THE INTERFACE BETWEEN IN – SERVICE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND
CLASSROOM TEACHING AND LEARNING IN ZIMBABWEAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

By

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DECLARATION

STUDENT NUMBER: 50790366

I, **Albert Mufanechiya**, declare that this thesis entitled: **The interface between in – service teacher development and classroom teaching and learning in Zimbabwean primary schools**, submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction, is my original work which has never been produced or submitted at any other institution before, and that all the sources that I have consulted, used or quoted, have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.
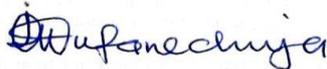
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Albert Mufanechiya   Date

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support. There were so many stressful moments which you tolerated. Tafara, you were the torch - bearer by scoring a first to be the first Doctor in the Mufanechiya family and you inspired me. I was really encouraged by the prayers as we gathered together as a family. What a wonderful family. My hope is that our children can emulate what we have done.

❖ My parents, mother Peggy and my late father Joseph Mbombo Mufanechiya, you had the vision, belief and you invested in my education against all odds. Without this bold divine vision I could be languishing in the villages. You remain the true heroes of my life. To me, you are the most educated people. To my siblings you have been wonderful, full of encouragement and support which was unwavering. This is my honest definition of family and my hope is that we remain united and assist each other wherever and whenever there is a distress call from any of the family members.

❖ There is maiguru, Tendai Mavugara, a strong pillar of support in my life, advising, comforting and encouraging. You have a special place in my life. May God bless you and take you through as you do your studies.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Tafara Joyline, daughter Tatenda Hope and son Arnold Tinashe.

To my mother Peggy, my late father Joseph Mbombo Mufanechiya and my late brother Jonathan.

ABSTRACT

Primary school teaching and learning, and indeed the whole teaching profession continue to be shaped by the ever – changing knowledge economy and global educational trends. To this end, professional teacher development in Zimbabwean primary schools has become an important focus area in terms of how it can facilitate and contribute to effective teaching and learning in line with the new educational developments. There is consensus among primary school stakeholders that the success of teaching and learning is dependent on promoting an efficient and student - needs driven in – service programme. The purpose of the study was to explore the influence of the university B.Ed (primary) in – service teacher development programme in its mandate to fulfill the critical function to develop primary school teachers with knowledge, skills and competencies for the Zimbabwean primary education system. The imperative has been for the university in – service programme to offer competences and skills that are needed by primary school teachers and for these teachers to upgrade and update their skills for effective teaching and student learning. The theoretical approach that informed the study was Vygotsky's Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) with its main perspective being that knowledge is socially constructed and takes place in real contexts.

The study ontology was interpretivism in which the qualitative single case study design was employed. The data were collected through semi - structured interviews with the Chairperson and five lecturers of the Curriculum Studies Department and focus group discussion in respect of ten B.Ed (primary) in – service student teachers. The participants were purposefully sampled taking into account their knowledge and experience with the in – service programme and primary school teaching - learning contexts.

The study found that the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme had minimal influence on primary school teachers' teaching and learning needs. The programme had not fully addressed the primary school teachers' expectations in terms of imparting knowledge and skills useful for classroom teaching and learning. One of the major contributory factors was that there were curriculum design frailties of the programme which were as a result of lack of dialogue, engagement and consultation between and among important primary school education stakeholders especially in – service teachers. As a result, the programme had not adequately raised the teachers' knowledge and skills in the critical areas of their practice, yet this was the core function of the programme. From the findings, the study recommends that the University sets up a strong Curriculum Development Department funded and staffed with experts in research and curriculum design and development. These should manage the designing and preparation of curriculum documents by involving primary school stakeholders, especially primary school teachers.
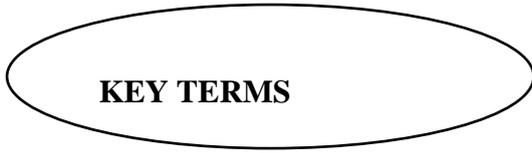
KEY TERMS

In – service, teacher professional development, primary school, university, teacher competencies, teacher needs, classroom teaching and learning, curriculum documents, Cultural Historical Activity Theory

LIST OF ACRONYMS

B.Ed – Bachelor of Education

CDTS – Curriculum Development and Technical Services

CHAT – Cultural Historical Activity Theory

DC –Departmental Chairperson

ECD – Early Childhood Development

FGD – Focus Group Discussion

GZU – Great Zimbabwe University

HEI – Higher Education Institutions

MDL – Manpower Development Leave

MoHTESTD- Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology

MoPSE- Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

MoPSLSW – Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare

PLAP – Performance Lag Address Programme

RBM – Results Based Management

SADC – Southern Africa Development Community

UZ – University of Zimbabwe

ZIMCHE – Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education

ZIMSEC – Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council

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CHAPTER ONE: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction and background to the study

Discourses on teacher development have increased in recent years due to the latter's effect on schools, teachers' practice and learners' academic achievement (Desimone 2009; Kang, Cha & Ha 2013; Postholm 2012; Putnam & Borko 2000).Teacher development lies at the heart of nearly every educational effort to develop teachers' knowledge and skills and improve learners' achievement. This is because teachers are key to any educational reform process. If teachers are to perform their functions effectively and efficiently, it becomes imperative for them to acquire new skills and modern methodology through further training (Osamwonyi 2016). To meet the growing needs of education in a global economy, it becomes crucial to provide a sound in-service education programme for teachers to update their skills, knowledge and experiences. Thus, the importance of in-service development cannot be over-emphasised.

In –service teacher development has remained a serious concern in both developing and developed countries (Lugalla & Ngwaru 2019: 13; Okobia 2013:4; Qi 2013:1). Globally, countries have developed diverse in – service programmes to provide continuous training to their teachers for professional growth and student learning. According to Altun (2011: 850) in the United Kingdom, in- service teacher development programmes were introduced with the realisation that individual teachers attending programmes designed and provided by outside agencies had little pay- off for the whole education system. The author finds that the in – service programmes were developed with a focus on the interests, needs, problems and responsibilities of teachers at specific schools. Altun (2011:851) observes that there was an awareness that without treating teachers as responsible actors in the planning and development of the in –service programme, school based teacher development would lack

reality and variability. The in – service programme courses would remain theoretical, vague, limited and of poor relevance. On the other hand, a school- based kind of in – service programme where teachers are involved has a higher chance of success as it helps teachers to improve instructional delivery, subject area content and their general readiness to face challenges and employ best classroom practices (Edwards & Osei – Mensah 2019: 391). A related study by Lee (2005) in the United States of America looked at possibilities of developing a professional development programme based on teacher needs. According to Lee (2005:39) the goals, content, main activities and structure of the in – service professional development programme were decided based on teachers' and administrators' inputs. The results of the study showed that such teacher needs- based in - service programmes where teachers were involved in the planning process were beneficial as the activities were connected to teacher learning needs and development.

In Turkey, the in – service was initially centrally planned by government through the Ministry of Education. Later, planning was decentralised to provincial directorates who planned activities in conformity with local requirements. Universities made limited and insignificant contributions. Altun (2011: 854) acknowledges that Turkish teachers had not taken in – service professional development seriously as the programme had not provided them with the much needed professional knowledge and skills for effective teaching in schools. The Turkish teachers complained that the in – service training sessions were too theoretical and the practical lessons highly limited. The other observation by Altun (2011: 854) was that the lecturers and tutors had no teaching experience in primary schools, hence, could not clearly state the links between theory and practice. Thus, Hunzicker (2010:4) notes that in - service professional teacher development only becomes relevant when it directly addresses teachers' specific needs and concerns or when teachers see a connection between a

learning experience and their daily responsibilities. The Turkish teachers were less confident about the transformative capacity of their in – service programme.

A key aspect of professional teacher development has been how higher education institutions have played an important strategic role in the provision of practice – based evidence (Lugalla & Ngwaru 2019: 27) through in – service programmes meant to develop requisite human capital for primary schools. In China, the professional teacher development story was different from the British model noted by Altun (2011) above, with normal universities in China dominating in the provision of in – service programmes. In a review of the in – service education in China, Qi (2012: 3) reports that the programme offered by normal universities involved intensive teacher learning and was university based. However, Qi (2012:3) notes that the universities lacked confidence and were unclear about the direction of the in – service teacher education programme. In – service development programmes of this nature result in decisions where teachers who are meant to benefit having little or no say. In relation to this, Sabri's (1997) research on in – service training programmes in Palestine comments that if in – service programmes at universities are to be a success the opinions of teachers have to be sought in order to improve the programmes.

In Nigeria, in – service teacher development has been largely organised by universities where practising teachers have the opportunity to attend training during vacation (Okobia 2013:2). Okobia (2013: 1) observes in her study that with in - service teacher preparatory programmes at universities, subject content takes up to 80 percent of the teacher preparatory time. She further notes that the scenario has adverse consequences on teachers' competency skills in classroom pedagogy. According to Okobia (2013: 1) research in education has revealed that it's only through in – service training for teachers that the gulf between advancing knowledge

and practice can be bridged. Such training has lacked in most university programmes. In the Kenyan context, Wanzala (2013: 36) regrets the irrelevant and poor quality education and training being offered in universities where programmes courses do not address student needs hence failing to produce competitive graduates.

In order to contextualise this study, it is necessary to address the background of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme in Zimbabwe universities and the students who enroll for the programme. The demand for university education in Zimbabwe has experienced explosive sectorial growth and remains on the rise and unsatisfied (Mawoyo 2012:122; Gandawa 2016:4).This demand has been propelled by the need to speak to immediate and long term national challenges (Kurasha & Chabaya 2013:55). The investment and expansion in the provision of higher education was a response to the quantitative growth in the education sector especially the primary school education sector soon after independence in 1980. This saw the construction of many primary and secondary schools as well as colleges of education across the country (Mawoyo 2012:116). Zimbabwe has ten (10) primary teacher training colleges churning out thousands of teachers annually. These teachers need to upgrade their qualifications at universities after serving the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education for at least two years. The pressure on one university, the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), became evident. The university could no longer cope with and house all graduates from high schools and colleges of education who needed university education (Motaboli 2008:27).

For most primary school teachers in Zimbabwe, obtaining a primary school certificate was a destination. There were no well-defined avenues for primary school teachers to update their knowledge and skills of the curriculum (Machin, Hindmarch, Murray & Richardson 2015; 31). The only window for primary school teachers was to use the then correspondence

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colleges and other open distance learning facilities such as the University of South Africa. Unfortunately, upon completion of a higher qualification, the primary school teachers migrated to teach at secondary school level. The quality of primary school teaching personnel remained at basic levels.

As the country shifted its educational focus from quantity to quality and technological advancement, the government became alive to the need to uplift primary school teachers' qualifications through the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme offered by universities. There was also a realisation that teaching at all levels were undergoing considerable changes. This was in light of the technological revolution and changing national and learner needs (McGuinness 2011: 35). Government, thus, embarked on a programme to devolve selected tertiary institutions into universities. The universities were allowed to be creative, innovative and come up with educational programmes that responded to and addressed various professional areas. This saw the birth of Great Zimbabwe University in 1999 which pioneered the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme, with the curriculum, however, largely borrowed from the University of Zimbabwe (Zvobgo 2014: 7).

After completing the pre- service teacher training course at colleges, primary school teachers have at least two years of teaching experience before they can apply for Manpower Development Leave (MDL) to do an in- service programme at university. These primary school teachers come for in – service training during school holidays just like what happens in the Nigerian context. The idea is for practising teachers to first have periods of school – based inquiry and experiences before they can do a programme of career – long professional development and support (Leu & Ginsburg 2011). The in- service teacher development programmes at universities help teachers acquire powerful teacher learning experiences and opportunities related to knowledge about the subject matter content, teaching skills and assessment methods required to implement the curriculum (Leu & Ginsburg 2011; Desimone

2009: 182). In – service training as a continuum of learning, builds on knowledge and skills previously acquired from pre-service and classroom experiences. It is informed by teacher performance needs for effective teaching and learning (Leu & Ginsburg 2011). Therefore, in – service intervention strategy is one essential step that can help teachers resolve and address changing demands and contexts in which they work and learning takes place (Altun 2011: 847). In – service training enables teachers to embrace reform oriented practice in teaching and learning. This current study explores the influence of the university B.Ed (primary) in - service programme and offers perspectives and insights into primary school teachers' needs, which a lot of studies in Zimbabwe have not developed literature on.

Most local studies available in the field of professional teacher development in Zimbabwe have generated interesting experiences about how to improve access, the provision of quality and relevant education in higher and tertiary institutions with emphasis on initial training of pre – service students (Chivore 1992, Nyaumwe 2008, Mswazie 2013, Mutambwa, Takavarasha & Kahari 2014, Garwe 2015). While these studies have provided a strong base for understanding higher education activities, the emerging reality has been their limited focus on the primary in – service programme and its influence and contribution to professional teacher development in Zimbabwe. The other research study on teacher development at primary school level was a comparative study of the B.Ed primary school pre – service and the Diploma in Education students with emphasis on teaching practice (Gonye, Mareva, Dudu, Sibanda & Mavhunga 2008). Their investigation was in the context of primary school heads and mentors. They found out that diploma students were rated higher than the university B.Ed pre – service students. The authors' analysis was that the diploma students were more professionally grounded in both theory and practice which was important for meaningful professional development than their university counterparts. Mudavanhu (2009) and Ngwarai and Ngara (2013) published articles related to teacher development in

Zimbabwe in terms of mentoring science pre – service and in – service secondary school teachers while on teaching practice and capacitating secondary school teachers to suit inclusive classrooms, respectively. In addition, Mukeredzi (2013)'s study confined itself to the development of unprofessionally qualified practising teachers in South Africa and Zimbabwe, thereby excluding the important aspects of professional in – service teacher development for practising primary school teachers.

Significant across these studies was how professional teacher development could be done in various areas addressing complex and ever - changing needs of classroom teaching in terms of what is worth for teachers to know, experience, need, do and become (Alene & Prasadh 2019: 171, Pacheco 2012:14). Thus, in – service training provides the strongest case for the transfer of such skills. The strength of these emerging bodies of research was the realisation that issues of teacher development have become very important and there are many areas that need attention. Glaringly evident from the studies above is the absence of the lens through which primary teacher in – service professional development programme at university could be understood. Although extensive researches have been done on in – service at secondary school level, there has been little attention and focus on in – service for primary school teachers whose demand has increased in Zimbabwe. This thesis, thus, adds to the literature and discourses related to teacher development in general but more specifically the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme in terms of its relevance, context factors, considerations in its design and implementation at university level. This study has located its contribution to concerns about the in – service programme in Zimbabwe in light of its influence on teacher professional practice.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Learning to teach is a life – long pursuit and a teacher's education is a continuing education otherwise his or her ideas and methods become obsolete (Okobia 2013:2). The dynamic nature of knowledge requires primary school teachers to be re -skilled through in – service teacher development to ensure that they acquire new knowledge, skills and attitudes for effective classroom practice. Teachers who do not experience effective in – service professional development do not improve their skills and student learning suffers (Mizell 2010: 6). The initial primary teacher training exposure may not have adequately prepared the primary school teachers for effective teaching and could be complemented by continuing in – service training at university (Alene & Prasadh 2019: 171, Okobia 2013: 2, Menter, Hulme, Elliot & Lewin 2010: 32). In the same vein, Zvobgo (2014: 7) agrees that the in – service programmes were meant to direct universities towards producing the kind of graduate teacher whose sensitivity and understanding of educational issues was broader than that of a diploma holder. In addition, Gonzalez (2007:315) notes that Colombian universities, just like their Zimbabwean counterparts, have become the main protagonists in the development of teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes. Thus, the central vision of this study was about how to produce a useful and relevant primary school in – service support programme at university level that addresses the needs of teachers and schools. For this reason, the programme should be sensitive to primary school teachers' requirements and difficulties by capturing important knowledge and professional dimensions.

