constructivists, and points to the influence on learning of the innate capacities of the evolved human nervous system, or of maturational factors (Fox, 2001, p. 26).

In addition, the anti-realist stance of universal constructivism advocated by certain sectors of the constructivist movement has been criticized as a denial of the existence of any reality outside of, or independent of, conventional constructions of reality (Moll, 2002, p. 19). It is argued that constructivists have failed to account for the fact that a socially constructed reality presupposes the existence of a reality independent of all social constructions. There has to be something for the social constructions to be constructed of. Fox (2001) argued that through their anti-realist stance, some constructivists have been reduced to believing that our minds constitute the whole world.

If I can be confident of the existence only of my own mental states, then I am reduced to believing that my mind constitutes the whole world. This, at the very least, makes it difficult to see how I can justify a belief in the existence of you, or your mind, or the natural world, or discourse about the world. I am left in absurd isolation, without a world of any kind to investigate or discuss. No-one seems to wish to occupy this ridiculous philosophical position, but in escaping from it, constructivists tend either to readmit an independent existing objective world, or else pursue a kind of social solipsism, in which other minds, and social constructions, are all that exist. (p. 27)

Another weakness of the constructivist theory is its insistence that learning is essentially a process of making sense. In this way, constructivists emphasize the notion of learning with understanding as opposed to memorization. Fox (2001, p. 32) argues that while memorizing without understanding is pointless, understanding without ever remembering is also equally useless. Furthermore, it has been argued that the progressivist claim that effective learning requires meaningful, open-ended, challenging problems for learners to solve has ignored the most difficult and persistent problems for teachers, namely “that of devising lessons and activities which succeed in persuading pupils to try, wholeheartedly, to learn something which is not, immediately or obviously, interesting to them” (Fox, 2001, p. 33). Not all learner-centred lessons are necessarily interesting to all learners. Gultig (1999, p. 59) sees the claim as “a romantic naturalist view of the child and

learning where the child is assumed to be innately curious, spontaneously self-active”, while this is not the case in reality.

Despite widespread criticism of learner-centred pedagogy in the literature, official texts such as *Toward education for all* (MEC, 1993) have presented learner-centred pedagogy as if it were unproblematic. The danger of such an approach is that it may perpetuate among some teachers a wholesale and uncritical embrace of the pedagogy as the best practice. This uncritical adoption of learner-centred pedagogy in Namibia needs to be seen in the context of what Van Harmelen (1998) described as subjecting new beliefs to a critical appraisal:

Current educational reform processes require teachers and learners to accept a theoretical shift. This means we are being asked to critically reassess the existing belief systems in which our practice is located and to adopt a new set of beliefs and practices. Lest, however, we simply exchange one set of educational ‘myths’ for another we need, firstly, to subject the origin of our existing beliefs to a critical scrutiny, and secondly, to be convinced that the new theory we are asked to adopt will in fact be better through an equally critical appraisal. (p. 3)

Therefore, instead of simply embracing it in an uncritical manner as if it were unproblematic, Namibian teacher education reform needs to subject the new pedagogy to critical scrutiny. Otherwise it will indeed be a matter of “exchang[ing] one set of educational ‘myths’ for another” (Van Harmelen, 1998, p. 3). While it can be observed from the discussion in section 3.7 that some members of the Namibian public adopted a critical stance towards learner-centred education, it is equally true that some officials (such as Advisory Teachers) adopted the new pedagogy in a blind and uncritical manner. Kristensen (1999) noted this uncritical stance in Namibia as follows:

It could be worthwhile to establish to what extent stakeholders have actually questioned the introduction of learner-centred education as a way of reforming the education system in Namibia after independence. Implicit in the response by the ATs [Advisory Teachers] is a blind belief in the initiatives undertaken after independence. To what extent have

stakeholders questioned these initiatives and the “baggage” with which they come? (p. 137)

In her study on learner-centred pedagogy in Namibia, Storeng (2001) questioned the whole notion of adopting and transferring a pedagogical approach from a western socio-cultural reality that is characterized by material abundance to a remote rural area in Namibia where material scarcity is the norm (Storeng, 2001, p. 207). Storeng argued that the adoption of learner-centred pedagogy in Namibia did not take into account structural, socio-cultural and material conditions that frame the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy. Therefore, in shifting from a traditional teacher-centred approach to a progressive approach it is worth investigating the extent to which learner-centred education in Namibia has achieved its goals of empowerment and democratization. These questions are explored further in subsequent chapters.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described learner-centred education. More specifically, I have discussed and analyzed the roots of and routes to learner-centred education in Namibia, its embeddness within the education for all policy, its key features and principles, and various problems associated with it.

In the following chapter, I map out the landscape of Namibian teacher education reform, the forces that shaped the reform process, structures and processes that were put in place to facilitate the reform process, as well as the politics of educational reform and curriculum policy formulation.

CHAPTER THREE

MAJOR FORCES THAT SHAPED THE TEACHER EDUCATION REFORM

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I dealt with the learner-centred educational approach that underpins educational transformation in post-apartheid Namibia.

In the present chapter, I outline the contextual profile of the Namibian teacher education reform. In particular, I map out the reform landscape by discussing the major forces that shaped the Namibian teacher education reform, the structures and processes that were put in place to facilitate the reform process, as well as the politics of educational reform and curriculum policy formulation.

3.2 The 1989 Lusaka Conference on teacher education

While the conference could not be held inside Namibia at the time due to apartheid colonial regulations (Angula, 1989, p. 11), the 1989 International Conference on teacher education for Namibia, held in Lusaka, Zambia, is one of the major forces that shaped the direction of Namibia's teacher education for basic education. In particular, the objectives of the conference were geared towards defining a new vision for teacher education in post-apartheid Namibia. This was evident in the conference objectives, which were:

First, to examine teacher education in Namibia, with the assistance of a series of working papers, prepared from preliminary research visits, in the following areas:

Teacher education in general, with attention to programs and their implementation;

The curriculum in general, specifically for teacher education, but also in all related areas: and administration and finance as these relate to teacher education;

English and local languages in relation to teacher education;

Science and mathematics in relation to teacher education;

Vocational and technical education in relation to teacher education.
(UNIN, 1989, p. 5)

The conference also aimed to chart the way forward for teacher education reform in post-apartheid Namibia:

Second, to produce a document incorporating temporary guidelines for teacher education in Namibia;

Third, to provide, in this way, an initiative towards the restructuring of the education system of Namibia; and:

Fourth, to produce a set of conference reports with conclusions and recommendations. (UNIN, 1989, p. 5)

In his official opening speech to the Conference, Mwanangoze acknowledged its intended role in the shaping of Namibia's post-apartheid teacher education reform, saying: "I am glad to learn that this conference will prepare the ground for the formation of policy on teacher education in Namibia" (Mwanangoze, 1989, p. 9). With financial support from various international aid agencies, the Conference attracted participants and facilitators both locally and from abroad. Worth noting is that, though it was held in Lusaka, the conference drew upon research based on data collected in Namibia. This is significant as it enabled the conference to make recommendations based on empirical evidence of teacher education. Empirical evidence was drawn from the colleges of education, schools, community members and the former Academy for Tertiary Education, predecessor of the University of Namibia (Callewaert & Kallos, 1989, p. 38). It was particularly emphasized during the conference that not only were teacher education programs in colonial Namibia based on a world view that was antithetical to social justice and democracy, but that the programs tended to emphasize academic content learning at the expense of teacher professionalisation. It was further noted that much of the academic content that was being taught in the teacher education programs did not take into account research findings of the last 10-30 years (Callewaert & Kallos, 1989, p. 38). This

situation was further aggravated by the fact that the texts being used in most of the programs were unsuitable for learning and not appropriate for serious reflection and the development of understanding.

The 1989 Lusaka Conference on Namibian teacher education was significant in the sense that it prepared the ground for the formation of policy on teacher education in post-apartheid Namibia by making several recommendations. Contributing decisively to these were the reviews shared at the Conference on teacher education programs offered to Namibians in exile that presented themselves as a model for new programs in post-apartheid Namibia. With the SWAPO liberation movement having the strongest voice at the conference, deliberations were dominated by the notion of a post-apartheid teacher education program informed by the ideals of a learner-centred pedagogy based on democracy and social justice. With this privileging of one dominant voice, there was no evidence of dissenting voices or contestations in the papers that were presented.

After the Lusaka Conference, another significant force was the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED).

3.3 The National Institute for Educational Development

Long before the dust from the first independence celebrations of 1990 had settled down, the idea of establishing the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) was already high on the agenda of the newly-elected political leadership. Situated in the town of Okahandja, about seventy kilometres north of Windhoek, the National Institute for Educational Development was created by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports to serve as the professional arm of the Ministry of Education and to spearhead post-apartheid educational reforms (NIED, 2000, p. 11). Official statements concerning the Institute were made for the first time in July 1990, as follows:

Curriculum reform is overdue in our country [...] *the Government has decided to establish the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED)*. This Institute will be the nerve-centre for curriculum design and development; co-ordination of teacher training and in-service training programs; language research and development; and education media development, documentation and dissemination. NIED is estimated to cost R25 million. *Given the sorry state of educational content in our country today it is of crucial importance that a professional institution, such as NIED, is established to spear-head educational reform and development* [emphasis, mine]. (Namibia. MECYS, 1990, p. 4)

The National Institute for Educational Development has been a very important state organ for curriculum development and educational reform in post-apartheid Namibia. Far from being accidental, its location in Okahandja, away from the Ministry head-quarters in Windhoek, was a deliberate decision based on the institution's envisaged professional autonomy from the administrative bureaucracy typical of ministerial headquarters. The location was also intended to encourage professional initiative, creativity and innovation through participatory approaches (Swarts, 1999, p. 38). However, despite its relocation and the envisaged professional autonomy, NIED remains a Directorate of the Ministry of Education. The main functions of NIED may be outlined as follows:

The National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) was planned and established as a nerve centre for educational reform, innovation, experimentation, research, and development. Its main functions are:

- 1 curriculum development;
- 2 teacher education development;
- 3 language research and development;
- 4 education media development;
- 5 higher-level human resource development for education.

The broad objectives of NIED are:

- 1 improvement of educational content with a view to providing relevant, balanced, and functional education programs;
- 2 development of relevant learning and teaching materials;
- 3 evolving effective teacher training and human resource programs;
- 4 enhancing language teaching, research, and development;
- 5 stimulating innovative pedagogy and curricula.

NIED was conceived as an autonomous professional institution and was established at Okahandja, north of Windhoek. The Institute provides valuable service to the education system. (Angula, 1999, p. 24)

The Institute boasts a modern, state-of-the-art campus consisting of office space for full-time faculty, a hostel for the short-term accommodation of teachers attending curriculum related activities and workshops, as well as workrooms and conference venues and modern information communication technology. The Institute is organized into two main divisions, one responsible for Curriculum Development and the other for Professional Development and Research.

The division for Curriculum Development is responsible for developing the school curriculum and assessment system, and new syllabi for individual subjects in general education. Apart from introducing new school subjects to meet new needs in a changing Namibia, the Curriculum Development Division is also responsible for adapting existing school subjects to new circumstances, new knowledge and new approaches. It is responsible for ensuring that syllabi and teaching materials as well as teachers' guides are available in Namibian schools. Swarts (1999, p. 38) contends that the Institute has been responsible for changing the values, understandings, and actions of educators through innovative and relevant curricula, appropriate methodologies, and new conceptualizations of teaching and learning. Furthermore, NIED has endeavoured to champion learner-centred pedagogy by establishing a flexible, relevant and caring approach to learning for all learners.

But it is NIED's Division: Professional Development and Research that has special significance for this study. Through the Division: Professional Development and Research NIED has been mandated to serve as the Government agency responsible for innovating, guiding, coordinating and directing the reform of teacher education for basic education in post-apartheid Namibia. This mandate is succinctly summed up as follows:

NIED was mandated by the Ministry to guide and coordinate the design, development, and implementation of the Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD). In 1992, the Minister of Education and Culture constituted a Task Force for pre-service teacher education, with NIED as the lead agency. The Task Force authorized the Curriculum Coordinating Group (CCG) based in NIED to operationalize and guide the design, development and implementation of the BETD [emphasis mine]. (Swarts, 1999, p. 38)

In executing its mandate NIED has assumed overall responsibility for the reform and implementation of teacher education for basic education at the four colleges of education in Namibia, namely, Caprivi College of Education, Rundu College of Education, Ongwediva College of Education and Windhoek College of Education. As the mandate spans both pre-service and in-service teacher education, NIED has also been responsible for coordinating teacher professional development activities at the thirty-four Teacher Resource Centres nation-wide, the delivery centres for in-service teacher education.

Over the years, NIED has come to be seen by many teacher educators in the colleges as *the* authority in matters of teacher education reform, ranging from curriculum design and development to the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy. Teacher educators often seek help from NIED in overcoming professional and curriculum-related difficulties. The Institute has constituted the focal point, the heart-centre, where new ideas, initiatives, curriculum development efforts and professional issues regarding teacher education reform are initiated and coordinated. In the same vein, it has also been monitoring and evaluating the appropriateness of implementing reform activities at colleges of education (NIED, 2000, p.1). This has been executed through regular visits to colleges as well as through special teams selected to visit each college as a quality assurance measure (Namibia. Ministry of Education [MoE], 2007, pp. 37-41).

For instance, a Moderation Team is constituted annually by NIED to visit each college not only as a quality assurance mechanism but also to moderate student practice teaching and the grading of student teachers in the program. The Team is expected to produce a written report after each annual visit. One of the key issues spanning these reports is the

appropriateness of implementing learner-centred pedagogy. Almost all the moderation reports that were reviewed for this study adopted a corrective stance on the manner in which colleges were implementing learner-centred pedagogy. The 1998 report did not only observe that learner-centred pedagogy continued to pose a challenge to both students and their teacher educators, but also recommended that student teachers needed more teaching opportunities to develop the skills to teach in a proper learner-centred way (NIED, 1998c, p. 11). The 2004, 2005 and 2006 moderation reports all noted anomalies in the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy by most of the student teachers. The 2005 report noted that “learner-centred instruction needs to be emphasized as several instances of teacher talk were observed” (NIED, 2005, p. 62). The implementation of teacher education reform in general and learner-centred pedagogy in particular has been the consistent focus of these reports.

What is also worth mentioning is that in executing its mandate NIED has been responsible for developing the professional and intellectual capital of teacher educators through various professional development programs. In this regard, NIED has been collaborating mostly with foreign universities and foreign donor-supported agencies, to offer professional development, including undergraduate and graduate level programs (NIED, 2000, p. 74). However, as mentioned elsewhere in this report, NIED remained a junior partner in this collaboration, with the foreign agencies in a superior position because they controlled both financial and intellectual aspects of teacher educator professional development activities.

In addition to professional development, NIED established a nation-wide curriculum development structure or network in order to facilitate curriculum development and implementation. Avenstrup (1994, pp. 15-17) has described this structure as a participatory, democratized and decentralized curriculum development structure which is based on a consensual process involving all stakeholders. Underpinned by participatory ideals, the nation-wide curriculum development and implementation structure has been intended to generate curriculum inputs from the grass-roots at college level through

college-based subject panels, and college-based broad curriculum coordinators. NIED (1999b, p. 4) has illustrated this structure as follows:

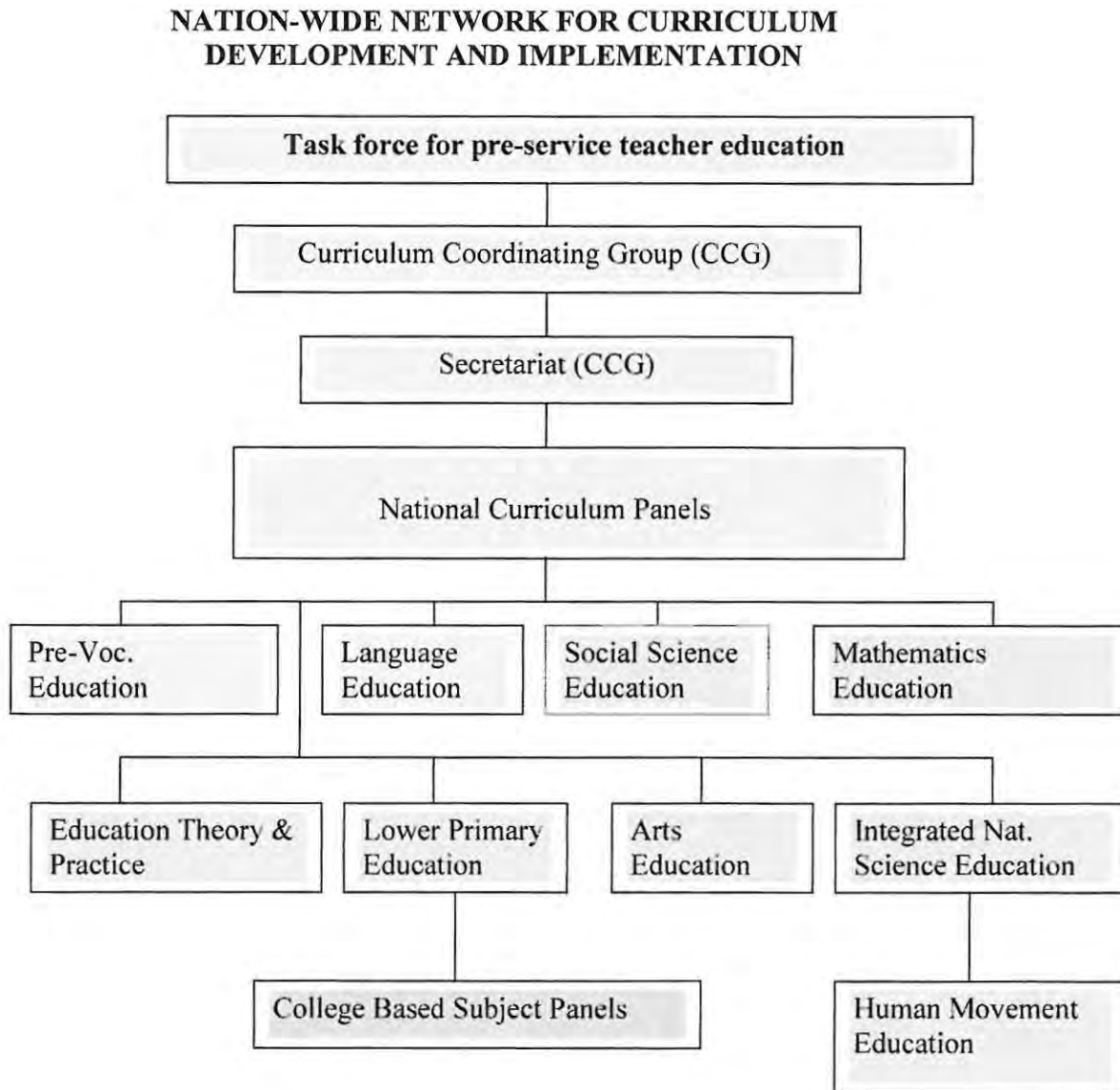


Figure 2.1: Nation-wide network for curriculum development and implementation (NIED, 1999, p. 4)

At the apex of the national curriculum development and implementation structure (Figure 2.1) was the Task Force for pre-service teacher education. The Task Force was the

highest policy decision-making body, chaired by the Minister of Education. Its terms of reference were as follows:

- to constitute a Curriculum Coordinating Group (CCG) to work out a broad curriculum, defining objectives, scope, content, methodology, time-frame and required resources to implement the new pre-service teacher education program for basic education (Grades 1-10);
- to oversee the work of the Curriculum Coordinating Group;
- to approve the new teacher training program for basic education, including entry requirements, curriculum, syllabi, assessment, evaluation, organization, facilities, feasibilities, etc. (Dahlström, 2002, p. 153)

Although the Task Force had the power and authority to take decisions pertaining to policy issues in teacher education, it did not last long. The Task Force gradually died away as its role and functions regarding policy were increasingly taken over by the Curriculum Coordinating Group (CCG) based at NIED. This power shift from the Task Force to the CCG consolidated NIED's authority and power as a significant force in teacher education reform. While previously, NIED's role was one of making policy proposals and recommending them to the Task Force for final decision, the shift of power meant that NIED was given the leverage to take decisions over the reform process without necessarily referring them to another level higher up in the hierarchy.

With the disappearance of the Task Force from the scene, the CCG became the only professional body on a national level dealing with issues relating to the development of teacher education and the sole official body for policy interpretation in teacher education. The CCG became the place where all important decisions concerning teacher education reform were being taken (Avenstrup, 1994, p. 15; Dahlström, 2002, p. 153). Therefore, within the nation-wide curriculum development and implementation structure, the CCG became the body where curriculum issues such as draft curriculum documents, assessment policies, and the addition of new subject areas, were tabled, discussed, and approved (Avenstrup, 1994). The terms of reference of the CCG were:

- to coordinate curriculum development, professional development, implementation, and quality assurance of programs for teacher education at colleges of education;
 - to coordinate pre-service teacher education;
 - to develop policy frameworks and the Broad Curriculum for pre-service teacher education for basic education;
 - to identify needs for research, materials and professional development for staff members at colleges of education.
- (Namibia. MBEC, 1997, p. 1)

Also to be noted is that in the early years of the CCG, its membership was heavily dominated by foreign advisors of European or North American origin, due to a lack of Namibian expertise at NIED. Dahlström (2002, p. 154) observed that not only was this important body chaired by a foreign “Reform Advisor” but that of the nine initial members, only two were Namibian. This situation meant that important decisions pertaining to teacher education reform for Namibia were being taken by foreigners. As Dahlström (2002) has observed:

[...] there were few Namibian educators who had both the necessary professional and political capital to lead and direct the national reform at this level. The few possible candidates, especially those coming back from exile, had already been recruited for other posts in the system. When rationalization started, NIED became a place for redundant surplus labour within the re-organized administration. Very few, if any, of the staff that ended up at NIED, especially in the division responsible for teacher education, had the experience or mindset needed to be instrumental in an innovative national reform [emphasis mine]. (p. 155)

However, in 1997, with more Namibians being appointed at NIED, an official decision was made to enlarge the CCG, bringing more Namibians on board. The membership increased from the initial nine to fifteen: in addition to the NIED-based Namibian members, each college appointed a representative (Dahlström, 2002, p. 155).

With the formation of the new CCG in 1997, the NIED Chief Education Officer for Professional Development and Research became the new official chairperson of the

CCG, with each college represented by a college Broad Curriculum Coordinator, who, in most cases, was the Vice-Rector. The Faculty of Education at the University of Namibia (UNAM) as well as the Directorate of Higher Education in the Ministry of Education each had a seat on the CCG, though they did not seriously utilize their membership and the two bodies were often not represented at meetings (Dahlström, 2002, p. 155). Through the CCG, NIED has been able to initiate curriculum changes, supervise implementation of reform, and provide the necessary guidance and feedback to colleges of education.

In order to facilitate the work of the CCG, NIED provided staff members from the Division: Professional Development and Research to serve as the Secretariat to the CCG. Their role has mainly been to take minutes at CCG meetings, organize venues for meetings and draft curriculum documents.

As also reflected in Figure 2.1, national curriculum panels have been accountable to the CCG. These panels have been organized in such a way that each subject area has its own national curriculum panel consisting of one representative from each college offering the subject concerned, a representative from NIED, a UNAM representative, plus a representative from the Polytechnic of Namibia. Unlike the CCG, curriculum panels are more specialized subject area working groups, whose mandates include interpreting curricula, initiating and proposing changes, doing curriculum revisions and making recommendations to the CCG at NIED. NIED has been guiding and coordinating meetings of these subject-based curriculum panels.

Figure 2.1 further indicates that at college level, each subject area has its own subject panel comprising the full subject department and representatives from support schools. Support schools refer to those schools that have been identified and trained so that they can be used for student teaching. Therefore, each college has been expected to have a Subject Panel for every subject area. For example, in each college there would be subject panels for Mathematics, Education Theory and Practice, Social Science Education, etc. However, it should be noted that the work of the college-based subject panels has been



coordinated at college level by the Broad Curriculum Coordinator. As indicated in the preceding paragraphs, within the college setting, the Vice-Rector serves as the Broad Curriculum Coordinator.

At the time of writing, Namibia's teacher education was in the initial stages of yet another reform process, under the auspices of the newly crafted national strategic plan of the Ministry of Education, the Education and Training Sector Improvement Program (ETSIP). Within the ETSIP framework, the provision of teacher education has been legislated for in the Teachers' Education Colleges Act 25 of 2003 (Namibia. Government Gazette of the Republic of Namibia, 2003). This new Act has made provision for new structures and new relationships in the curriculum development process that will most likely replace those described in the paragraphs above.

For instance, a political dimension has been restored to the policy decision-making arena, with the Minister of Education establishing an Advisory Council on Teacher Education and Training (ACTET). Within the new set-up, ACTET is responsible for advising the Minister on policy issues pertaining to teacher education (Namibia. Government Gazette, 2003, p. 5). The Academic Committee of ACTET has taken over the roles and responsibilities that were previously performed by the CCG. Consequently, the CCG has disappeared from the national curriculum structure.

Before leaving the subject of NIED, it is worth pointing out that, as will be elaborated on in subsequent discussion, throughout the reform process NIED has been supported by donor projects. The curriculum work and staff development activities outlined in the foregoing discussion have been carried out with the financial and technical support of these donor projects.

3.4 Foreign agencies and donor projects in the reform of Namibian teacher education

Despite the abundance of literature (Altbach, 1977; Berman, 1979; Ngugi, 1981; Hancock, 1989; Sikwibele, 1996; Tabulwa, 2003) demonstrating the negative impact of donor agencies in educational reform in developing countries, Namibian teacher education reform has been dominated by donor projects, particularly in the early stages. Dahlström (2002) has noted the heavy presence of donor projects:

The education sector was overwhelmed with support projects and foreign staff who were seen as and acted as experts, no matter their official titles as advisors or volunteers. *The number of support projects operating in the area of pre-service teacher education alone during the inquiry period was most of the time around seven [emphasis mine].* (p. 146)

Generally accepted as experts by Namibian educators despite their official titles, foreign project staff members have commanded significant control of the intellectual and professional lives of Namibian educators. Until it was officially phased out in December 2000, the Teacher Education Reform Project (TERP) from Umea University, funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), was the main foreign actor exercising significant influence over the conception and implementation of Namibian teacher education reform.

Through its technical staff, drawn mainly from Umea University in Sweden, as well as from other cooperating universities in Europe and North-America, the TERP project collaborated with other actors in Namibian teacher education reform to define and shape the pedagogical, professional and intellectual aspects of the reform process. Working with their Namibian counterparts, TERP technical staff produced the first steering documents, the draft Broad Curriculum, and draft syllabus documents for the BETD program and teacher education reform in general.

With its strong financial base, the TERP Project was able to set up resource libraries for Namibian teacher educators at both NIED and the colleges of education. I would like to argue that these libraries and the endeavours of the TERP project played a major role in the shaping of Namibian teacher educators' understanding and practice of learner-centred education, and in the implementation of teacher education reform in general. This claim should be seen in the context of the fact that NIED and the colleges of education had no relevant literature in their libraries. Some of the books held were in Afrikaans and all were totally unrelated to the new educational philosophy and practice.

In addition to setting up library resources at NIED and the colleges of education, the TERP project was actively involved in staff professional development. The project organized and facilitated staff development programs at undergraduate and graduate levels. These programs ranged from a certificate in teacher education (commonly known as the B-Level course) to a Higher Diploma and a Masters degree in teacher education. The staff development activities drew heavily on the TERP libraries established at the colleges, and demonstrated the nature and extent of TERP influence over teacher education reform in Namibia.

In order to facilitate staff development and the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy, the TERP project placed a Reform Facilitator at each of the colleges (one facilitator at smaller colleges and two facilitators at larger colleges). The role of these facilitators has been described as follows:

The Reform Facilitators had responsibility for the support to the development of the BETD program at the college where they were stationed. They also had an overall responsibility for areas of their own speciality at all colleges and in staff development courses. (Dahlström, 2002, p. 147)

In essence, the role of the Reform Facilitators at each college was to guide the reform process and to ensure that colleges were implementing the reform as envisaged. On a daily basis, the Reform Facilitator was available to teacher educators for mentoring,

guidance and consultation and, in situations where issues could not be resolved at college level, the Reform Facilitator liaised with the TERP Headquarters at NIED.

The Reform Facilitators were involved in numerous activities which included facilitating curriculum discussions, acting as resource persons, guiding curriculum implementation, guiding, assisting and mentoring staff members, and supervising them on their TERP-organized staff development programs. They also provided general guidance on organizational and college management issues, making their impact college-wide. At all the colleges, these Reform Facilitators served as members of the college management team, a situation which positioned them strategically to oversee the reform process.

Of great significance was the Education Development Unit (EDU) established and sponsored by TERP at each college. The EDU housed the TERP-sponsored library and was equipped with facilities such as heavy duty copy machines, computers and printers, all sponsored by TERP. This equipment was used by teacher educators in their staff development activities and lesson preparations. The Reform Facilitator had his own office in the EDU. In this way, he could manage the EDU by supervising the use of equipment and books while at the same time being available for consultation by teacher educators. When TERP introduced the Higher Diploma and the Masters Program, the EDU became a vital resource for teacher educators. Apart from being able to access the internet, use books in the EDU collection, and type and print their papers on the computers, teacher educators on staff development programs could expect guidance and even supervision of their work from the Reform Facilitator. The EDU also provided conference space where the Reform Facilitator could hold staff development sessions or curriculum discussion meetings with smaller groups of teacher educators.

TERP's activities in Namibian teacher education reform extended to the establishment and funding of the *Reform Forum*, a research journal based at NIED. In addition to serving as a platform for debating and discussing reform issues, the *Reform Forum* aimed to create a written knowledge base for Namibia while developing the capacity of college teacher educators in terms of writing and publishing articles. Consequently, Reform

Facilitators worked with individual teacher educators to produce articles for publication in the *Reform Forum*. It should be noted that the Reform Forum was the post-apartheid version of *The Frontline Teacher*, a quarterly magazine about primary education that was published by SWAPO in exile during the ITTP program. *The Frontline Teacher* was also published with Swedish financial and technical support.

Apart from the Reform Forum, teacher educators at colleges and the education officers at NIED were supported by TERP in various ways in order to develop their capacity in writing and publishing. These included making chapter contributions in book publications. In some situations, TERP helped teacher educators to write conference papers on teacher education reform in Namibia and present these papers at local and international conferences. Through TERP support, a significant number of publications on Namibia's post-apartheid educational reform were produced. The publication *Democratic Teacher Education Reform: The Case of Namibia* edited by Zeichner and Dahlström (1999), which consists of chapters written by Namibian teacher educators NIED and the colleges, is a classic example of TERP's contribution both to capacity building and to the production of a written education knowledge base for Namibia. Several other publications were produced in the same manner, focusing on new pedagogical practices in post-apartheid Namibia. TERP has therefore played a crucial role in the reform of Namibia's teacher education for basic education.

Apart from TERP, many other donor projects influenced teacher education reform in one way or another. The Namibia Association of Norway Project (NAMAS) placed a Reform Advisor at NIED who was instrumental in driving the activities of NIED during his project term. The NAMAS Reform Advisor shadowed the NIED Director and worked with him/her on a daily basis, rendering guidance and support. By virtue of this positioning the Reform Advisor had a powerful voice in the affairs and direction not only of teacher education reform but also of the Institute. The activities of the Reform Advisor ranged from general organizational development issues at NIED to curriculum development and implementation.

Also highly active in the reform of teacher education in post-apartheid Namibia was the English Language Teacher Development Project (ELTDP), initially funded by the British Overseas Development Authority (ODA), and later, the Department for International Development (DFID). The ELTDP project was mainly involved in funding and developing the teaching of English language in post-apartheid Namibia. Adopting a system similar to that of the TERP project, the ELTDP project placed an English Language Facilitator at each college while locating the project headquarters at NIED. Whereas the college-based TERP facilitator took a generalist approach covering issues ranging from pedagogy to specific subject areas of specialization, the college-based ELTDP English Language Facilitators spent most of their time conducting discussions pertaining to the English language curriculum, assisting with the writing of the curriculum materials, and guiding the implementation of the curriculum. At some of the colleges, the ELTDP facilitator also served as a member of college management.

The ELTDP project organized and conducted undergraduate and graduate-level staff development programs, namely, a Higher Diploma in English Language Teaching and a Master's degree in English Language Teaching. Much like the TERP facilitator, the ELTDP facilitator had the responsibility of supervising the English Language teacher educators in staff development activities as well as giving them general guidance and mentoring in their implementation of the English language curriculum. Staff development activities offered by the ELTDP project were the product of collaboration with universities back home in the United Kingdom, and the tutors in these programs were hired from the UK.

Equipment and facilities were also provided by the ELTDP project, albeit for the sole use of the English language teacher educators. However, unlike the TERP project that set up its own office, the EDU, the ELTDP project operated from the offices of the English Language Department. Their collection of books on the teaching of the English language was also housed in the English Language Department office.

Other foreign agencies, such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), also played a major role, not only by funding short-term staff development activities for teacher educators in Namibia, but also by sponsoring a number of Namibian educators to study at universities such as the University of Alberta in Canada and the University of Botswana. The CIDA Alberta-Botswana project was coordinated at the University of Alberta in Canada in collaboration with NIED. Like the other agencies described above, CIDA played a major role in shaping the intellectual capital of Namibia's post-apartheid teacher education reform.

Also active in Namibian teacher education reform were projects such as the Enviro-teach project, which focused on environmental education; the Life Science Project which supported the promotion of life science, agriculture and biology; and the In-service Training and Assistance for Namibian Teachers (INSTANT) project, which operated in the area of physical science. The activities of these projects ranged from producing teaching and learning materials to conducting workshops for teacher educators to equip them to introduce and make effective use of the materials.

Later on, other projects, such as that of the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH), placed volunteer teacher educators at colleges of education. By and large, these volunteers were used as gap-fillers responsible for routine classroom teaching. Classroom teaching was also done by a number of Peace Corps volunteers deployed in colleges through the USAID program. Other American-funded projects active in the reform of teacher education for basic education included the AED/BES 1, 2 & 3 projects, which supported colleges in terms of general pedagogical approaches and the continuous professional development of college staff members. As has been the practice among donor projects operating in Namibian teacher education reform, the American projects hired tutors and facilitators for various staff development programs from American universities and other collaborating institutions in the northern hemisphere.

Before leaving the subject of donor projects it should be noted that not all the projects exercised the same degree of influence over the reform of teacher education. Depending on how a particular project positioned itself and negotiated its powers, some projects were prominent while others occupied marginal positions in respect of their influence on the reform process. Nor did all the projects share the same ideological and philosophical assumptions. Different projects came with different ideological orientations and approaches, making the situation even more complicated for NIED and those who were supposed to listen to their advice and implement it.

3.5 The University of Namibia (UNAM) in the reform of teacher education for basic education

Apart from serving on subject area curriculum panels and participating in the BETD moderation exercise, the Faculty of Education at the University of Namibia was never a collaborating force in the reform of teacher education for basic education. For most of the time, the University chose to remain hostile, almost engaging in trench warfare by vehemently criticizing the BETD program for being less academic, that is, for teaching less subject content and placing too much emphasis on pedagogical knowledge (Nyambe, 2001, p. 74). Over the years, this stance has been mirrored in almost all of the University's thinking about the BETD. In its October 1998 advertisement of admission requirements for BETD graduates intending to enrol for the B.Ed. program, the University refused recognition of any prior knowledge emanating from the BETD:

All BETD holders should note that, in order to qualify for admission into the BACHELORS DEGREE IN EDUCATION (B.Ed.), a candidate must have at least:

1. An IGCSE Certificate (with a pass in at least 5 subjects) or equivalent qualification;
2. A minimum of an upper Credit BETD diploma certificate with subject passes obtained at the level of a "B" grade or better;
3. A minimum of three (3) years of teaching experience after successfully completing the BETD. (UNAM, October 12, 1998)

The implicit but very obvious message of the advertisement is that UNAM would recognize no prior learning associated with the BETD to enable BETD holders to enter the B.Ed. program at a point other than right from the beginning of the study program. The knowledge, skills and experiences acquired through the BETD would not be recognized by the University for granting credit transfer or exemption from a given number of years of study. NIED was appalled by the advertisement and responded as follows:

We would like to express our shock and dismay at the advertisement which appeared in today's *Die Republikein* and *The Namibian*. Since the notice does not link the requirements to the point at which BETD graduates enter, it creates the unfortunate and unjustified impression that the BETD is equivalent with a school leaving certificate and that it is in fact put on par with a school leaving certificate (IGCSE). It also seems to convey the impression that those BETD graduates who have obtained *Credit* or *Complete* would not qualify for the degree program. This is very disappointing since it seems to negate the notion that through their experience as teachers over the three years their knowledge base, skills and attitudes have not remained static, but have further developed. (NIED correspondence to UNAM, October 14, 1998a)

Despite two protest letters from NIED and several meetings with NIED, the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture and the Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology, the University of Namibia remained wedded to its original stance towards the BETD. While the protest letters from NIED managed to yield a public apology from UNAM – "*We apologize for any inconvenience caused by our previous notice*" (UNAM, 1998) – the apology proved to be mere lip-service, as the second set of advertisements after the apology did not differ significantly from the first ones:

Important Notice to all BETD holders:

All BETD holders should note that in order to qualify for admission into the BACHELORS DEGREE IN EDUCATION (B.Ed), a candidate must normally have attained:

A minimum of an upper Credit BETD diploma certificate with subject passes at the level of a "B" grade or better;

A minimum of three (3) years of teaching experience after successfully completing the BETD. (UNAM, October 1998)

While the second advertisement dropped the IGCSE requirement, it still reflected the initial stance of denying credit transfer to BETD graduates. It still ignored the possibility that during their three years in the BETD, students' knowledge, skills and attitudes may have developed. Also the stipulation of a "B" grade or higher indicated that only exceptionally good BETD students would be accepted onto the B.Ed. program.

In short, the University of Namibia made no constructive contribution to teacher education reform for basic education, with University faculty members frequently engaging in ideological contestations with the architects of the reform program at NIED and at the Ministry of Education.

UNAM faculty members' representation on significant bodies like the CCG could not be meaningfully utilized as they were often absent from meetings. Even in the context of the BETD moderation exercise (in which they showed some interest), University faculty members were bent on pushing an agenda of reversion to traditional pedagogical practices that emphasize content knowledge and teaching in a manner very different from that of the newly adopted learner-centred pedagogy, with its constructivist and progressivist underpinnings. This was evident not only in the University's critique of the BETD program (as shown by their refusal to grant credit transfer) but also in the moderation reports of the moderation team led by UNAM representatives. It was only in 2004 that the University changed its stance, introducing a special Bachelor of Education degree for basic education to provide for BETD graduates who wished to pursue further studies.

It can be concluded that the University was one of the significant forces in the shaping of teacher education reform for basic education, albeit by adopting a consistently negative stance towards the program. The latter was the result of the profound ideological, political and philosophical differences between many of the University faculty members and the reform program.

3.6 Colleges of Education

Another significant force in the shaping of teacher education reform was the contribution of the colleges of education and their teacher educators. Despite their official role as implementers of teacher education reform, some college teacher educators resented and resisted the reform and the BETD in particular. NIED took note of this resistance:

It was during the appraisal exercise that some college staff demonstrated their resistance to the BETD through overt and covert actions. The appraisal took a long time to complete, longer than it should have. The appraisal period was characterized by tension and conflict, in an attempt to regain what was deemed 'lost territory' in having compromised 'standards'. The issue of more content and the real or perceived lack of examinations came up as major issues. (NIED, 2000, p. 47)

The tension and resistance were even more evident at the 2001 BETD Forum. The 2001 BETD Forum was organized by NIED in order:

To provide an opportunity for all BETD stakeholders to discuss issues pertaining to the BETD program and its implementation. The Forum would offer the chance for participants to scrutinize the BETD Broad Curriculum structure and its implementation in the light of experience, and the present and future needs at college and school level. (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 2001, p. 4)

The Forum marked an important stage in the implementation of the BETD program. It was attended by 12 teacher educators from Caprivi College of Education, 15 teacher educators from Ongwediva College of Education, 13 teacher educators from Rundu College of Education, 14 teacher educators from Windhoek College of Education, 14 staff members from NIED, 4 staff members from the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation, and 2 from the University of Namibia, making a total of 74 Forum participants (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 2001, p. 4).

Of significance to this study is that the deliberations and recommendations of the Forum were supported by philosophical and epistemological orientations that radically opposed

those of the BETD Broad Curriculum. In particular, the demands for an 'increase' in content knowledge, expressed by the participants at the Forum, reflected a traditional positivistic stance at odds with the constructivist perspective embedded in the BETD Broad Curriculum. The demands for 'more content knowledge' expressed at the Forum assumed that 'knowledge' was an already existing object or entity which could be collected in determinate quantities.

Several explicit demands for 'increasing content' were made by various colleges. Rundu College of Education felt that "*not enough time is spent on content*" while Caprivi College of Education felt that "*we cannot assume that students have sufficient content, they really need support with content*". For the student representatives attending the Forum, their demands were that "*we need more content*" (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 2001, p. 14). In the wake of these demands to teach 'more content', recommendations were made that the foundation block which introduces students to the teaching profession in the first two terms of the program should be scrapped, so that specialization (content teaching and learning) would begin in the first term of the first year of studies.

While I am not suggesting that there is anything wrong with arguing for more content knowledge, it is equally important that such demands be consistent with what Prawat (1991, p. 742) refers to as "the epistemological and political empowerment of teachers with an arsenal of analytic skills that allow one to critically examine a broad range of educational claims". Giroux and McLaren (1987, p. 279) and Hill (2003, p. 45) view such teachers as "transformative intellectuals" who are capable of critically interrogating the ideological and hegemonic interests underpinning school knowledge. As a political project which is emancipatory, schooling would, therefore, ask fundamental questions about whose interests are being served by the content knowledge (Apple, 1990), instead of simply demanding more content knowledge in an uncritical manner as was done by the recommendations of the 2001 BETD Forum. The demand for more content knowledge aside, the positivist orientation was even more evident in the Forum's insistence on "*strengthening formal examinations in the BETD*" and, its request that "*common*

examinations across colleges be introduced" (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 2001, p. 24).

It can be concluded from the foregoing discussion that teacher educators constituted another significant force in the shaping of teacher education reform, not only through their teaching activities and participation on curriculum panels, but also through their reservations about, criticisms of, and even overt resistance towards some of the underlying tenets of the program.

3.7 Forces of resentment: rugged terrain, resistance and criticisms in the implementation of the BETD

In this section, I wish to pull the threads of the above discussion together so as to illuminate how forces such as the University of Namibia and some college teacher educators created a rugged terrain over which the implementation of the program had to pass. Resentment and criticism of the BETD were not restricted to University of Namibia academics and college teacher educators, but were also expressed by some sections of the Namibian general public, as noted by the *Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training*:

We received many criticisms of the BETD program. These came from members of the public at large, from serving teachers, and from tutors and students of the colleges of education. (Namibia. Government of the Republic of Namibia [GRN], 1999, p. 135)

In a subsequent report, the Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training observed that:

The BETD broad curriculum focuses on the methodology while neglecting the content of subjects which students are going to teach. The question arose if newly qualified teachers are then competent to teach. *There is much criticism of BETD graduates by schools and the wider community that they may have mastered the skills but have poor command of subject knowledge* [emphasis mine]. (Namibia. GRN, 2000, p. 11)

The ruggedness of the implementation terrain was also evident in the fact that some of the regional education offices did not hesitate to express their discontent with the BETD program to NIED. For instance, the Keetmanshoop regional education office wrote to NIED, expressing their sentiments as follows:

It has been observed throughout the engagement with BETD graduates that their standard of subject knowledge and methodology fall short of expectations...During grade 10 Accounting workshop held in January 1999, it was a piteous embarrassment for the 198 graduates not to know most of the topic content covered during the workshop. Some of the BETD graduates claimed that it is the first time they have heard, seen and experienced how certain topics, concepts and principles are handled and should be taught...on closer enquiries, the BETD graduates claimed that knowledge is being neglected during their PRESET training. They write neither examinations nor tests. (Keetmanshoop Educational Region, correspondence to NIED, 16 April, 1999)

Some of the criticisms have indeed had an impact on the BETD program. For instance, in response to the pressure to teach 'more content,' course organizers have abandoned the professional foundation block, thus enabling students to start specializing in a given subject area right from the beginning of the course. Previously, students spent two terms of the program doing a professional foundation block which aimed to introduce them to professional issues in teaching and teacher education.

3.8 Conclusion

In the foregoing discussion, I have outlined the major agents shaping the reform of teacher education in post-apartheid Namibia. I have provided a profile of each of these agents or forces, elaborating on the nature and extent of their influence and the structures and processes they have instituted in order to facilitate teacher education reform.

The activities of the major agents that have shaped teacher education reform leave many questions unanswered. For instance, the heavy presence of donor projects at NIED and the colleges was legitimized as a shift from a redundant teacher education philosophy to a

more relevant teacher education ideology. It was underpinned by the assumption that teacher educator capacity building was taking place. However, the question still remains: How did the heavy presence of technical staff at NIED and the colleges empower teacher educators in their interpretation and practice of learner-centred education policy and teacher education reform in general?

In the next chapter, I describe and discuss the theoretical framework for the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters I discussed Namibian teacher education reform. More specifically, in Chapter Two, I described the adoption of learner-centred education, its historical origins in Namibia, its underlying principles and theoretical bases. I also considered a critique of it. In Chapter Three, I analysed and discussed the major agencies that shaped teacher education reform in post-apartheid Namibia, and the curriculum processes and organizational structures that were put in place to facilitate the reform initiative.

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study. First, I explain how I worked with Bernstein's theory of pedagogy, especially his idea of modalities of pedagogic practice and concepts of framing and classification, to illuminate the inner logic and power structures of the learner-centred pedagogy adopted by the Namibian teacher education reform process. Secondly, I explain how I applied Bernstein's theory of recontextualization to generate the insights necessary for understanding how teacher educators at a Namibian college of education make sense of and implement learner-centred education in their classrooms.

What follows is an explanation of how I worked with Bernstein's theory of pedagogy to describe and explain learner-centred education as a pedagogic practice.

4.2 Bernstein's theory of pedagogy

Bernstein's theory of pedagogy was used to gain a deeper understanding of learner-centred pedagogy, through analysis of its internal logic and its underlying classificatory (power) and framing (control) relations. Before broaching this analysis, I shall briefly

recap some of the key features of the two modalities of pedagogic practice that were discussed in Chapter Two, namely, the pre-independence traditional pedagogic model and the post-independence learner-centred education model.

Pre-independence education was characterized by a traditional pedagogic model rooted in the political agenda of apartheid. With the intention of perpetuating the colonial status quo, apartheid education fostered strong power and control relations in the pedagogic relation between teacher educators and their students. This was manifested through teacher educator dominance and student teacher passivity. Post-independence education, on the other hand, has been characterized by the adoption of a learner-centred pedagogy based on a constructivist and progressive model of education.

As was observed in Chapter Two, learner-centred pedagogy is driven by the political imperatives of democracy, empowerment, social justice and equity. It is closely linked to the post-apartheid political agenda for societal transformation, emancipation, democratization and modernization. But in order to understand and describe the inner logic and power and control structures of learner-centred pedagogy, I turned to Bernstein's theory of pedagogy, with its supporting modalities of visible and invisible pedagogic practice and concepts of classification and framing.

Bernstein's theory of pedagogy (Bernstein, 2004, 195) is underpinned by a set of internal rules on the basis of which various modes of pedagogic practice are generated. These rules are identified as: rules of hierarchy, rules of sequencing and pacing, and rules of criteria (Bernstein, 1990, p. 64). According to Bernstein (2004, p. 196), rules of hierarchy define the interactional relationship between the transmitter (teacher educator) and the acquirer (student teacher), and thus determine the acquisition of rules of social order, character and manner appropriate in the pedagogic relation. Rules of sequencing and pacing, on the other hand, determine both the progression of the transmission (sequencing) and the expected rate of acquisition or learning (pacing), while rules of evaluative criteria define what is regarded as legitimate or illegitimate learning in a pedagogic relation.

Bernstein argued that “the inner logic of any pedagogic practice consists of the relationship essentially between these three rules” (hierarchical, sequencing and criterial rules), and that not only do they constitute what can be called “the *how*” of any pedagogic practice, but they also define the pedagogic relation between transmitters (teacher educators) and acquirers (student teachers) (Bernstein, 1990, p. 63). Essentially, in any pedagogic relation, these fundamental rules (*the how*) are prior to the content (*the what*) to be transmitted, and “act selectively on the what of the practice, the form of its content” (Bernstein, 1990, p. 63).

Bernstein’s theory of pedagogy further maintains that the three fundamental rules constituting the inner logic of any pedagogic practice are subsumed under two more general sets of rules: the regulative rules (constituted by hierarchical rules or rules of social order and conduct), and the instructional or discursive rules (constituted by rules of sequence, pace, competence and criteria). As will be elaborated on in section 4.3.1, regulative rules and instructional rules further generate the two sub-discourses that constitute pedagogic discourse: the regulative discourse (consisting of rules of social order) and the instructional discourse (consisting of rules of discursive order). The regulative discourse is dominant, always embedding the instructional discourse (Bernstein, 1996, p. 46).

According to Bernstein’s theory, various modes of pedagogic practice are generated on the basis of these internal rules. Specifically, the rules generate “what are regarded as opposing modalities of pedagogic practice, usually referred to as conservative or traditional and progressive or child-centred” (Bernstein, 1990, p. 63). Bernstein further distinguished between two generic modalities of pedagogic practice, visible pedagogy (VP) and invisible pedagogy (IP) (Bernstein, 1990, p. 66; 2004, p. 201).

These latter modalities are determined, first, as elaborated on in section 4.2.1, by the degree of explicitness or implicitness of each of the fundamental rules of pedagogic practice; and secondly, as elaborated on and defined in section 4.2.2, by the underpinning

classificatory and framing values (Bernstein 1990, 2004). Bernstein maintains that, on the basis of an examination of the degree of explicitness or implicitness of the rules, and their underlying classificatory and framing values, modalities of visible pedagogic practice and invisible pedagogic practice can be identified. Hence he contends that all modalities of pedagogic practice are generated from the same set of internal rules, and vary according to their classification and framing values (Bernstein, 2004, p. 196; 2000, p. 14).

In the following section, I elaborate on how, from the perspective of Bernstein's theory of pedagogy, the degree of explicitness or implicitness of each of the internal rules of pedagogy serves to generate visible or invisible pedagogic practices.

4.2.1 Explicit versus implicit rules of pedagogic practice

Bernstein (1990, p. 66) argues that explicit hierarchical rules generate visible pedagogic practices. In such practices, power relations are very clear, with explicit subordination and super-ordination in the transmitter-acquirer pedagogic relation. Not only does such a pedagogic relation create an explicit hierarchy, it also makes very clear to the acquirer the unequal power relations in terms of which the transmitter has explicit control over the acquirer. As pointed out in Chapter Two, explicit hierarchical rules based on unequal power relations exemplified the traditional pedagogic practice in apartheid-era Namibia, where very clear and unequal power relations existed between teacher educators and their student teachers.

Conversely, implicit, blurred or masked hierarchical rules generate invisible pedagogic practices:

We can define an implicit hierarchy as a relationship where power is masked or hidden by devices of communication. In the case of an implicit hierarchy the teacher acts directly on the context of acquisition but indirectly on the acquirer. (Bernstein 1990, p. 67)

Bernstein's implicit or blurred rules of hierarchy illuminate the progressive pedagogic model discussed in Chapter Two, where it was stated that learner-centred pedagogy in Namibia is purported to be based on a "democratic pedagogy," with students actively involved in the teaching and learning process, as well as the broader decision-making process (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 42). It can be argued that the political imperatives of democracy, empowerment, social justice and equity underpinning learner-centred pedagogy in the Namibian context conduce to the weak or diminished power relations characteristic of an invisible pedagogic practice that embodies progressive education and constructivism.

Apart from rules of hierarchy or rules of the regulative discourse, pedagogic modalities of visible and invisible pedagogies are further generated on the basis of the degree of explicitness or implicitness of the rules of the discursive order or instructional discourse, that is, rules of selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria. Bernstein (1990, p. 67) argues that when rules of instructional discourse are explicit, a visible pedagogy is generated, meaning that the skills and competencies to be transmitted are explicitly specified (in syllabuses and prescribed textbooks, etc.), and the pedagogic practice is characterized by an explicit transmission of these specified skills and competencies to the student. The explicit detailing of content is accompanied by specified sequencing and pacing, meaning the syllabi or curricula are organized in clear temporal demarcations prescribing how and when both the transmitter and the acquirer should proceed. The student is thus assigned a passive role as receptor of the pedagogic text transmitted by the transmitter.

Conversely, implicit rules of instructional discourse provide a basis for generating invisible pedagogic practices characterized by de-emphasis on the explicit and detailed statement of the knowledge, skills or competencies to be transmitted to the student. In this instance, discursive rules are known only to the teacher educator, and are invisible to the student (Bernstein, 2004, p. 201). Implicit sequencing and pacing rules eliminate the acquirer's ability to become aware of his temporal project "leaving him within the present, not in either the past or the future" (Bernstein, 1990, p. 69).

In relation to the selection, sequencing and pacing of discourses, the implicit rules of instructional discourse imply a flexible and highly collaborative process that takes into account student teachers' learning needs. Skills and competencies that are supposed to be transmitted are somewhat blurred and implicit and are left to the student to investigate, explore and actively construct, thus according the student an active role in knowledge acquisition. The de-emphasis on the explicit statement of content or knowledge in invisible pedagogy is characteristic of the progressive model of education, as discussed in Chapter Two, "where learners play an active role in determining the content of education according to their life-world" (Meier, 2005, p. 77). Also considered in that chapter (Section 2.7) was the critique of learner-centred pedagogy concerning this de-emphasis on the detailed explication of content, which maintains that it downplays serious academic learning.

Bernstein also uses the degree of explicitness or implicitness of criterial rules to generate various modalities of pedagogic practice. Where criterial rules are explicit and specific, and the student is aware of the criteria specified, a visible pedagogy is generated:

If criterial rules work by showing the child what is missing in the product, the criteria are then regarded as explicit and specific, and the child will be aware of the criteria. He or she may not like them, but they will be articulated. (Bernstein 2004, p. 201)

In visible pedagogy, then, the rules for successful performance are not open to negotiation, and the criterial rules emphasize attaining states of knowledge rather than ways of knowing. However, with invisible pedagogic practices, the criterial rules are implicit, multiple and diffuse, and the acquirer is not aware, except in a very general way, of the criteria he/she is expected to meet. Bernstein (2004) describes the application of criterial rules in an invisible pedagogy as follows:

In the case of implicit criteria, by definition, the child is not aware except in a very general way of the criteria she/he has to meet. It is as if this pedagogic practice creates a space in which the acquirer can create his/her text under conditions of apparently minimum external constraint and in a context and social relationship which appears highly supportive of the “spontaneous” text the acquirer offers. (p. 201)

While a visible pedagogic practice tends to emphasize the performance of the student against the evaluative criteria, invisible pedagogies are less interested in measuring the student against an external common standard. Thus visible pedagogies tend to focus on the gradable performance of the student, while invisible pedagogies tend to focus on the procedures internal to the student (cognitive, linguistic, affective, and motivational), as a consequence of which a text or performance emerges. This suggests that while visible pedagogies are interested in comparing students and producing stratified differences between them, invisible pedagogies are not. Rather, differences among students in terms of meeting criterial rules are treated as indicators of uniqueness and not deficits (Bernstein, 2004, p. 201). Where visible pedagogies place emphasis on external gradable text, invisible pedagogies place emphasis upon the competencies that all students bring to the context. Explicated elsewhere in the report, Bernstein’s theory of pedagogy is used to link invisible pedagogies with learner-centred pedagogy.

The application of criterial rules within the Namibian context reflects an invisible pedagogic practice, in terms of which the student’s performance is supposed to be “assessed in a variety of ways, giving an all round picture of the student’s development” (Namibia. MHETEC & MBESC, 1998, p. 2). As was elaborated on in Chapter Two, evaluation rules are supposed to be based on criterion-referenced assessment, including positive assessment that does not emphasize weaknesses in the text offered by the student. Assessment in the Namibian context is, therefore, supposed to be diffuse and multiple, using a variety of assessment approaches rather than a narrow one reliant on specified criterial rules (Namibia. MHETEC & MBESC, 1998, p. 19).

To recap: visible pedagogies tend to centre on the teacher educator, who is more active in the pedagogic relation, transmitting specified skills and competencies to the student

(teacher-centred). Invisible pedagogies, on the other hand, tend to centre on the student, who dominates the pedagogic space (student or learner-centred).

Furthermore, it can be argued that visible and invisible pedagogies construct and project different pedagogic identities for the different actors in the pedagogic relation (Bernstein, 2000, p. 66). In visible pedagogy, the pedagogic identity or specialized consciousness of the teacher educator is that of an authority figure, one who transmits the pedagogic text to the student, while the student teacher's identity is that of a passive receptor of the pedagogic text.

But in invisible pedagogies, new identities are constructed and projected, with the teacher educator becoming more of a facilitator, a mentor, or someone who provides guidance during the teaching and learning process. The student teacher also assumes a new pedagogic identity, as an active pedagogic actor who investigates and constructs knowledge in the teaching and learning process. As it was put in Chapter Two, learner-centred pedagogy repositions the student teacher and accords him or her a central position as the principal pedagogic actor occupying centre stage in the teaching and learning process. In the same vein, the teacher educator's new pedagogic identity within learner-centred pedagogy is supposed to be a flexible one, switching between the identities of "instructor, tutor, counsellor, enabler, mentor and facilitator"; and that "his/her teaching-learning time is supposed to include, among others: whole class-teaching, time spent between groups at work, small tutorial groups, individual guidance, and general supervision of tasks and assignments" (MHETEC, MBESC, 1998, p. 17).

I have thus located learner-centred pedagogy (as outlined in Chapter Two) within Bernstein's conceptualization of visible and invisible pedagogy, underpinned by relations among the three internal rules constituting the inner logic of pedagogic practice. I have illustrated how Bernstein's theory of pedagogy uses the three internal rules of pedagogic practice to generate various modalities of pedagogic practice. I have also used Bernstein's theory of pedagogy to illuminate the internal logic of learner-centred pedagogy as an invisible pedagogic practice. In the following section, I outline how Bernstein's theory of

generates various modalities of pedagogic practice, using the concepts of classification and framing. Furthermore, in the following section, I draw upon antecedent studies to illuminate how visible pedagogies impact learner performance positively.

4.2.2 Classification and framing

In addition to the internal rules of pedagogic practice, Bernstein's theory of pedagogy also uses the concepts of classification and framing to generate various modalities of pedagogic practice (Bernstein, 2000, p. 14).

According to Bernstein (1971, p. 49; 2000, p. 7), classification embodies power relations and is concerned with the strength of the boundaries or the degree of boundary maintenance (demarcation, insulation) between the various actors, agents, categories and discourses. Thus classification, defined by degree of insulation, is a principle of the social division of labour. It creates a space within which specialized agents, categories and discourses can develop their unique identities with their own special rules, special voice and specialized consciousness. Bernstein (2000) elucidates this crucial space of specialization as follows:

A can only be A if it can effectively insulate itself from B. In this sense, there is no A if there is no relationship between A and something else. The meaning of A is only understood in relation to other categories in the set, in fact, to all the categories in the set. In other words, it is the insulation between the categories of discourses which maintains the principle of their social division of labour. In other words, it is silence which carries the message of power; it is the full stop between one category of discourse and another; it is the dislocation in the potential flow of discourse which is crucial to the specialization of any category. (p. 6)

Bernstein maintains that classification refers to a defining difference between categories, rather than to a defining characteristic of the category itself. Strong insulation creates categories which are clearly bounded, creating space for the development of a specialized

identity, while weaker insulation creates categories which are less bounded and therefore have a less specialized identity (Bernstein, 1996, p. 101).

Bernstein further argues that it is power that maintains the strength of the insulation, and that attempts to change the degree of insulation will reveal the power relations on which the classification or social division of labour is based and which it reproduces (Bernstein, 2000, p. 6). The degree of insulation between categories regulates the classification values of the classificatory principle. Thus, depending upon the degree of insulation, classification can either be strong (C⁺) or weak (C⁻).

Bernstein (1990, p. 22) argues that where classification is strong (C⁺), boundary maintenance between the various agents, discourses and practices is strong, with highly specialized identities and voices coupled with little interchange between the various categories, agents or discourses. Where classification is weak (C⁻), boundary maintenance between the various categories, agents and discourses is weak, with less specialized identities and a high level of interaction between the various categories. As Bernstein (2000, p. 11) puts it, “where we have strong classification, the rule is; things must be kept apart but where we have weak classification, the rule is; things must be kept together”.

Also to be noted is Bernstein’s observation that classification, strong or weak, always carries power relations and that the arbitrary nature of power is disguised by the principle of classification. This disguising of power legitimizes and reproduces classificatory power relations. Bernstein (2000) elaborates thus:

The arbitrary nature of these power relations is disguised, hidden by the principle of classification – for the principle of classification comes to have the force of the natural order and the identities that it constructs are taken as real, as authentic, as integral, as the source of integrity. Thus, a change in the principle of classification here is a threat to the principle of integrity, of coherence of the individual. (p. 7)

In this way, power relations translated by the principle of classification come to be seen as natural, authentic and unproblematic. Within the individual, insulation becomes a system of psychic defences against the possibility of a weakening of the insulation; it becomes a system of psychic defences to maintain the integrity of a category, and thus the classification (Bernstein, 2000, p. 7).

Classification values generate modalities of pedagogic practice. Strong classification values (C^+) generate visible pedagogic practices with strong insulation, strong boundaries, specialized identities and no interaction between the various pedagogic agents, categories or discourses. Weak classification (C^-), on the other hand, generates invisible pedagogic practices with weak insulation, weak boundary maintenance and more interaction between the various pedagogic actors, agents, categories or discourses.

While the concept of classification determines power relationships, the concept of framing, on the other hand, determines control relations in the pedagogic relationship. Framing is about the locus of control over the selection, sequencing and pacing and evaluation aspects of the instructional and the regulative discourse (Bernstein, 2000, pp. 12-13). Thus, depending on the locus of control, framing can either be weak (F^-) or strong (F^+). Where framing is strong, the transmitter has explicit control over the selection, sequencing and pacing of the instructional and the regulative discourse. Where framing is weak, the acquirer has more apparent control over the instructional and regulative aspects of pedagogic discourse. Framing values are, therefore, regulated by the locus of control in the pedagogic relation between the acquirer and the transmitter.

Framing can either be external or internal. External framing (eF) refers to pedagogic contexts where external control factors such as the curriculum, authorities and other macro-level structural prescriptions constitute the locus of control over the discursive and regulative aspects of pedagogic discourse. Internal framing (iF), on the other hand, refers to pedagogic contexts where internal factors, such as the teacher educator, constitute the locus of control over the discursive and the regulative aspects of pedagogic discourse. Both external and internal framing can either be weak (${}^eF^-$, ${}^iF^-$) or strong (${}^eF^+$, ${}^iF^+$).

Bernstein (2000, p. 13) argues that it is possible to have a variation in framing values with respect to the elements of the instructional discourse, so that one could have, for instance, weak framing over the pacing but strong framing over the sequencing aspects of the discourse. Regarding framing as a basis for generating various modalities of pedagogic practice, Bernstein (2000) concludes:

In general, where framing is strong, we shall have a visible pedagogic practice. Here the rules of instruction and regulative discourse are explicit. Where framing is weak, we are likely to have an invisible pedagogic practice. Here the rules of regulative and instructional discourse are implicit, and largely unknown to the acquirer. Perhaps that is why such framings are called progressive. (p. 14)

It can be concluded, from the foregoing discussion, that the concepts of classification and framing underpin the three internal rules of pedagogic practice that Bernstein's theory of pedagogy uses to generate various modalities of pedagogic practice. At the micro-level of pedagogic practice, strong classification (C^+) and strong framing (F^+) give rise to the explicitness of internal rules of pedagogic practice and concentrate power and control in the hands of the teacher educator, thus generating a visible pedagogic practice. Weak classification (C^-) and weak framing (F^-), on the other hand, give rise to the implicitness of essential rules of pedagogic practice and diminish the power and control aspects of the teacher educator, thus generating an invisible pedagogic practice.

Bernstein's theory of pedagogy has been applied widely by many Bernsteinian scholars (Neves & Morais, 2001; Morais & Neves, 2001; Riksaasen, 2001; Sadvonik & Semel, 2006; Solomon & Tsatsaroni, 2001; Alves & Morais, 2008). These antecedent studies are of great significance to the current study as they both clarify Bernstein's concepts and provide examples of the application of these concepts to empirical contexts.

The preceding discussion of Bernstein's theory of pedagogy has been informed by a series of strong binaries – visible versus invisible pedagogy, strong classification (C^+) versus weak classification (C^-) and strong framing (F^+) versus weak framing (F^-) – which

suggest that pedagogic realities can be neatly packaged into unproblematic and dichotomous categories. The tendency towards dichotomization or binarization implies a weakness in the theory, as such neat categories may not accurately reflect social reality. Thus one of the critical lessons offered by most of the Bernsteinian studies cited above is that pedagogic reality is typically characterized by mixed values of classification and framing; as Morais and Neves (2001) argue:

Contrary to what is argued by many progressive educationists as to the potentialities of a totally invisible pedagogy characterized by weak classifications and framings, our studies so far show that while these weak classifications and framings are an essential condition for learning at the level of pacing, hierarchical rules, knowledge relations (interdisciplinary, intradisciplinary, academic-non-academic), and relations between spaces, they are less so at the level of selection, and certainly at the level of evaluation criteria. This conclusion does not support either a return to the traditional education of strong classifications and framings or a total acceptance of progressivism. Rather, it suggests a *mixed pedagogy*, a prospect suggested by the language of description derived from Bernstein's theory enabling distinction between specific aspects of classroom social contexts, going well beyond the dichotomies of open/closed school, visible/invisible pedagogies, and discovery learning/reception learning, introducing a dimension of great rigour into research on teachers' pedagogic practices. (p. 215, emphasis in the original)

Antecedent studies such as that of Morais and Neves (2001) thus offered me new perspectives that went beyond the neat binaries of Bernstein's theorizing. The investigation of classification and framing values was illuminated further in another study by Neves and Morais (2001) that undertook to investigate Portuguese science education reform, and the recontextualization that took place at the various levels of the reform. Comparing sociological messages contained in the syllabuses of the present science education reform (1991) with the messages contained in the syllabuses of the previous science education reform (late 1960s and early 1970s), Neves and Morais's study used classification and framing to investigate:

- relations underlying the teaching-learning process;

- Ministry of education-teacher relations: potentialities and limits of teacher intervention;
- the influence of the socio-political context on curricular reform and recontextualization. (Neves & Morais, 2001, p. 238)

Of significance to the present study is Neves and Morais' innovative use of the classificatory and framing principles to design a data analysis framework. For instance, in order to analyze the relations underlying the teaching-learning process, or the Ministry of education-teacher relations, Neves and Morais designed a four point scale of classification (C^{++} , C^+ , C^- , C^{--}) and a four point scale of framing (F^{++} , F^+ , F^- , F^{--}), with the highest values (C^{++} or F^{++}) indicating a well-marked hierarchy and the lowest values (C^- or F^-) indicating a blurred or diminished hierarchy, and the intermediate values (C^+ , C^- or F^+ , F^-) indicating minor to minimal degrees of hierarchy.

This four-point scale appeared to have the potential to achieve a more accurate representation of classroom reality. I therefore drew upon Neves and Morais's concept of mixed pedagogy and their extended scale of classification and framing values to refine the distinctions within Bernstein's theory of pedagogy. In doing so, I increased my chances of appropriately addressing the messiness of pedagogic reality. Following Neves and Morais, I adopted a weakening or decreasing four point scale of classification, ranging from very strong to very weak power relations (C^{++} , C^+ , C^- , C^{--}), and very strong to very weak control relations (F^{++} , F^+ , F^- , F^{--}). As opposed to a two-point scale that could have led to a simplistic binarization of pedagogic practices, the four-point scale data analysis model provided me with a lengthy continuum within which I could generate modalities of pedagogic practice.

Morais and Neves's (2001) study is also significant in the sense that its approach towards investigating the pedagogic relations between the Ministry of Education and teachers points to the fact that these relations of power and control can be expressed in subtle and covert ways, such as in the degree of explicitness and detail within the pedagogic texts (e.g. syllabuses) which teachers are made to use in their classrooms. In their study, the

degree of content explicitness in official texts such as syllabuses was measured by considering the framing value of each sentence, while the extent of the syllabus text was measured by the number of sentences contained in it as a whole (detail) and the percentage devoted to each syllabus dimension. It was assumed that more text meant greater explicitness. A four-point scale of framing was, once again, used in sentence analysis, with the highest value expressing a high degree of content explicitness and the lowest value expressing little explicitness.

In my investigation of how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practise learner-centred pedagogy, I drew upon this specific aspect of Neves and Morais. I used it to understand teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy in relation to the degree of explicitness and detail of the discourses that are transmitted to student teachers in the pedagogic relation.

Another lesson from the Neves and Morais study concerns how the underlying socio-political values in a given pedagogic context facilitate teacher educators' acquisition of recognition and realization rules and their ability meaningfully to recontextualize the official pedagogic discourse (OPD). For instance, Neves and Morais show in their study how the Portuguese socio-political context within which the educational reform was being implemented impacted on the availability of recontextualization space. This example facilitated my understanding of how a national curriculum development structure based on a democratic, decentralized and consensual approach facilitated or inhibited teacher educators' recontextualization of the official pedagogic discourse.

In yet another study, Morais and Neves (2001b) used Bernstein's concepts to investigate how interactions that occur in pedagogic social contexts such as the family, the school and teacher education facilitate the acquisition by learners of the recognition and realization rules needed to produce the requisite texts in the specific instructional and regulative contexts of school learning. Morais and Neves argue that pedagogic social contexts are defined by specific power and control relations among subjects, discourses, and agencies/spaces, and that the interactional dimension of a context is determined by

the relationships between its subjects (Morais & Neves, 2001, p. 188). Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing were used to analyze the pedagogic contexts. The research indicated how specific power and control relations in pedagogic contexts lead to differential access to the recognition and realization rules which regulate the multiple contexts of pedagogic interaction. The central value of Morais and Neves's study is that it explores the concepts of classification and framing, and the recognition and realization rules in much depth, in the process affording the reader a better understanding of what these concepts entail, not only at the theoretical level but also in an empirical situation.

The understanding and clarity generated by the Morais and Neves study were further enhanced by another study by Alves and Morais, who offered extended perspectives on teachers' uptake of the official pedagogic discourse at two levels, the argumentation level and the implementation level (Alves & Morais, 2008, p. 9). The argumentation level means being able to tell what the official pedagogic discourse means, while the implementation level means being able to do it, to implement the official pedagogic discourse. The study by Alves and Morais demonstrates how teacher educators' recontextualization of the official pedagogic discourse varies between the two levels. Teachers may be able to recontextualize and demonstrate possession of passive realization rules at the argumentation level, but this does not necessarily mean a corresponding ability to recontextualize at the implementation level. I use this perspective to structure my data in Chapters Six and Seven.

In another study, Mawoyo and Ensor explored different modalities of learnership using Bernstein's notions of classification and framing (Mawoyo & Ensor, 2006). In their study, classification was used to distinguish the ways in which the student teacher curriculum was differentiated between the school and the university, how delivery of the curriculum was shared between these sites, and how student teachers were assessed by the two institutions. Framing was used to distinguish the degree of control exercised by the University, the mentors and the student teachers in the selection, sequencing, pacing and evaluation of the student teachers' learning. Mawoyo and Ensor's study provides an

example of how classification and framing relations can be investigated in a pedagogic situation using a four-point scale of classification and framing.

In the foregoing discussion, I have given an account of Bernstein's concept of invisible and visible pedagogy, of the rules that generate these classifications, and of the concepts of classification and framing. I have also described subsequent Bernsteinian studies that refine or extend his insights, and which I have drawn upon in the present study in order to clarify and strengthen my own utilization of Bernstein's theory. In the next section, I elaborate on Bernstein's theory of recontextualization and how I used it in this study.

4.3 Bernstein's theory of recontextualization

Bernstein's theory of recontextualization highlights the process by which policy (e.g. learner-centred pedagogy) is interpreted – selectively appropriated, simplified and transformed – for use in a new context. Recontextualization refers to the interpretations, tensions, struggles, transformations and ideological screening and contestation on the part of various groups, agencies and agents, as texts and practices move through a differential system based on a social division of labour (Bernstein, 1990, 1996, 2000). Seen within the context of the foregoing discussion of visible, invisible and mixed pedagogies, the significance of recontextualization to the present study is that it illuminates the process by which Namibian teacher educators receive or appropriate learner-centred pedagogy as official pedagogic discourse, interpret it and implement it in their classrooms. Bernstein (1990) elucidates the recontextualization process as follows:

When a text is appropriated by recontextualizing agents [...] the text usually undergoes a transformation. The form of this transformation is regulated by a *principle of decontextualising*. This process refers to the change in the text as it is first *delocated* and then *relocated*. This process ensures that the text is no longer the same text:

1. The text has changed its position in relation to other texts, practices, and positions.
2. The text itself has been modified by selection, simplification, condensation, and elaboration.

3. The text has been repositioned and refocused. (pp. 60-61, emphasis in the original.)

Bernstein located the recontextualization process within a three field system of interrelated pedagogic fields associated with the structure and functioning of the education system. These are the primary field of knowledge production, the field of recontextualization and the field of reproduction (Bernstein, 1990, p. 191).

Consisting of research groups and individuals, the field of production is the intellectual domain where new ideas and theories are created, modified, and changed through a process of primary recontextualization. The field of reproduction, on the other hand, comprising four levels (pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary), is the field in which official discourses are reproduced and acquired at the micro-level of pedagogic practice (Bernstein, 1990, p. 59).

Between the pedagogic fields of production and reproduction lies the recontextualizing field, where positions, agents and practices are involved in the movement of discourses, selectively appropriating them from one context, then simplifying and transforming them for use in another context (Bernstein, 1990, p. 191). Two other fields are identified within the pedagogic field of recontextualizing: the official recontextualizing field (ORF) and the pedagogic recontextualizing field (PRF). The ORF is created and dominated by agents of the state, who select discourses from among the variety generated in the pedagogic field of production, and transform them into official discourse expressing the state's "bias and focus" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 65). Bernstein argues that it is in the ORF where the *what* (subject content) and the *how* (theory of instruction) of pedagogic discourse are decided upon.

In Namibia, the ORF is constituted by the Ministry of Education and its various directorates, like NIED, which are the state agents responsible for selecting and transforming discourses from the pedagogic field of production to reflect the "bias and focus" of the state, as these are articulated in policy statements such as *Toward education for all* (Namibia. MEC, 1993). The official pedagogic texts such as curricular documents

and guidelines on learner-centred pedagogy produced by NIED, for instance, represent the official pedagogic discourse (OPD) that is produced in the ORF (Ministry of Education and its directorates). As will be elaborated on in subsequent paragraphs, Bernstein maintained that the transformation of discourses in the ORF represents the first transformative act of recontextualization. The PRF, on the other hand, consists of agents (located for instance, in professional organizations and on the boards of specialized journals) who are involved in the second type of transformation, where official discourses undergo a recontextualization into pedagogic discourse and practices for pedagogic transmission or teaching (Bernstein, 1990, p. 191).

As was mentioned in Section 3.3, Figure 2.1, Namibia adopted a nation-wide curriculum development and implementation structure that is supposed to be participatory, democratic, decentralized and consensual. Because of the participatory and inclusive approach adopted for policy recontextualization in Namibian teacher education, some college teacher educators are working alongside NIED in the field of policy recontextualization. They are helping to generate official pedagogic texts in the form of curriculum documents and guidelines. This is the first act of recontextualization. Other college teacher educators are not involved in this process. Instead, they work from the recontextualized texts, which is a further recontextualization process. They reproduce the recontextualized texts in their classrooms.

4.3.1 Pedagogic discourse as a principle for recontextualization

Also to be highlighted in relation to the movement of texts or practices through the pedagogic fields is pedagogic discourse which, according to Bernstein (1996, p. 46), is the central principle by which discourses are appropriated and delocated from their primary context, transformed and relocated into another context. Bernstein (1996) elaborates on this process as follows:

Pedagogic discourse is a principle, not a discourse. It is a principle by which other discourses are appropriated and brought into a special relationship with each other, for the purpose of their selective transmission

and acquisition. Pedagogic discourse is a principle for the circulation and reordering of discourses [...] [It is] a principle for the delocating a discourse, for relocating it, for refocusing it, according to its own principle. (pp. 46-47)

Pedagogic discourse is, therefore, a recontextualizing principle, a principle for selecting the *what* (subject and content) and the *how* (theory of instruction) in the ORF and the PRF. It is a principle for appropriating discourses from the pedagogic field of production, and subordinating these discourses to a different principle of organization and relation as the original discourse passes through ideological screens and becomes its new form, pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 1996, p. 117). The new principle of organization and the relations to which appropriated discourses are subordinated is such that, at the theoretical level, two embedded discourses are involved: the instructional discourse (ID), which transmits a selection of various kinds of skills and their relation to one another, and a regulative discourse (RD), which creates order, relations and identity (Bernstein, 1996, p. 46). The new ordering to which appropriated discourses are subjected is such that the ID is embedded into a dominating RD, which Bernstein expresses as: ID/RD. Bernstein (1996) argues that “[p]edagogic discourse is the rule which leads to the embedding of one discourse in another, to create one text, to create *one* discourse” (p. 46, emphasis in the original).