Designing an in-service programme that meets the needs of all teachers is not an easy task due to the fact that teachers' needs depend on the context they find themselves. However, the strategic interest of any university regarding teacher preparation and development should be whether the programmes on offer have managed to impart knowledge, attitudes and skills that make a difference or not (McRobbie 2000: 1). This study sought to identify teaching –

learning needs of primary school teachers and how the in – service programme could articulate those needs in professional development. Practising primary school teachers confront challenges during their execution of duty which include changes in subject matter content, new instructional methods, advances in technology and student learning needs (Mizell 2010:6; Sabri 1997:114). The goal was to bring about a well planned university in – service programme that would help serving primary school teachers upgrade their skills, knowledge and experiences by filling in the gaps of professional inadequacies (Osamwonyi 2016).

This qualitative case study explored ways of engaging with different data sources namely: chairperson, lecturers and in – service students in the provision of quality and relevant in – service educational programme. Further the study interrogated gaps and inconsistencies in the programme (Cremer & Edwards 2011: 240) resulting in an in- depth and convincing explanation about the state of the in – service programme. The identification of gaps could improve learning outcomes of learners a well as the knowledge and skills of primary school teachers (Alene & Prasadh 2019: 173). The study also allowed the researcher to gain understanding of human and social behavior from an insider's perspective (McMillan & Schumacher 2010: 322). To help organise and offer insights into the qualitative data, thematic analysis was used which has a focus on identifying patterned meanings across a data sheet (Braun & Clarke 2012: 57). The thematic analysis according to Maguire and Delahunt (2017: 3351) has the ability to help a researcher understand, describe and interpret experiences critical in uncovering meaning in particular circumstances and contexts.

Great Zimbabwe University is one of the eleven (11) state universities in Zimbabwe. It is geographically located in the southern town of Masvingo. Most of the students enrolled at the university are in the Robert Mugabe School of Education and Culture where the B.Ed (primary) in - service programme in the study is housed. Students who participated in this

study and enrolled in the programme were from different provinces, districts, primary schools and were teaching various primary school levels in Zimbabwe. Other participants in the study, lecturers and chairperson, also belonged to the Robert Mugabe School of Education and Culture.

1.3 The research question

In light of the statement of the problem, the study was guided by the following main research question:

What is the influence of university in- service teacher development programme on the teaching – learning needs of Zimbabwean primary school teachers?

1.3.1 Sub –research questions

The sub – questions emanating from the main research question are as follows:

- What are teaching –learning needs at primary school level?
- What strategies can be used to enhance the provisioning of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme?

1.4 The aim and objectives of the study

The main aim of the study was to explore the influence of the University B.Ed (primary) in- service teacher development programme on classroom teaching and learning in the Zimbabwean primary schools.

1.4.1 Research objectives

- To explore the influence of university in- service teacher development programme and the teaching – learning needs of Zimbabwean primary school teachers?
- To determine teachers' learning needs at primary school level.

- To suggest ways to enhance the provisioning of the in- service professional teacher development programme.

1.4.2. Purpose statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the influence of the University B.Ed (primary) in-service teacher development programme on classroom teaching and learning in the Zimbabwean primary schools.

1.5. Significance of the study

The research potentially could provided a mechanism to address the development of knowledge, skills and competencies needed by teachers for the primary school sector in Zimbabwe through the in- service programme. Designing and structuring the programme by clearly defining the minimum body of knowledge and skills as well as outcomes of what the in – service students must know and be able to do at the conclusion of their studies was the rationale of the study. Further, what prompted the study was to take stock of the B.Ed (primary) in - service programme in terms of its design and implementation by asking stakeholders involved about the application and compatibility of the competencies and skills with the in – service students' concerns and values. Thus, the study sought to understand the in – service programme curriculum and how lecturers, as course designers and implementers had considered and anticipated problems that could emerge from complex and real primary school classroom contexts. The emerging concept of curriculum was that it should focus and develop professional knowledge, desirable skills, correct attitudes and values.

The idea was to reach an understanding of the critical philosophical and pedagogical issues related to the in-service professional teacher development programme in Zimbabwean universities. The in – service curriculum represents distinct beliefs about the type of knowledge and skills that should be taught, what learning consists of, how students should be

instructed and how they should be assessed (Schiro 2013: 2). These beliefs become important influences on how lecturers think, message and negotiate curriculum decisions and how they raise issues about competing visions of what constitutes a good in – service programme.

The value of the study should be understood in the context of investigating the existing situation in the University regarding the nature of the in – service programme and its desire to build a knowledge base for further exploration and improvement. Insights into how the University operated in the realisation of its goals to primary schools in Zimbabwe underpinned this study. The University appeared to have developed and implemented the in – service programme without the involvement of primary school teachers, resulting in a programme that may be unrelated to their classroom settings (Osamwonyi 2016). The University management would better understand, through academic leadership and well – intentioned policies, how the in – service programme could be organised, how power is allocated and the kind of decision making processes that go into the programme for its improvement and the realisation of outcomes. The study emphasised the kind of support network for all stakeholders; management, chairperson, lecturers and in – service students and the culture it creates that shape the every day activities of these system actors and what turns education policies and strategies into educational outcomes (Lugalla & Ngwaru 2019:13). The study becomes an important area of focus for successful system interface.

Further, the thesis provided a strong argument for all stakeholders at the institution of the need for an agreement that could ensure a common vision about what needs to be done in order to come up with a coherent and effective planning and implementation of the in – service programme. The findings may help the chairperson, lecturers, and in –service students on how to effectively and efficiently deliver an in – service programme that can be made to work. This could be done by strengthening the learning and dialogue among stakeholders in the value chain so that they understand and support programme design and

implementation. Since context is an important parameter in determining what constitutes quality programme, the regulations and modules should be strategically designed and implemented with a tie- in to various primary school realities and contexts. It is hoped this work on the B.Ed (primary) in – service teacher development programme would shed new light and literature on current discourses related to teacher development in state universities in Zimbabwe.

1.6 Limitations and delimitations of the study

1.6.1 Limitations of the study

Limitations, according to Simon (2011:2), are potential weaknesses in the study which are not under the control of the researcher. There are a number of limiting factors that may affect the credibility of the study if not well handled. By virtue of the study being a qualitative single case study, it lends itself to questions about rigour. To ensure methodological credibility, the researcher provided a thorough, detailed and in-depth description of methodological choice (Hyett, Kenny & Dickson – Swift 2014:2). This was to offset the criticism associated with qualitative designs.

Qualitative researches are also criticised for involving small numbers of participants and the manner in which the participants are chosen. This is especially so when non - probability sampling techniques such as purposive sampling are used in selecting participants. In this regard, the study might not be taken seriously when generalisations are supposed to be made. Consistent with qualitative studies, the intention was not to generalise findings but to provide insights and a winning argument that could shape B.Ed in -service educational conversation at Great Zimbabwe University. The idea was to contribute to a transformative in – service teacher development agenda with its curriculum as the centre ground.

This study was conducted at Great Zimbabwe University where the researcher teaches. Participants were drawn from the classes that the researcher did not teach. Because of the teacher – student relationship that existed between the researcher and the participants, the researcher was not directly involved in the recruitment of participants who were involved in the study. This was done to avoid imposing a sense of obligation to student participants. The Robert Mugabe School of Education administrator who worked in the School was ideal in this regard because of his relations with the B.Ed (primary) in – service students. He was willing to assist in the recruitment of the participants.

Issues of bias have been raised about qualitative studies. In this study, data and tool triangulation were defining factors (Hyett et al 2014: 1). This eclectic approach was important to help the researcher reflect on inconsistencies, variations and contradictions in the data thereby offsetting researcher biases.

1.6.2 Delimitations of the study

Delimitation of study is a clear description of the characteristics that limit the scope of the study and is influenced by sample size, time and geographical area (Simon 2011:2). The study focuses only on one university. The findings may be unique to this particular setting and may not necessarily be applicable to other settings. However, despite the uniqueness of the setting, the findings remain important considering the possibility of giving rise to a distinctive perspective of the phenomenon under study.

This qualitative single case study was limited to one Zimbabwean state university, Great Zimbabwe. The major reason for one university was time constraints. The other dimension was that there was need to be complete and deep in describing the in- service as a culture – sharing group (Creswell 2013: 91) which could only be done by limiting the cases. There was need to give a comprehensive appreciation of the nature and characteristics of the B.Ed

(primary) in – service programme. The case study also articulated the attributes and capabilities that those possessing such qualifications should be able to demonstrate (Barnett & Coate 2005: 18).

The study took into account the views of the Curriculum Studies Department chairperson as the custodian of the regulations and module outlines for the programme. The participants maybe similar in nature to others doing the same programme in other universities but the findings were limited to students, lecturers and the chairperson in the context of this study. Conceptually, the study focused on examining the influence of the   in- service professional teacher development on classroom practices.

1.7. Definition of key terms

This section defines the key terms and concepts which are used repetitively in this study.

Interface: This is when two systems are connected or intersect and showing how they affect each other. The context here is how the University and the primary school systems show a working relationship in the professional development of primary school teachers.

In-service teacher development can be defined as the relevant courses and activities in which serving teachers may participate to upgrade their professional knowledge, skills and competencies in the teaching profession (Osamwonyi, 2016). In – service teacher development is geared towards the enhancement of competencies that are required for proper functioning in the classroom. It is, thus, an opportunity accorded to teachers to improve their professional capacities and capabilities.

Classroom teaching and learning: This is the use of a variety of strategies and techniques by teachers in the classroom to enhance learners' academic achievement. Classroom teaching and learning, according to Okeke, Abongdia, Adu, van Wyk and Wolhuter (2016 :5) is when

teachers have knowledge and skills that help them become more productive in the classroom, while remaining constant in ensuring they bring out the best in the learners.

Teacher competencies: Literature on teacher competencies reveal that there are many and varying definitions. For the purpose of this study, teacher competencies are taken to encapsulate the myriad skills and abilities that teachers possess in order to facilitate teaching and learning. It relates to a cluster of related theoretical principles and abilities that enable the teacher to effectively function in a variety of teaching - learning contexts. Furthermore, teacher competencies include the teachers' ability to understand and appreciate diversity, plan his/her lessons and create an effective teaching and learning environment.

Primary school: In Zimbabwe, basic or primary education starts from Early Childhood Development (ECD) up to grade seven (7) levels. ECD, a preparatory stage, caters for children from three to six years. The ECD centres are housed at primary schools. According to Machinga (1998:5) the legal age of entry into primary school is six (6) years although children enter either earlier or later than this age. Following the 1999 Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training, primary school education in Zimbabwe became a nine (9) year cycle ranging from ECD to grade seven (7). Most of the teachers in the Zimbabwean primary schools are Diploma in Education holders trained at primary teacher training colleges dotted around the country. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) is responsible for running the affairs of all primary schools in the country.

University: A university is an institution of higher learning that grants its own degrees and normally undertakes the creation and extension of knowledge through research and scholarly activity (Stelmach 2012: 5). The purpose of universities is to offer competitive and comprehensive education that is responsive to labour needs. In Zimbabwe, universities fall

under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development (MHTESTD).

Teachers' needs: Teachers' needs are varied, depending on their teaching-learning contexts. In this study, teacher needs refer to the identified areas of practice that require developing and updating.

1.8 Description of research plan and timelines

Chapter One introduces the study. It is comprehensive overview of the whole study's intention, the gaps in knowledge to be filled and the methodology.

Chapter Two articulates in – service teacher development as an important professional step taken by practising primary school teachers in their quest to update and upgrade their teaching skills. Other global contexts were discussed including the increased interest in professional teacher development in terms of the kinds of knowledge, competencies and skills that such programmes should impart and their relevance in the context of work places. Considerable effort was done to characterise the Zimbabwean teacher development context. Vygotsky's CHAT or sociocultural theory informed the study

Chapter Three explores the methodology used to get into the field to obtain data from participants. The chapter lays the necessary groundwork for collecting data that were presented and analysed in Chapter four.

Chapter four examines the collected data and organises it into a meaningful whole. This was done according to emerging themes using the thematic analysis and it was guided by research questions presented in Chapter one.

Chapter Five gives a comprehensive discussion of findings and summary, conclusions reached and informed recommendations for action by stakeholders.

Table 1: Timelines

CHAPTER	TIME
Proposal	November 2016
Chapter 1	April 2017
Chapter 2	October 2017
Chapter 3	July 2018
Chapter 4	April 2019
Chapter 5	October 2019
Submission	June 2020

1.9 Summary

The chapter gave a detailed contextual background of the problem and unpacked the complex nature of the B.Ed (primary) in – service professional teacher development programme and the kind of gaps in knowledge that the study sought to investigate. The chapter also traced the background of the primary school teachers enrolled on the programme at the University and how, as a teacher preparation programme, it was critical to be interrogated for transformative teaching and learning at primary school level in Zimbabwe. The next chapter gives a comprehensive review of related literature in relation to B.Ed (primary) in – service teacher development.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORATICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

Chapter one gave the rationale for the study, the statement of the problem and research questions guiding the study. The current chapter reviews the contribution of other authorities regarding in - service teacher development as it relates to theory and practice. The literature is organized according to the following broad themes informed by the main and research – sub questions:

• Theoretical Framework

• In – service teacher development

• Organisation of the primary school curriculum

• Teacher competencies

• Curriculum development at universities

These themes were used to conceptualise and identify B.Ed (primary) in- service teacher development practices in other contexts and Zimbabwe.

2.2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical backdrop that underpins this study is the 1920s initial work of Russian psychologist, Vygotsky, and his contemporaries, Lenot'ev, Luria and Engestrom's Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, herein referred to as CHAT, sociocultural theory (SCT) or activity theory (Scott & Palinscar 2013: 1; Fahim & Haghani 2012: 693; Edwards 2011). While there could be some differences in these terms, they are used interchangeably in this study.

Vygotsky was one of the post – revolution Russian psychologist. Vygotsky was a student in the days of Wundt, the founder of experimental psychology and James, the American pragmatist. His contemporaries include Pavlov, Bekhterev and Watson, the popularisers of stimulus – response theories of behaviour as well as Wetheimer, Koffka and Lewin, the founders of the Gestalt psychology movement (Vygotsky 1978: 1). He was mandated to reformulate psychology by infusing Marxist philosophical principles (Muthivhi 2008: 15; Okeke et al 2016: 84) of society and historical materialism. Furthermore, Okeke et al (2016:84) concede that Vygotsky was also enthused by Engels' explanation of man's use of the tool system to master, shape and change the environment (Edwards 2011; Lefrancois 2012: 225; Vygotsky 1978: 7). From Marx and Angels, Vygotsky borrowed the principle that individual developmental change was rooted in society and culture. Vygotsky and his generation while under the influence of psychologists of their time, looked at the possibility of establishing a unified theory of human psychological processes by achieving a synthesis of the contending views. Ideas from Vygotsky's contemporaries found expression in his sociocultural theory. Thus, his theory is often referred to as an example of constructivism (Lefrancois 2012: 225).

To Vygotsky, the subject of psychology was to reconstruct the origin and course of development of human behaviour and consciousness (Vygotsky 1978: 6).Vygotsky applied this line of thinking to explain the transformation of elementary psychological processes into complex ones. According to Vygotsky (1978:6) and borrowed from other psychologists, the description and explanation of higher psychological functions was premised on three aspects which included: identification of the brain mechanism underlying a particular function, a detailed explication of their developmental history to establish the relation between simple and complex forms of what appeared to be the same behaviour and specification of the societal context in which the behaviour developed. The main idea emanating from his

psychology was how culture and social interaction were involved in the development of human consciousness. According to Lefrancois (2012: 225) the Vygotskian framework emphasises forces that are outside the child, that is culture and its tools which then account for and contribute to development. The assertion that meaning making is the mental functioning shaped by historical, cultural and institutional context run through Vygotsky's writings (Anderson 2013: 21). Thus, sociocultural theory appreciates that participation in social relations and culturally organised activities plays an important role in psychological development (Scott & Palinscar 2013).