Therefore, through their positioning in the ORF (e.g. at NIED) and the PRF, teacher educators in the Namibian context can, through a process of selective appropriation, modification, simplification, condensation and elaboration, recontextualize learner-centred pedagogy. In doing so they can subject the official pedagogic discourse (learner-centred pedagogy) to a new ordering that embeds ID/RD. Participation at this level is significant for this study as it has the potential to allow teacher educators to become recontextualizers of the official pedagogic discourse as opposed to mere reproducers of it.

Bernstein further argues that – since no discourse moves without ideology at play – when the discourse moves from its original site to its new positioning as pedagogic discourse (ID/RD), ideological transformation takes place (Bernstein, 1996, p. 47). However, as a

new discourse is being appropriated and decontextualized, and subordinated to a new ordering of ID/RD, the recontextualizing principle regulates the ideological positioning of the new text or discourse. Never neutral, the transformation act is characterized by ideological screening and contestation by various interest groups, leading to tensions and oppositional forces. Consequently, Bernstein (1990, p. 61) contends: *“it is the recontextualization field which generates the positions and oppositions of pedagogic theory, research and practice”*.

4.3.2 Prerequisite rules for recontextualization

Bernstein argues that in order for meaningful recontextualization to take place, that is, in order for the official pedagogic discourse to be creatively and meaningfully interpreted and put into practice, certain preconditions have to be met. In other words, the recontextualization of a given OPD requires that the recontextualizing agent (e.g. teacher educator) possesses certain ground rules which Bernstein (1996, pp. 31-33) identifies as the recognition, realization and evaluative rules. Before I explain what the rules entail, it is worth reiterating that the observance of these rules is a precondition for the meaningful interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy by teacher educators. In other words, teacher educators' successful interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy – their survival in a learner-centred context, their ability to perform in a learner-centred context – is contingent on their possession of these rules.

As discussed in Section 4.2.2, the principles of classification and framing underpin and generate the rules of recontextualization. The classificatory principles, weak (C^-) or strong (C^+), indicate how one context differs from another, thus providing a key to the distinguishing features of the context and orientating the speaker as to what is expected or legitimate in that context. In this way, the classificatory principles generate the recognition rule (Bernstein, 1990, 1996, 2000).

Operating at the level of the acquirer, the recognition rule is the means by which the acquirer is able to recognize the specificity of the context in which he or she is in.

Bernstein (1996, p. 31) argues that unless one recognizes the requirements of this rule, one will not be able to read the context and will remain silent or ask inappropriate questions. The significance of this principle to the present study is that in order for teacher educators to be able to interpret and practise learner-centred pedagogy, that is, to recontextualize learner-centred pedagogy according to the internal rules of pedagogy and the classificatory and framing values outlined in Section 4.2.1 and Section 4.2.2, they need to have assimilated this rule.

Bernstein (2000) maintains that the classificatory principle regulates recognition rules (the reading of the context), and the recognition rules refer to power relations. Strong classification (C^+) gives rise to clear contextual specialties and identities. The context is clearly spelt out, and the acquirer can thus recognize the context or read the text. Weak classification (C^-), on the other hand, gives rise to ambiguities in contextual recognition. The acquirer is given more room to infer what the context might be, instead of having it clearly spelt out to him or her. Seen in the context of Bernstein's theory of pedagogy (Section 4.2), strong classification with clearly spelt-out contexts or recognition rules generates visible pedagogies, while weak classification with contextual or recognition rule ambiguities generates invisible pedagogies.

Bernstein further argues that while the recognition rule enables the acquirer to distinguish the specificity of the context, the realization rule, on the other hand, enables the acquirer to speak the appropriate way. Realization rules determine how one puts meanings together and how one makes these meanings public, that is, how one produces the legitimate pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 1996, p. 33). Realization rules can either be passive or active (Alves & Morais, 2008, p. 5). Alves and Morais (2008) argue that passive realization rules enable one to say what a particular discourse means, while active realization rules enable one to produce a legitimate text in a given pedagogic context.

Thus the notion of the realization rule illuminates teacher educators' ability meaningfully to interpret and practise learner-centred pedagogy at both the (passive) level of being able to select meanings adequate to a learner-centred context, that is, to be able to say what it

is (Chapter Six), and at the (active) level of being able to produce a legitimate text in a given learner-centred context, that is, to be able to practise learner-centred pedagogy (Chapter Seven). In the context of this study, realization rules refer to the ability of teacher educators to communicate or practise learner-centred pedagogy in a manner that is acceptable, understandable and consistent with the internal rules and classificatory and framing values of an invisible pedagogic practice. Once again, as discussed in Section 4.2.2, where framing is strong (F^+) realization rules are explicit, thus generating a visible pedagogy. Where framing is weak (F^-), realization rules are implicit or tacit, thus generating an invisible pedagogy.

The third precondition for recontextualization, the evaluation rule, determines the standards that must be reached, and the criteria for attaining these standards, at the micro-level of pedagogic practice where the legitimate text is transmitted or taught. The evaluation rule entails actualizing the official pedagogic discourse in practice and being able to provide evidence of this.

In summary, it can be stated that in order for teacher educators to be able meaningfully to recontextualize learner-centred pedagogy, they must possess the ground rules for recontextualization. As outlined above, they are required to possess the recognition, realization and evaluative rules of recontextualization if they are to interpret and practise learner-centred pedagogy.

In the foregoing discussion, I have described the process of recontextualization in order to illuminate the process by which teacher educators make sense of learner-centred pedagogy and implement it in their classrooms. In the next section, I draw upon empirical studies by other Bernsteinian scholars who have made use of the concept of recontextualization. Not only did these studies clarify the concept of recontextualization for me, they also strengthened my usage of the concept.

The work of Wilmot (2005, 2006) is particularly instructive as it used Bernstein's concepts to investigate how and why teachers in two South African schools were able to

become meaningful recontextualizers of policy reform. Using Bernstein's concepts and rules, the study concluded that for the change advocated by policy to be achieved, teachers need to become recontextualizers of policy. This requires teachers to push the boundaries of their thinking and practice, and reconstruct their identities as professionals. They need to become voiced political agents who can re-position themselves within the structure and functioning of the national education system (Wilmot, 2006, p. 146).

Not only did the study investigate Bernstein's corpus of principles and rules in great depth, but it also offers insights into how recontextualization and the repositioning of teachers can be achieved in the context of a socially differentiated education system. It is important to note how teachers in the two South African schools were able to acquire the recognition and realization rules necessary to recontextualize policy, as opposed to simply implementing someone else's interpretation of policy. Wilmot's study is particularly instructive by virtue of its contention that in order for teachers to acquire the recognition and realization rules, a deliberate program of epistemological empowerment needs to be implemented (Wilmot, 2006, p. 407).

The study further illuminates the movement of the official pedagogic discourse from its primary context of production to its secondary context of reproduction, the processes of appropriation, de-location and re-location, the ideological contestations, the transformation that takes place and the ground rules that are prerequisites for its recontextualization. Wilmot's study enabled me to understand how and why teachers were able to become recontextualizers of policy, and this understanding helped to clarify issues pertaining to how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practise learner-centred pedagogy.

Also of significance, from an African perspective, is the study by Sikoyo (2006) that uses Bernstein's concepts to investigate teachers' interpretation and uptake of a pedagogic innovation (problem solving) prescribed by a centrally mandated curriculum in Uganda. The study examined teachers' possession of the recognition and realization rules needed to facilitate their interpretation and practice of the pedagogic innovation. The study

concluded that teachers' up-take of the innovation was regulated far more by contextual considerations and constraints within schools than by their interpretation or recontextualization of the official pedagogic discourse (Sikoyo, 2006, p. 480). The study argued that teachers may possess the necessary recognition rule to identify the specificity of a pedagogic context, its distinguishing features and its demands, and indeed, they may possess the realization rule (passive realization rule), but their ability to speak the expected legitimate text (active realization rule) may be constrained by other factors obtaining in the context of pedagogic practice.

The present study addresses questions and concerns closely related to those investigated by Sikoyo. The manner in which Sikoyo (2006) handled critical issues pertaining to how teachers recontextualized pedagogic innovation in Uganda provided significant lessons for the present study.

While several studies applying Bernstein's theories to other African countries are available (Naidoo & Harley, 2004; Parker, 2004; Parker & Deacon, 2004; Ensor, 2004b; Muller, 2006; Hoadley, 2006; Shay, 2008, Hoadley & Gamble, 2008), there are no such studies in or of Namibia. There is a gap within the Namibian knowledge base on teacher education reform. The present study seeks to help close this gap by using Bernstein's concepts to add new knowledge and ways of thinking to the Namibian knowledge base on teacher education reform.

Also worth mentioning is an initiative undertaken during the study in order to strengthen the construction of a theoretical framework using Bernstein's theories and concepts, a paper that I co-authored with my supervisor and presented at the fifth International Basil Bernstein Symposium, Cardiff School of Social Sciences, 9 July-12 July 2008 (see letter of attendance in Appendix VIII). The paper, entitled "Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse: A framework for understanding how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practise learner-centred pedagogy" (Nyambe & Wilmot, 2008), was a presentation on how I worked with Bernstein's concepts and principles as a theoretical framework for my study. My interaction with Bernsteinian researchers, some

of whom were students of Bernstein who had studied under his supervision, helped me to gain a deeper understanding of Bernsteinian concepts and how to apply them in practice. This was essential as it not only helped to strengthen the theoretical framework of the study, but also gave me confidence regarding my utilization of Bernstein.

In the foregoing discussion, I have described how other Bernsteinian scholars have applied Bernstein's theories, concepts and analytical tools in their work, and mentioned some of the insights that the application of these theories, concepts and analytical tools have contributed to my study. In the following section, I sum up my utilization of Bernstein's writings as the theoretical lens which enabled me to see how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practise learner-centred pedagogy, the official pedagogic discourse.

4.4 Synthesis of how I used the theoretical framework

The theoretical framework, drawn from Bernstein's theories of pedagogy and recontextualization, enabled me to gain a clearer view and understanding of:

- How teacher educators at the micro-level of pedagogic practice make sense of, interpret and practise learner-centred pedagogy; that is, the extent to which they possess the recognition (interpretation) and realization (practice) rules necessary to communicate a legitimate (evaluative rules) pedagogic text in their interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy, and how this interpretation and practice can be illuminated by being construed in terms of Bernstein's conceptualization of visible, invisible and mixed pedagogies.
- How existing pedagogic relations of power and control within the socially differentiated pedagogic social context of a Nation-wide curriculum development and implementation structure enabled teacher educators to gain access to recognition and realization rules that were needed for them meaningfully to interpret and practise learner-centred pedagogy; the nature of

the boundaries, if any, insulating teacher educators from other pedagogic agents in the PRF and the ORF; how this insulation or non-insulation impacted upon teacher educators' interpretation and practice of the official pedagogic discourse; whether and to what extent teacher educators were able to reduce this insulation, reconstruct their pedagogic identities and re-position themselves as curriculum designers; the tensions, struggles, transformations and ideological contestations at play in the re-positioning or border-crossing of teacher educators.

I was thus able to gain a vivid understanding of how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practise the learner-centred pedagogy underpinning the BETD.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I introduced Bernstein's conceptual language as an external language of description for an account of learner-centred pedagogy and teacher education reform in Namibia. I used this language to construct a theoretical framework for the study. Bernstein's language of description provided me with powerful concepts and analytical tools absent from the policy language contained in most of the official pedagogic texts such as *Toward education for all* (MEC, 1993).

In the next chapter, I outline the research orientation of the study as well as the manner in which Bernstein's rules and concepts were used to design a data analysis model.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the methodology employed in conducting the research. More specifically, I offer the following:

- a description of the research orientation of the study, that is, its ontological, epistemological and methodological orientations, and a justification for these;
- a description of and justification for the case study method used;
- an account of the sampling procedure followed, a description of the sample and a discussion of issues to do with accessing the research site;
- a description of the methods used for generating data, and of the data analysis model applied;
- a discussion of ethical issues as well as procedures that were followed to guarantee research quality and standards.

5.2 Research orientation for the study

A research orientation, also known as “a research paradigm” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 15) or “philosophical orientation” (Merriam, 1998, p. 3), is “a constellation of commitments, values, methods and procedures” (Popkewitz, 1984, p. 32) that inform and guide our research activities. It determines the ontological (views about what constitutes reality), epistemological (views about knowledge) and methodological (how we know the world) orientations of a study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, pp. 1-6; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 33).

In order to *understand* how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practise the learner-centred pedagogy underpinning the BETD program, I

needed to know how they “make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 1998, p. 6; Van Rensburg, 2001, p. 16). I therefore adopted an “interpretive qualitative” (Merriam, 1998, p. 5) research orientation.

The interpretive research orientation was best suited as it facilitated access to “rich, detailed information of a qualitative nature” which enabled “contextual meaning making” and allowed a closer look at a small group of individuals in their “naturalistic setting” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 39; Janse van Rensburg, 2001; p. 16). By generating “thick descriptions” the interpretive research orientation enabled me “to get inside the person and to understand from within”, “to examine situations through the eyes of participants rather than the researcher” (Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 22; see also Seidman, 1998, p. 3; Punch, 2005, and Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 270). Thus “in-depth, thick descriptions” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 270), in the form of thick narratives like those presented in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, facilitated my understanding of the way in which teacher educators created, modified and interpreted the world in which they operated, and of the reasons why they interpreted the world in this way.

Furthermore, given the ontological orientation of the study (relativist, with reality seen as socially constructed) as well as its epistemological orientation (knowledge as subjective and socially constructed), its interest in contextual meaning making and developing “an idiographic body of knowledge” rather than generalized rules (Merriam, 1998, p. 38), the case study method was chosen.

5.3 Case study method

As indicated above, the research orientation adopted by a researcher conduces to the adoption of a particular methodological orientation. My qualitative-interpretive research orientation, together with the nature of the research question that I was pursuing, indicated the use of the case study method, which seeks “greater understanding of the phenomenon” (Stake, 1995, p. 16). Punch eloquently describes the case study method as a method that aims to:

[...] understand the case in depth, and in its natural setting, recognizing its complexity and its context. It also has a holistic focus, aiming to preserve and understand the wholeness and unity of the case. Therefore, the case study is more a strategy than a method [...] we can define a case as a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context. Thus, the case may be an individual, or a role, or a small group, or an organization, or a community, or a nation. It could also be a decision, or a policy, or a process, or an incident or event of some sort [...]. (Punch, 2005, p. 144)

Through the qualitative case study method, I was able to generate “rich, vivid and thick descriptions of participants’ lived experiences, thoughts and feelings” (Cohen et al., 2000, p.182), which were necessary in order to understand teacher educators’ interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy.

Furthermore, the case study method was chosen as it enabled me to “investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003, p. 130). As Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 51-55) rightly contend, naturalistic study, or the investigation of the phenomenon within its real life context, was essential, in that it gave me the opportunity to take into account factors of complexity, mutual causality, indeterminacy and perspectival views characteristic of any social reality but not always catered for in mainstream scientific studies such as those in the quantitative paradigm. The case study method enabled me to take a particular case and come “to appreciate the uniqueness and complexity of its embeddedness and interaction within its contexts” (Stake, 1995, p. 8).

In the following sections, the case study is further delineated, giving shape to what Punch (2005, p. 145) identifies as the four main characteristics of a case study: its boundedness within a set of boundaries, its focus as a case of something, its attempts at preservation of the wholeness, unity and integrity of the case, and the multiple sources of data and data collection methods used in a typically naturalistic setting.

5.3.1 Description of the research site

There are four colleges of education in Namibia offering the Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD) program. These are Windhoek College of Education, Ongwediva College of Education, Rundu College of Education and Caprivi College of Education. Windhoek College of Education is in central Namibia while the colleges of Ongwediva, Rundu and Caprivi are located in the densely populated northern part of the country.

This study was conducted at one of the three colleges of education located in the formerly marginalized northern area of Namibia. As was the case with the other northern colleges, during the apartheid years the research site existed as a college only by name, without any physical infrastructure of its own in the form of classrooms or a campus. This was because the three northern colleges all shared buildings and facilities with local high schools.

Not only did the student teachers share the same physical facilities, such as hostels and classes, with learners from the high school to which their college was appended, but they also shared the same teachers. This was indicative of the lack of seriousness with which the colonial administration treated teacher education for the marginalized northern communities. Furthermore, as was the trend at the other northern colleges, during the apartheid era, the courses offered were the Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC) and the Lower Primary Teachers Certificate (LPTC). With the phasing out of the PTC and LPTC courses, the Education Certificate Primary (ECP) course was introduced. Later on, just after independence in 1990, with the phasing out of the ECP, the National Education Certificate (NEC) and the National Higher Education Certificate (NHEC) courses were introduced as interim courses pending finalization of a new national post-apartheid program for teacher education.

In 1993 the college that is the site of this case study attained official status as a college of education, and in the same year the first post-apartheid teacher education program for basic education, the BETD program, was implemented, with the first cohort commencing

their post-independence teacher education studies. After the completion of construction work the college moved to its new campus, which was inaugurated in 1995.

The college is organized into departments which include languages, mathematics and science, social sciences, lower primary education, education theory and practice and school based studies. Operating within the provisions of the Teachers Education Colleges Act (Namibia. Government Gazette, 2003), the research site, like all the other colleges of education in Namibia, resorts under the Directorate of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, for administrative purposes, while for issues pertaining to curriculum development, the college resorts under the National Institute for Educational Development, NIED.

5.3.2 Gaining access to the research site

In order to gain permission, acceptance and support for the study, I negotiated access to the research site with the various “gatekeepers”:

The keys to access are almost always in the hands of multiple gatekeepers, both formal and informal. In most cases, those gatekeepers, before giving assent, will want to be informed about the inquiry in ways that will permit them to assess the costs and the risks that it will pose, both for themselves and for the groups to which they control access. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 253)

The Rector of the college was identified as the gatekeeper whose official consent was critical to the success of my study. In order to obtain permission to conduct the study at the research site, I wrote an official letter on 29 March 2006 to the Rector of the College (Appendix 1). After consultation with his management team, the Rector granted permission (Appendix II). In keeping with the ethical commitments for the study, I decided to delete any information in Appendixes I and II that might reveal the name of the research site. Engagement with the research site only started after official consent had been secured.

I also thought it necessary to negotiate access with other significant gatekeepers such as the Head of the Department in which the study was to be conducted, and with the individual teacher educators who participated in the study. It was critical for me to gain the consent of these gatekeepers as the approval of access by senior members in an institution by no means guarantees that people lower down in the hierarchy “will automatically provide whatever the inquirer asks them” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 252). In order to promote goodwill and cooperation, and to ensure the success of the study, it was crucial for me to negotiate access with all significant figures. Eventually, as will be elaborated on in subsequent sections, the written consent of all the research participants was obtained before the research began.

5.3.3 Sampling procedure

In this study, numerous sites, events, people and activities could have been visited, observed and studied. However, as it was not possible for me to “study everyone everywhere doing everything” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27; Punch, 2005, p. 187), it was very important to decide on the sampling procedure. This involved “the selection of a research site, time, people and events” (Merriam, 1998, p.60), starting with the selection of the case before narrowing the focus to a given department and then the research participants – a small group of people, nested in their context and to be studied in depth (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27).

As a way of “setting the boundaries” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27) for the case, this study focused on understanding how teacher educators in the Education Theory and Practice (ETP) Department in a Namibian college of education interpret and practise the learner-centred pedagogy underpinning the Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD) program. The ETP teacher educators’ interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy constituted the focus of the case or its unit of analysis.

Purposive sampling was the procedure for further narrowing down the case. This entailed “sampling in a deliberate way, with some purpose or focus in mind” (Punch, 2005, p.

187): the purpose in this instance was to select “information rich” cases for study (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). ETP teacher educators were deemed to be information rich as compared to other teacher educators and departments at the research site. By focusing on ETP teacher educators I was able to generate significant insights pertaining to teacher educators’ interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy in the BETD program.

Further to this, the ETP subject area was targeted mainly because, as is the practice at all four colleges of education, it is through ETP that student teachers in the BETD are introduced to the theory and practice of education, including learner-centred pedagogy. Within the BETD program, ETP occupies a central position and is generally considered to be the core or backbone of the program. The ETP syllabus states:

Education Theory and Practice has a central role within the BETD program, cementing together all other elements of the curriculum and linking subject knowledge, pedagogical theory and praxis. As such, ETP teacher educators work closely with all other departments in course planning and delivery. (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 2001, p. 1)

Apart from occupying a central position as the subject area that consolidates all the elements of the BETD program, ETP aims to:

Familiarise the student with various teaching and learning principles and approaches based essentially on Social Constructivist [*sic*] theory, in order to equip him/her with knowledge and insight regarding the “how” and the “why” of teaching and learning. (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 2001, p. 1)

The relative importance of ETP within the program is further indicated by the fact that the subject area is not only allocated the largest percentage of study time in the program but also the most credit points. ETP is assigned 20% of the available study time in year one, and 27.5% in years two and three. It is allocated eight credit points in year one and eleven credit points in years two and three (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 1998, pp. 10-11). In addition, of the nine subject areas in the BETD program, ETP is one of the four key areas that are used to determine the diploma grade when graduating students at

the end of their studies. Bernstein (1971) provides a framework for understanding the relative importance of subject areas as follows:

Firstly, we can examine the relationship between contents in terms of the amount of time accorded to a given content. Immediately, we can see that more time is devoted to some contents rather than others. Secondly, some of the contents may, from the point of view of the pupils, be compulsory or optional. We can now take a very crude measure of the relative status of a content area in terms of the number of units given over to it, and whether it is compulsory or optional. This raises immediately the question of the relative status of a given content and its significance in a given educational career. (p. 48)

It is against the background outlined above that the ETP teacher educators were chosen as the sample for the study. All five teacher educators in the ETP Department at the college in question were included. Regarding their academic profiles, the three male participants had a B.Ed. (Honours) degree, while the two female participants had Masters degrees in education.

5.3.4 Data generation

Consistent with the research orientation and the research question, three methods for generating data were adopted: interviews, naturalistic non-participant observation and document analysis. These three methods served as a way of triangulating the data by providing for observation of the same phenomenon from three different angles. This enabled me to obtain a clearer picture of the phenomenon under investigation.

5.3.4.1 Interviews

In order to access teacher educators' "perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality" (Punch, 2005, p. 168) pertaining to learner-centred pedagogy, I conducted five interviews with each of the five teacher educators in the ETP Department. The interviews, each lasting ninety minutes, were conducted during site visits in March

2007, October 2007 and April 2008. The site visits in March and October were a month long, while the one in April was of three weeks' duration.

Interviews were best suited for generating data as they offer an opportunity “to enter into the other’s perspective” or “to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind, to gather their stories” (Patton, 2002, p. 341). Interviews gave me access to teacher educators’ feelings, views, intentions, expressions and thoughts about learner-centred pedagogy, and enabled me to listen to their own personal stories. Seidman (1998) characterizes storytelling in the following way:

Telling stories is essentially a meaning making process. When people tell stories, they select details of their stream of consciousness. It is this process of selecting constitutive details of experience, reflecting on them, giving them order, and thereby making sense of them that makes telling stories a meaning making process. (p. 1)

Another reason for choosing interviews were the opportunities this technique afforded for probing further and following up on individual responses, thus allowing for in-depth access to data and greater clarity (Mishler, 1986, p. 10; Fontana & Frey, 2003, p. 62). Patton (2002, p. 342) identified three basic approaches to the design of interviews, namely, the informal conversational interview which relies entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in a natural conversation; the general interview guide approach which outlines a set of issues to be explored with each participant before interviewing begins; and lastly, the standardized open interview which consists of a carefully worded and selected set of questions asked to each participant in a particular order, with limited flexibility in probing. For this study, I adopted a general interview guide approach, which is productive of semi-structured interviews. Punch (2005, p. 170) contends that, unlike tightly structured and standardized interviews with set questions and pre-determined categories for responses, semi-structured interviews allow for in-depth interviewing and data collection:

Interview questions are not pre-planned and standardized, but instead there are general questions to get the interview going and to keep it moving. Specific questions will then emerge as the interview unfolds, and the wording of those questions will depend upon the directions the interview takes. There are no pre-established categories for responding. (Punch, 2005, p. 170)

Following Punch's advice, general questions (see Appendix III) were used to get the interview going, with specific questions emerging as the interview progressed. In this way, I was able to access in-depth data pertaining to teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. Some interviews were conducted independent of lesson observation in order to gauge teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy, while others were conducted as follow-ups on observed lessons.

While taking into account the drawbacks associated with the mechanical recording of participants during an interview (Woods, 1986, p. 81; Merriam, 1998, p. 87), a tape-recording device was used, after permission was secured from each of the participants. This was done in order to ensure that everything said would be available for analysis. The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed immediately after each interview session. This was necessary not only as a way of producing a write-up of the interviews but also as a way of ensuring that the data were immediately available for analysis, and that issues for follow-up in subsequent interviews could be identified. As will be elaborated on in section 5.7, interview transcripts were made available to participants to read through, make corrections or elaborate on their responses.

In order to maximise the quality of the interview data certain standard procedures were followed, such as scheduling interviews at times that suited the research participants, communicating the likely length of the interviews, and maintaining sufficient gaps between interview sessions with a given research participant in order to allow him or her time to attend to his/her work (Seidman, 1998, p. 14). I continued conducting interviews until the data became repetitive and no new trends were emerging. This was in keeping with the criteria for exiting the research site in terms of interviews, which are "sufficiency and saturation" (Seidman, 1998, p. 48).

As described in Chapter Six, interviews provided data on teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy at the descriptive level of pedagogic practice; that is, at the level of saying what learner-centred pedagogy is and how they have experienced it.

5.3.4.2 Naturalistic, non-participant observation

In order to have a “first hand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a second hand account” (Merriam, 1998, p. 94) such as I obtained through the interviews, I adopted the naturalistic, non-participant observation method. Punch observes that:

In naturalistic observation, observers neither manipulate nor stimulate the behaviour of those whom they are observing, in contrast to some other data gathering techniques. The situation being observed is not contrived for research purposes. This is pure or direct or non-participant observation, in contrast with participant observation (Punch, 2005, p. 179)

I did not participate in the lessons that I observed. My approach was “to observe things as they happen, naturally, as undisturbed” by my presence as possible (Woods, 1996, p. 36). This naturalistic aspect, which was made possible by my long stay at the research site, helped to strengthen the quality of the observation data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

While I was able to gain access to perception-based data through interviews, the observation method enabled me to gain first-hand knowledge from fresh and original data. It enabled me to generate “live data from live situations” (Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 305), to make “naturalistic observations” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002, p. 262) in the field, to “observe behaviour as it [was] happening” in its natural setting (Merriam, 1998, p.96). Through this method, it was possible for me to gain access to the everyday classroom life of the research participants – “the ordinary, usual, typical, routine and natural environment of human existence” (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 15) – and see for myself how they practised learner-centred pedagogy

A total of fifteen double-period lessons (seventy minutes each) were observed across the year levels of the BETD program with the five teacher educators in the ETP Department. A lesson observation instrument (see Appendix IV) was designed in order to facilitate the data collection process. Two other instruments (see Appendix V and VI) were applied immediately after each lesson observation as a way of summarising the key features of the lesson and providing some preliminary reflections on the data before engaging in a more detailed and elaborate data analysis process described in section 5.4. In order to maximize the generation of data during these fifteen double periods, I adopted a semi-structured approach to observation. Punch describes this approach as follows:

In this case, the researcher does not use predetermined categories and classifications, but makes observations in a more natural open-ended way. Whatever the recording technique, the behaviour is observed as the stream of actions and events as they naturally unfold. The logic here is that categories and concepts for describing and analysing observational data will emerge later in the research, during the analysis, rather than be brought to the research, or imposed on the data, from the start. (Punch, 2005, pp. 179-180)

Through the open-ended and semi-structured observation instrument, issues were illuminated in a far less pre-determined or systematic manner than in structured observation (Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 305). The rationale for using a semi-structured observation instrument was that it allowed categories to emerge from the data and enabled me to focus not only on the larger patterns of behaviour in a holistic and macroscopic way, but also on specific issues which could be observed in some detail (Punch, 2005, p. 180).

While taking into account the fact that it may not be possible to write down everything seen and heard during an observation session, time was made available immediately after to make detailed field notes. The quality of the observation data was enhanced by my staying in the field for a lengthy period of two and half months, my taking detailed field-notes and my scheduling observations during times that best suited teacher educators and their students. As seen in Chapter Seven, the observation tool generated observation data

that illuminated how teacher educators enacted learner-centred pedagogy at the micro-level of pedagogic practice.

5.3.4.3 Document Analysis

In addition to interviews and naturalistic non-participant observation, document analysis served as a source of data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe documents as follows:

Documents are a rich source of information, contextually relevant and grounded in the contexts they represent. Their richness includes the fact that they appear in the natural language of the setting. (p. 277)

Documents were important for this study as they provided access to valuable information about the BETD program; this in turn prompted important questions that were pursued in the interviews and observation. Documents were sought in two categories: primary sources, which consisted mainly of public documents that offered first-hand descriptions of the BETD program, learner-centred pedagogy in particular; and secondary sources, which comprised documents not directly concerned with the BETD program but nevertheless offering valuable insights pertaining to the BETD and learner-centred pedagogy.

Documents used in the study included general policy documents on Namibian teacher education reform, curriculum documents, lecturers' notes, course materials used by teacher educators in their lessons, and administrative documents such as schemes of work, time-tables and tasks.

Throughout the study, I used the three methods of generating data in such a way that they informed each other and were mutually interdependent. Sometimes interviews preceded lesson observations, in which case I used the interviews to identify key issues which I would then be on the lookout for in the lesson observation. For instance, mention in an interview of active student participation and involvement in the pedagogic process, or of

weakly framed sequencing and pacing, served to signpost practices to be checked in lesson observation.

However, in other cases, interviews were conducted after a lesson observation. The interviews then afforded an opportunity to seek clarification of a given teacher educator's implementation of the pedagogy. Either way, the observation served as a tool for determining whether there was a correlation between answers given during the interviews and what was actually happening in the classrooms. Throughout the report, teacher educators' narratives are typed in *italics* as a way of distinguishing this raw data.

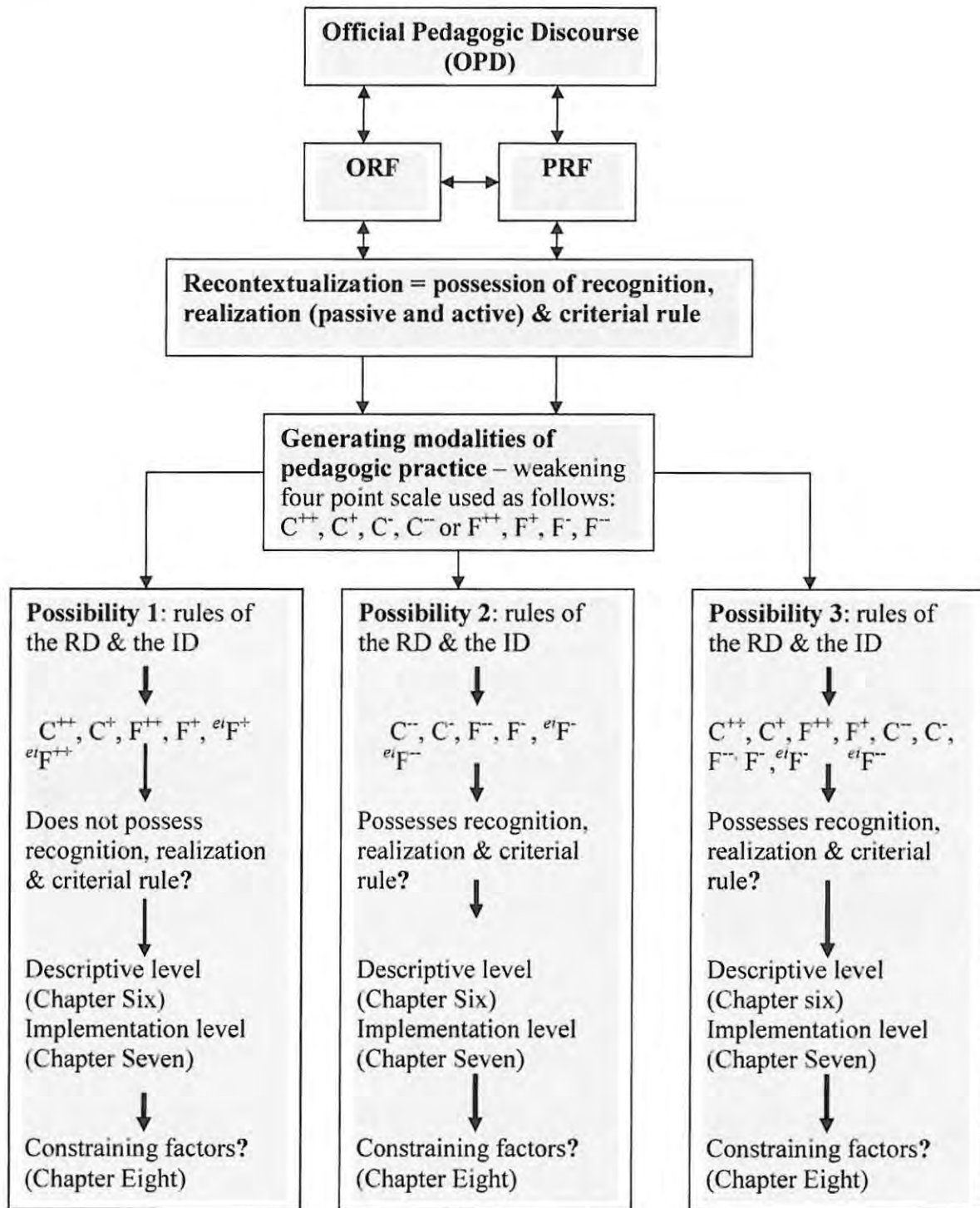
Document studies preceded both interviews and observations, and continued throughout the research period. Documents were used to identify themes or areas to focus on during interviews and lesson observation.

5.4 Data analysis

A data analysis model based on Bernstein's concepts and rules was developed for the study. This model is graphically represented in Figure 5.1. In order to address the research question and to achieve the objectives of the study, data were analysed, first, by identifying patterns and recurrences, or their absence. As Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p. 47) argue, "one should be looking for patterns, themes, and regularities, as well as contrasts, paradoxes, and irregularities": giving attention to negative exceptions as well as positive patterns is crucial. Data constituting similar patterns or recurrences were categorized and colour-coded for easy identification and retrieval (Bailey, 1978, p. 389; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 55). Themes were teased out of the patterns and recurrences. Bernstein's rules of the regulative discourse (RD) and the instructional discourse (ID), as presented in Figure 5.1, were used as frameworks for organizing the emerging themes and patterns and for presenting the data. These emerging themes and patterns are presented in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight.

Apart from analyzing data and identifying patterns, data were also interpreted. Interpreting means “attaching significance to what was found, making sense of findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meanings and otherwise imposing order on an unruly but surely patterned world” (Patton, 2002, p. 480). Following Stake (1995, p. 74), two strategies for interpreting data were used in the study, “direct interpretation of individual instances”, and “aggregation of instances until something is said about them as a class”. Significant meanings were therefore generated from individual instances as well as from recurring instances, for as Stake (1995, p. 78) allows: “sometimes we find significant meaning in a single instance, but usually important meanings will come from reappearance over and over”. The data analysis model presented in Figure 5.1 underlines this meaning making process.

Figure 5.1: Model for data analysis



As stated above, the rules of the regulative discourse (RD) and of the instructional discourse (ID) constituting the data analysis model (Figure 5.1) provided the framework within which data were organized and presented as patterns, themes or recurrences.

The model was also used to generate a weakening or decreasing four-point scale of classification, ranging from very strong to very weak power relations (C^{++} , C^+ , C^- , C^{-}), and a scale of framing, ranging from very strong to very weak control relations, (F^{++} , F^+ , F^- , F^{-}). Classification and framing values were, therefore, used to examine the nature of the power and control relations as well as the nature of the internal rules of pedagogic practice underpinning teacher educators' interpretation and implementation of learner-centred pedagogy. Specific descriptive indicators, outlining the classificatory (power) and framing (control) relations are elaborated on when analysing data under specific themes throughout the data chapters.

Following Bernstein's theory of pedagogy, the classification and framing values in the data analysis model were used to generate various modalities of pedagogic practice, and these are represented in the model as possibility 1, possibility 2 and possibility 3.

Possibility 1: pedagogic practices characterized by strong classification and framing values (C^{++} , C^+ , $^{ei}F^{++}$, $^{ei}F^+$) at both the descriptive and implementation levels, whether or not such values were indicative of teacher educators' possession of the prerequisite ground rules for the recontextualization (interpretation and practice) of learner-centred pedagogy, and regardless of whatever contextual factors were constraining this recontextualization. Possibility 1 draws upon Bernstein's notion of a visible pedagogic practice.

Possibility 2: pedagogic practices that were characterized by weak classification and weak framing values at both the descriptive and implementation levels, whether or not such values were indicative of teacher educators' possession of the prerequisite ground rules for the recontextualization of learner-centred pedagogy, and regardless of what

contextual factors were constraining this recontextualization. Possibility 2 draws upon Bernstein's notion of an invisible pedagogic practice.

Possibility 3: pedagogic practices with mixed classification and framing values at both the descriptive and implementation levels, whether or not such values were indicative of teacher educators' possession of the prerequisite ground rules for the recontextualization of learner-centred pedagogy, and regardless of what contextual factors were constraining this recontextualization. Possibility 3 draws upon the mixed pedagogy approach advocated by Bernsteinian researchers, particularly Morais and Neves (2001).

5.5 Research quality

In order to ensure research quality, various protocols for maintaining the validity and trustworthiness of the data were followed. To begin with, I had recourse to what Stake (1995, p. 112) refers to as "methodological triangulation", meaning the use of multiple data generating tools within a single study so as to enrich the data. Three methodological approaches (interviews, naturalistic non-participant observation and document studies) were employed in order to investigate the phenomenon under study from three different angles. The purpose was not in the first instance to confirm that matching data were being obtained from each source, but rather to obtain additional interpretations, more comprehension, more clarity and deeper insight (Van der Mescht, 2002, p. 48).

In addition to triangulation, quality was also ensured through a process called "member checking" (Stake, 1995, p. 115; Bassey, 1999, p. 76; Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127). Member checking entails taking raw data such as transcripts to the research participants in order for them to read through the transcribed data, comment on its accuracy and make any corrections or additions. According to Bassey (1999),

[i]t is good practice after an interview to take the report of the interview back to the interviewee to check that it is an accurate record and that the interviewee is willing for it to be used in the research. Sometimes people realize that they have not said what they meant to say and this provides an opportunity to put the record straight. (p. 76)

Member checking gave the participants the opportunity to check whether the written accounts truly represented their views or whether they wanted corrections made. Some transcripts were returned with annotations and changes, while others came back unchanged.

The quality of the research was further enhanced by making use of “critical friends” (Bassey, 1999, p. 76) and “peer-examinations” (Merriam, 1998, 204) or “peer-debriefing” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308), in terms of which professional acquaintances read through my work and gave critical comments. Two critical friends were secured, one a Namibian educator and the other a non-Namibian with an in-depth knowledge of Namibian teacher education reform. Other opportunities for peer review were also utilized through participation in the PhD weeks organized by the Rhodes University Education Department.

Furthermore, the sharing of my preliminary findings at the Fifth International Basil Bernstein Symposium in Cardiff was another opportunity for me to get critical comments on the theoretical and methodological approaches, as well as the data interpretation. For instance, the Cardiff gathering cautioned me against treating pedagogic reality as though it were something neat and unproblematic that could be tidily packaged and classified as strong framing (F⁺) or weak framing (F⁻). The critical comments from Cardiff, and my own further engagement with literature on Bernstein, brought me to the realization that Bernstein’s concepts could be used beyond the neat dichotomization of categories. This made me see aspects of pedagogic practice such as classification and framing not in terms of binary options but as points on a continuum of possibility.

Also to be mentioned was my own career progression during the course of the study. I moved from being Rector of one of the colleges of education to an elevated position at

NIED, where I assumed a 'supervisory' position over all four colleges of education in Namibia with respect to curriculum issues. From the inception of the study, I was fully aware of the negative impact my position as Rector of one of the colleges of education might have on the quality of my data. In order to mitigate the possible impact of my position, which was a position of power in relation to the research participants, and to enhance the quality of data, I decided to do the study at a college other than my own, as Seidman (1998, pp. 34-35) rightly advises. As it turned out, staff members at the research site were able to relate easily to me and did not see me as a power figure, as might have been the case had I conducted the study at my own college. The choice of an appropriate research site was, therefore, one of the steps taken to mitigate the possibly negative impact my position could have had on the quality of data collected.

The change from my former position as Rector to that of Deputy Director at NIED responsible for teacher education, which meant that I enjoyed more power over the colleges than I did initially, did not negatively affect the quality of the data as I had already established a good relationship built on trust with the participants when the change of positions took place. In this regard, I benefited from having heeded the advice in the research methodology literature that building trust with research participants is one of the ways to guard against the potentially negative impact of one's position of power (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 303; Bassey, 1999, p. 76). Strategies for building trust included demonstrating to the participants that anonymity would be guaranteed and their interests respected; that they would have opportunities to verify the data through member checking, and that there were no ulterior motives behind the study.

As advised by Bassey (1999, p. 76), Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 303) and Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 276), I undertook a "prolonged engagement with the providers of data" since trust develops gradually over time. This prolonged engagement was also a quality enhancing technique as it enabled me to immerse myself in issues pertaining to the case and to avoid misleading or distracting ideas (Bassey, 1999, p. 76).

I also endeavoured to keep a “case record” for the study in the form of folders containing the raw data and records of incidents that occurred during the study. The case record entailed keeping “a systematic record which would allow an auditor to check stage-by-stage on the research in order to certify that the conclusions are justified” (Bassey, 1999, p. 77). Therefore, the case record can be used as an audit trail in order to further enhance the integrity of the research.

5.6 Ethical considerations

In this study, I took into account ethical issues involved in qualitative studies that deal with human subjects. First and foremost, as outlined in section 5.3.2, permission to enter the research site and to proceed with the study was sought from the relevant gate-keeping authorities and individuals. A letter of request outlining the purpose of the research and what it entailed was written, and the study proceeded only when permission had been secured. This ensured that I conducted the study in an overt manner, as the reason for my presence on the research site became well known to everyone involved.

Apart from seeking permission to enter the research site for the purpose of generating data, participants’ informed consent was sought (see Appendix VII). In this regard, I ensured that participants were fully informed as to the purpose and intention of the study before asking them to decide whether or not to participate. As Cohen and Manion (1994, p. 349) contend, “the principle of informed consent arises from the subject’s right to freedom and self-determination”. Informed consent is, therefore, about individuals choosing whether or not to participate in the study after having been informed of all the facts. Ethical standards were also observed by ensuring mutual respect, confidentiality and anonymity. Seeking the participants’ informed consent was consistent with Bassey’s notions of “respect for democracy” and “respect for persons” (Bassey, 1999, p. 74). Respect for persons also entailed recognizing the research participants as the initial owners of the data. This was achieved through seeking their informed consent to use the data as well as regularly doing member-checks with them on the data transcripts.

Respect for persons was further enhanced by revealing nothing of the identities of the research participants in order to ensure that data are not attached to an individual participant in such a way that he or she could be negatively disadvantaged. Throughout the report, therefore, pseudonyms are used for the participants. This ensured recognition of the research participants as “fellow human beings who are entitled to dignity and privacy” (Bassey, 1999, p. 74).

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I outlined the research orientation of the study in terms of its ontological, epistemological and methodological leanings and assumptions. I also described the case study method, methods of data generation, data analysis, issues of access and sampling, as well as quality and ethical issues consistent with the interpretive-qualitative research orientation that I had adopted.

In the following chapters, the data are presented, interpreted and discussed.

CHAPTER SIX

TEACHER EDUCATORS' INTERPRETATION OF LEARNER-CENTRED PEDAGOGY: THE DESCRIPTIVE LEVEL

6.1 Introduction

Teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy was examined at two levels. The first was the descriptive level of pedagogic practice, and the second, the application level. While the descriptive level entails possession of the recognition rule, the application level entails possession of the realization rule (passive and active). These two levels are closely related to what Alves and Morais call the "argumentation" and the "implementation" levels in their study of curriculum and pedagogic practices in Portugal (Alves & Morais, 2008, p. 4). Alves and Morais explain as follows:

The level of argumentation refers to being able to tell what to do in the classroom, with reference to a given pedagogic characteristic, and the level of implementation refers to being able to do it. (Alves & Morais, 2008, p. 9)

In Chapter Seven I will examine how teacher educators practise learner-centred pedagogy at the application or implementation level; in the present chapter I examine how teacher educators interpret learner-centred pedagogy at the descriptive or argumentation level. Although interviews served as the main source of data at this level, data generated through document analysis were also used in order to construct a rich picture of the teacher educators' interpretation of the pedagogy. Official documents, reports from prior studies and teacher educator-generated documents were used.

In sum, this chapter seeks to illuminate:

- Teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy at the descriptive level;
- The extent to which the teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy at the descriptive level suggested possession of the recognition and realization (passive realization) rules needed for recontextualizing the official pedagogic discourse.

In order to achieve these objectives, decreasing scales of classification and framing were used, ranging from very strong to very weak power relations (C^{++} , C^+ , C^- , C^{--}), and very strong to very weak control relations (F^{++} , F^+ , F^- , F^{--}) (see the data analysis model presented in Figure 5.1). The four-point scales were used in order to provide for a spectrum or continuum of possible pedagogic practices. As seen in Figure 5.1, this continuum spanned three broad possible modalities of pedagogic practice: possibility 1 (strongly classified and strongly framed pedagogic practice), possibility 2 (weakly classified and weakly framed pedagogic practice) and possibility 3 (mixed classification and framing values). As indicated in section 5.5, possibilities 1 and 2 follow Bernstein's notion of visible and invisible pedagogy (Bernstein, 1990, p. 66; 2004, p. 201), while possibility 3 is generated by Morais and Neves's notion of a mixed pedagogy (Morais & Neves, 2001, p. 215).

In the subsequent sections, internal rules of pedagogy – that is, hierarchical rules or rules of the regulative discourse (RD), and discursive rules or rules of the instructional discourse (ID) – provide a framework around which the data are organized, presented, interpreted and discussed.

6.2 Rules of the regulative discourse

The rules of the regulative discourse define power distribution in the pedagogic relation between teacher educators and their students, and thus determine the acquisition of rules of social conduct, character and manner appropriate in a given pedagogic context

(Bernstein, 1990, p. 64; Morais, 2002, p. 560). Both classificatory and framing values can be used to determine the strength and nature of the rules of the regulative discourse in a given pedagogic context. When the rules of the regulative discourse are strong the teacher educator is clearly dominant and directs the pedagogic interaction. He or she “controls the social and moral order of the pedagogic context” (Ensor, 2004a, p. 220).

However, when the rules of the regulative discourse are weak, the authority of the teacher educator is masked and students are expected to be self-regulating (Mawoyo, 2006, p. 147). Pedagogic contexts characterized by weak rules of the regulative discourse exemplify Bernstein’s invisible pedagogies (IP), or progressive modes of education, while strong rules of the regulative discourse suggest the traditional, transmission-oriented visible pedagogies (VP) (Bernstein, 1990; 1996; Escandon, 2008, p. 104).

Data generated through interviews and documents were examined in order to understand teacher educators’ interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy in relation to the rules of the regulative discourse. Most of the participants expressed views indicating that they interpreted learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on weak rules of the regulative discourse. Weak rules of the regulative discourse were evidenced in the data by an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as:

- a repositioning of the student teacher to the centre stage of the classroom;
- a repositioning of the teacher educator to the backstage of the classroom, assuming an invisible pedagogic position;
- utilization of a variety of student-centred pedagogic approaches.

6.2.1 Learner-centred pedagogy and the positioning of the student teacher

When asked to share their understanding of learner-centred pedagogy, most of the participants expressed views evoking a pedagogic context that repositions the student teacher from the margins to the centre of the pedagogic process, to assume a more visible

and active pedagogic position than in the situation that prevailed before the teacher education reform. This is illustrated in the data as follows:

Learner-centred pedagogy is an approach that gives us the opportunity to empower our students so that they can be actively involved in classes and do things for themselves instead of getting it from the teacher educator all the time. When our students are given the opportunity to do things for themselves, I definitely think that they will be highly motivated.

(Interview: Bob, 09/03/07)

Mary described learner-centred pedagogy thus:

Learner-centred pedagogy means learner-engagement in more of critical thinking and digging deeper instead of just asking students to repeat facts, making students go into discussions, engaging in more critical thinking and exploring and becoming vocal when expressing their views and ideas. This also involves guiding them on how to go out there, finding more information by themselves so that they can internalize the information rather than just me giving it out to them every time.

(Interview: Mary, 15/03/07)

Loide interpreted learner-centred pedagogy in a similar way:

When we talk about learner-centred pedagogy, we think in terms of making students to be involved in the whole teaching and learning process. Especially during the classroom situation, we really do not want to see the students seated, listening to the teacher educator and at the same time taking notes, and sometimes they do not even understand those notes which they are busy taking. We would like to see students reacting in class. There should be some kind of movement, talking and working.

(Interview: Loide, 16/03/07)

For Peter, learner-centred pedagogy was understood to mean:

[...] there should be less of teacher talk approach. Everything should be based on sharing and then the teacher educator should rather facilitate while students take responsibility of their own learning.

(Interview: Peter, 09/03/07)

When probed to explain what his understanding of learner-centred pedagogy meant in practice, Peter responded:

In my class, I try to first and foremost give students to read the basics. For instance, if we are dealing with assessment, I would tell them to just go and read and see if they can explain what assessment is all about; why do we assess? What forms of assessment can we use? Now, if we manage to cross that line I go to the next step which is to facilitate knowledge construction, to elicit a discussion. I now design certain questions that would ask for their opinions like: What does assessment in the BETD context mean to you? What do you think assessment is all about in the Namibian context? In this way, I will make them come up with their own knowledge.

(Interview: Peter, 09/03/07)

Mary gave the following practical example to illustrate how she would apply learner-centred pedagogy in her classroom:

Like for example, I had a discussion this morning where I was asking whether students thought that the reform has changed all the thinking. Like why is it that there is now too much crime in our society? The discussion was based on the thinking that there is no wrong or correct answer, it all depends on how you argue your case. So, students went into discussions, exploring their own views and reaching new understanding. In this way, they were also actively involved and participating in class, instead of listening to me all the time.

(Interview: Mary, 15/03/07)

Loide volunteered this example of her teaching practice:

I want them to come up with own opinions rather than them repeating what I am going to give them. Normally, in the classroom situation I give individual tasks and I also give some group work, and I also give

them assignments to do. Sometimes I give them projects which they can go and do outside the College. Like for the coming holiday, I am planning to give them some activities where they can find information from the community. Then they will bring back this information to be used in our lesson discussion.

(Interview: Loide, 16/03/07)

Bob also gave a practical illustration to support his description of learner-centred pedagogy:

When I teach I want my students to be proactive in the sense that I do not want to refill them with all that I have read. But I only give them what I have read after they have had the opportunity to say whatever they wanted to say regarding what is being taught that day. There is a time that you would like to ask them to talk about the concept, to try and explain the concept and once they have attempted to explain the concept then as their teacher educator I provide them with an explanation of the concept the way I understand it. But within the activity, you need to challenge them. Before the end of the period you might ask them for two or three minutes to write some kind of reflections as to how they have understood the lesson.

(Interview: Bob, 23/10/07)

Learner-centred pedagogy was thus interpreted at the level of description as a pedagogic approach in which teacher educators are given *"the opportunity to empower [their] students so that they can be actively involved in classes"*, and in which *"students do things for themselves instead of getting everything from the teacher educator all the time"*. Furthermore, learner-centred pedagogy was described as an approach where students *"go into discussions, engaging in more critical thinking and exploring and becoming vocal when expressing their views and ideas"*.

The notion of active student involvement and participation in the pedagogic process was extended to mean *"guiding [students] on how to go out there, finding more information by themselves so that they can internalize the information"*, instead of getting it all from the teacher educator. Learner-centred pedagogy was also understood to mean a pedagogic process characterized by *"some kind of movement, talking and working"* among students,

instead of their being simply *“seated, listening to the teacher educator and at the same time taking notes”* (which they sometimes do not even understand). For some of the participants, learner-centred pedagogy meant adopting a *“less of teacher talk approach”*.

Also evident in the narratives is that “active involvement” meant student teachers coming up with their *“own opinions”*, being actively involved in *“knowledge construction”*, with the understanding that *“there is no wrong or correct answer”*, and that *“it all depends on how you argue your case”*. The interpretations dominating the interview narratives further suggested a pedagogic approach based on *“discussions”*, with students *“exploring their own views and reaching new understanding”*.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of how teacher educators interpreted learner-centred pedagogy, a data analysis instrument derived from the model in Figure 5.1 was applied. More specifically, the data analysis instrument was used to examine teacher educators’ interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy pertaining to power relations (C^{++} , C^+ , C^- , C^{--}) and the theory of instruction underpinning these relations. To this effect, a decreasing or weakening scale of classification with its descriptive indicators (table 6.1) was used as follows:

Table 6.1: A decreasing scale of classification used to examine power relations underpinning teacher educators' descriptions of learner-centred pedagogy.

Classification values	Descriptive indicators
C ⁺⁺	Very strong power relations – narratives suggest explicit and hierarchical power relations with the teacher educator dominating the pedagogic process and no intervention in the process by the student teacher. The narratives suggest a pedagogic approach more or less exclusively centred on the teacher educator.
C ⁺	Strong power relations – power relations are explicit and hierarchical, the teacher educator is still the dominant authority; however, in some instances, the pedagogic approach suggests diminished powers of the teacher educator. The narratives suggest a pedagogic approach which, although centred on the teacher educator, considers minimal intervention of the student teacher in the pedagogic process;
C ⁻	Weak power relations – narratives emphasize active student involvement and participation in the pedagogic process; the authority of the teacher educator as the dominant figure is weakened or diminished. The narratives suggest a pedagogic approach centred on the student teacher;
C ⁻	Very weak power relations – narratives emphasize a very high degree of student involvement and participation in the pedagogic process, the authority of the teacher educator is diminished and he/she is almost invisible in the pedagogic process. The narratives suggest a pedagogic approach mainly centred on the student, assigning the student a more visible pedagogic position.

Seen in the context of the data analysis instrument outlined in table 6.1, the extracts from interview narratives quoted above suggested an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic approach based on weak power relations or weak rules of the regulative discourse (C⁻, C⁻) in the pedagogic relation between teacher educators and their students. The teacher educators construed learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on active student involvement and participation in the teaching and learning process. This effectively shifts the student teacher from an almost invisible pedagogic position on the margins of the classroom (the situation under apartheid education) to a more visible pedagogic position at the centre of the classroom. This in turn indicates a decline in the teacher educator's power as the student teacher is empowered and emancipated through this repositioning (which is consistent with the principle of student-centredness that was discussed in section 2.2).

The views expressed by teacher educators were also consistent with official views of learner-centred pedagogy in texts representing the official pedagogic discourse (OPD), such as policy documents and curriculum documents. For instance, in the National Curriculum for Basic Education, it is stated that “learners learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process through a high degree of participation, contribution and production” (NIED, 2008, p. 31). Similarly, the Consultancy Report on Teacher Education Reform described learner-centred pedagogy as:

an educational paradigm that moves from a teacher-centred, authoritarian approach to a stronger focus on the role of the learner in education as a democratic venture. Education is based on the learners’ lives, their needs and interests. (Crebbin, Villet, Keyter, Engelbrecht & van der Mescht, 2008, p. *xi*)

As is the case with the narrative accounts cited above, the Consultancy Report (Crebbin, et al., 2008) defined learner-centred pedagogy in terms of a shift away from teacher-centred approaches to democratic approaches that value active student involvement and participation in the pedagogic process. In the same vein, Pomuti elucidated learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic approach based on collaboration and active student participation:

Learner-centred education is a social process and the emphasis in this process is on collaboration and the exchanging of ideas, experiences, values and attitudes. It is a negotiated process where our understanding expands through interaction and engagement with others. (Pomuti, 1999, p. 14)

Similarly, in one of the background documents that informed the designing of the BETD program, Callewaert and Kallos (1992) emphasized active student involvement and participation as follows:

The first view of learner-centred pedagogy regards the child as active and curious, striving to acquire knowledge and skills to master its surrounding world and able to do so under certain circumstances. The ensuing pedagogy is accordingly adapted to the experiences of each learner and uses these experiences and the knowledge already acquired by the learner

as a starting point for the teaching process. The necessary pedagogy is flexible and highly individualized in terms of content, methods of instruction and pacing. (p. 17)

It can thus be argued that, at the descriptive level of pedagogic practice, the teacher educators demonstrated possession of the recognition rule in their interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy. They described learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on weak rules of the regulative discourse in a manner that was consistent with official policy. While the consistency between teacher educators' interpretations and that of the policy documents might possibly be construed as the mere reproduction of official discourse, the examples the teacher educators gave of how they might implement learner-centred pedagogy in their own classrooms indicated possession of both the recognition and the passive realization rules. It can also be concluded that the power relations implicit in teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy were indicative of a pedagogic practice that exemplified possibility 2, that is, a weakly classified and weakly framed invisible pedagogic practice.

6.2.2 Learner-centred pedagogy and the positioning of the teacher educator

Apart from being described as a pedagogic approach characterized by active student involvement and participation in the teaching-learning process, learner-centred pedagogy was also represented in the interviews as an approach entailing a weakening of the teacher educator's authority through his or her relocation to the backstage of the classroom, where s/he assumed an invisible pedagogic identity as a facilitator.

Almost all the participants described learner-centred pedagogy in terms of the teacher educator's adopting the ambiguous pedagogic identity of facilitator or guide during the teaching and learning process, thereby weakening or diminishing his or her authority and power position in the teacher educator-student pedagogic relation. To quote some examples from the teacher educators' narrative accounts:

According to my new role I am a facilitator. I am supposed to plan tasks for students and various activities and then facilitate these in class. The new role calls for a lot of planning. It is very demanding when it comes to planning. One has to plan for a lot of activities in order to engage students throughout the lesson. Students are supposed to be active and participate all the time.

(Interview: Patrick, 29/10/07)

Loide's also emphasized the role of "facilitator":

Me, I am a facilitator. I am facilitating learning and at the same time I have to guide. Guide and direct the learning, even though the students are not dull or stupid they have got the information and at the same time I am also a co-learner because I have to learn from my students. That is why students should talk in class. The reason why I am asking them to talk is because I also need information from them. I also need to learn from them. I am really learning a lot from my students. Ok, here and there, I am also, as you know, a kind of, but not really a dictator or a so-called boss. There is somewhere where I can say: here you were supposed to do ABCD. Like a leader.

(Interview: Loide, 16/03/07)

Similarly, Mary defined learner-centred pedagogy in ways that suggested a pedagogic identity for the teacher educator of "learner" and "facilitator":

I sometimes become a learner by listening to their presentations and some examples that they give. I am also learning on each and everyday from what these students are giving. And sometimes they would also give me a reflection on how I have taught them. For instance, why have they not understood my lesson? So, I become just a listener.

(Interview: Mary, 15/03/07).

In a later interview, Mary elaborated thus:

The teacher educator should be able to facilitate the learning process instead of preaching throughout the lesson. So, it requires the teacher educator to prepare more than just sitting at the back of the classroom.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07).

When probed to explain what she meant by being a “facilitator”, Mary responded as follows:

For instance, if a teacher educator has prepared on a certain topic and decided to use a worksheet, that worksheet should have different aspects which the teacher educator is using to teach. This means that each question which is on the activity the teacher educator should have an input on it even when the students have discussed and have come up with ideas, the teacher educator should come in and give his or her own input or his own understanding because he or she has in-depth knowledge than the students.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

Like his fellow teacher educators, Peter defined learner-centred pedagogy in ways that evoked an image of the teacher educator as a facilitator of the pedagogic process:

I want to see myself as one who facilitates learning. I want to facilitate and motivate students to make them see why it is important to learn instead of just completing the course. I want to move them to a point where they will say Okay I have learnt this and I have managed through my own involvement to come up with this. I want to facilitate and motivate students to learn.

(Interview: Peter, 09/03/07)

Therefore, for Peter being “a facilitator” meant “motivating students in order to make them see why it is important to learn instead of just completing the course”. Similarly, Bob interpreted learner-centred pedagogy to mean:

Students will look at us and see how we teach. We become their role models. The way we do our presentations and also the manner in which we would present the material that we are using in the lessons, how effectively they are utilized; all that will show or will give a green light to our students on how to become good teachers. As a teacher educator, you must help them [student teachers], and not to create knowledge for them but to help them on how to construct knowledge for themselves. So, what I am trying to say is that the teacher educator has got a role in helping the

student teachers by empowering them with ways and means on how to construct new knowledge.

(Interview: Bob, 09/03/07).

Bob explained his understanding of the teacher educator's role as a facilitator:

As a teacher educator, I facilitate and guide the lessons. Facilitating and guiding come in the sense that when students are given an activity which appears to be challenging enough, the teacher educator should be there to assist each and everyone of the students. Of course they might have some ideas but they will have a lot of question where they will need assistance on how to put together those ideas. As a facilitator, you need to clarify those questions so that students can see their way forward. Facilitating and guiding are therefore more essential. At the same time, one needs to avoid spoon feeding. Spoon feeding will not help them. What will help them are leading questions. Questions that will help them reach the point where you expect them to be.

(Interview: Bob, 23/10/07)

In the interviews, then, the teacher educators described learner-centred pedagogy as an approach that entailed for the educator “*a new role as a facilitator*” who is “*supposed to plan tasks for students and various activities and then facilitate these in class*”. The new pedagogic practice was further perceived as one in which the pedagogic identity of the teacher educator is that of “*a guide*”, someone who “*guides and directs learning*”, “*a co-learner who learns from his students*” – quite the opposite of “*a dictator or a so-called boss*”.

The teacher educator was not only “*a leader*” in this role, but also someone who “*becomes a learner by listening to their [students'] presentations and some examples that they give*”, a “*listener*” rather than “*a preacher*”. The teacher educator was supposed to be “*a role model*”, someone who “*helps students on how to construct knowledge for themselves*” or “*[empowers] students with the ways and means on how to construct new knowledge*”.

The data analysis model in Figure 5.1 was applied using a weakening four-point scale of classification, as outlined in table 6.2, below.

Table 6.2: A weakening four point scale of classification in relation to the teacher educator's self-image

Classification values	Descriptive indicators
C ⁺⁺	Very strong power relations – with the teacher educator being clearly visible as a dominant authority figure allowing no interventions by the student teacher in the pedagogic process. Narratives value a pedagogic approach more or less centred on the teacher educator;
C ⁺	Strong power relations – the teacher educator is still clearly visible as an authority figure, however, he or she occasionally allows student intervention in the pedagogic process;
C ⁻	Weak power relations with diminished authority and powers of the teacher educator. The student teacher occupies more space in the pedagogic process than the teacher educator;
C ⁻⁻	Very weak power relations – diminished power and authority of the teacher educator. The student teacher occupies centre stage in the pedagogic process while the teacher educator is almost invisible.

Seen in the context of table 6.2, the findings revealed an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as based on weak power relations or weak rules of the regulative discourse (C⁻, C⁻⁻) in the pedagogic relationship between teacher educators and their students. Weak rules of the regulative discourse were suggested in the data by teacher educators' choice of various "communicative devices" that "masked" or "blurred" (Bernstein, 2004, p. 199) the unequal relations of power in the pedagogic process. These communicative devices included seeing oneself as "*a facilitator*", "*a guide*", "*a co-learner*", "*someone that learns from his students*" or "*a listener*".

Far from locating themselves in a position marked by an explicit and visible pedagogic identity, with clear authority and powers as transmitters of the pedagogic discourse, teacher educators placed themselves in a somewhat invisible and ambiguous pedagogic position camouflaged by the terminology of "*facilitator*", "*co-learner*" and "*listener*". The self-image of the teacher educator as a "*facilitator*", "*co-learner*" or "*guide*" suggests a perceived softening or weakening of what was formerly a position of power and authority within the classroom that evoked fear, respect and obedience among student teachers.

The pedagogic identities prevalent in the interview narratives need to be located within the Bernsteinian conceptualization of pedagogic identity as “a specialized form of consciousness” constructed in any curriculum reform (Bernstein, 2000, p. 66). According to Bernstein (1997, p. 165), curriculum reform is not only a struggle between groups in society “to make their bias and focus state policy”; it is also expected “to construct in teachers and students a particular moral disposition, motivation and aspiration, embedded in particular performances and practices”. Thus Namibian teacher education reform appears to have been successful in instilling in teacher educators a socio-affective disposition favourable to the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy – the “specialized form of consciousness” informing the self-image of facilitator, guide or co-learner.

Further examination of the data revealed that teacher educators’ interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy were consistent with pedagogic images advocated in official texts. For instance, not only is the new pedagogic identity emphasized in one of the background documents that were fundamental in the design of the BETD, but weak rules of the regulative discourse are implied:

The teacher-learner relationship in the old pedagogy that is criticized could be characterized as a subject-object relation. The main issue at stake is to change this relation into a subject-subject relationship, i.e. changes in both teacher work and learner-activities [...] If this view of learner-centred pedagogy is applied the concept of democratic pedagogy implies a break with an authoritarian pedagogy where the teacher dominates both the teaching process and the pedagogical discourse. (Callewaert & Kallos, 1992, pp. 17-18)

Thus “subject-subject relations” as opposed to “subject-object relations” (Callewaert & Kallos, 1992; Dahlström, 1999, p. 51) between the teacher educator and the student teacher characterize the weak rules of the regulative discourse in learner-centred pedagogy. The pedagogic image of the teacher educator as “facilitator” with less power than in the past was also evident in the BETD course material:

In learner-centred pedagogy, the teacher is seen as facilitator and guide, motivating students to learn, and creating a conducive learning environment. He/she assists students on how to find information [...]. (NIED, 1998b, p. 23)

Policy documents such as the Broad Curriculum for the BETD also define learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic approach in which “the teacher educator has a flexible role as instructor, tutor, counsellor, enabler and mentor” (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 1998, p. 15). The National Curriculum for Basic Education makes use of similar terminology:

[Learner-centred pedagogy] means that the teacher has to take on a wider repertoire of classroom roles. *These include being a manager and organizer of learning, a counsellor, and a coach, as well as being an instructor.* Consequently, a variety of techniques will be used, such as direct questioning, eliciting, explaining, demonstrating, challenging the learners’ ideas, checking for understanding, helping and supporting, providing for active practice, and problem solving. (NIED, 2008, p. 31, my emphasis)

According to the official pedagogic texts, then, the new image of the teacher educator includes the personae of manager, organizer of learning, counsellor, coach and instructor. Within the general literature on teacher education, the diminished hierarchy in the pedagogic relation between teacher educators and their students is captured as follows:

Relationship between learners and teachers is likely to show diminished hierarchy where educators are regarded as partners and facilitators of learning and students have more control over what and how learning is to take place [...]. (Thomas, 2004, unpagged)

Thus images of partners or facilitators of learning suggest not only a diminished hierarchy but also that students will assume more control over the what and the how of learning. Jansen (2001) comments on how this development will serve to render the teacher “invisible”:

Teachers would, in this new image, slowly but deliberately move back from centre stage into an invisible position on the margins of the classroom: facilitating a learning process in which young minds took charge of their own learning, designing their own materials, inventing their own learning opportunities, and occupied the centre of what was to become “a learner-centred classroom”. (Jansen, 2001, p. 243)

However, the pedagogic identity of the teacher educator as a facilitator should be seen within the context of the general critique of learner-centred pedagogy, particularly its progressive education underpinnings, as discussed in section 2.7. More specifically, attention should be paid to the criticism that through its embrace of pedagogic identities such as that of the facilitator the progressive education model has de-emphasized the role of the teacher educator as an important resource in the teaching and learning process. In the same vein, by advocating pedagogic practices based on weak power relations, the progressive education model is seen as having robbed the teacher educator of the pedagogic authority needed to achieve important educational goals (Gultig, 1999, p. 56).

In sum, it can be concluded that teacher educators’ interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic approach based on weak rules of the regulative discourse was deeply rooted within the essential rules of an invisible pedagogic practice. It can further be concluded that teacher educators were able to describe learner-centred pedagogy in ways that were consistent with descriptions in official pedagogic texts. As was the case in section 6.2.1, it can be argued that teacher educators’ interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on weak rules of the regulative discourse suggested a pedagogic approach consistent with possibility 2, that is a weakly classified and weakly framed pedagogic practice (see Figure 5.1).

6.2.3 Learner-centred pedagogy and approaches to teaching and learning

The interview data revealed an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice that valued the utilization of a variety of pedagogic approaches. For instance:

I don't have a single teaching approach. From time to time I use several kinds of approaches. For instance, I may use individual activity, a discussion, or I may consider an activity that can be done in pairs. In the following lesson I may still consider group-work. I may consider pair-work or I may consider a discussion that is based among the student teachers themselves. I use these interchangeably in the sense that it will always arouse the interests of my students so that I can keep them within the classroom situation. These are not the only approaches. I use also, for instance, demonstrations. I use instances where students are asked to go out and find out things for themselves. I use all approaches interchangeably when I do my teaching.

(Interview: Bob, 09/03/07)

For Loide, learner-centred pedagogy also meant using a variety of teaching methods:

I use the telling method or lecturing. I also use the problem solving method where I pose a problem to students and ask them to solve the problem by following the steps that I discussed or will discuss with them. Another method that I use is the group-work approach. Sometimes I also refer to hand-outs, like when I plan a cooperative learning exercise where I give them some text to read with questions and after reading they give answers. Sometimes I use hand-outs to give them information. In addition, I also give them role-plays. Sometimes I ask them to present. Say, I give them a task where they have to work in groups and the next time they have to come and give a presentation.

(Interview: Loide, 16/03/07)

Mary saw learner-centred pedagogy as a practice that entailed using several pedagogic approaches that empowered students:

Mostly, I try to give students an overview of the topic that I am about to teach. Then after that I will organize some break-ups into groups and assign them some material to go and read and then come back, give group feedback and have a discussion based on that. Another approach is designing a schedule like scaffolding on a certain material that I have given to help them read through the whole paper so that they can have a bit of understanding of what they are trying to read. Sometimes I also use some grouping strategies. As I found out that some students are more vocal, I would mix up such students with those who are always quite. Like in most cases, we have problems with female students who do not like to talk in class, so you will find that male students are still the ones talking.

(Interview: Mary, 15/03/07).

Like his colleagues, Peter described learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice that entailed utilization of a variety of pedagogic strategies. He emphasized that this enhanced the meaningfulness of the learning process for the student teacher:

The underlying principle of learner-centred pedagogy should be meaningfulness or relevance to the everyday lives of the students. Whatever you teach, the methods that you use, should be meaningful to the context of the learners. We should start by looking at what is meaningful in the teaching.

(Interview: Peter, 31/10/07)

When asked to explain what he meant by meaningfulness, Peter responded:

Students should feel that the lesson has more to do with their lives. Be it Mathematics, Social Sciences or whatever, but if the lesson has very little to do with their lives there is no meaningful learning taking place.

(Interview: Peter, 31/10/07)

Thus teacher educators understood learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice utilizing a variety of pedagogic approaches that included “*simple lecture*”, “*individual activity*”, “*group-work*”, “*pair-work*”, “*demonstrations*”, “*investigative and discovery*” methods, “*problem solving*” methods, “*hand-outs*”, “*cooperative learning*”, “*role plays*” and “*presentations*”.

Teacher educators’ views were examined using a decreasing scale of classification generated from the data analysis model as follows:

Table 6.3: Decreasing classification values in relation to pedagogic approaches

Classification Values	Descriptive indicators
C ⁺⁺	Very strong power relations – pedagogic approaches suggest explicit and clear power relations, the pedagogic process is transmission-acquisition oriented;
C ⁺	Strong power relations – pedagogic approaches suggest explicit power relations with the teacher educator as the dominant authority, however, minimal student intervention in the pedagogic process is also suggested;
C ⁻	Weak power relations- pedagogic approaches imply weak power relations evoking a pedagogic process centred on the student;
C ⁻⁻	Very weak power relations – pedagogic approaches suggest very weak power relations. The teacher educator is almost invisible with the pedagogic process centred on the student teacher.

When examined in the context of the decreasing or weakening scale of classification outlined in table 6.3, pedagogic approaches evident in teacher educators’ narrative accounts once again indicated an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic approach characterized by weakened or diminished power relations (C⁻). The narratives evoked a pedagogic context characterized by the utilization of a variety of pedagogic approaches underpinned by weak power relations, fostering not only the teacher educator’s facilitative role but also the student teacher’s new identity as an active participant in the pedagogic process.

Furthermore, a comparison of interview data with data generated through document studies suggested consistency between teacher educators’ views and those contained in official policy texts. For instance, the BETD Broad curriculum emphasizes the use of a variety of pedagogic approaches in learner-centred pedagogy:

Teaching is practically oriented, including participatory methods and observation. A wide variety of methods are used, including class visits, demonstration teaching, micro-teaching, team teaching, group-work, individual study and tasks, seminars, tutorials and lectures. This will be reflected in the teacher educators’ utilization of time, which will include whole class teaching, time spent between groups at work, small tutorial groups, individual guidance, and general supervision of tasks and assignments. (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 1998, p. 15)

The National Curriculum for Basic Education echoes this advocacy of variation in pedagogic strategies:

The teacher's roles are complemented by the way work is organized in the classroom. Work in groups, in pairs, individually or as a whole class must be organised as appropriate to the task in hand and the needs of the learners. Wherever possible, co-operative and collaborative learning should be encouraged in such cases, tasks must be designed so that pair or group learning should be encouraged and in such cases, tasks must be designed so that pair or group work is needed to complete it. (Namibia. MoE, 2008, p. 31)

Once again, the consonance between teacher educators' interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy and those advanced in official policy texts indicates that teacher educators possessed the recognition and passive realization rules that they needed to become meaningful recontextualizers. Not only were teacher educators able to recognize a learner-centred context as one demanding the use of a variety of pedagogic approaches, but they were also able to tell (passive realization) how they would use, or how they had been using, this diversity of approaches in the classroom. It therefore seems possible that, having demonstrated their possession of passive realization rules, teacher educators would be able meaningfully to implement (active realization) learner-centred pedagogy in their own classrooms using a variety of pedagogic strategies. Issues pertaining to practice are discussed in the next chapter.

As was the case in sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2, teacher educators interpreted learner-centred pedagogy as a practice based on pedagogic approaches that foster weak rules of the regulative discourse, and generate a weakly classified and weakly framed pedagogic practice (possibility 2 of the data analysis model in Figure 5.1).

6.3 Rules of the instructional discourse

The teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy was also examined in relation to rules of the instructional discourse. Rules of the instructional discourse define the control relation between teacher educators and their students over the selection,

sequencing, pacing and evaluation aspects of the instructional discourse (Morais, 2002, p. 560; Ensor, 2004a, p. 220). Instructional discourse refers to the content, skills and competencies to be acquired in a pedagogic relation.

Regarding the framing of instructional aspects, a distinction can be made between the internal (ⁱF) and external framing (^eF) of selection, sequencing and pacing. Ensor (2004a, p. 220) argued that internal framing refers to “control relations within a particular lesson” whereas external framing refers to “control of a lesson from external sources, such as that exerted by curriculum policy or scheme of work upon selection, sequencing and pacing on a program of study”.

6.3.1 Framing of the selection of instructional discourses

In order to understand how teacher educators interpret learner-centred pedagogy in relation to the framing of the selection of instructional discourses, data were examined in two ways. In the first place, data were examined in order to understand how teacher educators interpret learner-centred pedagogy in relation to control over the selection of instructional discourses. Secondly, data were examined in order to understand how teacher educators interpreted learner-centred pedagogy in terms of the degree of explicitness (degree of detail) or implicitness of the discourses they were offering to their students. In this particular instance, the study drew upon insights from Neves and Morais (2001), who used the degree of content explicitness and detail as indicators for determining the framing relations in their study of science texts in the context of Portuguese educational reform.

The data revealed an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on strong macro-level framing or strong external framing (^eF⁺) of the selection of discourses for inclusion in the syllabi and transmission to students. Participants in the study described the discourse selection process as externally controlled and facilitated by NIED at the macro-level. This is illustrated in the data as follows:

When it comes to selecting topics for the syllabus, NIED normally invites members of each subject panel. In our case, members of the ETP panel go for a couple of days to work at NIED, identify and discuss the topics and make some suggestions and agree on the topics to be included in the syllabus. But that is not the final because college representatives should again come back and share the topics with fellow ETP teacher educators at colleges who are not members of the national panels. Topics that have received most support or agreed upon among colleges end up being included in the ETP syllabus.

(Interview: Bob, 23/10/07)

When asked whether student teachers were involved in this discourse selection process, Bob replied:

No, students are not involved in selecting the topics. Teacher educators are the ones serving on the panels. They go to NIED to work with NIED staff to identify and discuss topics for the syllabus. Back at the college we arrange the topics in a scheme of work and share the scheme of work with the students when they report for the new academic year in February.

(Interview: Bob, 23/10/07)

Bob further emphasized the external control exercised by NIED in this regard:

In fact NIED is the leading institution. They are the people upfront because they direct everything. They arrange time for meetings and so on. So, even if people are being invited, it is the NIED people who are in the final position to take decisions on whether or not our contributions to syllabus development are acceptable. NIED is taking the lead.