Social interaction, which Vygotsky labels culture, is fundamentally involved in the development of cognition. Lefrancois (2012:225) observes:

> *Cultures determine what it is we have to learn and what sorts of competencies are required for successful adaptation to our worlds. Cultures necessarily shape human mental functioning…… we are not only culture – producing but also culture – produced….*

According to the Vygotskian theory, the importance of culture is highlighted in the distinction between elementary natural mental functions and higher mental functions such as thinking, problem solving and imagination which are largely through social interactions that culture makes possible (Lefrancois 2012: 226). Social interaction brings about the learning of a language and cognitive development is mainly a function of the largely verbal interaction between the child and the adults. Language is regarded as a social construct critical for any learning context. Through these interactions, the child learns and develops language and, as a result, logical thinking. Hence, to understand intellectual development, according to Vygotsky, it is necessary to understand the relationship between thought and language.

In elaborating the development of the psychological processes, Vygotsky used sociocultural theory to explain how individual mental function begins as actual social relations between people (Okeke et al 2016: 136). Thus, according to Gallagher (1999) and Lefrancois (2012:225) there are four basic unifying themes and principles underlying the Vygotskian framework, namely;

- The importance of culture which is a product of social life and human social activity

- The relationship between the learner and the teacher

- Learning can lead to development

- Language plays a central role in cognitive development

Culture, language and scaffolding are the defining pillars of the Vygotsky's theory.

Given this theoretical background, CHAT becomes an important comprehensive approach to analyse different learning approaches and contexts of learning such as schools and universities as cultural systems (Edwards 2011). Education is a social process through which society is reconstructed as human experience is powerfully shaped by cultural factors (Schiro 2012:6). Further, according to CHAT, education has the power to train people to analyse and understand social problems through learning experiences that lead to the development of desired effects, reactions and responses. The theory is a useful implement in this study to analyse how B.Ed (primary) in – service teacher development programme consciousness can be formed as students find new purpose and relevant meanings stimulated by the university context (Yamagata- Lynch 2010: 16). Edwards (2011) observes that:

> *Analyses typically focus simultaneously on individuals as thinkers and actors, their relationship with others and the purposes, values and knowledge to be found in the practices in the institutions or systems they inhibit.*

From this statement, learning and change in behaviour requires the learner to actively interact with someone or some situation to make meaning. The learner does not learn in isolation from stimuli coming from an outside reality (Schiro 2012: 182). Thus, learning occurs in a social group where the group develops the learner and the learner also enriches the group as both have experiences that contribute to the educational benefit. The B.Ed (primary) in – service programme creates an important social learning cultural group of lecturers and students drawn from different backgrounds, experiences and aspirations at a particular point in history. Together they can construct a vision of an improved programme and transform the existing practices to better ones as learning arises not through interaction but in interaction (Turuk 2008:248). At the heart of Vygotsky's theory was the understanding of human cognition and learning as social and cultural, rather than individual phenomena (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev & Miller 2003:1). Learning is conceived as embedded within social events and occurring as a learner interacts with people, objects and events in the environment (Edwards 2011).

The theory says a great deal about the forces that shape and promote learning, especially culture and language which are important drivers of cognitive development. In this study, the theory articulates a special social relationship that exists between lecturers and in – service students in the teaching – learning contexts. The theoretical framework involves teaching and learning for both parties, lecturers learn from and about the in – service students. Even as the students, they learn because of the lecturers' actions (Lefrancois 2012:229). Learning takes place in reciprocal expression among lecturers and students. The theory acknowledges the importance of what the learner brings to the learning situation as an active meaning - maker and problem – solver (Turuk 2008:248). Thus, Schiro (2013:181) observes that fundamental to learning is the kind of evidence about our wants which spring from experiences. According to Ndhlovu (2012:2) the Vygotskian framework is important in understanding teaching,

learning and development, and the sociocultural context becomes important in shaping and influencing educational experiences, which is the concern of this study. To this end, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory has made great impression on learning and the teaching profession.

Muthivhi (2008:45) recognises that the CHAT analysis helps universities to understand not only the knowledge about the teacher but the manner in which knowledge is organised as curriculum content and how this enlightens the teacher's practice. This suggests an inextricable causal connection between the nature of the in – service students and the kind of knowledge that make up the programme. The B.Ed in - service curriculum, thus, has to be developmentally connected to and influenced by the intricate primary school classroom contexts where the teachers' knowledge and skills are demanded. Universities are knowledge hubs and, these, as social institutions, excite teachers to research on critical issues and scaffold students to think and act beyond the ordinary through the creation of proper learning contexts. Teachers can define, develop and make meaning of their classroom world by their actions if they are given correct and relevant knowledge arising from their social interaction with peers and lecturers. The knowledge should be of value to their society and workplace contexts. Primary school teachers share the connection between concepts and knowledge learnt at universities and their relevance to teaching and learning in schools. The knowledge gained at university through in – service teacher development should be practically relevant and useful to teachers as they teach and as students learn in the classrooms. More specifically, the programme should provide B.Ed (primary) in – service students with answers to questions about the programme purpose, what knowledge and skills are of value and what methods and materials are more effective and productive in teaching and learning contexts.

In addition, the theoretical framework explains how the tools help individual internal function is related to cultural, institutional and historical context. Primary school teachers make use of these tools, especially language, in planning, preparing teaching and in learning activities (Machin, et al 2015: 32) as well as in solving difficult tasks in the classrooms. In the learning process, in – service students who make up a social and cultural group, make meaning of the teaching - learning world. In the process, they modify their prior knowledge and skills and create new activities that trigger transformation through artifacts, tools and other students in their environment (Yamagata – Lynch 2010:16).

The theory is anchored on Vygotsky's tripartite structure a of mediated action triangle as shown in Fig 1 below:

Figure 1: Vygotsky's mediated action triangle
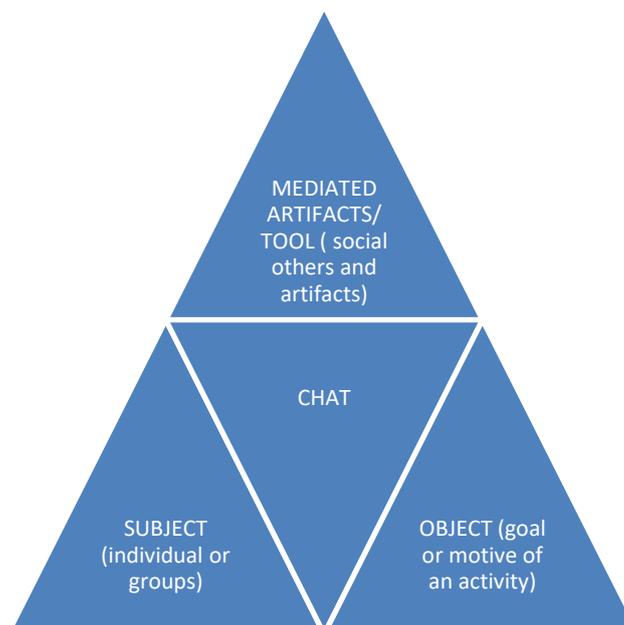
Adapted from Yamagata – Lynch (2010)

Fig 1 shows the dynamic interdependence between individuals and/ or groups, the social processes and how they nurture and scaffold learning and development (Muthivhi 2008: 16). Further, Vygotsky understood mediated action as a process where human consciousness develops through interaction with artifacts, tools and social others in an environment where individuals end up finding new meanings in their world. B.Ed (primary) in – service teachers should find new meaning by selecting and organising curriculum content and activities related to their practice as they interact with their lecturers. According to Scribner (1997) in Muthivhi (2008: 16), in that interaction, in – service students are not just passive, waiting for the environment to bring meaning, but, that through their social interaction they determine what sort of competencies are required and how learning is mediated. Further, the in – service students begin their interaction long before they come to university. During their teaching period they have a number of teaching experiences presented to them that could shape the programme.

As noted in Fig 1, the subject is the in – service students in a teaching - learning context while the mediating artifact/ tool include artifacts, social others and prior knowledge that contribute to the subject's mediated action experiences within learning. The object is the goal of the activity which is learning. The object is the reason why individuals and groups of individuals choose to participate in an activity. In this case, it is what motivates practising primary school teachers to come for the in - service programme and how the programme should contribute to the development of higher level teaching abilities. The programme should enable these students to gain new artifacts or cultural tools to make them robust in their execution of duty.

Vygotsky's most celebrated contribution was the development of the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which has had the most significant influence to the field of education and the learning process. Vygotsky's theoretical analysis of the ZPD is premised

on the thinking that the potential learning of children is better understood while collaborating in problem - solving with an adult or peer, an expert and a novice (Vygotsky 1978: 28; Muthivhi 2008: 18; Lefrancois 2012: 229). Vygotsky (1978: 84) says of ZPD:

> *It is the space between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under the guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.*

Turuk (2008:250) further observes:

The secret of effective learning lies in the nature of the social interaction between two or more people with different levels of skills and knowledge.

Thus, ZPD, according to Vygotsky (1978: 87) defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but currently in an embryonic state.

From the above statements, in – service student teachers need lecturers with higher levels of skills and knowledge. The lecturers should be able to assist the students to grow professionally and move them from their current 'embryonic state' through to the next layer of knowledge and skills relevant for classroom responsibilities. Through the interaction with lecturers, in – service students acquire a variety of information. They develop an entire repository of skills and knowledge through instruction (Vygotsky 1978: 84).The import of these statements is that in problem - solving situations, in – service students engage in learning activities while co - operating with lecturers. Students also develop multiple skills required for success in their professional lives. Their knowledge about teaching may have some maturity gaps (Vygotsky 1978: 87). University lecturers, then, can develop students by integrating new information with the information the students already possess. This can be

achieved through communicative interaction and acknowledgement of the students' pre – university knowledge (initial training) and their teaching experiences which should not be ignored. Lecturers, thus, should scaffold in – service students from their initial teaching skills to new, innovative and productive teaching by providing clear direction. What in – service students learn with the assistance of lecturers, they would be able to do independently in their classrooms with their learners, thus improving learning. University learning, therefore, should introduce something new and relevant into the in – service students' professional development. In this situation the lecturer becomes central.

Furthermore, the concept (ZPD) in Vygotsky's theoretical framework, has dominated in educational and pedagogical discourses where, in this case, has shown the micro- social relations between the lecturer and the in - service students. In addition, students are brought to the interaction as they acquire new strategies, knowledge and professional life (Scott & Palincsar 2013; Okeke et al 2016: 84) as a result of collective interaction with those around them (Vygotsky 1978:88). This suggests that lecturers in universities should organise knowledge, learning and problems in ways which are meaningful for the in –service students within their specific professional and cultural contexts. The in - service teacher development programme should reflect new sociocultural perspectives that appreciate that knowledge is co – constructed. It should also help students develop a new set and variety of developmental experiences. The interaction between lecturers and in - service students provides strategic guidance and aids future independent classroom problem - solving activities. Properly organised and guided learning informed by ZDP, artifacts and tools results in mental development. It also sets in motion a variety of higher developmental processes that are important for teacher effectiveness in the classroom. Such learning helps primary school teachers form their own view of the world (Gallagher 1999) initially through guided assistance and subsequently unaided.

Further, the theory would assist lecturers to realise how the Zimbabwean university has, among others, tailor made its B.Ed (primary) in – service programme in relation to the nature of knowledge and its application in real teaching – learning contexts (Kuzolin et al 2003:1). CHAT would lessen the theory – praxis gap (Roth & Lee 2007 in Ritchie 2008:1). What emerges then, informed by this sociocultural theory, is that the goal of instruction is to support students to engage in activities and get meaning that is relevant to their practice. In – service students need to use tools in a manner that is consistent with the practices of the classrooms. The theory, according to Gallagher (1999), leads to endless step by step changes in thought and behavior by the in – service students as they engage in appropriate learning that produces desired results both at intra and intersubjective levels.

Vygotsky's theory becomes an important framework, a lens through which to appreciate and clarify how learning and intellectual development take place in activities at university level. The theory provides insights into the programme on the mediated qualitative transition of in - service students from initial training to new developmental paths (Antoniadou 2011; Yamagata – Lynch 2010). This would improve the Zimbabwean primary school classroom teaching and learning. Lecturers should, therefore, understand that transformational changes that show the development of in - service students are fundamentally dependent on appropriately organised forms of social relations and educational processes. This is why Vygotsky in Muthivhi (2008) perceives thinking or cognitive activity as being inseparably interwoven with the context of its manifestation. Knowledge has no meaning unless it is given a real social context.

In – service is a critical professional teacher intervention strategy. Teachers who go through the training programme at universities should gain knowledge and skills and be some problem – solvers which results in change (Scott & Palincsar 2013). Teachers need to have both pedagogical as well as content knowledge (Okeke et al 2016: 133) for fruitful classroom

interaction. This knowledge gives the in – service students the chance to provide their learners with current skills and knowledge as they learn. In – service teachers should mediate their educational encounters at university with acquired previous experiences in the classroom (Ritchie 2008: 519) and workplace demands. They should understand the important role of the relationships among the students they teach, themselves and knowledge (Kozulin et al 2003: 1). Learning should be understood as social and cultural rather than individual. In – service students should mark that difference by making knowledge accessible to the learners they teach using learner friendly instructional practices.

The theory becomes appropriate for this study in a number of ways. Borrowing from Antoniadou (2011), the theory would enable the researcher to communicate an explanatory framework regarding the situatedness of knowledge and the participatory and social nature of learning. The in – service programme comprises social and cultural groups of students who share similar professional backgrounds and the same purpose under the expert guidance of the lecturers. Knowledge can be learned through mediated teaching in which lecturers understand the differences in student development and the professional needs of students. The theory becomes a rich source of deeper understanding of collective and cultural underpinnings of a modern classroom (Kozulin et al 2003:2). The theory also helps lecturers to reflect on how current practices in primary education in Zimbabwe could be altered assuming that through the curriculum, students are developed to higher levels of conceptualising their practice. Thus, the theory becomes a platform from which to look at the university curriculum and the instructional discourses related to literacy in a setting greatly influenced by social interaction and culture.

The in – service programme should prepare students for entry into new and demanding challenges they face in the classrooms. The implication of this theory is that lecturers should be important agents in initiating and awakening students' thinking. The theory points to the

important role played by lecturers in helping in – service students to describe the kind of interaction they should have with their learners in classroom environments. According to Kozulin et al (2003: 2) the theory makes it possible to articulate the ideal lecturer as a role model and source of knowledge as well as a facilitator. This leads to improved effectiveness in the lecture room contexts where students' needs are taken care of. There is also need for in - service teachers to know how to transform that university knowledge into effective tools for children's learning and development in Zimbabwean primary schools.

With this theory in mind, the researcher was in a position to investigate the influence and the gap that currently exists within the B.Ed (primary) in – service education programme at the University and its relationship to teacher classroom needs and practices.

2.3. In- service teacher development

Teachers who fail to take their teaching seriously, who do not study …, disqualify themselves as teachers (Barnes 2011: 168). McRobbie (2000: 6) underlines that teaching is an arduous journey of learning rather than a final destination of knowing how to teach. There is no epilogue in teaching (Uchiyama & Radin 2009: 279). Dana (2015:2) further acknowledges that he who dares to teach must never cease to learn. In the same vein, Duderstadt (1999: 4) notes that teachers need to progress with their education and acquire skills which instill a willingness to learn throughout teachers' working lives. Teachers who continue on a lifelong improvement path through in – service training become a country's important educational human resources.

 Premised on the statements above, in - service teacher development is a programme for teachers geared towards the improvement of competencies that are necessary for the proper functioning of the teacher (Fok, Chan, Sin, Ng & Yeung 2005: 2). Further, in - service teacher development is conceived as providing opportunities to practising teachers to enhance

their professional capabilities and capacities (Lee 2005: 39). It is an on - going capacity building exercise and change process for teachers that requires a great deal of learning, support and guidance (Alene & Prasadh 2019: 172). Fok et al (2005:3) acknowledge the need for in- service teacher development that would elevate practising teachers' professional practice to an acceptable level of performance. This is because there may be a difference between the teachers' existing competencies and their actual needs to perform well. In-service is, thus, a professional teacher development programme meant for teachers to upgrade themselves for value – addedness (Fok et al 2005:12). The idea is to increase the teachers' competitiveness and competencies, keep them up to date and extend teachers' required skills and knowledge further, in a fast changing educational world (Altun 2011:848).

According to Ling (2008:11) and Lee (2005: 39), in - service teacher development is pivoted on teachers to vary, nurture and breed a knowledge base that could help effective teacher decision – making. In the same vein, Gonye et al (2008:137) understand in - service teacher development as the desire to empower teachers with sufficient subject mastery and pedagogy. This is when teachers develop their own information – literate identity as well as pedagogical skills and knowledge (McGuinness 2011: 37) necessary to act in response to curriculum and practice (Carroll & McCulloch 2014:2). Altun (2011: 848) identifies three important activities of in service teacher development, namely;

- professional education, which is a broadening and expanding of teachers' theoretical perspectives by means of advanced study,
- professional training, the development of knowledge and skills which are a direct applicability to daily work, and
- professional support, activities aimed at developing on- the- job experience and performance.

Crawley (1994) cited in Gonye et al (2008: 139) also lists competences that in service teachers ought to have, viz: subject knowledge, subject application, class management, assessment and recording of pupils' progress. In- service teacher development has the prospect to build capacities of teachers to learn new things, apply their new knowledge in new contexts and work out intelligent judgment about what is important and what is not (Altun 2011: 847). In addition, in- service teacher development should:

- augment teachers' knowledge of the subjects being taught,

- perfect teaching skills in the classroom,

- keep up with growth in the individual fields and in education generally,

- generate and contribute new knowledge to the profession, and

- increase ability to monitor students' work, in order to provide constructive feedback to students and appropriately redirect teaching and learning.

In - service teacher development becomes an investment in human capital. This is not only in terms of knowledge and skills but in order to make a difference in education (Boud & Solomon 2010:6). B.Ed in – service primary school teachers can make a difference by accommodating changes, innovations and by keeping informed about developments in education in order that they can educate their learners more effectively (Cimer, Cakir & Cimer 2010). If teachers do not update their teaching skills they become 'dead wood'. Pollard and Bourne (2002:15) claim that trees do not kill themselves. Dead wood, rather, is a product of an infertile, undernourished environment.

In- service teacher development becomes an important intervention that nourishes teachers to get best practice knowledge and make the greatest difference in student learning (McRobbie 2000: 1). Thus, according to Cimer et al (2010) at the end of their course, in – service teachers are expected to have acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes to incorporate into

their practice, influence learners' learning and achievement and influence other teachers to bring change. Therefore, a teacher who has undergone in – service training should be a nourished one, with a repertoire of skills and a high probability of using strategies that enhance learner development in the Zimbabwean primary school classroom in which curriculum is organised according to subjects.

2.4. In- service teacher development in the context of universities

In – service professional teacher development has been conceived differently in most countries across the globe. Day (1997:39), with regards to in – service teacher development in most European countries notes that it was voluntary in Austria; not coordinated in Denmark, Italy and Spain; was not conceptualised in Belgium, France and Netherlands and was top – down, short course dominated in Portugal and the United Kingdom. A considerable amount of literature (Wanzala 2013; Okobia 2013; Qi 2012; Altun 2011; Sabri 1997) has also established that universities have played a leading role in the provision of in – service teacher development in both developing and developed countries. This is against the backdrop that the school – provided in – service may not promote the necessary range of outcomes to continuing high quality professional developments (Day 1997:44). In Canada, Fullan (1979) points out that thirty years back universities regarded greater involvement in in – service as a priority. Johnstone (1971) in Qi (2012) further states that universities should take full responsibility for coordinating various kinds of in – service and continuing teacher education because of their strategic positions. Universities have become important knowledge and skills development institutions where practising teachers can be nurtured and further improve their teaching skills and content delivery (Shigwedha, Nakashole, Auala, Amakutuwa & Ailonga 2017).

However, the potential of universities to execute this function has been overrated. According to Alwan (2000:18), in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), in – service courses are poorly

designed and carried out. There appears to be very little interest in the in – service training among UAE teachers. In some instances, universities had had full time, part time, short courses and workshops for in – service programmes that had added nothing to the primary school teachers' expertise, skills and knowledge (Chabaditsile, Gateboe & Nkwane 2017: 8; Alwan 2000: 18). Alwan (2000:18) raises the following as requirements by universities if they are to design impact in – service programmes:

- training needs should be dependent on a survey of the teachers' training needs,
- there should be a variety and balance of activities as well as content, activities should be a manifestation of training objectives and practice should be a salient feature of the programme and
- on – going evaluation of the programme is essential.

In most countries, thus, universities have taken the full responsibility for in – service teacher training to ensure present and future needs of students are met. This is despite questions being raised about the role of universities in the acquisition of professional competencies as well as the articulation between academic courses and practice in schools (Cornu 2015).

2.4.1 In- service teacher development in universities in Zimbabwe

After completing the pre- service teacher training course at colleges, primary school teachers have at least two years of teaching experience before they are granted leave to do in – service professional development. The two years would afford them time to do some reflection and self- evaluation (Villegas & Lucas 2002: 22) during practice with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. This is where teachers attempt to close the knowledge and teaching skills gaps identified. The learning opportunities that arise for teachers during their school – based practice (Nilsson & Driel 2010: 1309) become important to shape the in- service programme narrative. Thus, this teacher development programme includes a range of

activities from pre – service to a variety of in – service programmes at university (Alene & Prasadh 2019: 172). The in- service teacher development programmes at universities help teachers acquire and deepen their knowledge and skills required to implement the primary school curriculum.

The Zimbabwean primary school teacher goes through 'four stations' in the academic and professional journey. Training is done by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development (MoHTESTD) in colleges of education. The teacher is employed by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MoPSLSW). In terms of practice the teachers go to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE). For in- service, they go back to universities under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development as illustrated in Fig 3:

Figure 2: The four stations of the Zimbabwean primary school teacher.
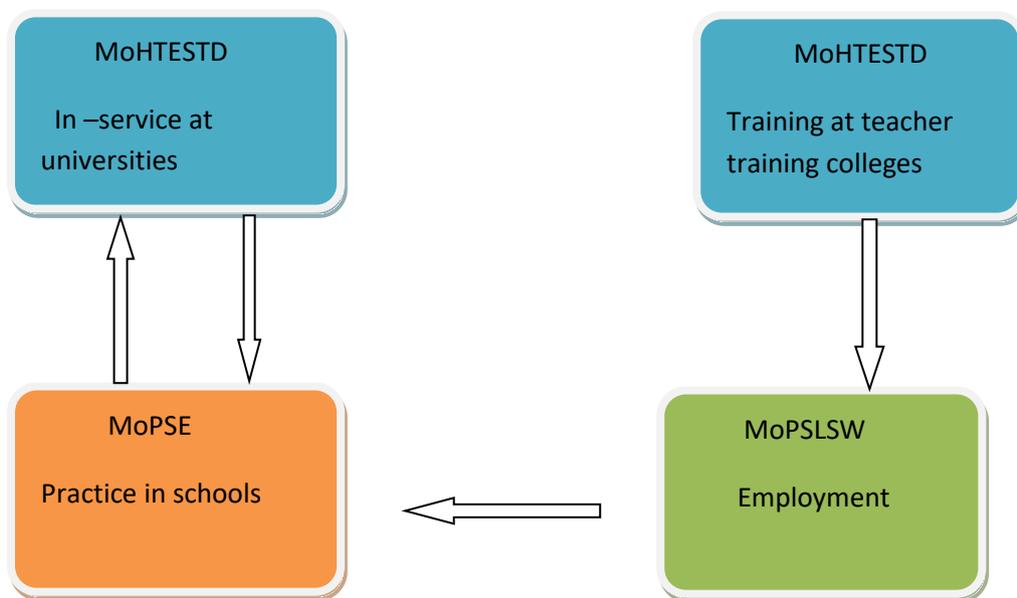
There seems to be a temporary disconnect between what universities offer as in –service modules and the workplace requirements of primary school teachers which is the concern of this study. It should be noted that schooling in all its phases has become subordinate to the

requirements of the labour market (Carroll & McCulloch 2014:5). Allen (2011: 743) laments that the world over, students' voices are rarely used to ascertain whether in – service teacher education programmes are achieving their goals or not. Yet, according to Bovill and Bulley (2011:1) higher education policies and literature have recently called for students to become co – creators, co- producers and co – designers of their own learning. Further, in –service professional teacher development research has had a narrow scope in Zimbabwe. Superficial treatment of universities' in – service curriculum issues may deprive Zimbabwean universities of the much needed competitiveness and effectiveness by not developing high level teaching skills. The university – primary schools conversation helps improve the quality of education in the Zimbabwean primary schools. Thus, Zvobgo (2014: 7) notes that the in – service teacher should represent a new breed of professional, capable of explaining how current educational theory demonstrates the interrelatedness between theory and practice and to demonstrate their potential as change agents.

There are telling indications that most university in – service programmes in most countries have had a stagnant status (McKernan 2008: xi). In – service intervention strategies should be aligned to national educational goals and teacher concerns by showing responsiveness. Most university lecturers in Zimbabwe may not have primary school experience and may not be aware of teachers' concerns. This current study is to appreciate how the B.Ed (primary) in - service programme interfaces with primary school teachers' on the job requirements at two levels, namely;

- Whether primary school in – service students think that the programme works and has a positive impact on their work and
- Whether the in – service programme leads to their professional growth.

Further, according to Zvobgo (2014:7) in –service programmes in Zimbabwe are meant to direct universities towards producing the kind of graduate teacher whose sensitivity and understanding of educational issues was broader than that of a certificate and diploma holder. Ideally, in – service primary school teachers would have an enriched conversation about the complexities of teaching and student learning (Lieberman & Mace 2008: 228). Teaching, as part of information profession needs to build a theoretically informed praxis (McGuinness 2011: 38) through programmes that help make a positive and principled input into education (Carroll & McCullock 2014: 2). Two fundamental questions come to mind;

- What do Zimbabwean lecturers want the in - service student to know and be able to do after completing the programme?
- How has the in – service programme articulated primary school teacher professional needs in the context of academic regulations and module outlines as programme implementation documents?

These questions become strong indicators and sound framework in shaping the in – service programme. The questions should help lecturers in Zimbabwean universities to identify a vacuum and areas in which training and competencies are most needed as they develop curriculum materials.

For university lecturers in Zimbabwe, knowing primary school teacher competence needs is essential for the designing and planning of in –service education programmes and the establishment of criteria for evaluation and self – evaluation (Liakopoulou 2011:66). Teacher professional practice is honed from an understanding of thoroughly explored theoretical knowledge produced in schools and universities (Driscoll et al 2013: 2). According to Kaur (2016) teacher quality, teacher learning and training and teacher improvement are becoming critical focus areas for programme designers and evaluators. Teachers, it should be

understood, are the kingpins of any educational system (Kaur 2016). They are important curricula voices and should remain critical engines of curricula debates. Thus, according to Driscoll et al (2013: 257), in – service primary school teachers should be able to:

- exhibit their knowledge of subjects, pedagogy and teach drawing on reading and research,

- critically reflect on their own practice, including researching on specific aspects in-depth in order to innovate, and

- be accountable for their own development.

This can be achieved if teachers become scholars through reading and debating essential curriculum issues related to their teaching profession (Taylor 2012: 15). Teachers should go through university in - service programmes that make the bridge between theory and practice.

The fundamental question is how much the designing of B.Ed (primary) in –service teacher preparation programmes at Zimbabwean universities taken into account the expected teacher competence needs. The planning of in - service teacher preparation programmes requires the capturing of teachers' needs so as to ensure that the study programmes are planned according to expectations of teachers (Liakopoulou 2011:73) as raised by Alwan (2000) in the United Arab Emirates. As practising professionals, in – service primary school teachers should be equipped with subject and pedagogical knowledge, professional skills, supporting attitudes and values for sound academic decisions (Hong Kong Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications 2003: 11; Chun & Evans 2015: 10). Built in B.Ed in - service teacher development programmes should be curricular, pedagogical and evaluative practices (Villegas & Lucas 2002: 22) in this ever- changing knowledge economy. Unfortunately, most university programmes in Zimbabwe may have remained flat without realising that curriculum reforms pay dividends to primary school teachers, the learners and the nation.

Moyo (2016: 2) states that the curriculum of universities should be deepened to equip students with skills and competencies that will sustain Zimbabwe's new educational agenda. According to Allen (2011:742), one of the biggest dangers has been preparing teachers who only know theory and know nothing about practice. While in – service should be anchored on marrying theory and practice, most of the work should be skewed towards application.

2.5. Organisation of primary school curriculum

Generally, primary school curriculum, the world over, aims to offer a variety of broad learning experiences, knowledge, skills, attitudes and attributes, thus, is organised differently. Primary school curricula mostly encourage a rich variety of teaching approaches to teaching and learning that accommodate different needs of children (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment 2005; Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 2015: 21).

In Nigeria, students take a minimum of eleven subjects in primary school (Mohammed 2014, Igbokwe 2015). In Zambia they also have the subject - based approach in a seven year primary school cycle (Zambian Ministry of Education 2000). The Botswana primary school education experience has also a subject- based approach with a seven year cycle from standard one to seven where students take a minimum of ten and a maximum of eleven subjects (Mosothwane 2006). The Irish primary school system has six areas which comprise eleven subjects (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment 2005). The South African education system from Grades R to twelve has eight learning areas (Department of Basic Education 2016). The above mentioned African countries are former British colonies and the influence and legacies are evident. They have followed the orthodox western tradition (Mufanechiya & Mufanechiya 2011: 26; Barnhardt 2006:6) of organising knowledge into subjects and or disciplines.

In the same vein, the European Commission (2019) reports that in Greece, primary school is orgainsed according to grades and learners enter school at the age of six. Each grade represents a certain level of teaching and educational goals and skills. In these primary schools, content is organised into subjects and taught by one teacher or by a specialist teacher whenever it concerns a subject of specialisation as spelt out by the curricula (European Commission 2019). Learners only progress to the next grade after recording positive assessment results. What obtains in Greece, Nigeria, and Botswana is the same as in the United Kingdom where majority of the primary schools organise the curriculum according to subjects (Alexander, Rose & Woodhead 1992: 21) and teaching is focused on single subjects. These cases share some similarities with the Zimbabwean primary school context.