(Interview: Bob, 23/10/07)

When the teacher educators were asked why they felt student teachers should not be involved in the process of discourse selection, they mentioned the low academic levels of students:

I like the idea of students taking responsibility of their own learning. I like that notion. One thing I am not sure about is the standard of our students in the BETD. In as much as you would have loved to involve them in syllabus development or selection of content areas, and take charge of their own learning, they can't. They are unable to do so. You will just end up spoon feeding them.

(Interview Peter, 09/03/07)

Bob harboured similar reservations regarding student involvement in the selection of discourses:

My personal concern here is that perhaps the person who came up with the notion of letting students decide on what to learn was so excited that he did not look at the other side of the coin. Yet these students who are joining the BETD have not gone far academically. They don't have much knowledge and experience to decide on what they should be taught. They are coming here to learn.

(Interview: Bob, 09/03/07)

The interviews revealed that the selection of discourses for inclusion in the ETP syllabus and final transmission to student teachers was externally controlled in the ORF, with members of each curriculum panel invited to go “*for a couple of days to NIED, identify and discuss the topics and make some suggestions and agree on which topics to include in the syllabus*”. While topics were further discussed by teacher educators at college level, NIED remained the “*leading institution, finally deciding which topics end up in the syllabus*”.

Regarding involvement in the selection process, students were “*unable to do so*”, “*they have not gone far academically*”, they “*don't have much knowledge and experience to decide on what they should be taught*”. The general feeling was that “*they are coming here to learn*”. The framing (control) relations underpinning teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy in this case were examined using a decreasing scale of framing with the following descriptors:

Table 6.4: Framing of the selection of discourses

Framing values	Descriptive indicators
${}^eF^{++}$	Very strong framing relations – control over the selection of discourses rests with external control factors;
${}^eF^+$	Strong framing – locus of control lies with external control factors, a collaborative process is adopted that involves teacher educators and student teachers in the selection process;
F^-	Weak framing – selection of discourses is a collaborative process that involves teacher educator and student participation;
F^{--}	Very weak framing – selection process is a highly collaborative process that involves various stakeholders such as teacher educators, student teachers and community members.

When examined in the context of the data analysis instrument (table 6.4), the data revealed an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a practice based on strong external control (${}^eF^+$, ${}^eF^{++}$) over the selection of discourses for inclusion in the syllabus and transmission to students. The discourse selection process was described as externally controlled and facilitated by NIED, with some of the teacher educators participating as curriculum panel members and working alongside NIED in the official recontextualizing field (ORF). The discourse selection exercise excluded student teachers. There is no evidence in the narratives to suggest a collaborative approach to curriculum development or syllabus development that would involve student or community organizations.

Thus, despite interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy in the preceding sections as a pedagogic practice based on student empowerment, active participation and involvement in the pedagogic process, it is interesting to note, in this regard, that teacher educators were hesitant to involve students in the selection of the *what* of the pedagogic process due to their allegedly low levels of academic ability. It can therefore be argued that while, as was seen in sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2 and 6.2.3, teacher educators orientated themselves towards weakly classified and weakly framed pedagogic practices, in this instance they aligned themselves with pedagogic practices that were strongly framed externally. In a study that focused on stake-holders' (teachers, advisory teachers and principals) perception of learner-centred education in Namibia, Kristensen (1999) also noted this exclusion of learners from decision making in the education process:

Learners have no role to play in the process, implying that learners are receivers of education not active partners in developing education. As with the teachers no mention is made of student organizations, teacher organisations or representatives from business or church organisations as partners in curriculum development. This must indicate a view that curriculum development and implementation is something which should only be undertaken by professional educationists. (p. 126)

Thus, whereas teacher educators maintained that learner-centred pedagogy is an emancipatory pedagogic practice based on active student involvement and participation in the pedagogic process, they did not in fact support collaborative approaches that involved students in discourse selection. This stance could be interpreted as a reflection of the preferred approach within the Namibian official policy documents. For instance, while official pedagogic texts advocate active student involvement in decisions pertaining to what to learn, procedural rules and guidelines for curriculum panels make no provision for student membership. The issue of students actively participating in decision making is expressed as follows in official pedagogic texts:

Much more than has been our experience previously, learners will be involved in setting objectives and organizing their work. [...] learners and teachers will share responsibility for the learning process [...] (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 11)

...

A democratic education system is organized around broad participation in decision making and the clear accountability of those who are our leaders [...] *adult learners are expert consultants on curriculum content, scope, and orientation.* (Namibia. MEC, 1993:42, my emphasis)

Similarly, in its statement of the program aims and objectives, the BETD Broad Curriculum seeks to develop in the student teachers “the ability to actively participate in collaborative decision making” and to “enable students to take responsibility for their own learning” (Namibia. Ministry of Education [MoE], 2007, p. 5). However, as stated above, while the BETD Broad Curriculum and other official pedagogic texts suggest student involvement in all aspects of the teaching and learning process, including discourse selection, on the contrary, the *Procedural Rules and Functions for Curriculum*

Panels/Committees (Namibia. MoE, 2007), make no mention of student membership on the panels responsible for the selection of discourses to be covered in the BETD syllabuses. Thus, despite statements of student involvement in discourse selection made at the macro-level level of policy, interpretations of policy evince an understanding of learner-centred pedagogy as a practice involving strong external framing over the selection of discourses. This situation is in fact consistent with Morais's (2002) finding:

Our studies have shown that while weak classifications and framings are an essential condition for learning at the level of pacing, for hierarchical rules, for knowledge relations (interdisciplinary, intradisciplinary, academic, non-academic), and for relations between space, *they are less so at the level of selection (at least at the macro level)* and certainly at the level of evaluation criteria. (p. 560, my emphasis)

The teacher educators' views on not involving students in discourse selection may proceed from their experience of interacting with students in real life pedagogic contexts, where students may have not have seemed capable of meeting such an expectation. Their views could equally stem from traditional pedagogic practices where student teachers were seen as passive recipients of knowledge selected for them by the system. Or the views might simply be the product of inconsistencies in the teacher educators' self-image and perception of the students.

In addition to determining teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy in relation to *how* or *who* selects pedagogic discourses, that is, the locus of control over the selection aspects, I examined teacher educators' interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy in terms of the degree of explicitness or implicitness with which discourses were being offered to students.

As alluded to in the preceding sections, the views expressed by teacher educators implied a pedagogic practice in which discourses were offered in an implicit and lightly signposted way, giving student teachers the opportunity to investigate, explore and make their own meanings. These views are congruent with official policy documents. For instance, the BETD Broad Curriculum suggests a 'less explicit' discursive approach:

Basic education in Namibia, and therefore, teacher education for Basic Education, is based on learner-centred principles. Central to these is the view that knowledge is not a static amount of content, but is what the learner actively constructs and creates from experience and interaction within the socio-cultural context. Teaching and learning in Basic Education continually builds on the child's experience and active participation, aiming to make learning relevant and meaningful to the child. (Namibia. MoE, 2007, p. 20)

Notions of knowledge as “not a static amount of content” but something that “learners actively construct and create from experiences and interaction within the socio-cultural context” suggest the provision of discourses in a rather blurred and fuzzy manner, allowing student teachers opportunities to offer their own texts based on their own exploration and investigation of the discourse. As previously mentioned, this attitude towards knowledge has been criticised for being anti-intellectual and down-playing serious academic learning (see the critique of the constructivist and progressivist underpinnings of learner-centred pedagogy in Section 2.7). It seems that at some level the teacher educators shared this negative perception, because – as we shall see in the next chapter – learner-centred pedagogy was in fact being interpreted as a pedagogic practice based on the delivery of explicit and detailed discourses, conveyed to student teachers not only through the prescribed textbook but also through teacher educators' elaborate and detailed verbal presentations and chalkboard notes.

To sum up: at the descriptive level of interpretation, teacher educators understood learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on strong macro-level framing or strong external framing (${}^eF^{++}$, ${}^eF^+$) over the selection of pedagogic discourses, with some teacher educators participating as curriculum panel members alongside NIED officials in the ORF. There was no collaborative process that accommodated student participation in this regard. The strong external macro-level framing of the selection of discourses and the explicitness of discourses were consistent with findings from empirical studies such as that of Morais (2002) on mixed pedagogies.

The disjunction between teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy (strong macro-level framing over selection of discourses) and original official policy on student involvement in deciding what to learn does not detract from their possession of recognition rules. They were able to recognize learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on weak rules of the regulative discourse, and they were equally able to recognize it as a pedagogic practice based on strong framing of the selection of discourses. The views held by the teacher educators therefore in this instance generated a possibility 3 pedagogic practice, that is, a mixed pedagogy in terms of the data analysis model in Figure 5.1.

6.3.2 Framing of the sequencing of instructional discourses

The data were further analyzed in terms of the framing of the organization or sequencing of discourses. Bernstein (1990) defined sequencing as follows:

[...] if there is a transmission it cannot always happen at once. Something must come before and something must come after. If something comes before and after, there is progression. If there is progression, there must be sequencing rules. (p. 66)

With regard to the sequencing of discourses, the data suggested an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice informed by strong framing relations in the pedagogic relationship between teacher educators and their students. The sequencing aspects were underpinned by strong external framing (${}^eF^+$, ${}^eF^{++}$) arising from curriculum requirements, that is, what was regarded as the logical order in which the curriculum content should be presented. This particular finding is illustrated as follows in the narrative accounts:

Teacher educators normally look at which topics come when, but also taking into account the precedence or order of topics because there are some topics that should be covered before students can go for School Based Studies, for instance. We want them to go for School Based Studies with relevant knowledge that they can use when they are teaching during practice teaching.

(Interview: Loide, 08/04/08)

When asked to elaborate on what she meant by the ordering of topics, Loide said:

Say, for example, Year 3 would need to cover research practice before going out for School Based Studies. In Year 2 there is also research practice where they do Critical Inquiry. We also have topics like teaching and learning theories. They need to do these before going out for School Based Studies. They also need to know the levels of planning and the theories that they need to follow in teaching. We have a topic, for instance, that talks about the school as an organization so that they can know about school management and other related aspects before going out on School Based Studies.

(Interview: Loide, 08/04/08)

For Bob, learner-centred pedagogy was interpreted as follows in relation to sequencing aspects:

Actually, what we normally do before students report in the new academic year is that we meet as teacher educators and look into what we are going to offer that academic year. And when we have agreed on all the areas, and have arranged these areas chronologically according to how we want to present them to students, and then we task one of us to prepare the document, write it up and circulate it among us. So, each and every one of us is having that copy.

(Interview: Bob, 23/10/07)

When asked where teacher educators got these topics from, Bob responded:

The topics come from the syllabus, even though this year there is a bit of a problem especially with the second years. The syllabus for this year required them not to focus on the theory. But seeing that last year they didn't do theory, we integrated both theory and practice for them.

(Interview: Bob, 23/10/07).

In this sequencing exercise, student teachers were perceived as recipients rather than participants:

When the students report in February, the scheme of work will already be in place, indicating the assignments and due dates on which the topics are to be covered, even though to some extent there are always some difficulties in meeting those deadlines.

(Interview: Bob, 23/10/07)

Loide concurred with Bob:

We are supposed to give this [scheme of work] to student teachers right from the beginning of the year so that everybody has a copy, the lecturers as well as the students.

(Interview: Loide, 08/04/08)

The narrative accounts were analyzed using a weakening scale of framing as follows:

Table 6.5: Framing of the sequencing of discourses

Framing values	Descriptive indicators
${}^eF^{++}$	Very strong external framing – sequencing of discourses is controlled by external control factors, for instance, curriculum factors or the logical order in which discourses should be presented;
${}^eF^+$	Strong external framing – sequencing of discourses is controlled by external curriculum demands, however, some minimum degree of flexibility is allowed to accommodate student interests;
F^-	Weak framing – sequencing of discourses is based on student interests regarding when to learn which topic areas;
F^{--}	Very weak framing – sequencing of discourses is entirely based on student interest. Student interest and not external demands form the basis for deciding which topics are taught when.

Measured against the four-point scale of framing outlined in table 6.5 above, the data revealed an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on strong external framing (${}^eF^+$, ${}^eF^{++}$) over the sequencing of discourses. In the narrative accounts, curriculum requirements rather than student learning interests emerged unequivocally as the basis for sequencing or ordering the transmission of discourses, e.g.:

“teacher educators normally look at which topics come when” and “take into account the precedence or order of topics because there are some topics that should be covered before students go on School Based Studies”; *“Year 3 [students] need to do research practice as well as teaching and learning theories before going on School Based Studies”*. It was further revealed that *“what we normally do before students report in the new academic year, teacher educators look into what is going to be offered and plan accordingly, and that “when students report in February, they are handed” the already-prepared scheme of work.*

As the scheme of work represented both the teacher educators’ interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy, I collected and examined copies of schemes of work so as to gain further insight into how they interpreted learner-centred pedagogy in relation to sequencing or ordering of discourses. The findings revealed that the 2008 Scheme of Work for Year 3 was designed in such a way that it outlined the content areas to be covered, when they would be covered (i.e. the college term and the weeks), assignments and their due dates, as well as the resources that would be used in teaching some of the topics.

The scheme of work also confirmed what the teacher educators described in terms of scheduling certain topics before activities such as School Based Studies took place. For instance, in the weeks towards the end of Term 2, topics such as action research, action research cycle, data gathering and data analysis, and micro-teaching sessions were scheduled in the scheme of work, probably as a way of preparing students for the School Based Studies module scheduled to begin in Term 3.

The 2008 Year 1 Scheme of Work was similar in structure to that of Year 3. While the Scheme of Work for Year 1 did not indicate the specific weeks of the term when given topics would be covered, it did indicate the terms when specific topics would be covered, and included assignment tasks with due dates and assessment criteria.

It is therefore evident that sequencing was being determined without consulting the interests of the students. This is contrary to the progressivist underpinnings of learner-centred pedagogy, in terms of which students should be allowed to progress at their own pace, according to their own learning needs and interests (Van Aswegen & Dreyer, 2004, p. 297; Meier, 2005, p. 79). It is clear from the narratives that this consideration was being ignored, and that the sequencing approach was determined by external control factors. These factors – essentially, the requirements of the curriculum – apparently comprised some form of prescription within which teacher educators felt they had to (or were perfectly willing to) operate.

The sequencing approach evident in the narratives located the student teacher in the subservient position of being a mere recipient of sequencing schemes drawn up for him or her by the teacher educators following the external dictates of the curriculum. The role of external control factors in this instance serves to highlight the contradiction within the Namibian official interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy. While promulgating an emancipatory vision of students taking crucial decisions in the pedagogic process, the education authority's interpretation of that vision instituted external control factors over the sequencing of discourses that effectively excluded collaborative approaches.

In sum, while teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy in respect of sequencing contradicted their earlier views of learner-centred pedagogy as a practice based on active student involvement and participation in the pedagogic process (Sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2), their pedagogic behaviour needs to be understood within the context of external control factors that prescribed how discourses should be ordered. Note should also be taken of other factors, discussed in sections 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5, below, that negatively impact on teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy.

6.3.3 Framing of the pacing of instructional discourses

Teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy was further examined in relation to the locus of control over pacing aspects in the pedagogic relations between them and their students. Bernstein (1990) describes pacing as follows:

Pacing is the rate of expected acquisition of the sequencing rules, that is, how much you have to learn in a given amount of time. Essentially, pacing is the time allowed for achieving the sequencing rules. (p. 66)

During the interviews, an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on strong external framing (${}^eF^+$, ${}^eF^{++}$) of the pacing of teaching and learning emerged. Key external pacing factors included the scheme of work, syllabus coverage, the college composite timetable, college authorities and the NIED moderation exercise. This particular finding is illustrated in the data as follows:

We don't have much liberty because we are timetabled in the college composite timetable. After thirty five minutes another class starts and you must vacate the classroom for the other teacher educator or you must proceed to your next class where other students are waiting for you. So, you can't do much, unless you have double periods. If you have got double periods then you are in a better position. But we don't have any liberty within the college time table. You are given thirty-five minutes and after those thirty-five minutes another teacher educator is waiting for the students. So, not much time is available.

(Interview: Peter, 31/10/07)

Peter further lamented the fact that the timetable posed yet another problem, the problem of insufficient time:

The time is not enough. If you have to be learner-centred you need a lot of time. From the college point of view we do not have enough time to really inculcate the philosophies and principles of learner-centred pedagogy into our students. We have very little time. Today, with all the learner-centred talk and the lesson is still thirty-five minutes. Now if we have changed the thinking and we want the teacher educators to become facilitators of learning and students to be involved in the teaching and learning process,

I think we need to re-think how much time is needed for a period. Thirty-five minutes, I think was for the era where the teacher educator did the talking and students did the listening.

(Interview: Peter, 31/10/07)

However, Peter consoled himself:

In the college because we understand each other there are times when you allow your students to continue when they have got a really good lesson. But in schools there is no way you can take someone's lesson because everything is structured. You teach your time and when the time is exhausted then the next person comes and takes over. But here in the college you can ask your friend that I have so much work to cover, can I use your lesson and I will compensate you for the time. I have seen people now doing more of that in the college. So, here in the college there is this kind of bargaining for time. But in the schools, they are given thirty-five minutes of which the five minutes is for learners to get settled and even the teacher is also trying to get settled, so from thirty-five minutes five minutes are lost. The lesson is down to thirty minutes. So, the real teaching is much lesser than thirty-five minutes.

(Interview: Peter, 31/10/07)

The scheme of work, identified as another external framing factor, posed its own problems, as Bob explains:

Even though we have set deadlines in the scheme of work, in most cases we do not meet these deadlines. You will find that when the date comes you are still left with maybe two or three topics uncovered. This is due to the fact that students are progressing at different rates. When you are teaching the most important thing is not to cover the scheme of work but the most important thing to focus on is that students should understand. Because if we are to teach for the scheme of work to be covered then you will find that throughout the term we have not done anything. So, we try to teach in order to help our students to understand what we have planned for them. But then we are expected in the scheme of work to meet set deadlines.

(Interview: Bob, 23/10/07)

The role of the college authorities as an external framing factor of pacing was also mentioned:

The aim of the authority who manages the colleges is that we should cover the syllabus. The syllabus should be covered as a whole. I fully understand the fact that even if they are driven by that intention they do not know what is on the ground in the classroom. It is only me, the teacher educator, who knows what is here and who knows what the students are demanding from me. So, I must know how to play the game so that I can satisfy both parties. While I should make sure that the syllabus is covered I should at the same time make sure that my students are learning. Teaching should be focused on students' learning rather than coverage of the syllabus or scheme of work. Otherwise when the NIED people come for moderation they will start blaming you as a teacher educator that you haven't done anything.

(Interview: Bob, 23/10/07)

When asked what he would recommend in this regard, Bob, who was one of the teacher educators working alongside NIED officials in the ORF as a curriculum panel member, argued:

The teacher educator should be aware at all times and at all costs that his sole responsibility is to ensure that the students benefit from his or her teaching irrespective of the fact that the higher authorities want him to cover the whole syllabi.

(Interview: Bob, 23/10/07)

As for Peter, following the prescribed procedures concerning coverage of work was less than ideal:

Another issue is the scheme of work. You are given a scheme of work saying this is what and this is how much we are going to cover in this time period. You have to cover that and seem to have completed the work and show that things are covered. It becomes problematic because you can't cover so much. Students cannot be too much involved because you can only allow so many students to be involved in so much time and then you move on because you have a yardstick of how much work should be covered, say, in a given term or two terms. After that students have to go for school Based Studies. Certain things have to be covered before that. It is already prescribed. So, there is not much room for a teacher educators'

own initiative. Because you have, as it were, a schedule to follow and work has to be covered. That is how it is supposed to be.

(Interview: Peter, 31/10/07)

The four-point scale of framing, derived from the data analysis model in Figure 5.1, was used as follows in order to examine teacher educators' interpretations of pacing in learner-centred pedagogy:

Table 6.6: A four-point scale of framing in relation to the pacing of discourses

Framing values	Descriptive indicators
${}^eF^{++}$	Very strong external framing – pacing of discourses is strongly controlled by external control factors with no student control at all;
${}^eF^+$	Strong external framing – pacing of discourses is controlled by external control factors, however, flexibility is exercised to allow minimal student control over pacing;
F^-	Weak framing – the student's tempo of pedagogic acquisition forms the basis for pacing of discourses;
F^-	Very weak framing – pacing of discourses is entirely controlled by individual students' tempo of pedagogic acquisition.

When applied to the interview narratives, the four-point scale of framing revealed an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on strong external framing (${}^eF^+$, ${}^eF^{++}$) of the pacing of discourses. In the interview extracts quoted above it was apparent that the tempo of student learning did not constitute a significant pacing factor.

It also emerged in the data that external framing factors generated problems for teacher educators in terms of their meaningfully interpreting learner-centred pedagogy, and hence feelings such as the following featured prominently: *"If you have to be learner-centred you need more time"* and *"we need to re-think the thirty-five minutes as thirty-five minutes was for the era when teachers did the talking and students did the listening"*. Furthermore, teacher educators felt they did *"not [have] much liberty"* and were *"externally controlled through time-tabling"*.

While some teacher educators, mostly those working alongside NIED officials in the ORF as curriculum panel members, interpreted learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on flexible and responsive pacing that takes into account the tempo of student teachers' knowledge acquisition, it is evident that in most cases the narratives reflected a strongly structured pedagogic environment. This environment negated the progressivist and constructivist assumptions of learner-centred pedagogy:

In learner-centred pedagogy, [...] the "timetable" is less of a regimen than it once was. There are fewer scheduled "class" hours; students use the institution's learning centres at any time of the day and any time of the week. Similarly, traditional semester dates take less importance. A student completing a specific learning outcome can work ahead, concentrating on weaknesses, or pursue other priorities. Within the year, traditional subject sequences (first and second semester; first and second year) become less a function of program organization and more a function of learner needs and priorities. (Van Aswegen & Dreyer, 2004, p. 296)

Although alluding to the costs involved in terms of time, Morais (2002) also argued for a weakly-framed context for pacing:

[...] successful learning depends to a great extent on the weak framing of pacing – that is, on conditions where children have some control over the time of their acquisition. This has generally been politically unacceptable, since it raises the cost of education. (p. 560)

Therefore, while it can be inferred from the narratives that teacher educators understood learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice characterized by weakly framed pacing, they were actually implementing the pedagogy as a practice in which pacing was strongly framed externally. This was because teacher educators had "*no liberty*" and had to conform to certain controls. It appears that the strong external framing factors repeatedly mentioned in the interview narratives meant that teacher educators had to pace their teaching so as to ensure syllabus coverage, compliance with their assigned timetable slots and conformance with the dictates of the scheme of work; in brief, to meet the expectations of college authorities.

These external frame factors suggest a narrow understanding of learner-centred pedagogy in the Namibian context, where it is seen purely as a matter of changing teacher educators' pedagogical approaches from teacher-centred to learner-centred. By focusing only on this, the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy has ignored structural and systematic factors that condition the way in which learner-centred pedagogy is interpreted and implemented.

In his study of stakeholders' understanding of learner-centred education in Namibia, Kristensen (1999, p. 123) similarly observed that learner-centred education was understood as "a matter of changing teachers' attitudes and teaching skills", and that introducing learner-centred education is a process that "requires only methodological changes and not systemic changes". Thus while the teacher education reform policy expects teacher educators to teach in a learner-centred manner, it still clings to traditional practices in terms of the duration of lessons (thirty-five minutes), rigid schemes of work and timetabling, and authoritarian expectations in terms of syllabus coverage. It seems that in order for a meaningful pedagogical transformation to take place, there is a need for a broader understanding of learner-centred pedagogy that will take into account not only changes in teacher educators' pedagogical skills but also changes in structural arrangements such as time-tabling, sequencing, pacing, and the views of the authorities regarding syllabus coverage.

Furthermore, the external frame factors contradict the supposed roles of the teacher educator as a facilitator and the student teacher as an active participant in the teaching and learning process. Strong framing of the selection, sequencing and pacing suggests that the teacher educator assumes the position of an authoritative transmitter of the pedagogic discourse, while the student teacher assumes the role of a passive recipient. When the selection or sequencing of discourses is strongly framed externally, there is little possibility of the teacher educator's executing his or her facilitative role. Instead, the chances are that the teacher educator will simply become a transmitter of externally prescribed knowledge.

It can be concluded that while teacher educators demonstrated possession of the recognition and passive realization rules in their interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on weak framing of pacing, they were forced by external control factors to implement the pedagogy in a strongly framed approach. As was the case in preceding sections, a contradiction emerges: official policy advocates pedagogic processes that are flexible and responsive to the individual student teacher's tempo of learning, and at the same time insists on external frame factors that eliminate possibilities for flexibility and responsiveness to student teachers' needs. This contradiction may be interpreted in terms of the economic factor attached to weakly paced pedagogies, as has been argued by Morais (2002, p. 560), i.e. that they are expensive in terms of time and material cost. From another angle, it is possible that this situation simply reflects a contradiction on the part of teacher educators, whose policy says the 'right' things but whose practice remains unchanged.

6.3.4 Framing of the evaluation criteria

In contrast to assessment practices during the old dispensation, assessment in the BETD is supposed to be learner-centred, emphasizing positive achievement as opposed to focusing on weaknesses (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 1998, p. 17). Thus assessment practices in the BETD are supposed to be implicit and various, involving multiple and diffuse approaches, and always accommodative of the student teacher's contributions. In order to gain some insight into how teacher educators interpreted learner-centred pedagogy in relation to evaluation aspects of the instructional discourse, I asked them to share their understanding of assessment practices in the program. In this regard, the following emerged:

Assessment in the BETD, I think, theoretically speaking is good, but seriously speaking it does not motivate serious learning. You will find that even those who are committed to serious work at the beginning of their studies, after some time they will get d-motivated. We don't want to go back to the old system where everything was about tests and examinations but we are really struggling with the current approach. Assessment in the BETD is a problem. We are struggling.

(Interview: Peter, 09/03/07)

Peter explained further:

Learner-centred education borders on one thing which is that students must be very much involved. Assessment in a learner-centred situation requires that students should work towards some criteria. It is quite okay, but now if you implement it students tend to be satisfied with only the most basic criteria. For instance, if you give assignments, students will just work for the basic criteria, they just want to meet the minimum criteria. They get a COMPLETE grade and they are just happy about that. They don't want to bother themselves with getting a CREDIT or a DISTINCTION. So, you will find that you don't get from the students the motivation and eagerness to learn required for learner-centred to be implemented. Learner-centred education will work well where students are motivated to work hard.

(Interview: Peter, 09/03/07)

Mary expressed a similar view:

The assessment is a de-motivating issue because if you get a CREDIT from the beginning and your performance goes down to a COMPLETE grade, automatically you will be graded COMPLETE in the end. So, there is no need to put extra effort in whatever you are doing. You know that it is not easy for the assessment process to make you fail. So, the assessment process is a de-motivating factor in the program. We don't know how the system can be changed but there should be change somewhere because with such a de-motivating system learner-centred pedagogy becomes difficult to implement.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

Asked to elaborate on what impact this was having on the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy, Mary had this to say:

Students learn through, again, by repeating a task but it makes them lazy on the other hand because they know that even if I get an INCOMPLETE [fail] I will still have another chance again to re-do the task. I don't mind failing, there will still be another chance. So, students do not have the

motivation and enthusiasm to work hard as required in a learner-centred classroom.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

When asked what she would recommend, Mary stated:

The College should change and try to use the same system that the University of Namibia is using whereby students write tests and accumulate marks which allow them to enter and write an examination. Even though we do not want to emphasize examinations I think it is now time to do so, we have had enough. A lot of people have gone through such a system which is so relaxed. It is time they start sweating. They should work towards accumulating enough points or marks to enable them to be allowed to write the end of year examination. This will make them to feel the eagerness to work. For now, they are just having Christmas in the College each day. There is nothing happening, no matter how hard you as a teacher educator can try. In the end you just lose hope. Some students can be very useless but in the end they will go through and pass the BETD course.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

Asked what she meant by there being no failures in the program, she responded:

There are failures but those are very obvious case. When you see someone who has failed that should really have been an obvious case. But even those who fail they are made to repeat in the following year and automatically they are going to become teachers. Some are not really good teachers but they end up completing the program and eventually become teachers.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

Loide made a similar recommendation:

In order to promote learner-centred education, assessment in the BETD needs to be revised. Like the way we are trying to assess our students, okay, students write assignments and then fail. We give them again a second chance, a third chance, and a fourth. It is really too disturbing because now what will happen is like teacher educators will not mark or assess for the correct information or really to assess the student based on

the information they want. They will only mark to make them pass. Why, because I cannot again set up a third paper, and a fourth paper. So, now what I am seeing is that if that will carry on then we will not have quality teaching and learning or learner-centred education because some of us are really not committed. So, that is why when my students will write an assignment or task I can make them all pass because I do not want to set another task.

(Interview: Loide, 16/03/07)

Peter maintained that the current assessment practices were actually constraining the successful implementation of learner-centred pedagogy by obliging him to resort to teacher-centred approaches:

I have tried to do it in the other way [teach in a learner-centred way]. But it has never worked. I try to engage students but students are not motivated. When I joined the college we were made to believe it is because the assessment at the end of the day does not require students to produce this so-called knowledge. It is like students come in the college and somehow they make do with very little knowledge that they have. Students are not motivated and after that we were saying maybe if we can change the assessment, we have not really managed to change and when you attempt to change you are told you are now trying to contravene the whole idea of learner-centred education because assessment in learner-centred education is supposed to be criterion referenced. Those policies when they are translated into the real world of teaching you will discover that actually somehow it is difficult without a proper yardstick of how you can measure students' performance at the end of the day. But in the BETD it is very possible that students can come and they virtually have learnt nothing but after three years they still graduate. Some students are working very hard while others are doing virtually nothing but at the end of the day the exit is just the same. Because of their lack of motivation you just end up explaining everything to them instead of teaching in a more learner-centred manner.

(Interview: Peter, 09/03/07).

Teacher educators' interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy in relation to the evaluation aspect of the instructional discourse were examined using the following scale:

Table 6.7: Four-point scale of framing in relation to evaluation criteria

Framing values	Descriptive indicators
F ⁺⁺	Very strong framing – evaluation rules are very explicit and specific, emphasizing not only the gradable performance of the student such as in an examination but are also interested in comparing students;
F ⁺	Strong framing – evaluation rules are explicit and specific, however, there is minimal utilization of varied assessment approaches;
F ⁻	Weak framing – evaluation rules are implicit, multiple and diffuse;
F ⁻⁻	Very weak framing – evaluation rules are implicit, multiple and diffuse, the pedagogic practice creates a space in which the acquirer can create his/her text under conditions of minimal external constraint in a context that appears to be highly supportive;

Seen in the context of the four-point scale of framing outlined in Table 6.7, above, the narratives indicate that while the official pedagogic discourse advocates evaluation rules that are more implicit, multiple, diffuse and inclusive of student teachers' contributions (F⁻, F⁻⁻), teacher educators preferred explicit and specific evaluation rules (F⁺, F⁺⁺), emphasizing the gradable performance of the student as attained in an examination. As emerged in the interviews, teacher educators wanted a more visible, explicit and specific form of assessment, arguing that the blurred and implicit type of assessment currently in practice *“does not give students the motivation and enthusiasm to work hard as required in a learner-centred context”*. Thus, teacher educators felt that *“the college should change and try to use the same system that the University of Namibia is using whereby students write tests and accumulate marks which allow them to enter and write examinations”*.

Also recurrent in the narratives was the view that *“even those students who are committed to their work at the beginning of their studies after some time they will get demotivated, as students tend to be satisfied with the most basic criteria, they just want to meet the minimum criteria”*. Teacher educators therefore recommended that the current assessment practices be changed to fall in line with the approach adopted at the University of Namibia, which is not only test- and examination-oriented but also more explicit and specific, emphasizing the student's gradable performance.

From the interviews it emerged that teacher educators advocated strongly framed evaluation criteria as opposed to the weakly framed evaluation criteria advocated by the official pedagogic texts. This needs to be located within the context of Morais's contention that the strong framing of evaluation criteria "may lead children to acquire the recognition and realization rules" (Morais, 2002, p. 560). It would appear that the teacher educators exhibited possession of the recognition rules in their interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on strong framing of the evaluation criteria. The fact that they were implementing weakly framed evaluation criteria was a result of the strong controls exerted by the pedagogic context in which they were operating.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the data analysis model in Figure 5.1 was used to illuminate teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy and whether or not they possessed the recognition and the realization (passive) rules needed to recontextualize the new pedagogy.

The findings revealed that, at the level of description, teacher educators interpreted learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on weak rules of the regulative discourse or weak power relations in the pedagogic relationship between themselves and their student teachers. A weakening of the rules of the regulative discourse and of hierarchical power relations was indicated by the preponderance of views insisting on the student teacher's repositioning from the margins to the centre of the pedagogic process. This repositioning is clearly indicative of a process of empowerment.

In the same vein, the data revealed an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a repositioning of the teacher educator to the backstage of the classroom as a "*facilitator*" or "*co-learner*" with a relatively invisible pedagogic identity. There had therefore been a significant transfer of power. However, it was argued that this diminishing of the teacher educator's authority was not necessarily an entirely good thing, as is argued by those who

are critical of the progressivist tendency to de-emphasise the important role of the teacher (see Section 2.7).

With regard to rules of the instructional discourse, the findings exhibited an interpretation by teacher educators of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on strong framing of the selection of discourses, weak framing of the pacing of discourses (though they were obliged to operate in a pedagogic context that demanded strong framing over pacing), and strong framing over sequencing and evaluation aspects. It was further revealed that while at policy level official texts (e.g. *Toward education for all*, MEC, 1993) advocated a view of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on weak framing over the selection, sequencing and pacing of discourses through active student involvement in these aspects, the official interpretation of these texts in the ORF, and in documents representing the OPD, advocated a pedagogic practice that was strongly controlled externally in terms of the selection, sequencing and pacing of the instructional discourse. Regarding evaluation aspects, teacher educators interpreted learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice that ought to be based on strongly framed evaluation criteria, whilst the official texts advocated weakly framed evaluation criteria.

A comparable disjunction was noted in that, while the teacher education reform initiative expected teacher educators to change their pedagogical practices to learner-centred pedagogy, it still preserved the traditional way of organizing the teaching and learning process in terms of the duration of lessons, schemes of work, timetabling, and expectations in terms of syllabus coverage. These frame factors are contradictory to learner-centred teaching. Furthermore, the strong external framing of the selection, sequencing, and pacing of the instructional discourse undermines the role of the teacher educator as a facilitator. Instead, such external frame factors require the teacher educator to assume a more prominent position as an authoritative transmitter of prescribed knowledge. The data thus revealed a narrow understanding of learner-centred pedagogy that focused on changing teaching skills and attitudes while ignoring broader structural and systemic factors. Dominant in the data is a narrow reduction of learner-centred

pedagogy to a technical rationality concerned only with simple tricks of the trade while ignoring changes in the broader structural sphere; structural changes that are pertinent to the successful implementation of the new pedagogy.

Seen in the context of the data analysis model, the pedagogic practices evident in teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy covered the entire spectrum from possibility 1 (strongly classified, strongly framed visible pedagogy) and possibility 2 (weakly classified, weakly framed invisible pedagogy) to possibility 3 (mixed strong and weak classification and framing, mixed pedagogy). For instance, teacher educators interpreted learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice where rules of the regulative discourse (power relations) were weakly classified, while selection aspects of instructional discourse were strongly framed. It was also seen as a pedagogic practice in which sequencing aspects were strongly framed, but which required a weak framing of pacing.

It was concluded that teacher educators generally exhibited possession of the recognition and passive realization rules needed to interpret learner-centred pedagogy, though in certain instances possession of these rules was constrained by external control factors.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TEACHER EDUCATORS' PRACTICE OF LEARNER-CENTRED PEDAGOGY: THE IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, interview data and data generated through document studies were analyzed in order to understand teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy at the level of description. In the present chapter, lesson observation data and data generated through document studies are presented and analyzed in order to understand teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy at the micro-level of their classrooms, that is, at the level of implementation. More specifically, the chapter illuminates:

- How teacher educators practise learner-centred pedagogy at the level of implementation;
- The extent to which teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy indicates their possession of the recognition and realization (passive and active) rules necessary to recontextualize learner-centred pedagogy at the level of implementation.

Once again, within the context of the data analysis model presented in Figure 5.1, a decreasing or weakening scale of framing, ranging from very strong to very weak framing relations (F^{++} , F^+ , F^- , F^{--}), was used to generate various modalities of pedagogic practice (possibilities 1 through 3).

7.2 Teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy

In order to gain a clear idea of teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy, I observed them in action in their classrooms. A total of fifteen double periods (running for seventy minutes) were observed across the three year-levels of the Basic Education Teachers Diploma program.

Using a pre-designed lesson observation form as the data collection instrument (see Appendix IV), detailed field-notes were taken during all lesson observations. As mentioned in section 5.3.4.2 a preliminary data analysis was conducted immediately after each observation session using pre-designed preliminary reflection instruments (see Appendix V and VI). However, data were further analyzed using the four point scales of classification and framing (also derived from Figure 5.1) together with their descriptive indicators. Table 7.1 below provides a summary of the power and control relations evident in the lessons that were observed:

Table 7.1: Framing relations in teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy

Teacher Educators	Framing of the rules of the regulative discourse				Framing of the selection of discourses				Framing of the sequencing of discourses				Framing of the pacing of discourses				Framing of the evaluation of discourses			
	F ⁺⁺	F ⁺	F ⁻	F ⁻⁻	F ⁺⁺	F ⁺	F ⁻	F ⁻⁻	F ⁺⁺	F ⁺	F ⁻	F ⁻⁻	F ⁺⁺	F ⁺	F ⁻	F ⁻⁻	F ⁺⁺	F ⁺	F ⁻	F ⁻⁻
Patrick	x					x				x				x				x		
Bob		x				x				x				x			x			
Bob		x				x				x				x				x		
Loide		x				x				x			x					x		
Loide	x					x				x			x					x		
Loide	x					x				x			x				x			
Loide	x					x				x			x				x			
Bob	x					x				x				x				x		
Bob	x					x				x				x				x		
Loide	x					x				x			x				x			
Loide		x				x				x			x				x			
Loide		x				x				x			x				x			
Mary	x					x				x				x				x		
Patrick		x				x				x				x				x		
Mary		x				x				x				x				x		
Total	8	7	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	15	-	-	7	8	-	-	6	9	-	-

Table 7.2: Rules of the regulative discourse – elaboration on the framing values used in table 7.1

F ⁺⁺	F ⁺	F ⁻	F ⁻
Very explicit hierarchical relations Teacher educator selects, transmits and reinforces the regulative discourse in a clear and detailed manner	Explicit hierarchical relations teacher educator selects, transmits and reinforces the regulative discourse, however, students take some responsibility	Implicit hierarchical relations students have some control over the regulative discourse	Implicit hierarchical relations. Students exercise control over the regulative discourse

The framing values used in table 7.1 in relation to rules of the instructional discourse are described in table 7.3 below:

Table 7.3: Rules of the instructional discourse – elaboration on the framing values used in table 7.1

Framing values	Framing over selection of discourses	Framing over sequencing of discourses	Framing over pacing of discourses	Framing over evaluation of discourses
F ⁺⁺	Very strong framing. Locus of control lies with the teacher educator with no student involvement at all.	Very strong framing. Locus of control lies with the teacher educator with no student involvement at all. No collaborative planning was evident. Student interests do not matter.	Very strong framing. Locus of control lies with the teacher educator. Student teacher's tempo of learning did not matter.	Very strong framing. Very explicit and specific – systematically points out what is incorrect and indicates in clear and detailed ways what is missing in the student's text.
F ⁺	Strong framing. Locus of control lies with the teacher educator. However, through minimal collaboration, students have minimal control.	Strong framing. Locus of control lies with the teacher educator. However, students have minimal control as their interests are taken into account to a small extent.	Strong framing. Locus of control lies with the teacher educator. However, students have minimal control as their tempo of learning is taken into account to some extent.	Strong framing. The teacher educator points out in general terms what is incorrect and indicates in general ways what is missing in the student's text.
F ⁻	Weak framing – teacher educator collaborates with students in selecting discourses.	Weak framing – sequencing is flexible and is responsive to individual student's learning needs.	Weak framing-pacing is flexible and responsive to individual student's learning needs.	Weak framing – teacher educator points out what is incorrect but does not clarify what is missing in the text.
F ⁻⁻	Very weak framing – high levels of collaboration with the student teacher in selection of discourses.	Very weak framing – sequencing is highly flexible and responsive to individual student teachers' learning needs.	Very weak framing- pacing is highly flexible and responsive to individual student teachers' learning needs.	Very weak framing – teacher educator accepts students' productions with questions only intended to clarify those products.

In the following sections, teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy is examined using Bernstein's rules of the regulative discourse and rules of the instructional discourse, together with the concepts on which they depend.

7.2.1 Strong internal framing (F^+ , F^{++}) of the regulative discourse

Rules of the regulative discourse define the transmitter-acquirer interactional relationship and thus determine the acquisition of rules of social order, character and manner appropriate in the pedagogic relation. A decreasing scale of framing (F^{++} , F^+ , F^- , F^{--}) was used to examine teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy at the level of implementation. The values on this scale are described in table 7.3.

As is evident in table 7.1, all the pedagogic practices observed were underpinned by strong rules of the regulative discourse, ranging in value from F^+ (seven lessons) to F^{++} (8 lessons in total). Thus, while in Sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2 and 6.2.3 teacher educators claimed that learner-centred pedagogy was a pedagogic practice based on weak rules of the regulative discourse, observation of their actual practice of learner-centred pedagogy revealed an approach characterized by strong micro-level framing of the rules of the regulative discourse.

For instance, Patrick's practice of learner-centred pedagogy during the observed lessons was characterized by explicit hierarchical rules (F^{++}), that is, by explicit selection and transmission of rules of order, character, manner and social conduct. Throughout his lessons, Patrick selected and reinforced a regulative discourse. For instance, in one lesson Patrick made very clear what behaviour he expected in terms of punctuality, attendance and preparation for examinations:

Patrick: Please always remember to come on time. Don't forget that examinations are around the corner. I don't like people who come late to class. I don't like disturbances when classes have started.

(Lesson observation: Patrick, 24/10/07)

Apart from the regulative discourse pertaining to punctuality, Patrick also emphasized what behaviour was expected regarding preparation for examinations, reminding student teachers of the possible areas where they might have examination questions asked:

Patrick: Remember that there can be a possible exam question on School Based Studies. You can be asked to write reflections on your School Based Studies during the examination.

(Lesson observation: Patrick, 24/10/07)

Later on in the lesson, Patrick again cautioned his students about another possible examination area:

Patrick: Remember that another possibility is to have an examination question on reflections on your action research.

(Lesson observation: Patrick, 24/10/07)

Some months later, Patrick's pedagogic practice was again observed and found to be characterized by a very strong regulative discourse (F⁺⁺) – as seen in the following exchange with his third year students:

Patrick: My friend, I don't want late comers. If you don't want to come to my class, please stay away.

Student Teacher: [student teacher tries to explain] Please sir...

Patrick: Just sit down; you have already spoilt our mood.

Patrick: [Continues to explain the activity. Two students arrive late at the door, trying to knock]

Patrick: Guys, just go away. You are disturbing my class.

(Lesson Observation: Patrick, 09/04/08)

In this scenario, the two latecomers were literally turned away by Patrick and excluded from the lesson. Patrick's power over the students was thus demonstrated: from his position of authority he exercised the privilege of selecting and transmitting a regulative discourse which students were simply made to accept and obey. Patrick's lesson was itself couched within the transmission mode of pedagogic practice, further accentuating

his position of power and authority as the transmitter of knowledge. Patrick was thus clearly dominant in the pedagogic relationship, directing the pedagogic interaction in respect of the rules of the regulative discourse.

Explicit rules of the regulative discourse were also evident in several of Bob's lessons. For instance, the transmission of the regulative discourse (F⁺) pertaining to his students' attentiveness was evident in the following:

Bob: Are we together class? Are we moving together? I don't want anyone of you to be left behind, otherwise there will be trouble.

Class: Yes, sir [in unison].

(Lesson observation: Bob, 03/04/08)

In another lesson, Bob's control over the regulative discourse was manifested when he reprimanded one student who, according to him, was misbehaving:

Bob: Please behave yourself.

(Lesson observation: Bob, 26/10/07)

In yet another lesson, the regulative discourse was even more evident (F⁺⁺) when Bob warned his students for not observing deadlines when submitting their action research reports:

Bob: Now, I am going to repeat what I said last time. This year all Year 2 and Year 3 students will be sent out for School Based Studies at the same time. This will be very demanding in terms of time and will be frustrating to your teacher educators. So, if you are told to submit your work on a given date, please do so. Otherwise you will find yourself in trouble.

(Lesson observation: Bob, 04/04/08)

Later on in the lesson, Bob again selected and reinforced the regulative discourse in much stronger terms (F⁺⁺):

Bob: Are we together class?

Students: Yes, Sir [almost in unison]

Bob: It calls for more seriousness. That time of sleeping until the last minute when you start running around for your action research report is something of the past. You have to work hard and hand in your work to lecturers on time. The work must be submitted on time.

(Lesson observation: Bob, 04/04/08)

Mary adopted a similar kind of register when chastising students for misbehaviour:

Mary: Yesterday other people were taking chances. There are those students who were misbehaving yesterday during the test. Those students need to come and see me at the office after class and explain to me why they were behaving like that.

(Lesson Observation: Mary, 09/04/08)

The power (F⁺⁺) held by Mary over her students in the pedagogic relation was clearly manifest in her labelling certain students as “misbehaving” and summoning them to her office for reprimand. In another of Mary’s lessons about lifelong learning, just a day before, explicit hierarchical power relations (F⁺⁺) were evident as follows:

Mary: [after posing a question to her class] I need new people who haven't spoken, not those who have been speaking.

Student: Yes, for us lifelong learning means that we need to study continuously.

Mary: [reprimanding another student who apparently was not paying attention] You are out. Stop thinking about things which are not happening here. She is really day-dreaming. I don't know what happened to her last night.

Mary: [points out another student to comment on the topic]

Student: [student tries to elaborate on the topic]

Mary: Yes, you are not talking to me. Be louder. You are talking to your fellow classmates.

(Lesson observation: Mary, 08/04/07)

As seen in the extract above, Mary's position of power is evident in her rebuke (F⁺⁺) of the student: "she is really day-dreaming". "I don't know what happened to her last night". Mary then rebuked another student who happened to speak too softly: "you are not talking to me. Be louder. You are talking to your fellow classmates". Hierarchical power relations were, therefore, explicit in the pedagogic relation between Mary and her students, despite learner-centred pedagogy's being defined in the interviews as a pedagogic practice based on the teacher educator's abdication of power.

Like her fellow teacher educators, Loide quite explicitly wielded the power invested in her role in several of her lessons that were observed. For instance, in one lesson she reprimanded a student who was presenting a mathematics micro-teaching lesson on the formula for calculating area:

Loide: That is why I always say that we need to be serious. Look at the way he drew a square on the chalkboard and how he drew it on the poster. My dear, if you don't know how to draw properly, your learners will lose interest in your lesson. Also explain to the learners why they should use length and breadth. Explain that. Don't just ignore and think that learners know.

(Lesson observation: Loide, 04/04/08)

In another of her lessons, strong power (F⁺) relations were manifested in her invocation of a regulative discourse to correct what she regarded as a student teacher's un-professional behaviour:

Hey [name of the student] listen to me ...a teacher should never chew something in front of learners. It is not professional.

(Lesson Observation: Loide 04/04/08)

The data generated by lesson observation revealed that, despite the interpretation expressed in the interviews – of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on weak rules of the regulative discourse and less power for the teacher educator – the actual enactment of learner-centred pedagogy in classrooms by teacher educators reflected a pedagogic practice based on strong rules of the regulative discourse. In almost

all the lessons observed, teacher educators chose constantly to select, transmit and reinforce a regulative discourse – a far cry from the “*facilitators*” and “*co-learners*” who are only there to “*guide*” and “*learn*” from their students, as depicted in the interviews. Teacher educators selected, sequenced and paced the regulative discourse, and set the criteria for expected conduct. Not only was the persona of the teacher educator as a *facilitator* absent from most of the lessons, but there was no evidence either of any student empowering pedagogic approaches. The pedagogic practices exhibited strong internal framing (${}^iF^+$, ${}^iF^{++}$) of the regulative discourse.

Thus, contrary to the purported ambiguity (Power & Whitty, 2004) or invisibility (Jansen, 2001, p. 243) of the teacher educator’s identity, as framed by weak rules of the regulative discourse, in the observed lessons the teacher educators still exercised a prominent and visible position of authority, suggesting strong rules of the regulative discourse. A dislocation appears to exist between teacher educators’ ideas of learner-centred pedagogy and their practice of it. This can be interpreted as a reflection of the pedagogic practice that teacher educators were exposed to during their own training as student teachers which, by and large, occurred under apartheid education, where the teacher was typically a dominant authority figure. Alternatively, the disjuncture can be attributed simply to resistance to change, to the challenge of adopting new practices in place of familiar ones. This seems particularly likely when the situation is placed in the context of criticism and resistance on the part of some teacher educators towards the BETD program, as described in Chapter 3, Section 3.7.

The dislocation between teacher educators’ ideas of learner-centred pedagogy and their practice of it can also be attributed to their lack of knowledge and skills meaningfully to interpret and apply learner-centred pedagogy (see Chapter Eight, Sections 8.3 and 8.4). And importantly, the hierarchical interaction observed in the classroom needs to be placed within the broader context of a culture that is strongly hierarchical and in which the adult figure still enjoys a dominant position in everyday life (Storeng, 2001, p. 213).

Furthermore, strong framing over the regulative discourse at the micro-level of pedagogic practice by teacher educators needs to be seen within the context of a curriculum that is strongly framed externally. It is possible to argue that in order for teacher educators to meet the expectations of a curriculum that is strongly framed externally they are actually obliged to tighten up interactional pedagogic relations through explicit rules of hierarchy.

The observed practice that contradicts the interpretations gleaned from the interviews (see Sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2 and 6.2.3) could also be interpreted to mean that the teacher educators have just picked up on the jargon of learner-centred education without acquiring any understanding of what it looks like in practice. This becomes particularly plausible in the context of Chapter Eight, where teacher educators share their frustration regarding the lack of staff development activities that would help them acquire the skills properly to implement learner-centred pedagogy.

It is important also to note in this regard the findings of O'Sullivan, who investigated the implementation of learner-centred approaches in a three-year INSET (In-Service Education and Training) program for 145 unqualified teachers in Namibia (O'Sullivan, 2004). O'Sullivan's study reported similar findings regarding the mismatch between teachers' claims about learner-centred pedagogy and their actual practice of it.

Interviews with teachers suggested that they were familiar with learner-centred approaches: 'I know about this new method, it's good for the learners'. Most teachers claimed to be implementing learner-centred approaches in their classrooms: 'I use it much'. Lesson observations however, did not corroborate teachers' implementation claims. They indicated that teachers were not implementing learner-centred approaches.

(O'Sullivan, 2004, p. 593)

It was argued in the O'Sullivan study that learner-centred pedagogy required for its meaningful implementation teachers who were more qualified and experienced than those who participated in the study. Jansen (2001, p. 244) has also pointed to "the gap between what teachers claim to do and what they are actually observed to do in practice". He ascribes this in part to a lack of professional confidence among teachers when it comes to

applying the new approaches. The views of O'Sullivan and Jansen concerning the professional confidence and competence of teachers to implement pedagogic innovations concur with the findings of this study in Sections 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5. As will be elaborated on in Chapter Eight, these findings unveiled the lack of confidence and know-how among teachers educators inhibiting their implementation of learner-centred pedagogy and attributed at least in part to an alleged failure by NIED to provide the professional support to empower them with the necessary knowledge and skills. This role had tended to be relegated to foreign experts who were largely unfamiliar with the social and cultural context.

Regarding teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy in relation to the regulative discourse at the micro-level of their classrooms, this study concurs with observations made by other Bernsteinian scholars such as Bolton, who observed that "it is not always easy to distinguish regulative from instructional communication" (Bolton, 2008, p. 71). For instance, comments such as: *"Please always remember to come on time. Don't forget that examinations are around the corner"* or *"Remember that there can be a possible question on School Based studies. You can be asked to write reflections on your School Based studies during the examination"*, or simply: *"please behave yourself"* can either be instructional or regulative comments about conduct and behaviour. Although I eventually decided that comments like these were indeed part of a dominant regulative discourse, I concur with Bolton (2008) that the distinction between regulative and instructional discourse at the micro-level of the classroom can at times be fuzzy.

While it is possible to argue that the disjunction between teacher educators' ideas of learner-centred pedagogy in relation to the regulative discourse was indicative of their lack of the appropriate recognition and realization rules needed to become creative practitioners of learner-centred pedagogy at the micro-level of implementation, cognizance should be taken of the externally framed pedagogic context within which they were attempting to practise the pedagogic discourse. In other words, to what extent can teacher educators weaken the rules of the regulative discourse in the context of strong external framing factors that impose certain prescriptions?

It indeed appears that in the context of the strong external framing of the instructional discourse, as observed in Chapter Six, there is very little scope for teacher educators to relax the rules of the regulative discourse by engaging in more lenient or egalitarian pedagogic relations, because these might possibly distract them from achieving the goals prescribed by the external framing factors. Thus the lack of recognition and realization rules exhibited in this regard can be interpreted as the result of teacher educators' attempting to practise learner-centred pedagogy in a pedagogic context that is framed or conditioned by strong external control factors. This conclusion is reached in the context of the narrative accounts in Sections 6.3.1, 6.3.2 and 6.3.3, where external framing factors that hindered teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy were cited. At the same time, the teacher educators' lack of recognition and realization rules should not be blamed solely on external framing factors. As discussed above, there are many other possible contributing factors including, for instance, their own histories of pedagogic experience. But whatever its provenance, teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy in relation to rules of the regulative discourse reflected a possibility 1 (Figure 5.1) pedagogic practice that is strongly framed.

7.2.2 Rules of the instructional discourse

The data analysis model in Figure 5.1 was again invoked to help examine teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy in relation to the discursive rules or rules regulating the instructional discourse.

As discussed earlier, Bernstein (1990, 1996, 2004) has argued that rules of the instructional discourse determine the control relations between teacher educators and their student teachers over the selection, sequencing, pacing and evaluation aspects of the pedagogic process. Bernstein uses the concept of framing to analyze the pedagogic relation between transmitters and acquirers with respect to the instructional aspects of the pedagogic process. Where framing is strong (F^{++} , F^+), the rules of the instructional discourse are explicit and control by the teacher educator is explicit, whereas in the case

of weak framing (F^- , F^{--}) control by the teacher educator is masked and the student teacher appears to have greater control over the selection, pacing, sequencing and evaluation aspects of the instructional discourse (Mawoyo, 2006:147).

Also worth repeating is that framing can either be *external* (eF) or *internal* (iF), with *external* framing involving external control factors such as school authorities, curriculum requirements or curriculum policies, while *internal* framing refers to the relationship between the teacher educator and student teacher and the control relations that exist between them. In the following sections, data are presented, interpreted and discussed in order to understand how teacher educators practise learner-centred pedagogy in relation to rules of the instructional discourse.

7.2.2.1 Strong internal framing (${}^iF^+$, ${}^iF^{++}$) over the selection of discourses

In order to understand how teacher educators practise learner-centred pedagogy in relation to the framing of the selection of discourses, data were examined in relation to the following two aspects:

- In the first place, data were examined in order to understand how teacher educators practised learner-centred pedagogy in terms of the control relations between them and their students over the selection of discourses, that is, whether or not at the micro-level of pedagogic practice the selection process was entirely in the hands of the teacher educator or whether there was some kind of collaboration with student teachers in this regard;
- In the second instance, data were examined in order to understand how teacher educators practised learner-centred pedagogy in terms of the degree of explicitness (degree of detail) or implicitness with which discourses were offered to student teachers at the micro-level of pedagogic practice.

Teacher educators' enactments of learner-centred pedagogy were thus observed and examined in order to understand how learner-centred pedagogy was being practised in relation to control over the selection aspect of the instructional discourse in the pedagogic relationship. The lesson observation data suggested that at the micro-level of pedagogic implementation, strong internal framing (F^+ , F^{++}) of the selection of discourses existed, in the sense that the teacher educator exercised control on a daily basis, through lesson planning, by selecting which content areas or topics to cover in a given lesson, and by announcing these topics to student teachers.

Thus, despite interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy at the level of description as a pedagogic practice that values student involvement and participation in the pedagogic process, lesson observation data and data generated through teacher educator-prepared documents like lesson plans revealed an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy, at the level of implementation, as a pedagogic practice where control over the selection of discourses for transmission in the pedagogic relationship lay solely with the teacher educator, suggesting strong (F^+) to very strong (F^{++}) internal framing relationships. In almost all the lessons that were observed, the discourse to be transmitted during a given lesson was initially known only to the teacher educator, who announced it to the student teachers at the beginning of the lesson. It must however be borne in mind that this occurs in the context of a strongly (externally) framed college curriculum.

The teacher educators' control over what was to be taught is evident in the following extracts:

Patrick: Last week we did some reflections on our school based studies [SBS] experience.

Patrick: Remember, there can be a possible question on SBS. You can be asked to write reflections on your SBS experience during the exam.

Patrick: Today's topic is on action research. We will share our reflections on action research [teacher educator instructs students to break into groups according to their specialization areas]

Students: [Students move desks and chairs around. Four groups are formed]

Patrick: In your areas of specialization, reflect on how action research has promoted your professional development....

(Lesson Observation: Patrick, 24/10/07)

It is evident here that the teacher educator (Patrick) has selected the topic for the day and announced it to his class, suggesting strong internal framing of the selection of the day's topic – with Patrick, and not the students, as the locus of control. Similarly, Bob determined what was to be taught in each of his lessons and would accordingly announce it to his students:

*Bob [does some introduction, calls out the attendance register]
Students [respond to the attendance roll-call by saying] present
Bob: [introduces the day's topic] Today's topic is motivation. [Writes the word motivation on the chalkboard];
Bob: Who can define the word motivation for me?
Student: Motivation is anything that guides a person in order to achieve what he wants to achieve;
Bob: [receives a number of definitions from students and acknowledges that all definitions are correct]....*

(Lesson Observation: Bob, 25/10/07)

In another lesson, Bob exhibited strong control over the selection of discourses as follows:

*Bob [does some introductions and starts off the lesson by asking students to indicate what was covered in last week's lesson]
Bob: Today we will do a revision lesson to confirm our understanding of what was covered last week.
Bob [writes on the chalkboard] Action Research
Bob: Remember when you go for SBS you will be required to identify 3 topics
Bob: Once you have identified these topics, what is the next step?
Students [in unison] consult your tutor*

(Lesson Observation: Bob, 03/04/08)

Like Patrick and Bob, Mary selected the topic for the day and announced it to her class:

Mary: Today's lesson will continue identifying the difference between elite type of education and education for all.

Mary: We need to define the term "lifelong learning" and how it promotes education for all.

Mary: Does lifelong learning mean that you should be in school all the time?

Students: [students give several answers to Mary's questions]...

(Lesson Observation: Mary, 08/04/08)

In a follow-up lesson the next day, Mary again exhibited control over the selection of topics:

Mary: Yesterday we looked at lifelong learning and what can be done to cure the diploma disease.

Mary: I have decided that for today you work in groups and look at the issue of education for all.

Mary: I will give you these questions, I have them typed out.

Mary: [reads out and explains the questions]. This is your time to engage in discussions.

(Lesson Observation: Mary, 09/04/08)

Therefore, while at the level of description in Chapter Six, learner-centred pedagogy was described as a pedagogic practice in which the selection of discourses for inclusion in the syllabus and final transmission to the acquirers was externally controlled (${}^eF^+$, ${}^eF^{++}$) (largely through NIED facilitation of the syllabus development process), the lesson observation data revealed that at the micro-level of implementation, the selection of discourses was more teacher-centred, with the teacher educator retaining full control (${}^iF^+$, ${}^iF^{++}$) over which topics to cover and when to cover them. These findings were also confirmed through an examination of teacher educators' daily lesson plans which reflected that teacher educators selected topics for the day and did their preparation or planning accordingly. Of course, from the teacher educators' point of view, the selection of topics may well be perceived and experienced as externally controlled by the demand of the syllabus.

In sum, despite interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice that valued active student involvement in the pedagogic process, as seen in the interview data and data generated through official documents, the lesson observation data and data from documents generated by teacher educators such as lesson plans indicated that student teachers were recipients of topics chosen and announced to them by their teacher educators. There was no evidence of collaboration or student involvement in the selection of topics to be covered for a particular lesson. A study by Van Aswegen and Dreyer (2004) investigating the extent to which English second-language teacher educators were implementing learner-centred teaching and learning at the University of North-West came up with similar findings:

The results indicated that the teacher educators assume most of the responsibility for determining the learning goals, delivering what they determined to be crucial information, providing feedback when possible, and assessing learning outcomes. They [teacher educators] determined what ought to be taught, when, how and in what time frame. Students had no input in the decision-making process and they did not get the opportunity to set their own learning goals, make connections between prior knowledge and experience, build pathways for new understanding and continuously modify their behaviour to better achieve those goals. Student teachers and their teacher educators, therefore, acted independently and in isolation. (p. 297)

While the non-involvement of students in the selection of discourses can be ascribed to teacher educators' reservations about their ability to make such decisions (section 6.3.1), it can equally be interpreted in terms of how the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy has typically tended to keep the function of discourse selection in the hands of teacher educators at the micro-level. Similarly, the strong internal control as regards discourse selection can be interpreted as simply a case of reproducing or mirroring the strong external control that was discussed in Chapter Six.

However, the non-involvement of student teachers in the selection of discourses was in contradiction of official policy. For instance, the policy document: *Toward education for all states*:

Much more than has been our experience previously, learners will be involved in setting objectives and organizing their work [...] learners and teachers will share responsibility for the learning process. (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 11)

The policy document goes on to say:

A democratic education system is organized around broad participation in decision making and the clear accountability of those who are our leaders...*adult learners are expert consultants on curriculum content, scope, and orientation.* (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 42, my emphasis)

The teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy was further examined in terms of the degree of explicitness (detail) or implicitness with which discourses were introduced to students. Despite teacher educators' interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy as pedagogic practice characterized by implicit discourse, the data generated through lesson observation revealed a practice based on the explicit and detailed transmission of discourse in all fifteen lessons that were observed. There was no evidence of the implicit or blurred transmission of discourse, or of students being given the opportunity to investigate and offer their own perspectives. Instead, two features tended to dominate: the first was an explicit detailing of knowledge content in the prescribed text, and the second, an elaborate and explicit text delivered by the teacher educator, either on the chalkboard or through oral presentation, which student teachers then copied down in their note books.

While taking into account other constraining factors such as those discussed in Chapter Eight, it is nevertheless possible to conclude that the explicitness or detail with which discourses were presented could be attributed to strong external control (${}^cF^+$, ${}^eF^{++}$) over the selection of discourses. It can of course be argued that in a pedagogic context characterized by strong external prescriptions of content there is most likely to be very little room left for teacher educators to offer implicit discourses and to encourage students to explore, investigate and construct their own texts. However, one cannot help but wonder – in the context of the inadequate professional confidence among teacher educators described in Chapter Eight – whether, even in the absence of external framing

factors, teacher educators would have been able to offer implicit discourses to their students.

But even taking into account other constraining factors, it can be concluded that external prescription most likely compelled teacher educators to deliver detailed and explicit discourse to their students. This argument is supported by the fact that in almost all the lessons observed, a prescribed text entitled *Educational Psychology: An African Perspective*, by T.S. Mwamenda (1989), was being used by the teacher educator and the student teachers. The textbook offered detailed and elaborate content areas and was closely followed during some of the lessons in somewhat dogmatic fashion. In some lessons, student teachers were expected to provide definitions of concepts as they appeared in the prescribed text.

Despite teacher educators' interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice in which discourses are offered in an implicit and blurred manner, giving student teachers the opportunity to explore, investigate and create meaning for themselves, the lesson observation data reflected a more detailed and elaborate transmission of knowledge with almost no opportunities for students to offer their own texts. However, it should be noted that this contradiction appears to be replicated in the official texts, where, on the one hand, it is suggested that discourses be offered in an implicit and blurred manner, according students opportunities to investigate and create new knowledge, while at the same time it is suggested that the selection of discourses should be strongly controlled and offered in explicit terms. Similarly, the official expectation is that certain prescribed texts will be used which tend to offer students detailed explication of content knowledge. And yet the BETD Broad Curriculum recommends the use of implicit discourses.

To sum up: despite interpretation at the descriptive level of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice that valued student's active participation and involvement in the pedagogic process, lesson observation data, lesson plans and official texts all revealed a more teacher-centred practice, in which control over the selection of discourses to be

transmitted on a daily basis was left entirely in the hands of the teacher educator – who was himself or herself mainly following the prescribed textbook.

The opportunity to explore, investigate and create knowledge for themselves was being denied to student teachers by the detailed transmission of knowledge: knowledge was being made available in such a way as to create the impression that nothing more needed to be added to it. It seems that, in the context of strong external framing over the selection of discourses, there is a likelihood of strong internal selection of discourses, too, as teacher educators would naturally respect external prescriptions and expectations. However, it is not clear whether, in the absence of external prescriptions, teacher educators would behave at all differently.

One may conclude that teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on strong internal framing of the selection aspects could possibly generate a pedagogic practice characteristic of possibility 1 in Figure 5.1, that is, a strongly framed visible pedagogy.

7.2.2.2 Strong internal framing (F^+ , F^{++}) over sequencing of discourses

The data were also analyzed in order to understand how learner-centred pedagogy was being practised in relation to the sequencing of discourses. As indicated in the preceding discussion, sequencing refers to the order in which discourses are presented. An examination of the data revealed that at the micro-level of pedagogic practice, teacher educators, by and large, exercised control over the sequencing of discourses. In their own lessons, teacher educators sequenced the progression of the lessons in terms of what came first and what followed next. To illustrate this, the following excerpts from the lesson observation data are presented:

Class: BETD 1 B
Course: ETP

Date: 25.10.07
Topic: Motivation

Bob [teacher educator does some introductions, calls out names in the attendance register]

Students: [individually, students indicate their presence by stating:]
present

Bob [writes topic on the chalkboard]. *Today's topic is about Motivation*

Bob: *Who can define motivation for me?*

Student A: *Motivation is anything that guides a person in order to achieve what he wants to achieve.*

Student B: *Motivation means encouraging someone to work hard.*

Student C: *Motivation is to encourage someone to achieve his goal.*

Bob: [Acknowledges that all the definitions are correct]

Bob: [Offers definition] *Motivation is a human behaviour that shows how one engages himself with regard to something that he wants to do.*

Bob: *I want you to identify things that a teacher needs to do to motivate learners.*

Students [Identify in unison]: *teaching and learning material, concrete and semi-concrete materials, giving learners compliments like: very good, keep it up.*

Bob [Probes students to identify more]: *Can you please identify more of those things that a teacher needs to do or have in order to motivate his students.*

Students [Continue listing]: *the teacher should show good teaching styles (drama, role-plays, etc.), good communication skills, friendliness, positive attitude, good dressing, fairness and good quality teaching*

Bob [Lists up the responses on the chalkboard]: *If these elements are present in your lesson, your learners are likely to be motivated.*

Bob: *Motivation consists of three parts, what are those parts. Give three examples of motivation.*

Students [students identify internal and external motivation but could not identify the third one]

Bob: *Yes, you could have internal and external motivation. What are the other names for internal and external motivation?*

Students: *Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation*

Bob: *Thanks. That is good. The third form of motivation is called personality form of motivation*

Bob [Offers some explanations to help students understand the difference between the three forms of motivation]

Bob: *According to the author [Mwamwenda], internal motivation is considered more superior and more preferable than external motivation. I give you two to three minutes to think about that and then come back with your arguments....*

(Lesson Observation: Bob, 25/10/07)

When analyzed, Bob's lesson reflected strong internal framing (F^+) over the sequencing of the pedagogic transmission, with Bob retaining control over this aspect throughout. The pedagogic process began with Bob instructing students to define motivation. After the definition exercise, Bob steered the lesson to the next stage in the (predetermined) sequence, which was identifying things that a teacher needs to do or to have in order to motivate his or her learners. Thereafter, Bob moved the lesson towards the next stage, the identification of parts of motivation, which was followed by a group exercise and group reports. On the evidence of this example, it can be argued that while sequencing of discourses at the macro-level was externally controlled by curriculum and time-table requirements (section 6.3.2), at the micro-level of pedagogic practice, teacher educators retained control over the sequencing aspect. It could also be the case that teacher educators' pedagogic practice in this regard could simply be an instance of doing what was expected of them.

In Bob's case, there was no evidence of flexibility and responsiveness to individual learners' needs. The lesson progressed in the same manner for all students irrespective of their individual learning needs.

Like Bob, Mary was the locus of control over the sequencing aspects, as is evident in this excerpt from a class:

Class: BETD 1B

Course: ETP

Date: 08/04/08

Topic: Lifelong learning

Mary: In today's lesson, we will continue with the differences between elite type of education and education for all.

Mary: We need to define the term lifelong learning and indicate how it promotes education for all.

Mary: What is your understanding of lifelong learning?

Student A: Lifelong learning is a never ending process of learning.

Student B: Lifelong learning is an endless process of education.

Mary: Does lifelong learning mean that you should be in school all the time?

Mary: [explains] *Lifelong learning is not an event which just ends there. It is a continuous process. It also means that the teacher is not a preacher. He or she is also a learner. It means that you should also talk.*

Mary: *How was lifelong learning seen in elite education?*

Student: *In the past, learning was seen as an event*

Mary: [Elaborates] *This gave rise to the Diploma Disease. But in Education for All, your BETD studies, for example, is just the beginning. Previously, if you got a certificate you would be considered for a post.*

Mary: *What has become important these days?*

Student: *Understanding*

Mary: *Yes, you need understanding.*

Mary: *Can you define what Diploma Disease means?*

Student A: [attempts a definition]

Student B: *People kept on studying, what mattered to them was to get more diplomas with no regard for understanding.*

Mary: *That is good. The Diploma disease means an ever ending chase for getting diplomas. People are in the chase for getting diplomas. They want to get more and more diplomas and salary rises emanating from there. People are only concerned with certification and less of learning or understanding.*

Mary: *This kind of learning we don't need it. What we need is that people should understand what they are learning instead of just concerned with acquiring diplomas.*

Mary: *What mechanism should we put in place to cure the disease?*

(Lesson Observation: Mary, 08/04/08)

Like Bob's lesson, Mary's lesson exhibited strong internal framing (iF^+ , iF^{++}) over the sequencing aspects of the pedagogic process. Throughout the lesson, Mary maintained control over what was to be discussed and when it was to be discussed. She began by soliciting definitions of lifelong learning, and then juxtaposed lifelong learning with elitist education. She then introduced the concept of "Diploma Disease" before engaging the class in exploring what the concept meant. Lastly, Mary moved the lesson towards identifying mechanisms for curing the "disease".

Patrick too exercised control over the sequencing aspects in his lessons, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

Class: BETD 3C
Course: ETP

Date: 09/04/08
Topic: Environmental
features and routines:
learners with special needs

Patrick: [starts off by asking students to go into their groups]

Patrick: [recaps yesterday's lesson]

Patrick: [one student arrives late]. *My friend, I don't want late comers. If you don't want to come to my class, please stay away.*

Student teacher [student tries to explain something]

Patrick: *Just sit down you have already spoilt our mood.*

Patrick: [continues explaining the activity, task for the day] [some students arrive at the door and try to knock]

Patrick: *Guys, just go away. You are disturbing my class.*

Student teacher: [late coming students try to explain something, eventually they leave]

Patrick: [elaborates the task at length] *You cannot keep quiet every day and think that you will pick up the communication skills.*

Patrick: *Those are my reflections from yesterday* [Patrick calls up student to the front to present]

Patrick: [invites comments from the class]

Patrick: *What are some of the examples of independent work routines?*

Patrick: [elaborates more on independent work routines]

Patrick: *How does the Home Ecology class foster this environment?*

Patrick: [elaborates more on how physically challenged learners can be entrusted with responsibilities to work independently]

Patrick: *Can we move to classroom interaction. How does this learner with learning disabilities come in now? What should we do to foster inclusion of learners with disabilities? How do you foster freedom, spontaneity, etc in your class in order to create an environment conducive for learners with disabilities?*

(Lesson Observation: Patrick, 09/04/08)

At the micro-level of implementation, Patrick began the sequencing of the lesson by putting his students in groups. This was followed by a recap of the previous day's lesson, after which he invited comments from the class. Patrick then moved to the day's topic, namely, what should be done in order to ensure that learners with disabilities participate in classroom interactions? He then suggested that the class discuss specific questions regarding learners with disabilities: "*What should be done to foster inclusion, participation in class, freedom and spontaneity?*"

It is evident from the foregoing presentation of data that at the micro-level of pedagogic implementation, the sequencing of discourses was strongly controlled internally ('F⁺', 'F⁺⁺') by teacher educators who exercised control over the chronological order or progression of topics which were themselves mandated by external framing factors. To an extent, it must be pointed out, the progression of the lesson was determined by the structure or intrinsic logic of the topic to be covered. Seen within the context of the four-point scale of framing outlined in table 7.1.2, at the micro-level of pedagogic practice, teacher educators practised learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice characterized by 'F⁺', 'F⁺⁺' regarding the sequencing of discourses. There was no evidence of flexibility and responsiveness to student needs in any of the observed lessons.

Apart from the external framing element, this lack of flexibility might be attributed to other factors such as teacher educators' lack of appropriate professional competence to identify and respond to individual learning needs. This could be true in the light of the academic and professional profiles of the research participants as presented in section 5.3.3. The fact that only two of the five research participants possessed a Master's degree, while the rest had a Bachelor of Education degree (the minimum entry requirement to the position of lecturer in Namibia), could be interpreted to mean that the professional profile of the majority of the research participants was not high enough to give them the necessary competence to be able to overcome external framing factors regarding sequencing.

Thus, despite teacher educators' descriptions of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on student involvement and participation in the pedagogic process, the data revealed that students were not involved in the sequencing of discourses and were relegated to a subservient position of mere recipient of sequencing schemes drawn up by the teacher educator. Once again, this situation contradicted the policy vision of active student involvement as the basis for learner-centred pedagogy (Namibia. MEC, 1993).

The strong internal control by teacher educators over the sequencing of discourses should be seen within a pedagogic context where the degree of detail and explicitness of

discourses to be delivered are strongly controlled externally through the prescription of certain texts. While it could be argued that competent professionals could make plans to by-pass the external controls, it is equally true that in such an externally controlled pedagogic context there was most likely very little option for teacher educators other than to maintain strong internal framing over the sequencing of the pedagogic process. While it can be said that teacher educators did not demonstrate possession of recognition and realization rules to meaningfully recontextualize learner-centred pedagogy, the demonstrated lack of these rules should be seen in terms of a pedagogic context conditioned by the various factors discussed in Chapter Eight.

7.2.2.3 Strong internal framing (F^+ , F^{++}) of the pacing of discourses

Pacing is the amount of time allowed for achieving the sequencing rules (Bernstein, 1990, p. 66; Mawoyo, 2006, p.150). Pacing in this study also refers to the degree to which the pedagogic process is flexible and responsive to the learning tempo of the student teacher rather than only to external framing factors such as the scheme of work, the timetable and other external demands made by college authorities. A student teacher can be said to have control over the pacing aspects when he manages the pacing of the pedagogic process through his learning tempo. On the other hand, control over the pacing aspects will be out of the student's hands when other factors such as the scheme of work, the syllabus and the time table, and the teacher educator come into play.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of how learner-centred pedagogy was being practised, framing relations between teacher educators and their student teachers were examined in relation to control over the pacing of discourses. Apart from a pacing rate dictated by the college composite time table and the scheme of work, data revealed that at the micro-level of pedagogic practice, in their own classrooms, teacher educators controlled the rate of pacing, thus suggesting strong internal framing (F^+ , F^{++}) of pacing relations. In all the lessons that were observed, the teacher educator prescribed the deadlines for submission of assignments and stipulated when specific tasks had to be completed, thus expecting all student teachers to progress at the same pace.

During presentations by student teachers or groups of students, the teacher educator not only decided on who spoke when but also for how long one could speak. For instance, in one of the lessons that were observed, Bob's internal control over the pacing aspects of the instructional discourse was evident when setting a time for group-work exercises to be completed:

Bob: [checks each group] Are you done? Please finish quickly. We are waiting for that group to finish. There are a few minutes only for you to finish.

(Lesson Observation: Bob, 03/04/08)

Similarly, Mary controlled the pacing in her group exercise as follows:

Mary: [giving instructions to student teachers] I am giving you 10 to 12 minutes to do the task because you have been reading already about this task. One should be the secretary while another group member should be prepared to report.....[Mary walks around helping groups. Later on she announces] a minute, one minute remaining then you will be reporting.

(Lesson Observation: Mary, 09/04/08)

For Loide, internal control over the pacing aspects of micro-teaching lessons offered by her students was exercised as follows:

Loide: I am going to give each of you fifteen minutes to present your lesson. After your presentation we will take five minutes to look at the strong points and weak points of your lesson.

(Lesson Observation: Loide, 02/04/08)

It is evident in the excerpts cited above that at the micro-level, in their own classrooms, teacher educators retained full control over the pacing aspect of the learning process. For instance, during group-work exercises, teacher educators served as time keepers who

constantly announced how much time was still remaining for students to complete their group work. At the expiry of the time assigned for the group exercise, teacher educators adopted a no-nonsense approach by abruptly stopping everyone and announcing the next step in the pedagogic process. Similarly, when students were giving presentations to the class, teacher educators decided how much time each student could have and stopped him or her when the time was up.