2.5.1. Organisation of primary school curriculum in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, the primary school system is sometimes referred to as the basic or foundational phase and it caters for pupils from Early Childhood Development (ECD) to grade seven. Just like in most countries it is organised according to grades. The organisation of the primary school curriculum spans the years from infancy, which includes ECD A and B, to grade two. Junior phase runs from grade three to seven (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 2015:21; Dokora 2016:A4). The primary school curriculum is organised in cycles, namely; infant school cycle and junior school cycle (Dokora 2016: A4). The primary school exit point is the grade seven level where students write Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC) examinations in five subjects: English, Shona/ Ndebele/ Tonga, Mathematics, Content and Agriculture. The assessment through examinations is meant to build an informed picture over the seven years of the child's learning progress across the curriculum. The primary school phase takes the child to secondary school level. It is the junior phase which is the concern of this study as B.Ed in –service students in question fall and practise in this category.

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE)'s Curriculum Development and Technical Services (CDTS) unit is responsible for preparing the primary school curriculum (Kanyongo 2005: 65; Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 2015:3). The curriculum preparation by CDTS is a highly technical and consultative process. The unit is accountable for the production of important curriculum implementation documents such as syllabi for each subject and teaching- learning aids for all primary schools in the country; a 'one size fits all' curriculum (Duke 1999 in Mufanechiya and Mufanechiya 2011: 38; McGuinness 2011:34; Lieberman & Mace 2008:227). The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, through its technocrats, the Permanent Secretary and Education Directors, are empowered by the Education Act (1987, 2006) to guide and enforce the implementation of various provisions of the curriculum (Mufanechiya & Mufanechiya 2011:26). This is achieved through circulars to all the primary schools in Zimbabwe.

According to Machinga (1998:5) and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (2015:6) the philosophy which underpins the type of curriculum offered in Zimbabwean primary schools is derived from the government's commitment to developing the full potential of the child. This is achieved through the curriculum and pedagogy so that the child can be a useful member of the society. The curriculum is enriched by reflecting the philosophy of *Unhu/ Ubuntu,* emphasising human values and interconnectedness (Zimbabwe Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 2013: 57). This is also in line with the South African Education aims which ensure that children obtain and relate knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their lives (Department of Basic Education 2016). The primary school curriculum is expected to grow the child in all dimensions of life.

The Zimbabwean primary school curriculum is both academic and vocational in orientation. The subjects taught in Zimbabwean primary schools are: Mathematics, English, ChiShona and IsiNdebele (the main indigenous languages), Social Studies, Environmental Science,

Religious and Moral Education, Music, Art, Home Economics, Physical Education, Computer Education and HIV/ AIDS Education (Kanyongo 2005: 67; Makwekwerere 2015: 3; Zimbabwe Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 2013: 57). What is critically important is that there is no specialisation by teachers at primary school level when it comes to teaching. Primary school teachers are expected to be acquainted with and teach the whole range of subject areas (Robinson, Bingle & Howard 2013:88). While this is the case in the Zimbabwean primary school system, Driscoll et al (2013:258) observe that the teacher is not likely to be an expert in all areas of the primary curriculum.

The CDTS is responsible for the content of these subjects and the quality of the Zimbabwean primary school curriculum (Mufanechiya & Mufanechiya 2011: 26). Over and above the teaching these subjects, teachers participate in co – curricular activities such as sports and clubs.

As observed by Mufanechiya (2015:39), the daily Zimbabwean primary school programme is packed from start to finish. According to Taylor (2012), the primary school curriculum has become so congested and, at times confusing to the teacher. Emphasis is placed on implementing mainly the primary school subjects, thereby making primary schooling a labour – intensive industry (Preedy 1993 in Mufanechiya 2015: 39; Carroll & McCulloch 2014: 6). Primary school curriculum encourages conformity and compliance amongst teachers with very little professional autonomy (Carroll & McCulloch 2014:7). Teachers have, however, implemented these primary school subjects with varying degrees of success. In most cases, one would notice a halfhearted implementation or no implementation in some subject areas pointing to an insufficient knowledge base of the teachers (Rao 2009:260). Rao (2009:260) further asserts that this is partly the result of the primary school teachers' initial training and more realistically, the lack of regular opportunities to update their knowledge and skills. This makes in –service teacher development at universities an important intervention strategy. It

could ensure that teachers are equipped with essential knowledge and skills to engage in primary curriculum differentiation (Okeke et al 2016: 43) in order to reach out to all learners.

2.6. Primary school curriculum development

Curriculum planning which involves the design and development of programmes is an endeavor for broad – based thinking on teaching, learning and intended learning outcomes and evaluation processes before teaching is done (Maphosa, Mudzielwana & Netshifhefhe 2014: 355). Basically the curriculum development process at all institutional levels is highly academic and technical, involving professionals, curriculum specialists and other stakeholders.

A study by Nascimento (2014: 4) in Brazil revealed that curriculum development practices in primary schools have been one sided and did not include the voices of teachers. According to him, important decision making processes about the curriculum development at primary school level has been in the hands of specialists and government with schools merely becoming implementation sites. Furthermore, Nascimento (2014:18) says that the process has been characterised by specialists who 'speak' and other stakeholders such as teachers who 'listen.' In New Zealand, Riggall and Sharp (2008: 13) report that the government has the ultimate responsibility for the structure of education and the Ministry of Education provides policy advice and develops the curriculum, allocates resources and monitors effectiveness. Riggall and Sharp (2008 : 12; 13) further point out that primary school curriculum development processes in the Netherlands and Sweden were also in the hands of government through their Ministries of Education, with local level municipalities making decisions on the running of the schools, staffing and resources.

The points worth noting about curriculum development in European contexts have been how governments have maintained a stranglehold on curriculum development at primary school

level. The defining features of curriculum development in African contexts have not fundamentally differed from the European practices. Dwarkan (2017: 10) comments that in Mauritius, the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) has been entrusted with the full responsibility to undertake activities in connection with curriculum development from pre – primary to secondary levels. The institute develops materials for educators and learners as well as participates in updating of the syllabi and the development of new teaching and learning materials. Shigwedha et al (2017: 10) observe that in Namibia the state makes all important decisions about primary school curriculum. The same scenario is reported by Chabaditsile et al (2017) in Botswana where the Ministry of Education and Skills Development is responsible for the administration of the education system and the accompanying decisions related to the curriculum development, in close consultation with important stakeholders. There are close connections between Zimbabwe and these international curriculum development practices.

2.6.1. Stages in primary school curriculum development in Zimbabwe

In coming up with the Zimbabwean primary school curricula the starting point is the needs or situational analysis. This is the stage where the policy established by government through MoPSE becomes the basis for clear and communicable aims and objectives. The objectives serve as the basis for decision making, a direction – giving influence, and are derived from ideology, economic interests, cultural aspects, to mention a few (Mufanechiya & Mufanechiya 2011:25). The CDTS, an arm of government, uses an expanded and all-embracing stakeholder consultation process. Stakeholders include representatives from the national subject panels, business community, the National Manpower Advisory Council (NAMACO), parents, line ministries, industry and commerce through the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI), representatives from universities, teachers ' colleges, teacher associations, churches, chiefs, publishers and all other interested stakeholders (Ministry of

Primary and Secondary Education 2015:7). Just like in the South African education system, the curriculum decisions are made in a participatory and representative manner (South African Department of Basic Education 2016).

Consulting these stakeholders is supposed to anchor the curriculum on what Jones and Straker (2006) in Bertram (2011:6) identify as intertwining content, context and process through:

- content knowledge – the knowledge of the subject content that needs to be taught, the skills and values,

- general pedagogical knowledge – knowledge of different teaching, classroom management strategies and assessment strategies, and

- context knowledge – about the political, social, economic, technological and general learner background.

The input and influence of the important stakeholders cannot be underestimated. They represent the political, economic, social and technological considerations that are fated to drive the educational thinking in Zimbabwe. The idea is for important stakeholders to buy – in so as to ensure that the curriculum is a game changer. Consultation makes the curriculum responsive to the needs of the rapidly changing and expanding social, economic and cultural environment and, thus, enables viable practice (Pendlebury & Shalem 2010). The curriculum ideas are packaged into the syllabuses. According to the Curriculum Development Unit Plan (1987) the syllabi constitute the legal framework for the development of detailed teaching and learning activities, hence, should be in line with government policy whilst following universal educational principles. The syllabi are then taken to the schools for implementation by teachers.

Currently, there is a lot of curriculum activity in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education with the Ministry being engaged in curriculum reform in order to replace the current content based primary and secondary school curricula with the competence based one.

2.7. Primary school organogram in developing/ developed countries

Generally, primary schools set ups in various countries have been the same with little variations, with primary schools managed by heads. The heads have responsibilities mainly to guide, mentor, supervise and ensure the smooth and effective running of the school.

Human resources of a primary school in Rwanda include the head teacher, teaching staff, administration personnel, support staff, pupils and partners especially parents (National Curriculum Development Center 2008:3). The primary school organogram in Rwanda has the head teacher at the helm, then the Head of Department, the class teacher and the learners. The Mauritian primary school set up also provides the same arrangement where the schools are managed by school heads who have the responsibility to drive national educational policies and curriculum implementation (Dwarkan 2017:49). Teachers work under the supervision of the school head. Shigwedha et al (2017: 57) report that in Namibia primary schools are run by a principal who has the responsibility of managing financial, human and material resources for smooth education delivery.

Generally, primary schools have been managed by heads/ principals with duties to oversee curriculum implementation and other general administrative functions at school level. Zimbabwean primary school context has not been different from practices obtaining in other countries.

2.7.1. Primary school organogram in Zimbabwe

Primary and secondary schools in Zimbabwe, regardless of whether they are government or non- government, have the school head or principal as the chief executive officer (Samkange 2013: 635). The heads are appointed by government through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and are usually experienced teachers. The organogram of the Zimbabwean primary school set up includes the head at the top, the deputy, senior teachers (usually a male and a female), class teachers, head boy and head girl, prefects and the general student population. Below the heads are deputy heads who have the delegated responsibility in the academic and administrative functions of the school. Mcewen and Salters (2010:69) observe that the head as manager is a leading professional whose authority has been perceived chiefly in terms of intellectual, moral and management values.

2.7.1.1. Roles of heads of schools

The role of the head is two pronged. It is administrative and managerial. Inasmuch as the head is responsible for everything which happens in the school, he/she must achieve most of the objectives indirectly through the work of others (Lloyd 2006:317). Heads work closely with teachers to control the instructional programme (Manaseh 2016:32) by getting in touch with classroom work, children performance and behaviour. As promoted teachers, school heads set clear goals, manage curriculum, monitor lesson delivery and plans, allocate key teaching and learning resources and evaluate teachers regularly in order to promote learner learning and growth (Muranda et al 2015:1). In the same vein, Manaseh (2016:32) appreciates the role of the head as that of supervising the teaching programme and ensuring high quality teaching and learning. The idea is for heads to get to know how teachers relate to curriculum implementation best practices.

Further, Jita (2010) in Manaseh (2016:32) and Mulford (2003:5) observe that heads help develop knowledge and implementation of the curriculum as well as the instruction,

personnel assessment and inspectorial visits. They provide professional leadership for the effective and smooth running of the school.

At the end of each academic year the Zimbabwean teachers are appraised by heads using the performance management tool or the Results Based Management (RBM). The performance of each teacher is rated using this RBM tool.

2.7.1.2. Roles of the teacher

The teacher is next in line with the chief responsibility of implementing the curriculum under the watchful eye of the head, deputy and senior master/ woman. Teachers have the responsibility to plan and deliver effective learning programmes for mixed groups of learners (Machin et al 2015: 31). Further, Machin et al (2015:32) note the following as the responsibilities of the teacher:

- adhering to key legislation, regulatory requirements, for example Acts, circulars;

- designing and contributing to the design of the course curriculum;

- planning learning activities based on the needs of the learners and specific individual needs within the group;

- designing learning resources that are varied, appropriate and intellectually challenging to learners;

- keeping accurate records of individual learners' achievement, progress and evaluation, and

- ensuring one's own professional development.

According to Okeke et al (2016: 53 - 54) the teacher has four important roles, namely; plans and prepares, manages and organises the classroom, communicates clearly and mediates learning. Teachers, thus, teach, make sure that students learn and make assessment in a sequence that helps learners to have a positive experience and to be able to achieve their

academic goals (Gravells 2014:3). McGuinness (2011:149) states that if teachers are to be teachers, then they need to be fully engaged in training for, and maintaining competence in aspects of professional identity. The teacher's key result areas include; identifying learner needs, planning teaching and learning plans and resource materials, checking whether learners have gained the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding and providing feedback (Gravells 2014: 3-4). The critical period of teacher development is the time spent in the classroom (Carroll & McCulloch 2014: 2). The last point in Machin et al (2015)'s teacher responsibilities is very important as a properly and professionally in - service teacher is able to execute his/ her duties with confidence.

2.8. Teacher competencies

At the core of education systems the world over is the development of the required human capital to meet present and future challenges of the 'shrinking', globalised and knowledge economy (Igbokwe 2015). Teachers need to compete in a rapidly changing global economy in which the knowledge economy plays an important role (Carroll & McCulloch 2014:5). At the centre of this are the critical educational essentials that point to teacher competence as the nucleus of any successful education system (Georgescu 2013: 1).

Successful curriculum implementation heavily depends on the existence of a well – qualified teacher workforce with relevant professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes and values (Liakopoulou 2011: 66). The teacher is the one who translates educational philosophy and objectives into knowledge and skills. The teacher transfers the knowledge and skills to learners in the classroom (Okeke et al 2016: 61). Nyerere (1963) observes that there is no education system that is better than the quality of its teachers (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports 2011: ii). The quality and standard of any education system depends on the quality and standard of its teachers (Visvanathan & Panneer Selvam 2014:7).

There is no gold medal winning definition of teacher competence. However, Wolfe and Poon (2015) have a more comprehensive one. They maintain that teacher competence is the capacity by the teacher to use quantitative and qualitative information to systematically appreciate skills, gaps, strengths, weaknesses and interests of students. The teachers use that information to devise and adopt learning paths that lead towards meeting professional standards (Wolfe & Poon 2015: 16). Teacher competence presupposes interweaving individual qualities and attitudes, skills and knowledge that arise as a result of their work (Liakopoulou 2011: 66). Further, Cruz (2004: 58) notes that teacher competence is that capacity by teachers to generate a physical, mental and social disposition that engages the learners, resulting in high quality teaching for the learner's learning. Thus, teacher effectiveness cannot be benchmarked in skills and knowledge acquisition only but that teacher quality is also a critical factor. Competent teachers are those who recognise the 'intersecting axes' in which the heart, hand and head – the child and the subject – are both part of the education matrix (Driscoll, et al 2013: xvii). According to Visvanathan and Panneer Selvam (2014: 7) a competent teacher is one with the knowledge and skills to cope with a professional problem. A competent teacher is one who is thoroughly grounded in knowledge, has critical appreciation of relevant theory and practice and has a predisposition to learn (Machin et al 2015: 31; Carroll & McCulloch 2014: 7).

What teacher competence entails has meant different things to different authorities. The concept, which is deemed necessary for the teachers to execute their didactic and pedagogical duties (Liakopoulou 2011: 66), ranges from the broad to the particular. Some of the key teacher competence descriptors identified by Cruz (2004: 57 - 59) include:

- capacity to plan instruction and design learning experiences articulating aims and goals for student learning, that is correct interpretation of curriculum documents;
- indicating knowledge of subject matter content;

- interconnecting ideas and information within and across the subject matter areas;

- making use of instructional strategies appropriate to the subject matter and cognitive level of learners;

- identifying resources, materials and technologies to make subject matter accessible;

- using results of assessment to guide instruction;

- connecting with students and stakeholders about students' progress;

- working with colleagues to improve professional practice, and

- creating professional goals and pursuing opportunities to grow professionally.

Wolfe and Poon (2015: 6) summarise teacher competencies into four related wide domains necessary for teachers to thrive in the classroom, namely; cognitive, intrapersonal, interpersonal and instructional as shown on Table 2.

Table 2: Information about the teacher competence domains

Domain	Description
Cognitive	Present content – based concepts both within and across disciplines
	Use a variety of perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, transfer and collaborative problem – solving
	Can perform the standards of discourse, academic language and argumentation in specific content areas
Intrapersonal	Remain traditionally sensitive and celebrating students diversity
	Provide frequent and timely feedback to

	students
	Demonstrate a growth mindset
	Look for opportunities to learn new knowledge and skills
	Take advantage of new tools and resources to enhance teaching, especially technological resources
	Remain philosophical and focused on improvement and innovation
Interpersonal	Contribute to favorable student learning environments
	Create conditions that are physically and emotionally safe, friendly and affirming
	Build relationships with families, communities, business and other outside the school for educational support services
Instructional	Deal with classroom dynamics
	Determine students' progress, advancement, and pace and various methods of demonstrated understanding of content
	Use quantitative and qualitative data to plan and alter learning paths of students
	Use many, frequent and constructive assessments to monitor learner progress
	Adapt, adopt and create high quality

	resources for curriculum implementation

Adapted from Wolfe and Poon (2015: 8 - 19)

2.8.1. Teacher competencies in other contexts

Most nations, through their education ministries have identified critical teacher competences as important task definitions and goal settings for personal and professional development.

In Greece, Liakopoulou (2011:66) classified teacher qualifications leading to teacher competence into two categories, viz:

- Personality traits, attitudes and beliefs and

- Pedagogical skills and knowledge which encompass subject knowledge, knowledge of learners, teaching methodology, curriculum knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of contexts and knowledge of self.

The Turkish Ministry of National Education (2006:3) identified six generic teacher competencies as:

- Personal and professional values – professional development;

- Knowing the student;

- Learning and teaching process;

- Monitoring and evaluation of learning and development;

- School – family and society relationships and

- Knowledge of curriculum and content

Uganda, through its Ministry of Education and Sports developed a Primary Teacher Competence Profile in conjunction with Kyambogo University. They identified five primary

teacher competencies as: instructing, caring for learners, providing guidance and counseling services to the learners, providing leadership and management and managing one's professional growth (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports 2011:6). These tasks are accompanied by sub- tasks as shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Uganda Primary Teacher Competence Profile

Competences	Sub - competences
Instructing	Preparation
	Teaching
	Assessment
	Evaluation
Caring for learners	Providing for physical needs of learners
	Providing for psycho – social needs of learners
	Providing for moral and spiritual needs of learners
	Fostering network with parents
Providing guidance and counseling services to the learners	Assisting learners cope with difficult situations
	Facilitating learners choose and develop a career
	Aiding learners develop a health relationship with others
	Helping learners familiarise with new environments
	Helping learners develop appropriate study habits
Providing leadership and management	Managing and utilising resources
	Coming up with leadership in school and community
	Building effective teams within the school and community and building trust among members
Managing one's personal growth	Systematic reflection on performance
	Recording and sharing one's experiences with others

	Looking for and using opportunities for improvement

Adapted from Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports (2011:6)

These professional competencies make it possible for teachers to fulfill their work - related professional duties with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

2.8.2. Teacher competencies in primary schools in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, primary school teacher professional competence expectations are not very different from those suggested and generated by other countries the world over as characterised above. While this may be the case, there are some details that remain particular, peculiar and unique to each country's education context (Liakopoulou 2011:66; Pacheco 2012: 1). The Zimbabwean primary school background is defined by historical experiences and cultural realities (Shizha & Kariwo 2011:13). As already alluded to, Zimbabwe has a unique historical country profile related to political struggles (Pacheco 2012: 4) which have informed current practices in the primary school education system. Primary school teachers, according to McKernan (2008: xii), need situational understanding, practical and critical judgment for them to make professional decisions about their day to day work.

The Zimbabwean education system has four broad aims from which values underpinning the curriculum are derived, which, in turn, inform curriculum design and implementation. This continuum leads to the key competencies that the Zimbabwean primary school teacher should possess in the micro - classroom set up. The four broad aims of education, according to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's Zimbabwe Sector Operational Plan (2013: 52), are to:

- uphold and value the Zimbabwean identity and unity;

- prepare learners for life and work in an increasingly globalised and competitive environment;

- prepare learners for participatory citizenship, intercultural understanding and sustainable development, and

- nurture life – long learning in line with the challenges and opportunities of the knowledge society.

It is from these aims that the values of *Ubuntu/Unhu/Vumunhu*, tolerance and respect, honesty and integrity, resilience and sensitivity to art and beauty are derived (Dokora 2016: A4). Deduced from the aims and values are principles curriculum designers and implementers should take into account, according to Zimbabwe Sector Operational Plan (2013: 54), namely; inclusiveness, learners – centredness, openness and flexibility, balance and coherence and transparency and accountability. The sum total of these aims, values, curriculum design and implementation principles have created a system of understanding professional competencies.

Zimbabwean primary school teachers should possess and develop these competencies in their learners. Below are the expected teacher competencies in Fig 4:

Figure 3: Key teacher competencies for Zimbabwean primary school teachers

Openness and flexibility	• Broad learning areas • Integration of cross – cutting and emerging issues • Community service • Extra – curricular activities
Balance and coherence	• Meaningful learning progression • Whole- child approach • Taking into account multiple intelligences • Horizontal and vertical coherence
Transparence and accountability	• Fair and reliable assessment of learning outcomes • Communication with parents and community • Monitoring and evaluation

Adopted from the Zimbabwean Draft Framework for Curriculum Review (2015: 54).

It is these teaching competencies that the Zimbabwean primary school teacher needs to translate into teachable units in order to effectively execute their daily classroom work. Universities need to build the in - service teacher capacities through a broad- based curriculum that seeds and invests in intellectual and skills empowerment (Mutambara 2013:10). In this regard, universities would embrace the values of the teachers' workplace requirements (Delanty 2011:58). There is a need to establish whether universities in their in – service teacher development programme planning take into account these expected primary teacher competencies.

2.9. Assessment of the primary school curriculum

Assessment as a pedagogical process is premised on gathering data on the teaching - learning processes with the view to making informed decisions related to improving learners' learning and teachers' instruction (Brown 2004:310). Assessment describes the procedures of appraising the efficiency of sequences of instructional activities (Wiliam 2011:3). Thus, it is through assessment that teachers in a classroom set – up discover whether their instructional activities have resulted in the intended learning (Wiliam 2013:15). Wiliam (2013:16) further adds that assessment looks at three key processes, namely; where the learner is, where the learner needs to be and how to get there. From the key teacher competencies discussed above (2.7.), the nature and role of assessment is of paramount importance. Curriculum is organised in a way that assessment is an important part of teaching (Driscoll et al 2013:261; Okeke et al 2016: 137). Thus, assessment becomes the connection between teaching and learning.

The conversation around assessment in other primary school contexts shows that there are two complementary forms, namely; formative and summative. Formative assessment is an on – going practice, primarily to improve the learners' performance and essentially used by teachers as they teach various subject areas. Formative assessment allows teachers to revise, revisit and review their own practices. On the other hand, summative assessment is basically meant to measure the achievement of goals and provide statistical information about individual learners' performance (Middle States Commission on Higher Education 2007:27).

In Greece, the European Commission (2019) reports that at primary school level, assessment consists of both formative and summative aspects. Formative assessment consists of educators assessing the pupils' performance in each subject of the curriculum. The assessment takes into account knowledge acquired, competencies developed, as well as formation of right attitudes, values and behaviours. Summative evaluation is done after the

completion of a teaching year, results in the award of a progress certificate, and at the end of the primary school programme they are awarded a primary leaving certificate.

The primary school assessment situation in Lithuania as reported by the European Commission (2015) shows the use of both formative and summative assessments. The formative educational assessment in Lithuanian primary schools is provided throughout the learning process using observation, interview, discussion, task analysis and writing. Summative assessment is used on completion of primary education curriculum and a record of achievement and progress is prepared and a certificate of primary education is issued. The Ethiopian primary schools have used continuous assessment (Abejehu 2016: 24). However, Abejehu (2016) laments the way it has been handled where continuous assessment has been continuous testing, hence, lacking in harmony and consistency. Formative and summative assessments converge as related constructs and contribute to developing a better understanding of primary school learners. Assessment becomes an important teacher task and without requisite knowledge and skills, the process would become flawed and meaningless.

2.9.1. Assessment of the primary school curriculum in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, assessment is continuous and is done internally and formatively by teachers and summative assessments are also used (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 2015: 52). Assessment serves to conclude how much knowledge and skills the learners have acquired as well as check the progress of every child (Maphosa & Ndamba 2012: 77). It also provides an opportunity for reflection and introspection on the part of the teacher. In Zimbabwe, formative assessment develops the learner's potential (Okeke et al 2016: 137) throughout the learning process using a number of strategies such as observation, interview, discussion and writing as observed in Lithuania (European Commission 2015).

Summative assessment is an opportunity for the teacher to understand what the learners know and what they do not know. According to the European Commission (2015) summative assessment is used on completion of primary education curriculum and a record of achievement and progress is prepared.

According to UNESCO International Bureau of Education on Zimbabwe (2001: 19) assessment takes five forms; firstly, after each topic throughout the term, secondly, mid- term assessment when all topics covered are assessed; thirdly, at the end of the term when all topics are assessed. The fourth is the end of year assessment and evaluation. The first to the fourth forms of assessment, which are through teacher generated tests, exercises and mock examinations, are a window through which teachers, learners and parents gauge the preparedness of learners for the final examinations (Mufanechiya 2013: 326). The final form of assessment is during the end of the primary school cycle through summative evaluation which takes place at grade seven exit points.

At grade seven the learners write five subjects namely; Mathematics, English, Shona/Ndebele/Tonga, Content and Agriculture (UNESCO International Bureau of Education on Zimbabwe 2001:14; Marufu 2016: 4). Content comprises a wide range of items from all the other subjects taught at primary school level, especially Environmental Science, Social Studies, Home Economics, HIV/AIDS Education and Agriculture. Art, Music, Physical Education and Information Communication Technology (ICT) have few or no items in the content examinations. Students sit for two papers per subject and they are awarded a primary school graduate certificate which is necessary for the secondary school entry. Primary school teachers doing an in- service teacher development programme should be given competencies to effectively assess learners.

2.10. The primary school language in education

Most countries, especially in Africa, have struggled in terms of the language of education given their multilingual contexts. In majority of cases most nations have adopted their former colonisers' languages as media of instruction. Botswana (Chabaditsile et al 2017) and Mauritius (Dwarkan 2017), have used English as the medium of instruction at primary school level for all other subjects except for their indigenous languages. In Namibia, Shigwedha et al (2017) say that in the first three grades lessons are given in the mother tongue of the majority of the learners and from grade four onwards the learners switch to English which is used for teaching and examinations. In Angola, the language of instruction in primary school is Portuguese (The Southern and East Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality 2010 - 2019). Thus, language policies in most African countries have been informed by colonial antecedents despite calls for language policy reform and an embrace of indigenous languages in education.

2.10.1. The Zimbabwean primary school language context

Africa remains the only continent where children receive their schooling in a language other than their home language (Mutasa 2006: 60; Prah 2008: 21; Bamgbose 2009: 13). In SADC countries indigenous African languages continue to be heavily marginalised and dominated. According to Ndamba (2013:4) the majority of SADC countries pronounces and acknowledges the importance of African languages but these are not followed up by development and implementation of these policies. Zimbabwe is not an exception. Like in most former British colonies, the Zimbabwean education system is in the same language predicament. Yet, Vygotsky argues that language is the main tool that promotes thinking, develops reasoning and supports cultural activities (Darling – Hammond, Austin, Orcutt & Martin 2001: 126). The curriculum in the Zimbabwean primary schools is generally accessed through English, which is the medium of instruction and the language of examinations except

in ChiShona, IsiNdebele and TshiTonga and other indigenous languages. In some instances code switching and mixing is used during teaching and learning to reach out to learners who have difficulties with English.

Zimbabwe does not have a well-defined language policy. It is only understood through Education Acts, their amendments and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education generated circulars. After the colonial Education Act of 1979, the post-colonial one came as late as 1987. The 1987 Act makes reference to the languages that are supposed to be used in education. Section 55 Part XI headed; *Languages to be taught in schools* reads:

(1) Subject to the provision of this section, three main languages of Zimbabwe, namely Shona, Ndebele and English shall be taught in all primary schools from the first grade as follows –

a) Shona and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority of the residents is Shona; or

b) Ndebele and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority of the residents is Ndebele.

(2) Prior to the fourth grade, either of the languages referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) of subsection (1) may be used as the medium of instruction, depending which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils.

(3) From the fourth grade, English shall be the medium of instruction.

In 2006 there was an amendment which tried to address the language plight of the majority black Zimbabweans. The Education Amendment Act section 62 of Cap 25:04 on the languages in Zimbabwean schools; reads:

Languages to be taught in schools –

(1) Subject to this section, all three main languages of Zimbabwe, namely Shona, Ndebele and English, shall be taught on an equal – time basis in all schools up to form two level.

(2) In areas where the indigenous languages other than those mentioned in subsection (1) are spoken, the Minister may authorise the teaching of such languages in schools in addition to those specified in subsection (1).

(3) The Minister may authorise the teaching of foreign languages in schools

(4) Prior to Form one, any of the languages referred to in subsection (1) and (2) may be used as the medium of instruction, depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils.

Despite the provision of the 2006 Amended Education Act, English has remained the language in education and instruction. Yet, the majority of the learners use indigenous languages common in their areas for communication. Therefore, primary school teachers need to be given skills to handle this complex and contradictory language situation in Zimbabwean classrooms.

2.10.2 The nature of learners in the primary school

Most primary school educational contexts have learners who are culturally and linguistically diverse and academically different (Villegas & Lucas 2002: 21). To be inclusive, the primary school teachers have used more multi – sensory activities, visual and tangible aids, interactive tasks, simplified and extended groups, paired and individual (Robinson et al 2013: 109). Primary school learners learn in different ways and at different rates. This explains why according to Lopez (2019) primary school learners have been classified as gifted, talented and less talented given their achievement levels in the subjects in the curriculum.

Kutnick (2002) reports that in United Kingdom primary school learners were generally of mixed ability and that in classrooms teachers have adopted teaching approaches and styles in which within class ability grouping has been used. In the same vein, Gaertner (2010) also notes that in Austria children in primary school are mixed and are identified as able, more able, very able, of exceptional ability, gifted and talented. Nascimento (2014:9) attests to this when reporting on the nature of learners in Brazil that most students are taught in mixed ability classes. The trends in most countries are that primary school learners learn in a mixed ability environment with a single teacher responsible for teaching the class.

2.10.3. The nature of learners in the Zimbabwean primary schools

Teaching in the Zimbabwean context is woven with intricacies and complexities, complicated by the individual nature of making professional judgment (Robinson et al 2013: 129) in a culturally rich and diverse society (Driscoll et al 2013: 2). In many Zimbabwean classrooms, learners cannot be taken as a homogenous group where one size (or teaching approach) fits all (Okeke et al 2016: 42). The present day in - service teacher, thus, should be able to analyse the demographic composition of the learners and have skills to deal with and manage such diverse situations.