Thus, as illustrated in table 7.1, the framing of the pacing of discourses ranged from 'F⁺' (8 lessons) to 'F⁺⁺' (7 lessons). No weak framing relations over the pacing aspects of the instructional discourse were observed, despite the teacher educators' view (see Section 6.3.3) that learner-centred pedagogy is a practice in which pacing is controlled by the student teachers' pace of acquisition of the pedagogic discourse. The teacher educator seemed to teach in order to cover a syllabus or scheme of work, and as if all the students were progressing at the same tempo, presumably under the pressure of external expectations.

Once again, it is possible to conclude that teacher educators did not meaningfully and creatively recontextualize learner-centred pedagogy, suggesting that they lacked recognition and realization rules. However, once again, the observed practice could equally be the result of the numerous factors to be discussed in Chapter Eight. At the same time, as was indicated in preceding sections, learner-centred pedagogy was being recontextualized in a pedagogic context conditioned by strong external framing through external control factors such as the syllabus, the scheme of work, timetables, college authorities and the moderation exercise. These factors all served to constrain teacher educators in their interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. In sum, the teacher educators appear to have had little autonomy to make creative decisions at the micro-level of pedagogic implementation.

7.2.2.4 Strong internal framing ('F⁺', 'F⁺⁺') over evaluation of discourses

Regarding the evaluation of discourses Bernstein argued that:

In any teaching relation, the essence of the relation is to evaluate the competence of the acquirer. What you are evaluating is whether the criteria that have been made available to the acquirer have been achieved – whether they are regulative criteria about conduct, character, and manner, or instructional, discursive criteria: how to solve this problem or that problem, or produce an acceptable piece of writing or speech. (Bernstein, 1990, p. 66)

Bernstein further argued that criteria can be explicit and specific, or implicit and diffuse. Where evaluation criteria are explicit and specific, framing of the evaluation aspects of instructional discourse is strong, with the teacher educator being the locus of control. The rules for successful performance are made explicit to students and are not open to negotiation (Ensor, 2004a, p. 220). However, where criteria for evaluation are implicit and diffuse, framing of the evaluation aspects of instructional discourse is weak, with the student teacher being the locus of control. In the BETD Broad Curriculum, assessment practices are weakly framed as follows:

Assessment in the BETD is learner-centred and criterion referenced. It is designed to encourage a focus on progress and achievement, and to measure each student's personal and professional development towards the competencies. As such it is an integral part of the teaching and learning, providing feedback to teacher educators and students through a wide variety of formative and summative assessment processes. (Namibia. MoE, 2007, p. 23)

The Broad Curriculum emphasizes the multiplicity and variety of weakly framed assessment practices:

The principle of positive achievement is used to assess what students know, understand and can do, rather than to focus on the student's weaknesses. This principle entails that a variety of assessment approaches are used, and that feedback, support and when necessary, compensatory tasks become an integral part of assessment procedures. (Namibia. MoE, 2007, p. 23)

From a Bernsteinian perspective, then, the BETD Broad Curriculum suggests weak framing of assessment practices with implicit, diffuse and multiple approaches. The

lesson observation data were examined in order to understand how teacher educators implemented learner-centred pedagogy in relation to the framing of evaluation aspects. Contrary to the weak framing (F⁻, F⁻) advocated by the official pedagogic texts, the data generated through observation of teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy revealed strong internal framing (F⁺, F⁺⁺) of assessment practices that are explicit and specific. This was evident in examples such as the following:

Loide: The word "pest" was incorrectly written. The "P" was not written in capital. The heading should also be written on the chalkboard. Chalkboard writing was not good. You need to come back in the afternoon and practice chalkboard writing skills. You should avoid putting hands in your pockets when teaching because that shows a bad image. Boys, remember that. When you explained some of the concepts you were too fast.

(Lesson Observation: Loide, 04/04/08)

In another lesson, Loide dismissed a lesson offered by one of her student teachers in no uncertain terms, and instructed her to re-plan and re-teach the lesson:

Loide: ...Eva, please improve on that. You also ignored when learners said they did not understand. Please, Eva attend to students. You have to be attentive. It was a good topic but the way you presented it, I think Eva you did not prepare. Eva, please always prepare for your lessons. I think you just did the preparation this morning. You could have gone to the hospital to get a variety of material to use in your class. You can't just bring one condom. You could have brought more and let the children touch. The demonstration was not well. You even failed. My dear, when we are dealing with these issues we need to be serious. At the hospital they have all these material. They have appropriate material at the hospital that can be used to demonstrate the use of condoms. So dear, if this is what will happen in your class during School Based Studies, I will not just sit there and watch such things happen. I will simply walk out. Remember, learner-centred education requires learners to touch and feel. Year 3, you are not going to graduate, remember this. Eva, we really need to be serious. I want you to re-teach this lesson. I will allocate you time. You need to go to the hospital and get more material.

(Lesson Observation: Loide, 03/04/08)

In his classes, Bob also preferred being explicit and specific in his evaluation criteria. For instance, when teaching his students about writing research reports he asked them why they thought it was important in such a report to write about the school profile. After several students attempted to give responses to the question, Bob stated:

Bob: Tell you what? All that is not addressing my question. Why is the information about school profile important when writing up your action research report?

(Lesson Observation: Bob, 03/04/08)

In this particular lesson, Bob's pedagogic approach was mainly to make a statement and then ask students whether it was true or false. Throughout the lesson, Bob made it clear when a student gave a wrong answer.

Explicit evaluation criteria were also preferred in Mary's lessons. For instance, in one of her lessons on the topic "From elite education to education for all", Mary gave her students a list of questions to work through and the page reference numbers in the prescribed text where they could find the answers. This was stated in the worksheet, as the following extract illustrates:

Class Work, ETP Year 1, 7 March 2008
From elite education to education for all
Work through the following questions focusing on pages 2-16 (Towards Education for All) in your ETP notebooks....

(ETP Class work activity: Mary, 09/04/08)

Similarly, in one of his lessons, Patrick showed something like an obsession with making assessment criteria explicit and specific. This was illustrated by the frequency with which he made references to possible examination questions on certain aspects of his lesson:

Patrick: [reminds students], remember that there can be a possible exam question on SBS. You can be asked to write reflections on your SBS during the exam.

Patrick: [announces], remember that another possibility is to have an exam question on reflections on your action research.

Patrick: [teacher educator keeps on clarifying the task. Teacher educator responds to individual students seeking clarifications on the task], this task will help you with your exam. It is a possible exam question.

Patrick: Let me warn you guys who don't come to classes. Don't run to me when exams are around the corner. I will not help you.

(Lesson Observation: Patrick, 24/10/07)

Data generated through the observation of teacher educators' enactments of learner-centred pedagogy revealed assessment practices that were explicit, specific and underpinned by strong internal control relations, ranging from F^+ (9 lessons) to F^{++} (6 lessons) (see Table 7.1). It appears that the teacher educators interpreted learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on assessment practices that are strongly framed internally. In most cases, teacher educators opted systematically to point out what was incorrect and indicate in clear and detailed ways how to correct it. For instance, Loide clearly indicated not only what was wrong in the text presented by the student teacher but also how to make it right: *"the word pest was incorrectly written. The "P" was not written in capital. The heading should be written on the chalkboard."* Similarly, Patrick's concern, demonstrated by his alerting students to possible exam questions, was to prevent them from giving 'incorrect' answers during the examination.

Thus, while the official pedagogic texts advocate weakly framed assessment practices, teacher educators preferred practices based on strong internal framing. This preference reflects the dislike they expressed in the interviews of the assessment approaches in the BETD program (see Section 6.3.4). Weakly framed assessment practices were perceived to generate problems inhibiting teacher educators' meaningful recontextualization of learner-centred pedagogy.

7.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used the data analysis model in Figure 5.1 to illuminate teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy and the extent to which their practice of the pedagogy suggests possession of recognition and realization rules. Despite interview and document interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on weak rules of the regulative discourse, the data generated through lesson observation and from lesson plans suggests a pedagogic practice based on strong rules of the regulative discourse.

The data revealed strong internal framing (iF^+ , iF^{++}) of the regulative discourse at the micro-level of pedagogic practice, with the teacher educator being the locus of control. The teacher educator selected, sequenced and paced the regulative discourse and set the evaluation criteria for the students' conduct and performance. The teacher educators' pedagogic practice therefore contradicted not only their own interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy as expressed in the interviews, but also the interpretations advanced in official pedagogic texts. However, these contradictions should also be seen within the context of the contradictions that were observed in official discourses in policy and other official documents like syllabi instructions that advanced contradictory messages to teacher educators.

As argued throughout this chapter, the strong internal framing that was exhibited at the micro-level of pedagogic practice could be attributed to several factors, including strong external framing of the instructional discourse. In other words, many factors (as discussed in Chapter Eight) such as teacher educators' lack of professional confidence, feelings of dependency on foreign experts for guidance, and a lack of instructional material and resources may have led teacher educators to resort to strong internal framing over the regulative discourse. The strong internal framing may also have resulted from teacher educators' efforts to meet the external prescriptions of a strongly framed curriculum. This raises the question of whether it is possible to have weak internal framing of the regulative discourse in the context of a curriculum that is strongly framed externally?

While Bernstein (2000, p. 13) maintains that the two systems of rules regulated by framing (rules of the regulative discourse and rules of the instructional discourse) can be at variance, with their framing values changing independently, there is a distinct possibility that at the micro-level of pedagogic practice, teacher educators' application of rules of the regulative discourse may be influenced or regulated by external macro-level framing over the instructional discourse. In other words, teacher educators will exercise the appropriate regulative rules necessary for them to fulfil the external prescriptions.

The data further revealed that of all the aspects of the instructional discourse, only the evaluation aspect was weakly framed by external framing factors such as official texts (the BETD Broad Curriculum). At the micro-level of pedagogic practice, teacher educators nevertheless recontextualized learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on strong framing of the evaluation aspects. And while they gave several reasons for this choice in the interviews (see Chapter Six), it can also be concluded that the preference for strong framing was an aspect of a pedagogic modality that insisted on strong framing over every aspect of the instructional discourse (including the selection, sequencing and pacing aspects), in response to strong external framing.

The next chapter seeks to illuminate contextual factors that constrained teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS THAT CONSTRAINED TEACHER EDUCATORS' RECONTEXTUALIZATION OF LEARNER-CENTRED PEDAGOGY

8.1. Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I examined teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy at two levels. The first, presented in Chapter Six, was the descriptive level, that is, the level of being able to describe what learner-centred pedagogy is and what to do in a learner-centred context. The second, presented in Chapter Seven, was the implementation level, the micro-level of pedagogic practice.

At both levels, the findings suggested that teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy does not happen in isolation but is inextricably intertwined with contextual factors that could serve to constrain the meaningful and creative recontextualization of the official pedagogic discourse.

8.2 Strong external framing of the pedagogic context

In Chapters Six and Seven we saw that strong external framing of the curriculum imposed certain controls on the pedagogic context. This imposition may have stifled not only teacher educators' professional autonomy but also their creativity, in terms of their ability meaningfully to recontextualize learner-centred pedagogy. When sharing their experiences of implementing learner-centred pedagogy, the teacher educators alluded to the negative impact of the strongly framed sequencing and pacing on their attempts to teach in a learner-centred way. For instance, teacher educators complained about "*not having much liberty*", being "*externally controlled through time-tabling*" and that "*if you have to be learner-centred you need more time*". Teacher educators further indicated that "*there is a need to rethink the 35 minutes, as the 35 minutes period was for the era when the teacher educator did the talking and students did the listening*".

Data in the preceding chapters indicated that in some cases, teacher educators bargained with each other for extra time so as to ensure that their students benefited from their lessons. But generally speaking, in terms of pacing, teaching remained inflexible and non-responsive to the learning needs of the student, partly because teacher educators had to conform to a prescribed timetable. The timetable could be organized differently so as to provide for more substantial blocks of teaching and learning time.

Another structural control factor that emerged in the data as a constraint had to do with the strong framing of the sequencing aspect. This was the case in the sense that deadlines were externally set and had to be met. But difficulties were experienced in meeting these deadlines due to the pace of the students' learning. The leadership and management of the College constituted another problem, as *"the aim of the authority who manages the college is that we should cover the syllabus. The syllabus should be covered as a whole. I fully understand the fact that even if they are driven by that intention they do not know what is on the ground in the classroom"*. Even though the authorities were pressuring teacher educators to teach for syllabus coverage, they apparently did not know what was going on in the classrooms. Additionally, teacher educators had to ensure conformance to externally framed pacing *"otherwise when the NIED people come for moderation they will start blaming you as a teacher educator that you haven't done anything"*. Some teacher educators felt that teaching should be driven by student teachers' learning needs and not by syllabus coverage, or that *"one has to play it in such a way that you satisfy both parties"*.

Other factors such as strong external framing of the selection of discourses were also seen as problematic. Even though teacher educators were pleased to be involved in the discourse selection process as members of the NIED-based curriculum panels, they felt that in the final analysis NIED decided what went into the syllabus regardless of the views of others. Some complained about their own inputs being no longer visible after NIED had worked on the draft syllabus documents.

It is therefore possible to conclude that strong external framing in terms of the selection, sequencing and pacing of discourses constituted one of the limitations that hindered teacher educators from creatively and meaningfully recontextualizing the official pedagogic discourse. Teacher educators did not have the autonomy (*“we do not have liberty because we are time-tabled in the college composite time-table”*) to take decisions at the micro-level of pedagogic practice so as to practise learner-centred pedagogy in a meaningful way.

However, as will be argued in subsequent paragraphs, there is a strong possibility that even if the pedagogic contexts were weakly framed teacher educators might still not be able meaningfully to recontextualize learner-centred pedagogy. This conclusion is reached in the context of teacher educators’ self-doubt and lack of professional confidence, the alleged lack of professional support from NIED, feelings of dependency on experts, the lack of instructional resources, and the inadequate academic backgrounds of the student teachers.

It should be noted that external framing factors not only constitute one of the constraints hindering teacher educators from recontextualizing learner-centred pedagogy but also help to account for the narrow understanding of learner-centred pedagogy dominant within Namibian teacher education reform. As discussed elsewhere in this study, learner-centred pedagogy is understood to mean changes in teacher educators’ teaching skills from teacher-centredness to learner-centredness. This understanding ignores the need for change in the structural or systemic frame factors that condition how the new pedagogy is to be implemented. Thus, teacher educators are expected to shift to a learner-centred pedagogy while teaching and learning is still rigidly organized and managed in traditional ways, at the College level and beyond.

8.3 Teacher educators' self-doubt and lack of professional confidence

Apart from external framing factors, another constraint evident in the data was teacher educators' lack of confidence in their ability to interpret and practice learner-centred pedagogy. Almost all the participants expressed feelings of self-doubt and lack of professional competence when sharing their experiences of implementing the new pedagogy. As illuminated in the interview narratives, this lack of professional confidence was mainly due to their realization that they were not as proficient in interpreting and implementing learner-centred pedagogy as they ought to have been. Thus, despite the Ministry of Education's insistence that "learner-centred classrooms rely on an active teacher role in developing the curriculum and working out how to implement it" (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 11), most participants tended to shy away from this responsibility. They expressed doubt in their own professional competencies, not only in terms of participating at the macro-level in the broader activities of the reform process, such as curriculum development and syllabus writing, but even with regard to the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy in their own classrooms. This is illustrated in the data as follows:

Do we really have what it takes to develop a syllabus that is learner-centred? Apart from the BETD there is nothing else that we know that happens elsewhere where teachers are trained. The only little exposure and experience is the BETD experience. Now you wonder how you can develop a learner-centred syllabus with that limited exposure.

(Interview: Peter, 09/03/07).

Loide voiced similar sentiments:

You know, if you look at us teacher educators, we don't all have the knowledge and skills, and even the attitude to prepare teachers in a learner-centred way. We are struggling. We are just trying. To tell you the truth, our students are not well prepared, even after completion of their studies, after three years.

(Interview: Loide, 16/03/07)

Loide explained how teacher educators were hindered by a lack of knowledge and skills in their attempts to interpret and practise learner-centred pedagogy:

Even though there are changes, these are not being implemented as they were supposed to be. More emphasis was not put on the implementers for them to be really empowered. We are not empowered really to implement the reform as it is supposed to be. So, you will find that methods about learner-centred pedagogy are there, but now the way on how to implement these methods in a real life situation is a problem. Most of us are not well trained so that we can handle the reform process.

(Interview: Loide, 16/03/07)

Mary articulated similar feelings:

*Some of us are trying to really implement the philosophy of learner-centred education. But in some lessons, you will see that there is a lack of skills to implement learner-centred education
I don't see how we can develop this on our own. We are not trained to develop learner-centred curricular. We are just teachers.*

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

Teacher educators demeaned themselves by harbouring self-depreciating feelings such as “we are just teachers” or “I don't see how we can develop this on our own” . Some criticized their own colleagues for not having the competence to articulate what learner-centred pedagogy entails:

What I saw in the discussion with fellow colleagues about learner-centred pedagogy is that some could not even explain what learner-centred education is. But they are the teacher educators who are training the students to become teachers who are going to use learner-centred approaches. They could not explain and if you asked them to talk about the elements of learner-centred education it is very difficult for them to give even one element. Such teacher educators are the ones busy training our student teachers. So, it is really a problem. Even those who attended courses before, I think somehow, somewhere, the concept was not really well explained or defined so that one can understand it in order for him to confidently train student teachers using learner-centred approaches.

(Interview: Loide, 16/03/07).

Evident in these extracts are teacher educators' feelings of *"lack of empowerment and not being properly trained"*, self-depreciating feelings of having *"little exposure"*, *"little experience"* and *"lack of knowledge of what is happening elsewhere in teacher education other than the BETD"*. Since their only experience in teacher education is limited to the BETD, teacher educators wondered whether they *"really had what it takes to develop and implement a syllabus that is learner-centred"*.

It thus seems likely that the lack of professional confidence among teacher educators constituted part of the pedagogical environment that constrained their interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. Since two of the participants possessed Masters degrees in education, one could hardly describe them as under-qualified (see Chapter Five, Section 5.3.3); moreover, all of them had at least three years' college teaching experience, albeit with limited collegial activities and little professional exposure to learner-centred pedagogy.

It appears that the lack of professional confidence among teacher educators identifies them as "restricted" rather than "extended" professionals (Rawling, 2003 cited in Wilmot, 2005, p. 29). They understand what they should do regarding learner-centred pedagogy but are unable actually to do it: the shift to learner-centred pedagogy has for them occurred at the level of rhetoric and not implementation. Effective recontextualization requires teacher educators to be extended professionals who possess the appropriate epistemological empowerment to actualize the new pedagogy in practice.

8.4 Lack of professional support by NIED in terms of workshops and staff development

Among the limitations constraining their interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy mentioned by the teacher educators was the lack of professional support from NIED in terms of workshops and staff development activities:

The workshops really are not preparing us properly. Why, because they do not focus on particular areas. For example, in ETP there is an area called reflective practice. Instead of NIED or the Ministry to conduct a workshop particularly on that area so that teacher educators can understand what it is and how we can prepare our students on this area, that is not done. Okay, generally, I can say that there are workshops that are being conducted but these do not focus on particular areas in a way that would help us teacher educators. I can remember that last year, they started going around colleges asking teacher educators to list areas on which they need training or workshops. But since they collected that information, I never saw them come back for training on those areas that were listed so that they can help teacher educators on the what, how and why of learner-centred pedagogy. To conclude, I can say, we are really not getting much from the Ministry and NIED. We are not being supported.

(Interview: Loide, 16/03/07)

Peter was somewhat dismissive of training workshops:

We have got a lot of workshops. But again, the question still remains: What does one get from these workshops? The workshops are there and they are too many. I don't think people really benefit from these workshops.

(Interview: Peter, 31/10/07)

Asked to be more specific about why he thought teacher educators were not benefiting from the workshops, Peter replied:

Maybe it is the way in which they are planned or maybe the problem has to do with the people who facilitate them. The facilitators have the same handicaps like us teacher educators. It is like a blind man trying to lead another blind man. It would be nice for one blind man to be led by someone who at least has got some sight, then you will be able to achieve much more. With the workshops, it has been a case of two blind people trying to lead one another in darkness. It is very difficult. We really don't know who is supposed to assist who. . . .

The real major problem is staff development. I think staff development is very poor. To say the least, it is very poor. The demands of learning in today's world, with all the changes, are so much and the expectations are

so high, and yet our staff development in terms of academic development leaves much to be desired. If we have to really be at the level where we are supposed to be as colleges, staff development is supposed to be one of the priorities. As you can see how much challenge we are facing, for instance, just what learner-centred pedagogy is supposed to mean is a major challenge for us. One cannot just get it in a two or three day workshop.

(Interview: Peter, 31/10/07)

Peter had more to say on the issue of staff development:

Staff development has been a mixed bag of confusion. People get Masters Degrees in ETP instead of getting Masters Degrees in their various subject areas of specialization, for instance, in English or Language teaching or History. I would be more comfortable with a situation where people are trained in their various subject areas of work. But now it is like people are being trained upside down. So, we need to be taught. We need to learn and learn the right things and implement the right things in our classes. That is how it works in all institutions of learning. You are a history professor, for instance, because you specialized in History. You are a language professor in the university because you know more about language and you teach language. All over the world, it works like that. But when it comes to colleges, it is totally a different ball game. You know more about ETP and you were trained more in ETP but by the end of the day you will be teaching languages. How does ETP help me to understand languages? Well, in a way.

(Interview, Peter, 31/10/07)

For Mary, there were no staff development activities that specifically addressed learner-centred pedagogy:

No, no staff development activities are happening on learner-centred pedagogy. All we had was one on action research. But this was two years ago. Since then, there has been nothing organized. That is why some of us think that learner-centred pedagogy is group-work. We are not acquainted with other approaches or methods that could be used.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

Some of the participants also felt that NIED was not providing appropriate written materials for teacher educators to read for themselves about learner-centred pedagogy:

NIED does not provide any written guidance about learner-centred education. The understanding we have about learner-centred education comes from upgrading courses that we do on our own. If you are not studying, then there is no way you will understand learner-centred education. That is why teacher educators need to upgrade themselves because when you are upgrading that is when you gain knowledge. But really from NIED, to tell you the truth, since I entered the college, I never got any reading from NIED or even from the Ministry that could help me to teach my students or for myself to gain more knowledge. Like now, the material that I am using even with my students is the one I used during the Rhodes course.

(Interview: Loide, 16/03/07)

Others recognized that some such material had been provided, though not enough and not sufficiently focused on practice to be useful:

NIED has partly assisted teacher educators by providing some material on how they can use learner-centred pedagogy. But to really give practical examples that one can adopt and say this I can take and internalize for myself, that level I think NIED still needs to do a lot of work.

(Interview: Mary, 15/03/07)

Asked what she would recommend, Loide responded:

What we need as teacher educators is staff development on learner-centred pedagogy. We need to know what other methods can be used. As you have observed by yourself, there is too much usage of group-work and question and answer method. We want to pretend that we know more about learner-centred education when we actually don't. I don't want to blame student teachers for using too much group-work or question and answer method because that is what we have exposed them to. That is what we have taught them. We have not exposed them to other methods or approaches that could be used. This is because of our lack of knowledge and skills in learner-centred pedagogy as teacher educators. So, the problem is with us teacher educators. We are not well exposed.

(Interview: Loide, 08/04/08).

It can be argued on the basis of these statements that teacher educators' feelings of self-doubt had been compounded by the absence of appropriate staff development activities or training workshops organized by NIED on the subject of learner-centred pedagogy. As seen in the narratives, where workshops were organized by NIED, these lacked "*focus on particular areas*". Or, allowing that there were a lot of workshops taking place, "*the question remains: what does one get from these workshops?*". The workshops were not of any real value, "*maybe it is the way in which they are planned or maybe the problem has to do with the people organizing them*".

The situation pertaining to NIED workshops was further described as one of "*two blind people trying to lead one another in darkness*". Not only is staff development perceived to be "*very poor*", but it has been "*a mixed bag of confusion*", failing to address "*academic development*". In sum, the lack of support to teacher educators in terms of equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to properly interpret and practice learner-centred pedagogy was seen as one of the factors inhibiting or limiting their recontextualization of learner-centred pedagogy.

However, the findings of the 1997 evaluation study of the implementation of the BETD that was conducted by NIED in cooperation with the Teacher Education Reform Project (TERP) pointed to the contrary, indicating that the implementation of the program was being supported through national seminars, workshops and monitoring activities:

The implementation of the BETD program has also been supported by the Ministry/NIED through national seminars, subject area workshops and monitoring activities.....Almost all teacher educators (92%) had participated in one or more of these activities. Most of them had participated in the national seminars (74%) and/or the subject area workshops (48%). Very few had been directly involved in the monitoring activities. (NIED, 1997, p. 99)

It should be noted that the NIED/TERP report seemed to be satisfied with the fact that teacher educator support activities such as workshops had been conducted and that most teacher educators had participated in them, without addressing the issue of whether or not the workshops had been effective. The discrepancy between the perceptions of the teacher educators and the findings of the NIED/TERP study cited above could be explained by the fact that many of the activities that supported the implementation of the BETD program during its inception were funded by the TERP project and disappeared with the expiration of the project. Besides, most of the teacher educators who were involved in the delivery of the BETD during the phase of TERP-funded staff development activities have since left the colleges for other jobs.

The teacher educators clearly expected professional development to come from an external agent (NIED) rather than from within (the College management). On the one hand, this can be interpreted to mean that they did not have sufficient confidence in the ability of their own College to provide the requisite professional development. On the other hand, it may simply be a reflection of the way in which these activities have traditionally been organized. However, the data do indicate that the College did not have its own strategic professional development plan, and indeed imply that there was no capacity in the College to initiate professional development activities. This suggests that management and leadership at the College were less than fully effectual.

8.5 Dependency on experts

In addition to the lack of professional confidence in their ability to interpret and practise learner-centred pedagogy, and the absence of professional support through workshops and staff development activities (for which NIED is blamed), the data indicated that feelings of dependency on 'experts' among teacher educators may be one of the factors militating against their interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. This is illustrated in the following:

The problem is that we do not have the 'experts' that can direct the process. Okay, we have the content knowledge ourselves but we need to have those who can add to what we have, like for example, to direct. Say, for example, if I am maybe experiencing a certain problem there should be someone who should assist to correct the situation. For instance, during the first curriculum panel meeting that we had, I was expecting someone from UNAM [University of Namibia] or a member from these other institutions just to come and be with us. We were just working on our own, alone. Sometimes you are seated in a room working alone and you are experiencing problems but there is no one to direct you or to help you. There is no direction and guidance.

(Interview: Loide, 16/03/07).

Mary concurred with Loide, saying *"There must be a consultant or expert to see that what you are doing is right. I think there is a lack of knowledge somewhere"* (Interview: Mary, 15/03/07).

Like Loide and Mary, Patrick felt that there was a need for the external monitoring of colleges to ensure that they were doing the right things as far as learner-centred pedagogy was concerned:

Sometimes we get the moderation visit from NIED but that is only for a very short period of time. I think NIED should monitor colleges and always ask them to submit their strategic plans. This will ensure that our products, the graduates, are of good quality. This will also ensure that we are doing the right things as far as learner-centred education is concerned.

(Interview: Patrick, 29/10/07).

Notions of having experts that would monitor, guide and direct the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy were further echoed by Peter:

One feels we would have done well to work with specialists, especially at NIED. For instance, there are people that are professors in education. I think they are not professors for nothing. I feel we have not involved these people. If we have involved them, it has been a once off consultant coming and going back and now you are to make do without them. So, one would have loved to see a situation where we use people that really know the business of teacher education. As for us teacher educators we can teach

down here and let specialists guide us and shade light on learner-centred education. So, I would have loved to see a situation where we give the whole idea of reform to specialists. We are not specialists. We are only teacher educators. We are far from being specialists. If we are guided, we can facilitate the teaching but to be given this whole responsibility to go all out and to be the masters of the reform, I think it is asking too much from us.

(Interview: Peter, 09/03/07)

The data also revealed that the teacher educators were not happy about the fact that they were supposed to be involved in the syllabus writing and curriculum development processes. Instead, they felt that curriculum development and syllabus writing should be done by 'experts', though they were willing to be consulted:

The only problem is we seem not to be very sure whether the extent of our involvement is really necessary or whether we could just get some experts that we could work with or that could involve us just by way of consultation concerning what is on the ground because we do not have the international exposure.

(Interview: Peter, 09/03/07)

I may be teaching ETP but if I did not specialize in order to understand the whole idea of curriculum development, I better as well not be involved. It is not just a question of being involved because there is democracy. Well, the idea of involvement is okay, but I wish lecturers were involved much more on a consultative basis. But as for curriculum development, there should be specialists, for instance, in Geography curriculum, History curriculum and English curriculum whose job is just curriculum development. But you can't develop it in a vacuum. You need to consult people on the ground, people that are teaching. Then you share certain things with them and consult them. As for developing the curriculum, I think there should be people who are entrusted with that because they know better. But to think that every lecturer knows better in terms of curriculum development is not being serious with what we are doing. The current situation can be seen to be too liberal.

(Interview: Peter, 31/10/07)

Asked whether it was not a good thing that teacher educators were being involved in curriculum development, Peter argued:

Involvement is good. But then I think there should be two levels of involvement. One is the consultative level, and then the development of the curriculum should be different people, and then the implementation should come back to us. Then those who developed the curriculum should do the monitoring because they know the objectives of the curriculum they developed. Because they know the objectives, they will come and monitor us. But now it is like, we develop the curriculum, we implement it, and then we monitor ourselves. There are no checks and balances.

(Interview: Peter, 31/10/07)

Asked whether this involvement on a consultative level might not pose a problem for teacher educators, Mary maintained that it would not:

Since we are consulted along the way and we are together I don't think there will be a problem than just using us. The way we know each other, at Ongwediva College I know it is Ms. X who will come to the panel meeting, at Windhoek College it is X, and Caprivi College it is Mr. Y, and we meet. So, I don't see how we can develop it on our own. We need some expertise from outside who will just consult us.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

Some teacher educators exhibited a craving for 'experts' to give learner-centred "model lessons", or "practical examples" of how they have been implementing learner-centred pedagogy in their own countries:

Sometimes you would wish to see a learner-centred lesson taught by the expert. Such a lesson would indicate what it is that is really required in a learner-centred lesson. Each time the NIED people come here it is just preaching. This has been the case over the years. So, we don't know where we are moving to. Sometimes it is good to have even a model showing us that this is the kind of lesson that should be regarded as a learner-centred one.

These consultants should come with examples and share with us on how they have worked in their countries. They should share with us what has

been their experience of a teacher education program based on learner-centred education. How should it look like? We would like to see an example given from their countries. We would like to hear the expert or consultant say that in Europe where I come from this is how learner-centred education is implemented in the syllabus.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

Probed to elaborate on what she meant by an 'expert', Mary stated:

People understand a person who is from outside than whom they know. They will always wonder what it is that you can bring about which is new that they don't know. So, they will believe a person from outside because they think that this person has more expertise, and even has a Doctorate, and may even be white for that matter.

(Interview: Mary 31/10/07)

Some teacher educators expressed unhappiness with 'experts' who, instead of being explicit in their directions and guidance, chose to remain liberal, implicit or blurred. Experts were expected to make explicit corrections to teacher educators' work and show them the right way to do things (which is of course contrary to the spirit of learner-centred pedagogy). Vague and implicit expert interventions were seen as confusing and frustrating:

There was this lady, an expert. Yes, a consultant. We were expecting more on how we can balance pedagogic content knowledge and subject content knowledge so they are seen in one syllabus. We were really struggling because we are from colleges and we have never seen such a picture which people want to see in the syllabus. The consultant is there and we are waiting for input from her but she is really not forthcoming with her input. But she is there. Now we wonder. Maybe we don't know how consultants or experts work. After we had done our first draft we would have loved to see some changes made by the consultant because she has more knowledge and experience on such type of syllabus. But even when the syllabus came out it just contained our own inputs.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

NIED's 'failure' to intervene directly was also a source of frustration:

What was happening is that we sat and wrote, and then after writing we submitted the drafts to them but the feedback we were getting from them could not really direct us. We asked why they were not being part of what we were busy doing. One member from NIED said that ourselves also we are not experts. So, we are just people like you. So, then I fail to understand, if we are in the same category, who is going to direct another one? It means we have been working on curriculum documents without knowing whether what we have been doing is correct or not because there is no one to direct and guide us.

(Interview: Loide, 16/03/07)

Mary made much the same point:

When we give our input there should be some other changes so that we can see that they too have made their own input which is needed to guide us. Sometimes when you seek for guidance the consultant will say: please just go ahead. You don't know how to even go ahead. You start wondering whether what you are doing is the right thing or there is something missing. You are just going ahead. We would love to hear them say in Europe where I come from this is how the syllabus looks like. But then instead of that her starting point is: Namibia was disadvantaged, telling us again things we know already.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

Prominent in these extracts is a plaintive appeal from teacher educators for 'experts' or 'specialists' to "guide", "direct" and "monitor" their interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. Teacher educators did not see themselves as experts in their own right. Loide, for instance, felt that "the problem is that we do not have experts that can direct the process", and that if a teacher educator was experiencing a problem, "there should be someone who should assist to correct the situation".

Peter concurred that "we would have done well to work with specialists". More particularly, Peter pointed out that "there are people who are professors in education", "people that really know the business of education", and said: "I feel we have not

involved these people". If academics had been involved, it had been a *"once off consultancy coming and going back, and now you have to make do without them"*. As for teacher educators, Peter's views were self-belittling: *"we are not specialists. We are only teachers. We are far from being specialists"*. Instead of teacher educators being involved in curriculum development and syllabus writing, Peter felt: *"I would have loved to see a situation where we give the whole idea of the reform to specialists"*.

Also evident in the interview narratives was a preference among teacher educators to be involved only by way of *"consultation concerning what is on the ground because we do not have the international exposure"*. Contributing on a consultative basis to syllabus writing and curriculum development would not pose any problems, *"since we are consulted along the way, and we are together, I don't think there will be a problem than just using us"*. According to Peter, teacher educator involvement in these tasks should *"not just be a question of democracy"*, and that the current practice *"is being too liberal"* and *"not being serious with what we are doing"*. The appropriateness in context of the democratic principles informing the syllabus development process were therefore being questioned by some of the teacher educators like Peter, who would have preferred the whole process to be handled mainly by *"specialists"* or *"experts"*.

The interview data also indicated a desire among teacher educators for 'experts' who would provide *"model lessons"* or *"practical examples"* of how they had been implementing learner-centred pedagogy in their own countries of origin. Furthermore, the narrative accounts offered a definition of an 'expert' as an *"outsider"*, someone from another country, probably having a Doctorate and even *"white"* for that matter. This view of an expert as an *"outsider"* seems to underpin the demands for 'experts' expressed by most of the participants. An insider such as a fellow teacher educator would not be seen as an expert as *"people believe an outsider"*. Furthermore, the teacher educators would prefer 'experts' who were very explicit and specific in terms of guiding and correcting their inputs on syllabus or curriculum development.

It is interesting to observe that the demands for experts and external support expressed by the participants in this study are consistent with those made by teacher educators in the 1997 NIED and TERP study on the implementation of the BETD program (NIED, 1997, p. 102). At OCE, these feelings were expressed as follows:

NIED must at this stage take a strong grip over the colleges and the implementation of the BETD. They must come close to us....They must assist us in the implementation...

(Teacher Educator, OCE)

A teacher educator from Caprivi College of Education expressed similar sentiments about external support (NIED, 1997, p. 102):

At this stage, NIED is very important. NIED must guide us. *They will have the capacity and expertise.* A good working relationship must be maintained. (my emphasis)

(Teacher Educator, CCE).

It is therefore evident from the NIED study that teacher educators' felt need for expert guidance and direction is an issue that has been around at the colleges since 1997. The CCE teacher educator quoted above expresses the need for expert guidance in almost the same language as the participants in the current study. The CCE teacher educator did not only voice a desire for expert guidance, but also assumed that NIED would have the capacity and the expertise which the colleges, according to him, did not have. Callewaert made similar observation regarding teachers' self-belief in relation to 'experts' in Namibia:

Visitors to schools in the northern Namibia just before independence were struck with the observation that no teacher on duty would consider the possibility that his or her ideas about how to do things in school could have any importance. *People believed that they did not know how things should be done. The national and international chorus about the unqualified teachers corresponded to the teachers' own convictions that only experts have ideas.* (Callewaert, 1999, p. 224, my emphasis)

While the majority of teacher educators expressed the need for expert direction regarding the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy, at least one teacher educator held dissenting views on this issue. Bob disagreed with the rest of the participants:

I wouldn't support that kind of notion. Of course the point that we are not exposed is quite true. But what should we do if we are not exposed? Should we just sit down like that? When we are asked to go and participate in syllabus development that is where our exposure begins. And as we go there, we meet different people coming from different spheres of life. I think that is the beginning of our exposure. Some authors say: for teachers to teach well they need to be honoured. They need to be respected and the part that makes them to feel honoured and enjoy teaching is that their contributions to the syllabus are recognized and acknowledged. When teachers see their contributions in the syllabus they become excited. So, honestly speaking, I am happy that we are part of the syllabus development process.

(Interview: Bob, 23/10/07)

While agreeing with the other participants that teacher educators did not have international exposure in teacher education, Bob did not believe in having outside 'experts' monitoring teacher educators' work. Instead, he felt that through participation in syllabus development teacher educators were being empowered and exposed. Not only did Bob locate his beliefs within the context of literature that regards the teacher as a curriculum developer but he also maintained that teachers teach more effectively if they have been involved in the design of the curriculum.

Within the conceptual framework of this study, teacher educators' lamentations for expert guidance and direction can be interpreted as one of the factors that constrained their meaningful interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. With their low professional self-esteem (see Section 8.3), teacher educators seemed to be at risk of uncritically accepting the knowledge claims advanced by the so-called experts guiding the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy as transcendent truths. Similarly, the views expressed in the interviews suggested a positioning of teacher educators as mere consumers rather than constructors of the curriculum, which is contrary to the aspirations of the Ministry of Education that learner-centred classrooms rely on "an active teacher

role in curriculum development and working out how to teach it” (Namibia. MEC, 1993, p. 11).

By lamenting the absence of specialists, teacher educators denied their own “voice”, that is, as Prawat (1991, p. 740) puts it, “the right and power to have a say in policy”. As maintained in the literature (Bernstein, 1990; 1996; Prawat, 1991; Giroux & McLaren, 1987; Shalem, 2003, p. 30; Carl, 2005, p. 228), teacher educators are not necessarily mere reproducers of curriculum, but can also be curriculum constructors. By denying their role as participants in curriculum development and syllabus writing teacher educators were disempowering themselves as agents working alongside NIED officials in the ORF. By advocating that they work on a consultative basis to help interpret texts written by ‘specialists’, the teacher educators were being complacent with the system and were not exhibiting the potential to challenge their own positioning in that system.