Primary school teacher competencies cited above (2.7) articulate the kind of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are important for addressing different challenges and micro realities of the teacher's workplace (Georgescu 2013; Lieberman & Mace 2008:228). The competencies are supposed to nurture the child in all dimensions of life; the 'what' and 'how' of children's learning (The Irish National Council for Curriculum and Assessment 2005). Further, there are areas of convergence and divergence, but, generally, they are agreed that primary school teachers should demonstrate a broad appreciation of issues in the primary school sector. With their competencies, they should be able to give all the young children the best possible start in academic life (Government of Ireland Primary School Curriculum 1999:

vi) despite their differences. If these competencies are well managed they should enhance the teacher's capacity to develop, implement, manage and support the whole teaching and learning programme and diverse learner population in the primary school classrooms (South African Department of Basic Education 2016). The university needs to take cognisance of these competencies of how to handle mixed ability learners so as to incorporate them when they plan their B.Ed in – service programme.

2.11. Curriculum development at universities.

The purpose of curriculum development is to research, design, plan and engineer the working relationships of curricular elements that are active during the instructional phase in order to achieve desired outcomes (Wiles & Bondi 2011:8; Kranthi 2017:1).Wiles and Bondi (2011:7) go on to say that curriculum development is a systematic plan of structuring the educational milieu to manage in an orderly manner the elements of time, space, materials and personnel. In addition, du Preez and Simmonds (2014:4) observe that curriculum development involves consulting curriculum statements issued by government, defining objectives, finding information about topics, deciding on suitable teaching methods and choosing ways in which the learning could be assessed. This is a multi-stakeholder, multi- step and cyclical process from designing, development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review (Kranthi 2017:2) producing documents that represent the official university curriculum and the nation's educational priorities. The document, thus, has to have a clear guiding philosophy statement and objectives for curriculum coordination detailing what students are expected to know and able to do and the assessment criteria.

The case of Guyana University provides a good example. According to Livingstone (2014:6) successful university curriculum development depends on a strong and formal needs analysis that finds gaps between what is available and what is desired. In this Guyana University case, Livingstone (2014) points out that all stakeholders, students, parents, government, teachers

and industry, should unite in an inclusive team building exercise where they work together to shape the curriculum. According to Livingstone (2014:7) the identified gaps and deficiencies make important contribution towards the development of curriculum at the university as the curriculum would be reflective of teacher needs, societal values, beliefs and ideologies.

In another instance on universities in Serbia, Matkovic, Tumbas, Sakal and Pavlicevic (2014:4116) conceive curriculum development as a complex process which is generally influenced by many stakeholders such as parents, learners, trade and industry, teachers, trade unions, religious groups, social organisations, employers, politics and researchers. The process must also require analysis of many aspects including regional, national and international interests. Further, Matkovic et al (2014: 4116) say that curriculum development must reconcile and acknowledge different competing interests. In the same vein, Brennan, King and Lebeau (2004) suggest that Commonwealth universities and university systems are usually influenced by what is happening in the wider society and the wider world as they develop their curricula. These stakeholders' requirements serve as an important basis for the process of determining competencies, attributes, knowledge and skills needed for the effective and efficient functioning of the country.

Thus, curriculum development at university level is an intricate process defined by a framework of what is to be offered, what steps to be taken and what objectives to be achieved. The curriculum needs to be properly planned, designed and developed and relevant consultations made in order to come up with the right product.

2.11.1. Curriculum development in Zimbabwean universities

The academic position at the Zimbabwean universities views the mastery of academic content that is to be taught as the most important aspect of in - service teacher education programmes (Schiro 2013:244). Thus, curriculum development at universities is basically concerned with

the historical dominance of producing content packages for students making it a more mechanical process. The most important aspect should be to prepare students through the curriculum, to reflect critically about professional issues that form their everyday thinking and practices.

 Just like the curriculum development experiences in most world university contexts, the Zimbabwean universities consult a number of stakeholders who have direct and indirect interest in the skills, knowledge and attributes coming from university graduates. These include; industry and commerce, sister universities, relevant government ministries, alumni students, researchers, professional bodies to mention some. Majoni (2014; 21) observes the need for universities in Zimbabwe to design a demand - driven curriculum which is assisted by industry, commerce and the general labour market. This should result in designing modules that match the rapid changing environments and the demands of a diverse world. While Zimbabwean universities enjoy relative autonomy, they are closely monitored by government through the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development. According to Matkovic et al (2014: 4113) the strategic goal of universities in curriculum development is education which facilitates the acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant in a distinct context or needs of specific stakeholders.

Currently, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development has been active in the development of new curricula for universities code named Curriculum 5.0 and a National Qualification Framework. Curriculum 5.0 is an improved version of Curriculum 3.0. Curriculum 3.0 had universities emphasising on three key result areas; research, teaching and community engagement. Curriculum 5.0 has added two more aspects to respond to the government's agenda of innovation and industrialisation in order to produce graduates who can create jobs through the application of acquired knowledge and skills.

Further, the Ministry has come up with the National Qualification Framework with the idea of coming up with qualifications from universities that are standardised and comparable given that for each programme there are recommended minimum bodies of knowledge with credits linked to notional hours. These efforts are still at infancy stage and not yet implemented in universities but operationally they would help regulate all programmes in Zimbabwean universities. These policy developments have the net effect of informing how university curriculum in Zimbabwean universities would be developed and implemented. It is, however, not clear how these efforts are going to attend to primary school teachers professional development needs.

2.11.2. Curriculum development model used in the Zimbabwean universities

To develop university curriculum, a number of models have been used. However, Tyler's (1949) objectives model has dominated curriculum development processes in Zimbabwean university contexts and has influenced and guided academic practices. Tyler's model has provided clear direction to university teaching staff through its precise objectives which can be managed to monitor attained outcomes (Cruickshank 2018: 208). Matkovic et al (2014: 4116) regarding curriculum development model in Serbian universities, share the same sentiments that subject – centered/ objectives model of curriculum development by Tyler is still widespread among universities. Borrowing from Stenhouse (1975), curriculum at university level is seen as socially constructed where lecturers and other external stakeholders are involved in its development. Tyler's curriculum development on the other hand, is a technical production procedure, driven by means – end reasoning (du Preez & Simmonds 2014:3) where a set of usability characteristics are used to describe the curriculum. Curriculum making process, according to Tyler (1949) in Khan and Law (2015:68), should have the following essential elements:

- educational purposes of institutions;

- obtainability of educational experiences to attain these purposes;

- organisation of educational experiences, and

- instruments to measure whether these purposes have been attained.

These educational purposes are selected on the basis of what Tyler called sources of information about important aspects of contemporary life, subject matter, needs and interests of learners (Lunenburg & Ornstein 2008: 413). University curriculum development is heavily leaned towards the Tylerian Rationale with the starting point being the pre – specification of the purpose of the curriculum. These are derived from a needs and or situational analysis with competitiveness and responsiveness (Kotecha 2008: 39) being important catch words. According to Livingstone (2014:7) situational analysis is the identification, selection, analysis and evaluation of those relevant situations or factors both internal and external that govern curriculum design and development in institutions. Situational analysis is done to address the needs of all stakeholders, identify gaps and deficiencies to ensure the curriculum remains relevant. To this end, Boulton and Lucas (2008:6) say that in coming up with their curriculum, universities redesign, repackage and sell their products in response to government policies as well as attending to the shifting student priorities and to the immediate satisfaction of the workplace. This is translated into regulations and module outlines which are programme implementation documents.

2.11.3. University academic regulations

The centre ground in university education curriculum is the provision of quality and relevant programmes (Khan & Law 2015: 66) through the crafting of academic regulations that spell out primary and specific goals and objectives. These are university specific and localised curriculum implementation documents akin to syllabuses at primary and secondary school level. The standards of universities as degree awarding institutions are that they are self-

governing and independent (Uchiyama & Radin 2009:271; Boulton & Lucas 2008:3) as they produce these regulations. Universities develop their own curricula intended to give each university a distinct profile suited to the specific needs of their clientele (Delanty 2011: 99). The regulations aid the development of competencies that allow graduates to operate in national and international environments (Hubball & Gold 2007: 5).The regulations seek to understand the complex relationship between the programme and the Zimbabwean primary school identity so that the institution can build required changes consistent with learning outcomes (Wiles & Bondi 2011:19). Regulations guide in terms of time frame, entry requirements, the structure of the programme; that is, the number of modules and when they are to be studied in a semesterised system (Great Zimbabwe University In – Service Regulations 2015: 1). Each programme is meant to speak to the needs of multi- stakeholders using multi- directional communication.

In developing these important university curriculum implementation documents, universities use both the bottom – up and top – down processes and go through different stages (Hubball & Gold 2007: 7). Departments, headed by chairpersons, are motivated to scan the macro and micro educational milieu, align programmes to government policies and the university niche. This is curriculum mapping and procedure that create representation of curriculum based on real time information (Uchiyama & Radin 2009: 271). The process requires taking into account differing locations, social and cultural contexts, historical moments and individual and work related needs and desires (Miller 2000: 253). The idea is to produce graduates whose training, skills and knowledge equip them to perform tasks the nation expects of them (Joseph 2015: 14).

Departments produce draft regulations, a process which is well substantiated with bodies of knowledge related to the central phenomenon of the quality of an in – service product whereby departments propose modules to be taken by students for the programme (Khan &

Law 2015:68). The provision of quality and relevant educational experiences and services (Khan & Law 2015: 66) for in –service students is a coherent, collaborative and collegial effort (Uchiyama & Radin 2008: 271) giving it a multi- dimensional explanation as the draft is subjected to scrutiny, discussion, correction and revision by members in the department. At this stage of university curriculum design of in - service regulations, the department engages several institutions in the teaching and learning context (Hubball & Gold 2007: 7) including primary teacher training colleges, sister universities and Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education officials among others to thoughtfully interrogate gaps and inconsistencies in the draft.

The chairperson of the department as the custodian of the regulations, takes them to the bigger School Board meeting to further involve other academics to identify any gaps in ways that add value to the document. The draft document is then taken to the School Planning Committee, the Deans' Committee and the university quality assurance department to provide a more thorough reflection on the document. At the local level, the document is finally taken to University Senate for approval and further scrutiny to ensure that the programme design and curriculum practices are clear about what has to be taught, what should be learnt at each stage of the semester and consistent with government policies (Khan & Law 2015: 66). According to Majoni (2014:21) the senate is both the main quality assurance body and the main custodian of academic quality. Once satisfied, the University forwards the document to the universities regulatory authority, Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE). As a quality assurance body, ZIMCHE monitors and evaluates programmes by higher education providers, standardises qualifications and standardises new higher education providers (Garwe 2013: 3). It is this statutory board which approves programmes for implementation by universities in Zimbabwe. Thus the process integrates different types of stakeholders and

multiple information sources leading to diverse analytical strategies and resulting in an improved explanation of the document.

These regulations are given a life shelf of three (3) years before they are revised and updated. The continuum in these regulations encompasses design, implementation and assessment (Khan & Law 2015: 67). The regulations framed with the primary purpose of producing the expected B.Ed (primary) in – service graduates become critical core documents and the foundation stone in the provision of the desired quality educational programmes and academic services to students at university level in Zimbabwe.

2.11.4. Module outlines

Developing education curriculum is not an easy task, especially, in the current global and changing work environment (Khan & Law 2015: 73). Universities have become central to the development of human capital in all sectors and education in particular (Kotecha 2008: 5).

In Zimbabwean universities, as is the case in most universities the world over, lecturers, because of their expertise, knowledge and skills, craft their own module outlines. In the spirit of academic freedom, lecturers are entrusted with the responsibility to independently create a student road- map (Uchiyama & Radin 2008: 276; Boulton & Lucas 2008: 4; Altrichter & Elliott 2009: 99; Khan & Law 2015: 67) showing content, modes of transaction, assessment procedures and coursework assignments to be written by students. According to Wills and Bondi (2010) and Marsh and Wills (2007) in Joseph (2015: 14) module outlines are documents which indicate the content, planned learning experiences for desired ends. The lecturers decide what should be taught and this is heavily influenced by their concepts of what constitute relevant knowledge in the subject area in terms of student needs and aspirations and work requirements (Joseph 2015: 14). Burns and Sinfield (2008: 27) assert

that lecturers are experts, often researchers at the cutting edge of the subject, and who should be able to design what Tight (2003: 76) calls a flexible curricula.

The module outlines reflect on the lecturer's knowledge and beliefs about what is worthy knowing, that is, what knowledge is of most worth (Ornstein & Hunkins 2013: 2). Lecturers teach in accordance with their deeply and reasonably based convictions (Boulton & Lucas 2008:3). Thus, according to Joseph (2015: 18), in module outlines, lecturers have the overall mandate to shape curriculum in terms of what content should be included or excluded in order to develop specific competencies in the students coming out of university education. Any changes to the module outline takes place at individual lecturer level (Uchiyama & Radin 2008: 275).

While the decision to design appropriate curriculum to provide knowledge and skills to students (Khan & Law 2015: 60) rests with the lecturer, the whole process is superintended over by the departmental chairperson. The chair checks on timely production of module outlines and their implementation. The chairperson provides dynamic and strategic curriculum leadership and management for optimum student learning (Welikala 2011: 5; Khan & Law 2015: 74). The chairperson helps lecturers to come up with module outlines that carry students to levels of reasoning which makes it possible for students to make critical reflection on experiences (Tight 2003:174).

The problem though has been that in most cases lecturers have not kept the curriculum modern and relevant through refreshing the content (Uchiyama & Radin 2008: 279; Yadav 2010: 43). Today, universities' B.Ed in – service programmes suffer from and are affected by deterioration in teaching and research (Kotecha 2008: 22) as observed in most lecturers' module outlines. According to Wanzala (2013: 37), in Kenya and the world over, the quality of education, training and learning a student receives depends on the quality of lecturers. It is

important that lecturers should carry out systematic evaluation of the modules they teach and reengineer and renew the disciplinary knowledge for value addition and functionality (Yadav 2010: 34, Miller 2000: 253).

The suspicion, especially where there is little instructional leadership from the departmental chair, is that module outlines might or might not reflect what is really implemented in the lecture rooms (Uchiyama & Radin 2008: 275). They may remain sterile for a long time (Altrichter & Elliott 2009: 125); what Miller (2000: 259) calls reform in a box. It explains why curriculum and pedagogy at most universities and modules therein have remained 'static commodities' with simplistic input – output models of education (Doherty 1994: 6; Altrichter & Elliott 2009: 22). Miller (2000: 256) laments that curriculum in most universities still means objectives to be defined and measured in terms of students' tested achievement – a stagnant and controlling idea of curriculum. This has, in turn, created a situation where the in - service programmes provided by universities appear polarised with primary schools contexts where the students they train would operate. Module outlines should be reviewed with increasing regularity. Yadav (2010: 43) remarks:

> *The schools are changing, schooling has to change, society is changing, social roles and obligations have to change, contexts are changing, contextual meanings have to change and to bring about these changes education of teachers has to change, both to understand and facilitate the change in the life of the learners in the right direction.*

Further, module outlines have emphasised rote learning of information and theories rather than insightful practical thinking. According to Altrichter and Elliott (2009: 125) module outlines should show interactive links between universities and school based learning experiences. This would enable teachers doing an in –service programme to come to terms with the true nature of their profession, its possibilities and limitations. Unfortunately,

curriculum has been seen in two disconnected camps, where theory resides only in universities and practice is limited to classrooms (Miller 2000: 259). Teaching in the university lecture rooms has gone on without meaningful creativity and improvement, thus creating sameness (Noll 2010: xvii).

Teaching in universities has remained unidirectional, usually from lecturer to students and not mutual interaction (Hayes 2008: 5). According to Antoniadou (2011: 107) teacher education is not fixed in nature and it demands conceptualisations to fit its constantly – changing and socially – mediated character. Module outlines should enable primary school teachers doing in –service programmes to acquire practical knowledge, techniques and strategies together with attitudes and behaviors required at work places – the primary schools (Altrichter & Elliott 2009: 132). There is need for in – service student teachers to invest in an educational system that works and connects them with best practices (Noll 2010: 67). This is the only way professional teacher development by universities can be qualitatively re-energised (Yadav 2010: 41; Kotecha 2008: 4).