The need expressed by teacher educators for the intervention of experts ought to be located within the historical context of Namibian teacher education reform, which was dominated by foreign project staff who were normally regarded as ‘experts’ despite their title of ‘volunteer workers’. According to Dahlström:

The education sector was overwhelmed with support projects and foreign staff who were seen as and acted as experts, no matter their official titles as advisors or volunteers. The number of support projects operating in the area of pre-service teacher education alone during the inquiry period was most of the time around seven. (Dahlström, 2002, p. 146, my emphasis)

Similarly, Marope and Noonan observed in their evaluation of the TERP project and BETD support:

*The project shows a high density of expatriates. This leads to questions in many quarters about the extent to which Namibia is in charge of its own education reform. It has a negative influence on the sense of *ownership* of the reform and the *motivation* to support change. The perception of high density expatriates is magnified by the absence of systematic use of *counterparts*. (Marope & Noonan, 1995, p. vii, emphasis in original)*

Therefore, the observed lack of professional confidence among teacher educators and their need for experts are deeply rooted in pedagogic relations that were not only inimical to creating the sustainability and empowerment of local capacities, but instilled among teacher educators a perpetual dependency on 'experts', especially foreigners.

The TERP project and the ELTDP project both placed Reform Facilitators at colleges of education (see Chapter Three). The role of Reform Facilitators in colleges of education included guiding the implementation of the BETD program, facilitating curriculum discussions, acting as resource persons, assisting and mentoring teacher educators, and even supervising teacher educators on their TERP or ELTDP Project-initiated staff development programs. It can be argued that this easy accessibility of Reform Facilitators, who were generally perceived as 'experts', with some of them behaving accordingly (Dahlström, 2002, p. 146), deeply entrenched teacher educators' dependency on external support. As indicated in the 1997 joint NIED/TERP report, teacher educators were positive and happy about having Reform Facilitators at colleges:

At college level, the implementation of the BETD is supported by the Reform Facilitators and the EDUs [Education Development Units]. The general attitudes towards these activities are positive...On the whole, most teacher educators (78%) are very positive (45%) or positive (33%) to the EDUs and the Reform Facilitators...Most of the teacher educators (74%) states that the EDUs and the Reform Facilitators have supported the implementation of the BETD to a greater (40%) or fairly great (34%) extent. (NIED, 1997, p. 101)

However, despite the positive assessment by the 1997 NIED/TERP evaluation study, teacher educators were already expressing concerns that arrangements needed to be made to develop local capacity to take over the role of guiding the implementation of the reform, once the project was over and the Reform Facilitators had gone. As cited in the NIED report, teacher educators at both OCE and CCE made the following observations:

The EDU and the Reform Facilitators contributed a lot..... *We must make the teacher educators independent otherwise we will fail when the Reform Facilitators leave. ...*

(Teacher Educator, OCE, my emphasis)

Another teacher educator at CCE expressed a similar opinion, suggesting that successors to Reform Facilitators be trained so as to take over when the Reform Facilitators left:

The EDU and the Reform Facilitators have really assisted us a lot in the implementation of the BETD....*There should be a counterpart trained with N.N [sic].*

(Teacher Educator, CCE, my emphasis)

But despite these early concerns voiced by teacher educators about the necessity of building local capacity, possibly by way of 'counterparting' (mentoring), nothing appears to have happened. The result is the current climate of self-doubt and dependency on the input of experts or specialists.

It should also be noted from the foregoing presentation of data that the preferred practice of donor projects to recruit staff members, usually white staff members, from bases such as universities back in the project's home country in Europe, had a negative impact on teacher educators. Teacher educators had come to embrace the belief that only "outsiders", "people from other countries", probably "having a Doctorate degree", and "white", could be experts. Local capacity and local knowledge are thereby delegitimized and expelled from the realm of 'expertise'. Teacher educators see neither themselves nor their fellow colleagues as possible candidates for the title of 'expert'.

It can therefore be concluded that an engrained dependency on outside expertise prevalent among teacher educators constitutes one of the factors constraining their meaningful interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. This is because the teacher educators had no confidence in their own professional abilities, and instead looked outwards to experts for guidance and correction. In the absence of these experts, teacher educators felt insecure about their own interpretations and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. In other words, they did not possess the socio-affective disposition necessary for them to become confident, meaningful and creative recontextualizers of learner-centred pedagogy.

8.6 Student teachers' inadequate academic backgrounds

Another constraint exposed in the data was the inadequate academic background of student teachers. It was maintained that due to their lack of academic preparedness, student teachers were unable to rise to the demands of learner-centred contexts, making it difficult for teacher educators to recontextualize the new pedagogy. This is illustrated in the data as follows:

They come with low academic levels. So, their survival in the program is a problem. In the end you just let them pass or complete the program. With the new admission criteria, we will see how the quality of our students will improve. Because now, we will be requiring them to have a "D" grade in English before they can be considered for admission to the BETD. Whether you have a "B" grade in the subject where you want to specialize if you have an "E" grade in English we won't allow you to enter the program. So, maybe with the new intake for next year there will be a great change. Learner-centred pedagogy can be a good philosophy if we have good students. It can be a very good philosophy. But if you have weak students then you have to compromise on all the aspects of learner-centred pedagogy.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

Mary had more to say on the subject of student teachers:

They have become used to the idea of being provided with information. The moment you say that I have a hand-out for you, you will see how they are interested to get it. They are not ready to go and search for information. They would like to get your hand-out. Maybe your hand-out is now the bible. I don't know how we can make them feel that ownership and power to search for knowledge. They like hand-outs.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

Peter addressed the issue of inadequate student academic backgrounds in this way:

One thing I don't like is the standard of the students themselves. It is one thing to say learner-centred education but when you look at whom you are

dealing with you wonder whether they can really rise to the occasion. The problem is that there is this gap. In as much as you would have loved students to learn in a learner-centred way, to take charge of their own learning, they can't. You just end up spoon feeding them. They will just take things as you give them out or as they read them. So, that is my problem.... It is a struggle to move students to that level. So, we find ourselves dealing at a very lower level of just giving information and then information is taken. They can only struggle to remember facts. But if you take them to another level where they are required to apply the knowledge they will find this very difficult.

(Interview: Peter, 09/03/07)

For Loide, English language proficiency was a particular problem:

The background of our students is not well, especially when it comes to English language. For example, you can give them something to read and when you give them an activity on what they have read it is very difficult to get a response. Why, because they did not understand. Okay, sometimes the knowledge is there, but the understanding is not there.

(Interview: Loide, 16/03/07)

Mary concurred with Loide in this regard:

The other challenge is the language barrier. We have students that were just given to us by the Ministry to admit, students from marginalized communities like the Ovahimbos. Their grades are too low. So, for them to really reach the level where you require them to be is very difficult.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

Thus one of the contextual factors perceived to be constraining teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy is the low academic background of the students that get admitted into the program. While all students in the BETD are twelfth-grade school leavers, it was generally felt that they had "low academic levels" or "low standards", that they "preferred to be spoon fed" and were "not ready to search for their own knowledge", on top of which some had a "poor language background". For

these reasons, teacher educators found it difficult properly to implement learner-centred pedagogy.

Also emerging from the data is that this situation was aggravated by the Ministry of Education, which imposed on colleges certain students from marginalized communities via an affirmative action policy, despite the poor academic background of these students.

8.7 Weakly framed assessment practices in the BETD as a constraining factor

As indicated in Section 6.3.4, contrary to assessment practices in the pre-independence dispensation, assessment in the BETD is supposed to be learner-centred, emphasizing the principle of positive achievement rather than focusing on the student teacher's weaknesses (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 1998, p. 17). Far from being explicit and specific, assessment in the BETD is supposed to be implicit and blurred, with multiple and diffuse approaches, always accommodative of the student teacher's contributions (MoE, 2007, p. 23).

Assessment practices in the BETD were frequently cited by the research participants as one of the major problems constraining meaningful interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy in their classrooms. In most cases, assessment procedures in the program were seen by teacher educators as not providing proper incentives to motivate students to work hard. This was especially so in the case of CORE subjects that are only graded COMPLETE or INCOMPLETE, meaning pass or fail. Even in the other subjects, instead of putting in extra effort, students were satisfied with meeting the most basic requirements. Since they could only be graded COMPLETE, CREDIT or DISTINCTION, students were in most cases satisfied with meeting the criteria for COMPLETE.

Also evident from the data is that the assessment system was perceived to be too relaxed, as students who did not meet the expected criteria on a given task were given several

further compensatory opportunities to do so. This particular practice of the BETD assessment is stated as follows in the BETD Broad Curriculum:

If a student's work is graded as INCOMPLETE, they will have to compensate the shortcoming. Students should be made aware on a continuous basis, by the subject teacher educator, of any INCOMPLETE tasks. They must be given a deadline and guidance as to what must be done to bring their work up to standard and compensatory teaching must be given where students are not achieving subject competencies. There is no obligation to provide for more than two resubmissions within a subject in any year, and resubmissions will only be allowed if the student meets the given requirements for effort and punctuality. Any resubmitted work will only be assessed to a satisfactory standard. (Namibia. MBESC & MHETEC, 1998, p. 19)

Participants in the study felt that this particular aspect of allowing for the resubmission of work graded INCOMPLETE was a major cause of what they termed "laziness" among students. Since they knew that there would be several opportunities to re-do the same task if they failed at the first attempt, students apparently assumed a relaxed stance towards their work. The narratives presented in Section 6.3.4 further revealed that for some teacher educators there was a tendency to simply pass students or grade them COMPLETE as a way of avoiding having to set several compensatory papers on the same work for the same student. Furthermore, the model of assessment is perceived as inappropriate or ineffective, even meaningless in terms of giving feedback to students. The grading system does not motivate nor does it help students to understand where they have gone wrong or what they need to do to get higher marks.

In sum, what were regarded as the relaxed or implicit assessment practices underpinning the BETD program were, by and large, seen by research participants as one of the factors constraining their recontextualization of learner-centred pedagogy.

8.8 Lack of instructional resources

The successful implementation of learner-centred pedagogy implies the availability of instructional resources needed not only to support student learning but also to expose students to various perspectives and sources of knowledge. Thus another contextual factor impeding the proper interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy cited in the interviews narratives is the shortage or absence of instructional resources. Most of the research participants lamented the lack of resources and materials:

If our students are to learn in a learner-centred way then they are to be provided with the necessary resources. They should, for instance, have a variety of reading literature so that they can meaningfully participate and engage in class discussions. But with the limited resources out there, it becomes difficult to teach them in a learner-centred way.

(Interview: Peter, 09/03/07)

Loide shared similar feelings:

The only problem is with support material because we need support material to be able to teach effectively using learner-centred approaches. Sometimes you have got to go out there and struggle to get them. Materials are a problem. If we can have the support material like reading material as well as facilities that would be very helpful in our implementation of learner-centred pedagogy. As for now, the lack of material is coming in our way. Sometimes I have got some materials that I can give to the students, but now, coming to the facilities like photocopy papers and ink, these are not easy to come by. So, that is the problem. It is very difficult really, even in giving them activities because when you give activities you should give them something that they should get the information from. So, that is the problem that I am experiencing; facilities, support material, you know. . . .

On the side of the students we also do not have enough facilities to be used, for example, you can give them an activity to go and search on the Internet; sometimes the computers are not enough for the students because the same computers are being used for typing assignments. We are only having thirty computers, and how many students are there? The students are many. So, it takes time for you to get feedback from students because the facilities are not enough for them.

(Interview: Loide, 16/03/07)

Bob made a similar point:

One of the challenges are the materials, the resources are a problem. But in a situation where the facilities are there and you are able to manipulate those facilities, I think it would have helped us a lot in promoting learner-centred pedagogy in our classroom situations.

(Interview: Bob, 16/03/07).

When probed to elaborate on what he meant by materials, Bob had the following to say:

Materials would include things like visual aids that we are supposed to use to aid our lessons so that students can see what we are presenting. I am referring to facilities that require technical skills to employ. These are things that can be used to enhance one's lesson. Things like digital projectors. They are not enough.

(Interview: Bob, 16/03/07)

Mary argued the point more fully:

Another problem is the shortage of resources in the College. Sometimes one wants to make use of a computer in the lesson presentation, but computers are not enough. There is only one digital projector in the whole College. Even when you go to the computer lab to prepare your lesson on the computer by the time you want to make use of the projector it will already be taken by another teacher educator. You cannot keep it for too long. That is the rule from the Stores Department. So, it is a big challenge for the institution. There is only one projector in the college while both teacher educators and student teachers should be doing their lesson presentation using power point. It is just a dream. With the computers, the server is always down. Sometimes the Internet connectivity is not paid for. Mostly, the computer lab is just used for typing and not Internet research.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

Regarding the availability of resources and facilities in the library, Mary stated:

But even the whole library is just a white elephant. We cannot really say that we have a library in the college. Some of the high schools are even better than us. Maybe we need to look for donations from somewhere. Our library is in bad shapes. When you have time just take a walk down there. You will see that some of the shelves are completely empty. There are no books on the shelves.

(Interview: Mary, 31/10/07)

Patrick attributed the lack of resources and consequent problems pertaining to the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy to the College's management, who were not supportive of teacher educators when it came to their needs for instructional resources:

Learner-centred pedagogy requires a lot of creativity on our side as teacher educators. The lack of support that we normally experience with Management stifles our creativity. Without the support, you cease to be creative and start teaching in the old traditional way. As a teacher educator, I need a supportive environment in order to exercise creativity. For instance, if you cannot be provided with the material or facilities that you need for your classes, you just end up teaching in the old manner.

(Interview: Patrick, 29/10/07)

Evident in the narrative accounts is that teacher educators felt that *"if students are to learn in a learner-centred way, then they are to be provided with the necessary resources"*. More particularly, *"they should have a variety of literature to read"* so that *"they can meaningfully participate and engage in class discussions"*; because *"with the limited resources, it becomes difficult to teach in a learner-centred way"*. The library was referred to as being a *"white elephant"* with empty shelves. It should be noted that while teacher educators lamented the scarcity of instructional resources such as library books, they did not, however, mention issues of relevance or appropriateness of such resources. Thus, while it is important to be concerned with issues of quantity, there is a need for teacher educators to properly assess the present literature list at the College in terms of relevance and meaningfulness.

Teacher educators further cited the problem of insufficient resources, such as computers, which were too few for the number of students needing them. What is more, when students need to do Internet search, there is no connectivity. It should be noted that throughout all the lessons that were observed, there was no evidence of student teachers engaging with a variety of reading materials or using equipment such as the computer. In most cases, both the student teachers and the teacher educators used only the prescribed text, which everybody seemed to possess. In their 1995 evaluation study of the BETD program, Marope and Noonan made similar observations about the lack of materials, library books in particular, as a limitation affecting the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy:

Although funds have been allocated for procurement of library books and teaching equipment, problems with procurement have left several colleges with shortages of modern library books and equipment. *These shortages limit the effectiveness of teaching learner-centred methods.* (Marope & Noonan, 1995, p. viii, my emphasis)

The absence of instructional resources indicates a narrow understanding of learner-centred pedagogy that fails to acknowledge that such resources are necessary if the new pedagogy is meaningfully to be implemented. It also suggests a problem of ineffectual college management and leadership. Learner-centred pedagogy requires effective management that will ensure provision of the materials and facilities needed to facilitate teacher educators' uptake of the new pedagogy.

It is, therefore, concluded that the absence or shortage of instructional resources was another factor within the pedagogic environment that constrained teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. A study of teachers' uptake of a pedagogic innovation in Uganda conducted by Sikoyo came up with similar findings indicating how the lack of instructional resources negatively impacted on teachers' implementation of the new pedagogic practice (Sikoyo, 2006, p. 471). As was mentioned in Section 6.3.3, there is a need to adopt a much broader understanding of learner-centred pedagogy that will go beyond changing teacher educators' instructional skills and address structural concerns such as provision of the necessary instructional materials.

8.9 Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that teacher educators' recontextualization of the official pedagogic discourse is a process that is inextricably interwoven with certain contextual factors that frame the observed pedagogic practices, irrespective of teacher educators' possession of the appropriate recognition and realization rules specific to the pedagogic context. Thus, the possession of recognition and realization rules, seen in isolation, does not necessarily guarantee that meaningful recontextualization of the official pedagogic discourse will take place. Other contextual factors such as those discussed above need also to be taken into account.

In the context of this study, teacher educators' ability meaningfully to interpret and practice learner-centred pedagogy was regulated by factors such as: the strong external framing of the curriculum (observed in Chapters Six and Seven); teacher educators' self-doubt and lack of professional confidence, lack of professional support in terms of workshops and staff development by NIED, dependency on 'expert' guidance and direction, the poor academic preparation of students resulting in their failure to meet the demands of a learner-centred pedagogic context, the relaxed assessment practices which were generally seen as de-motivating, and the lack of necessary instructional resources that made the meaningful recontextualization of learner-centred pedagogy difficult.

In the next chapter, I synthesise the main findings and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER NINE

SYNTHESIS OF MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Introduction

In this study, the focus throughout has been on understanding how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practice the learner-centred pedagogy that underpins the Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD) program. In the present chapter, I present a synthesis of the main findings and conclusions of the study. I also present the lessons that I learned from the study, its potential value, policy implications and recommendations.

9.2 The research design and goals

This case study, qualitative-interpretative in orientation, consisted of three interrelated phases. Phase one consisted of a literature review on learner-centred pedagogy. This entailed a study of Namibian official policy texts on learner-centred pedagogy, its historical origins in Namibia, its embeddedness in Namibian policy on education, its key features and supporting theories. Other literature sources on learner-centred pedagogy were reviewed, illuminating its underlying principles and problems attending its implementation. This initial review of policy and other related literature was essential as it helped me to define my research problem and clarify the objectives of my study.

Phase two consisted of an engagement with the research site and the research participants in the form of a qualitative-interpretive case study. While this phase involved a further literature search and review, it focused more on generating data through interviews and naturalistic non-participant lesson observation. During this phase, the goal of the research was to generate data so as to understand:

- How teacher educators interpret learner-centred pedagogy at the level of description;

- How teacher educators practise learner-centred pedagogy at the micro-level of pedagogic practice or implementation.

While phase two comprised mainly field work, in phase three I withdrew from the research site and focused on analysing and interpreting the data. The literature review continued throughout this phase to illuminate the findings emerging from data gathered in the field. Bernstein's theories of pedagogy and recontextualization were used to generate ideas and concepts required to gain deeper understanding of teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. A data analysis model using Bernstein's ideas and concepts was developed and used to analyze the data.

9.3 Main findings and conclusions of the study

Findings generated through interviews and document analysis indicated that, at the level of description, teacher educators interpreted learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on weak rules of the regulative discourse or weak power relations in the pedagogic relationship between them and their student teachers. The weakening of hierarchical power relations was suggested by responses prominent in the interview narratives that evoked a pedagogic context characterized by a repositioning of the student teacher from the margins to the centre of the classroom, thereby assigning him/her a more active and visible role. In contrast to the disempowering practices of classrooms under the apartheid dispensation, the repositioning of the student teacher suggested a process of empowerment, of power shifting from the teacher to the student.

In the same vein, the findings revealed an interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy as a repositioning of the teacher educator to the backstage of the classroom as a "*facilitator*", "*guide*" or "*co-learner*", where he or she assumed an invisible pedagogic identity. Thus the pedagogic approach suggested a power shift towards the student teacher through his or her repositioning as an active participant at the centre stage of the classroom, coupled with a simultaneous weakening or diminishing of the power and authority of the teacher

educator. Assuming the pedagogic identity of “facilitator”, the teacher educator backed off to the margins of the classroom. The teacher educators’ interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy in relation to rules of the regulative discourse were consistent with official interpretations in official policy texts that were reviewed.

With regard to interpreting learner-centred pedagogy in relation to rules of the instructional discourse, the findings revealed an interpretation based on strong framing of the selection of discourses, weak framing of the pacing of discourses (though working in a context that demanded strong framing), and strong framing of the sequencing and evaluation aspects. While at policy level official texts advocated a view of learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice that is weakly framed regarding the selection, sequencing and pacing aspects through active student involvement, further official translation or interpretation of the pedagogy in the ORF, and in documents representing the OPD, revealed the advocacy of a pedagogic practice that is strongly framed externally. A narrow interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy was observed, one that focused on changing teacher educators’ teaching skills and attitudes while ignoring change in the broader structural and systemic frame factors.

A contradiction was noted within the official interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy. While on the one hand teacher educators were required to change from teacher-centredness to learner-centredness, the reform still followed traditional approaches to the organization of teaching and learning in terms of timetabling and schemes of work. College authorities still saw their role as that of ensuring that teacher educators cover the syllabus. In the same vein, the narrow interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy that focused on changing teacher educators’ pedagogical skills tended to ignore aspects such as epistemological empowerment – which would give teacher educators the necessary professional confidence to interpret and practice learner-centred pedagogy – the provision of necessary instructional resources, and programmatic aspects related to assessment that would motivate students to work hard and take their studies seriously.

The findings generated through lesson observation and teacher educator-generated documents revealed a dislocation or mismatch between teacher educators' ideas about learner-centred pedagogy and their practice of it. Despite interpretations in the interviews of learner-centred pedagogy at the level of description as a pedagogic practice based on weak rules of the regulative discourse, findings indicated that, at the micro-level of their classrooms, teacher educators were implementing learner-centred pedagogy as a pedagogic practice based on strong to very strong rules of the regulative discourse. The results revealed strong to very strong internal framing (iF^+ , iF^{++}) of the regulative discourse at the micro-level of pedagogic practice, with teacher educators being the locus of control.

The teacher educator selected, sequenced and paced the regulative discourse and set the evaluation criteria for the conduct expected of student teachers. Further contradictions were observed between teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy and interpretations of the pedagogy in official texts in relation to rules of the regulative discourse. While both interview data and data generated through official texts interpreted learner-centred pedagogy in terms of weak rules of the regulative discourse, lesson observation data offered an interpretation based on strong rules of the regulative discourse or strong framing of the regulative discourse.

Regarding rules of the instructional discourse, the findings at the micro-level revealed that the teacher educators' practice of learner-centred pedagogy was based on strong internal framing of the selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria for evaluation. Teacher educators' preference for strong internal framing of these aspects of the instructional discourse could be attributed to the strong external framing that they were facing and to factors arising from their own professional histories and academic profiles.

In the context of the data analysis model, the study concluded that while some teacher educators demonstrated possession of the recognition and realization rule for interpreting learner-centred pedagogy at the level of description, at the level of practice, most of them did not. Interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy at the level of description ranged on a

broad continuum from possibility 1 (strongly classified, strongly framed visible pedagogy) and possibility 2 (weakly classified, weakly framed pedagogy) to possibility 3 (mixed strong and weak classification and framing, mixed pedagogy). The practice by most of the teacher educators exemplified possibility 1 (strongly classified and strongly framed pedagogy, visible pedagogy).

The findings revealed several factors that constrained teacher educators' recontextualization of learner-centred pedagogy. These included:

- Strong external framing of the curriculum by factors that imposed external controls on the pedagogic context;
- Teacher educators' self-doubt and lack of confidence in their own professional abilities to interpret and practice learner-centred pedagogy;
- The purported absence of professional support from NIED in terms of workshops and staff development activities as a means to empower teacher educators with the appropriate knowledge and skills to implement the new pedagogy;
- Feelings of dependency on 'experts' and specialists to "*guide*", "*direct*" and "*monitor*" teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy;
- Student teachers' inadequate academic backgrounds as a result of which teacher educators were finding it difficult to recontextualize the official pedagogy in a meaningful and creative way;
- Weakly framed assessment practices in the BETD program that were generally perceived as offering student teachers no incentive to work hard; and
- The lack of instructional resources that were perceived as hindering teacher educators from implementing learner-centred pedagogy.

9.4 Lessons learned from the study

From this study, I learned that in any educational reform, possession of the recognition rules and passive realization rules at the level of description does not necessarily translate

into possession of active realization rules at the level of practice or implementation. This lesson confirmed for me what Bernstein (2000) meant when he stated:

[...] we may have the recognition rule which enables us to distinguish the specialty of the context but we may still be unable to produce legitimate communication. (p. 17)

At the level of description, teacher educators were able to recognize and describe learner-centred contexts. They were able to define learner-centred pedagogy and even give illustrations of how they would implement it or how they had been implementing it, thus suggesting possession not only of the recognition rule but also of the passive realization rule. But despite their possession of the recognition and passive realization rule, some teacher educators could not demonstrate possession of the active realization rule at the micro-level of pedagogic practice. The recognition rule did not translate automatically into the realization rule.

I realized, through the study, that teacher educators' recontextualization of the official pedagogic discourse is a process that is inextricably interwoven within a complex of contextual factors that frame the observed pedagogic practices, irrespective of their possession of the appropriate recognition and passive realization rules. Thus, possession of the recognition rule, seen in isolation, does not guarantee that meaningful recontextualization of the official policy will take place. Other contextual factors such as structural factors and personal-psychological factors need to be taken into account in order to gain a full and vivid picture of the recontextualization process. A broader understanding of learner-centred pedagogy that includes structural and systemic factors would help address some of the structural constraints that have hitherto hindered teacher educators' acquisition of active realization rules.

Another lesson learned from the study was that, in the context of Namibian educational change, political rhetoric in the form of the notion of democracy underpinning learner-centred pedagogy did not sit easily with the demands of the classroom. The ideals of equality and social justice informing weak power relations or weakly framed assessment

practices were mere political rhetoric whose translation in the micro-level pedagogic context posed problems for teacher educators. This was illustrated, for instance, by the fact that while the official assessment policy saw learner-centred pedagogy in terms of weakly framed assessment practices, teacher educators were consistently opposed to these and advocated, instead, strongly framed assessment practices. Teacher educators regarded weakly framed assessment practices as a de-motivating factor that conduced to students not being serious about their studies.

9.5 Potential value of the study

As mentioned in Section 4.4.2, while several studies using Bernstein's theories have been made on the African continent, there are none that focus on Namibia. There is therefore a gap within the Namibian knowledge base on teacher education reform. This study, as the first of its kind (as far as I am aware) in the Namibian context using Bernstein's theories, is an attempt to help close that gap. Drawing upon Bernstein's ideas and concepts, the study provides new theoretical perspectives on what learner-centred pedagogy means in the Namibian context. The study offers bases for theorizing the internal logic and the power and control structures that constitute learner-centred pedagogy as an invisible pedagogic practice rooted within the progressivist and constructivist models of education. The study offers analytical concepts that are needed for a better understanding of what learner-centred pedagogy entails.

On the policy front, the potential value of this study to Namibian policy makers lies in the fact that it has interrogated and illuminated the inner core of the recontextualization process, that is, the ground rules of recontextualization that are a prerequisite if teacher educators are to become meaningful change agents. The study has highlighted what conditions need to be addressed if teacher educators' possession of the recognition and passive realization rules are to translate into active realization rules. With the ETSIP teacher education reform about to take off, the study will offer policy makers insights pertaining to teacher educators' uptake of new policy.

As a senior official in the Ministry of Education responsible for teacher education at NIED, my intimate engagement with Bernstein's ideas and concepts throughout the study will enrich and strengthen my personal contributions to Namibian teacher education reform and the understanding of learner-centred pedagogy.

9.6 Implications for policy

In order to enhance effectiveness in implementing educational reform, the study notes the following implications for policy and suggests the following recommendations:

- In order to ensure effective interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy, there is a need to appreciate the multiplicity of factors that condition teacher educators' uptake of new policy. Among other measures, there is a need to embark upon a systematic and deliberate program of teacher educator professional empowerment. The study revealed that teacher educators were constrained in their interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy by factors such as their own self-doubt and lack of professional confidence in their ability to implement the pedagogy, by the sense of a lack of professional support from NIED, by feelings of dependency on expert interpretations of learner-centred pedagogy and models of learner-centred pedagogy generated by others, especially foreigners. These issues beg for teacher educator professional empowerment that will enable them to become transformative intellectuals who are "voiced political agents" (Wilmot, 2006, p. 416) capably of participating meaningfully in the reform process.
- If progress is to be made in terms of implementing learner-centred pedagogy at the college level, there is a need to ensure that student teachers possess the appropriate academic background needed to ensure that they survive in and benefit from learner-centred pedagogic contexts. As seen in this study, student teachers' lack of academic preparedness hindered the proper implementation of learner-centred pedagogy by teacher educators. The Ministry of Education could

consider introducing academic enrichment programs that would help raise the academic levels of students before they were admitted into the BETD program. Alternatively, the program should target students with good or high grades from the twelfth grade examination.

- In order to support the proper implementation of a learner-centred pedagogy, it is necessary to provide sufficient instructional resources. Funds must be budgeted for the procurement of instructional resources and facilities, especially the stocking of libraries with appropriate study materials.
- There is a need, at policy level, critically to examine whether learner-centred pedagogy is indeed the best way for Namibian classrooms to go. We need to subject learner-centred pedagogy to critical appraisal in order to be convinced that it will produce better learning outcomes in our classrooms than traditional practices. Without this critical appraisal, we will, as Van Harmelen (1998, p. 3) argues, be simply exchanging “one set of educational ‘myths’ for another”. This study found that within Namibian official texts, learner-centred pedagogy is adopted and presented in an uncritical manner, as if it were unproblematic, a natural approach that can be universally applied in all Namibian schools, despite reservations and criticisms voiced in the literature. There is a need to reconsider whether a pedagogy that was relevant at independence as a way of symbolically promoting democratization and social justice is still relevant at the stage when Namibia, through ETSIP, is rethinking its education system to move the nation towards a knowledge-based economy and global competitiveness.
- In the context of the contradictions observed within both teacher educators’ interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy and the official interpretation of the pedagogy, there is a need to develop a shared and clear understanding of what learner-centred pedagogy in the Namibian context entails. While this is not to suggest a monolithic understanding, this shared understanding should clarify what the pedagogy entails in terms of the underlying classificatory (power) and framing

(control) relations that underpin the regulative discourse and the instructional discourse. The shared understanding will help to ensure the proper interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy. The theorizing of learner-centred pedagogy by the current study could be used as the point of departure in building a common and shared understanding of learner-centred pedagogy;

- The study also recommends a balanced approach that desists from the dogmatic, one-sided emphasis on learner-centred pedagogy at the expense of traditional pedagogic practices, the emphasis that refuses to take into account the shortcomings of learner-centred pedagogy and the merits of traditional pedagogic practices – as observed in policy texts and teacher educators' interpretation and implementation of the pedagogy. The literature review undertaken in this study has revealed that successful pedagogies are usually mixed pedagogies.

9.7 Implications for future research

This study recommends that future research in the Namibian context should, first and foremost, investigate whether or not learner-centred pedagogy, widely celebrated in official texts, is indeed superior to traditional pedagogic practices. Future research needs to determine the best pedagogic practices for Namibian classrooms, and should strive to go beyond the political rhetoric of democracy, freedom and justice that seems to dominate current official policy texts.

Learner-centred education has been implemented in Namibian classrooms for a period of seventeen years since the country's independence from apartheid South Africa. But the learner-centred model has left many questions unanswered. Has this model achieved its goals? Has it been an enabling framework for humanizing and democratizing education? Has it enabled a shift from an authoritarian, unequal, unfair system to a more equitable and socially just one? Has it actually achieved its declared goals of access, equity, quality and democracy?

This study recommends that future research in the Namibian context should critically investigate the extent to which learner-centred pedagogy has achieved its objectives.

9.8 Conclusion

The qualitative-interpretative case study has enabled me to understand how teacher educators in a Namibian college of education interpret and practice the learner-centred pedagogy that underpins the BETD program. By drawing upon Bernstein's theories of pedagogy and recontextualization, I have been able to understand teacher educators' interpretation of learner-centred pedagogy at the descriptive level and the level of implementation in relation to rules of the regulative discourse and rules of the instructional discourse. I have drawn upon other supportive literature and studies to generate further understanding of teacher educators' interpretation and practice of learner-centred pedagogy in relation to these rules.

This study has also taught me that in order for meaningful and creative change to take place at the micro-level of the classroom, teacher educators need to be empowered with the appropriate knowledge and skills for interpreting and implementing the new change. Just as importantly, there is a need to appreciate all the contextual and structural factors that have the potential to constrain teacher educators' interpretation and implementation of the new pedagogy.

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APPENDIX I: LETTER SEEKING AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY



CAPRIVI COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Private Bag 1096, KATIMA MULILO, Tel: 066-253422/253930, Fax: 066-253934

29 March 2006

The [redacted] Rector
[redacted] College of Education
[redacted]

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF
THE BETD PROGRAMME AT [redacted] COLLEGE OF
EDUCATION

I am a Namibian teacher educator currently based at the Caprivi College of Education.

At the present moment, I am pursuing a PhD programme with Rhodes University Faculty of Education in Grahamstown. I am writing this letter to request for permission to conduct a study of the BETD programme at your College. The study is conducted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

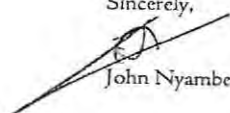
The purpose of the study is to understand how participants in the BETD programme make sense of and interpret certain key tenets of the BETD programme.

The proposed time-line for the data collection is from May 2006 to May 2007. The data collection process will be organized in such a way that I will only be coming to [redacted] College of Education for certain periods of time during the May 2006-May 2007 period as I cannot be fully released from my job at Caprivi College of Education.

I trust that the study will yield significant insights on the BETD programme.

Your consideration of this request will be highly appreciated.

Sincerely,


John Nyambe

APPENDIX II: LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY



The Rector
Caprivi College of Education
Private Bag 1096
KATIMA MULILO

Thursday, March 30, 2006

Dear Mr Nyambe

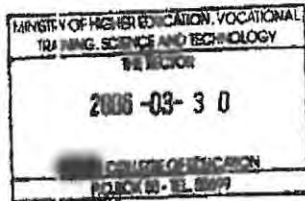
APPROVAL TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF THE BETD PROGRAMME

Your letter dated 29 March 2006 refers.

I wish to inform you that the Management of the College granted your request to conduct a research for study of BETD programme from May 2006 - May 2007 at [redacted] College of Education.

I want to welcome you all at this college for this very important study.

Sincerely,



APPENDIX III: GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

(Some guiding questions not necessarily to be followed as stated)

General impression, policy process, etc.

- What are your general impressions of the Namibian teacher education reform after fifteen years of implementation?
- How have you been involved as a teacher educator in the reform process?
- What are your likes and dislikes about the process?
- What would you say has been the role of NIED in the teacher education reform process?
- How would you describe the relationship between NIED and College teacher educators during the reform process?

Learner-Centred Education

- How are you finding the shift from the old teaching approaches to LCE?
- In your opinion, what are some of the key characteristics of LCE in the BETD?
- Has LCE had any impact on your teaching? Elaborate.
- What does LCE tell us to do in our classrooms? Why these things?
- Any frustrations, issues or tensions that you are facing in the implementation of LCE. If there are any, what are they? Can you provide examples?
- What are your likes and dislikes concerning the implementation of the new approaches?

Knowledge Construction

- One of the key aspects of the reform is that of knowledge construction. What is your understanding of this new approach to knowledge?
- What is your opinion regarding this new approach?
- What does it tell us to do in our lecture rooms?
- How do you facilitate knowledge construction in your lessons?
- What characterises a lesson which seeks to foster knowledge construction?
- What are some of your likes and dislikes regarding knowledge construction?

Learning with understanding

- What is your understanding of learning with understanding which is one of the new approaches in the Namibian teacher education reform?
- What does it tell us to do in our class rooms?
- How have you facilitated learning with understanding in your own lessons?
- What characterises a lesson that seeks to promote learning with understanding?
- What are some of your likes and dislikes concerning this new concept?

Teaching and teacher educator's role

- What teaching approaches do you use in your own teaching?
- How have these strategies worked for you and your students?
- What do you think is important in teaching in order to bring about learning?
- How would you describe your role as you go about teaching?
- What characterises learner-centred teaching?
- How would you describe the role of students in your teaching?
- Any likes and dislikes regarding the teaching approaches you have been using?
- Have you experienced any frustrations/obstacles in fulfilling your new role as a teacher? What are they? Give examples.

End of interview – researcher thanks the participant for his/her time. Participant will have the opportunity to go over the transcribed interviews in order to make corrections, additions, etc. if there are any.

APPENDIX IV: LESSON OBSERVATION FORM

Class (e.g. BETD 1B):

Time:

Number of Students:

Date:

Length of Period:

Topic:

Time	Description of teacher educator's activities	Description of student teachers' activities	Reflective comments

APENDIX V: LESSON OBSERVATION FORM (PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS ON THE DATA)

Classification and framing of pedagogic practice

	C ⁺⁺	C ⁺	C ⁻	C ⁻	Comments
Classification of pedagogic actors					
Classification of pedagogic spaces					
Classification of discourses					
	F ⁺⁺	F ⁺	F ⁻	F ⁻	
Framing over selection of discourses					
Framing over sequencing					
Framing over pedagogic pacing					
Framing over evaluation					

APPENDIX VI: LESSON OBSERVATION FORM (PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS ON THE DATA)

Class (e.g. BETD 1B):

Time:

Number of Students:

Date:

Length of period:

Course (e.g. ETP):

(Examination of the explicitness (e) and implicitness (i) of the fundamental rules of the pedagogic practice)

Lesson Description	Internal logic/fundamental rules		Comments
	Hierarchical rules	<i>e</i>	
		<i>i</i>	
	Discursive rules	<i>e</i>	
		<i>i</i>	
	Criterial rules	<i>e</i>	
		<i>i</i>	

APPENDIX VII: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in the study on the following conditions and shall freely withdraw from the study should I feel that the conditions are not being met:

1. The researcher has explained to me in comprehensive terms the nature and purpose of the study;
2. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary;
3. I reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without justifying that action, in which case I have the right to have the data returned to me;
4. I will remain anonymous throughout the study and that raw data from the observations and interviews, and any other interaction during the study will remain confidential.

Signature (study participant)

Date

Place

**APPENDIX VIII: CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE – BERNSTEIN
SYMPOSIUM**

Cardiff School of Social Sciences
Director Professor Huw Beynon
Ysgol Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol Caerdydd
Cyfarwyddwr Yr Athro Huw Beynon



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Adelind Morganwg
Rhodfa Brenin Edward VII
Courtydd CF10 3WT
Cymru Y Deyrnas Gyfunol

9th July 2008

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

This certifies that John Nyambe attended the **Fifth Basil Bernstein Symposium** which took place in the School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, UK on the following dates: 9th, 10th & 11th July 2008.

This should therefore be considered as proof of attendance.

Gabrielle Ivinson

Dr Gabrielle Ivinson
Conference Organiser

Tel: +44 (0)2920 875391
Email: IvinsonG@cardiff.ac.uk
<http://www.cf.ac.uk/socsci/newsandevents/events/Bernstein/symposium.html>