In Zimbabwe today, little is known about the nature, forms, focus, extent , outcomes and benefits of the interaction between universities and primary schools and even why that interaction is non - existent (Kotecha 2008: 32). There is also very little research around the work of lecturers in terms of how they formulate these regulations and module outlines. It appears the university – primary school interface is low and there is need to contribute to the discourse. The gap between universities and primary schools has been mirrored (Karseth 2008: 11) in both academic regulations and module outlines. Practices of engagement between primary schools and universities should be nurtured to re – imagine university purpose (Welikala 2011: 6) as to address teacher workplace needs.

2.12. The role of universities' regulating bodies

Given how governments around the world have become seized with quality products from universities, they have set up quality assurance review bodies meant to check, evaluate and credit programmes by universities (McFarlane 2010:25). Quality assurance is a system of monitoring all aspects of teaching which occur with learners throughout their time of training from when they commence to when they achieve (Gravells 2014: 4). Good practice should obligate universities to have both internal and external quality assurance control systems. External bodies have become very important as ongoing systems to monitor and assess university products and services (Gravells 2014: 9). In South Africa, there is the Council on Higher Education (CHE) responsible for advising the Minister on all higher education policy issues, and quality assurance in higher education and training. In Ghana, the National Accreditation Board (NAB) has that responsibility and in the United Kingdom, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAAHE) is in place. These bodies have provided important regulatory framework for university academic activities.

2.12.1. The role of university regulating body in Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE)

In Zimbabwe, there is the newly minted statutory body, the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) (Jongwe 2012; Garwe 2013:1). The ZIMCHE body, created through an Act of Parliament No 1 Chapter 25:27 of 2006, has joined the quality assurance discourse in higher education in Zimbabwe through its quality assurance function (Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education 2016:1). The role of ZIMCHE entails the consistent and impartial evaluation of courses, programmes, and degrees offered by higher education institutions (Mawoyo 2012:116; Herald 2012). The mandate of ZIMCHE, according to Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (2016:1), is to promote and co –ordinate education provided by institutions of higher learning. It acts as a regulator in the determination and maintenance of

standards of teaching, examinations and academic qualifications in those institutions. ZIMCHE can deregister programmes that do not meet its standards and if they are not relevant to learner and national needs. Thus, according to ZIMCHE, its purpose is to ensure that students in Higher Education Institutions (H.E.I) in the country realise their dreams through relevant and high quality academic programmes in all registered institutions (ZIMCHE 2016:1). The body physically inspects institutional capacity to offer these programmes in terms of appropriateness and adequacy of teaching space, equipment and apparatus and manpower. This has brought a lot of sanity in higher learning institutions with on – going conversation about curriculum relevance (Miller 2000: 255). With ZIMCHE, there is rigorous evaluation of programmes before they are implemented.

Issues of the nature of knowledge for which universities stand for should be derived in the context of the needs of the work place and the learner (Boud & Solomon 2010: 5). Further, Boud and Solomon (2010:6) observe that if learning that is undertaken is to be used to influence and shape teaching and learning, it must be represented in the form that it can be used. This calls for evaluation, which is a process of assessing the curriculum or the likelihood of the curriculum to meet its objectives with the two questions; 'How effective has the programme proved to be?' and 'How effectively has the programme been put in place?' Mufanechiya and Mufanechiya (2011:59) underline that evaluation is important in providing a wealth of information to use for the present and future directions of curriculum practice, for planning and management of programmes. University devised programmes are judged taking into account the structure of the programme itself and about the products and could best be achieved through monitoring, reviewing and evaluating with the purposes of improvement (Reece & Walker 2004:371).

A well planned university programme must go beyond altering the edges (Whitby 2010). It must strengthen best practices, relevance and quality issues as the programme upgrades

knowledge and skills to meet the needs of schools (UNESCO 2006:7; Doll 1992:6). The question to ask is whether the expected results are worth the likely costs of delivering them (Ornstein & Hunkins 2013:247). Evaluation motivates universities to engage in programme enhancement by moving the right knowledge to the right people at the right time. Evaluation must enable information to be translated into action to improve school performance (Al – Shanableh 2013:2). By addressing Reece and Walker's (2004:380) ideas the following evaluation aims, relevance and quality are achieved:

- improve educational processes and programmes,

- identify the relevance and currency of the programme,

- identify problem areas, and

- evolve new content and approaches

Universities should have their programmes on the radar, monitoring, revising, aligning and even replacing curricula to ensure that they serve their projected purposes (Ornstein and Hunkins 2013: 24). ZIMCHE has become critical for the success of universities as they keep programmes relevant. Universities cannot afford to give up the effort to make curriculum timely, context related, relevant and of high quality (Doll 1992:4; Everard, Morris & Wilson 2004:46) lest the curriculum house may fall (Miller 2000: 255). The in -service curriculum should make new demands on the students to arouse their understanding and allow them to reach the highest stages (De Smet 2012: 51). According to Mohanty (2007:22) the curriculum for universities needs to be developed in a national workshop, in conversation with other stakeholders and taking the national understanding thrust and educational requirements into account. ZIMCHE has provided universities with this dimension. Tight (2003:75) sums it up when he states that unless we understand what it is we are producing, for whom and in what context, we are unlikely to be able to manage it effectively.

B.Ed in –service university curriculum has to be more relevant to employment and societal needs and should help teachers confront what it means to be a teacher (Pollard & Bourne 2002:71). Focus must be placed on the development of relevant education and training by addressing needs that prepare teachers for the world of work. The curriculum must look at those rough spots where there is still critical work to be done (Miller 2000: 260). Teachers are the most prized assets in the education sector and their training cannot be left to chance. Their education becomes a market signal of their productivity and meaningful contribution (Xiao 2001:3) to the primary education sector.

In – service teachers become significant human resources in Zimbabwean primary schools who have a consciousness and understanding of the importance of social interaction with others, context, cultural, linguistic and historical settings at workplaces (Fahim & Haghani 2012: 693; De Smet 2014: 50) which aid teaching and learning.

2.13. Summary

The chapter started by explaining the Vygotskian theoretical framework used to interpret and understand the relationship between the context of learning and psychological development and the participants in a socially and culturally organised learning environment. The chapter also provided an overview of scholars' theoretical contributions to what constitutes the concept in – service professional teacher development. It described the B.Ed (primary) in – service teacher development in Zimbabwe and how the programme could be positioned and configured in its design and implementation to address primary school teacher workplace demands and challenges. The next chapter deals with the processes of data collection related to curriculum design, development, implementation and evaluation at the University.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter laid out the theoretical dimensions of the study. The chapter looked at various authorities' views and experiences about how the B.Ed (primary) in – service teacher professional development has been generally understood, managed and implemented in various contexts and more specifically in Zimbabwe.

This chapter deals with the research methodology. Methodology is at the heart of logical, organised and theoretical analysis of the methods and principles applied during the study. Research methodology is the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena in a systematic and disciplined way (Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathambi 2013: 5; Mohajan 2017: 2). Mohajan (2017: 3) maintains that research methodology is the logic of development of the processes used and the procedural framework within which the study is conducted. The chapter is about what Rajasekar et al (2013: 22) call, plan your work and work your plan. Thus, the chapter introduces interpretivism and methods consistent with the approach in order to address the study objectives. It is organised using the following broad themes as shown on Table 4.

Table 4: Organisation of the chapter

Item	Description
Research approach	Interpretivism
Design	Qualitative Single Case Study
Research site	Great Zimbabwe University
Population and sampling	Lecturers, B.Ed (primary) in – service students, Departmental Chairperson
Sampling strategies	Purposive

Data collection strategies	In – depth semi - structured interviews with lecturers and Departmental Chairperson and Focus Group Discussion in respect of B.Ed in – service (primary) students
Data analysis	Thematic analysis, Descriptive and Narrative with vignettes
Trustworthiness	Credibility, Confirmability, Dependability, Transferability
Ethical considerations	Access to research site, Informed consent, Confidentiality, Non – maleficence and Beneficence

3.1 The research approach: Interpretivism

This thesis is premised upon the interpretivism paradigm. Its synonym is constructivism, given that it stresses on the ability of the individual to construct meaning (Mack 2010: 7). The approach and research methods are rooted in the German word *verstehen,* which means to have a meaningful understanding of human intention and the context of human action (Chowdhury 2014: 435; Crossman 2019; Gann 2017: 31). The approach is attributed to German sociologist Max Weber and his contemporary Georg Simmel. According to Weber, the interpretivist approach is focused on understanding meaning and action that those studied give to their beliefs, behaviours and social relationships with people and institutions as well as studying social trends and problems (Crossman 2019; Chowdhury 2014: 433). Similarly, Maree (2012: 58) traces the history of the approach back to the 19th Century philosophical concept of meaning and understanding, and literary interpretation. Maree (2012: 59) attributes the approach to the works of hermeneutic theorists Schleiermacher and Dilthey, with its alternatives as naturalistic and qualitative. The philosophical and research paradigm,

according to Chowdhury (2014: 434), is concerned with the uniqueness of a particular situation, contributing to underlying pursuit of contextual depth.

The theorists' major orientation was that access to reality could only be achieved through social structures such as language and shared meanings. The approach is about how participants in a study find the meaning of their experiences within their collective realm in their social and cultural life (Chowdhury 2014: 433). The interpretive perspective is based on the tenets that follow. Firstly, human life can only be understood from within. Central to this notion is that one needs to be closer to the life of the participants in order to appreciate and understand the issues that surround their world. The second interpretivist tenet is that social life is a distinctly human product. Thirdly, the human mind is the purposive foundation or beginning of meaning (Maree 2012: 59 - 60). Thus, as human beings continuously engage in communication, so do they make sense of their world. Maree (2012: 60) further notes that human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world. Lastly, the social realm does not exist independently of human knowledge.

From these tenets Cohen and Gabtree (2008) draw our attention to the three important pillars of interpretivism, that is, relative ontology, transactional or subjectivist epistemology and naturalistic approaches. At the centre of interpretivism is how human situation is conceived and interpreted using different lenses. Commenting on interpretivism Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls and Ormston (2014: 22) state that it is reflected in practices which underscore the importance of understanding people's perceptions in the context of the situations and environments of their lives. This view is supported by Cohen et al (2011: 16) who note that the interpretivist approach has greatly borrowed from psychology, social psychology and sociology with their analysis of the subjective world of human experiences resisting imposition of external form and structure.

The approach is based on the philosophy that the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the continuing action being investigated (Cohen et al 2011: 15). Interpretivism thus seeks to understand how groups of people actively construct the reality of their everyday lives through meanings they give to their actions and perspectives (Crossman 2019). Reality is based on an individual's insights and individual experiences (Lehman 2007: 99). The interpretivist framework upholds that all human beings are involved in the process of making sense of their worlds and continuously interpret, create, give sense, define, defend and justify daily actions (de Vos et al 2012: 8). According to McKenna (2003: 215) the use of an interpretive paradigm allows researchers to see reality as a production relative to its setting. Fig 4 is a representation of interpretivism according to Maree (2012:61).

Figure 4: Representation of interpretivism
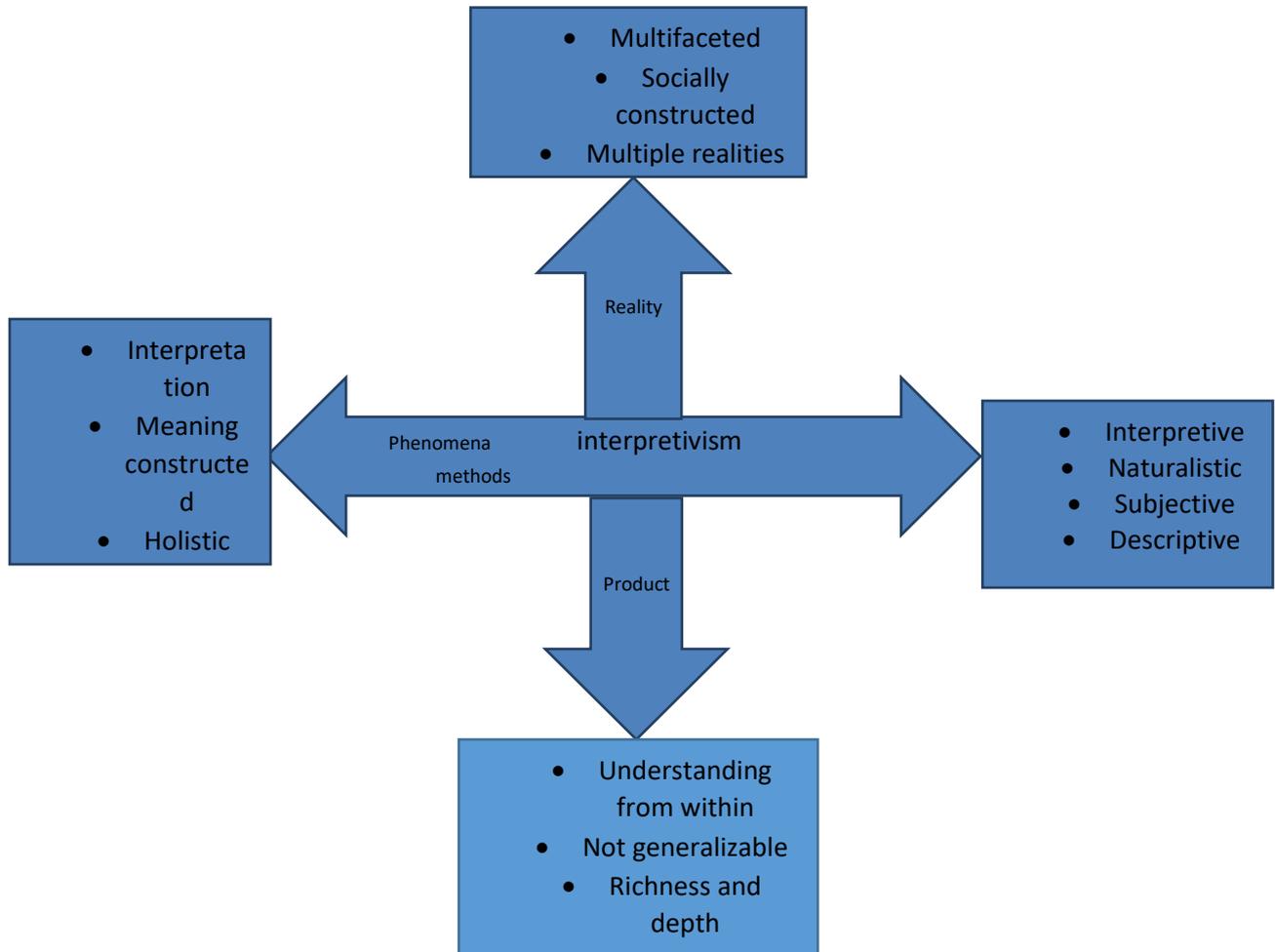
From Fig 4, the ontological assumption of interpretivism is that the substance of social sciences is essentially different from that of natural sciences (de Vos et al 2012: 309; Maree 2012: 32). Thus, interpretivism was born as a reaction to the constricting approaches of positivist research paradigm. Positivism conforms to the notion that the universe or world is permanent, unchanging and attention is on the importance of impartiality, measurement, objectivity and repeatability (Aliyu, Bello, Kasim & Martins 2014:81). Weber and his contemporaries' broad contribution to interpretivism were to see the inadequacies in the positivistic sociology pioneered by Emile Durkheim and others where quantitative data were its practice (Crossman 2019). Such exposition was unsatisfactory because human individuals can not be quantified (Gann 2017: 31).

With interpretivism, the dependent and independent variables are not fixed but the motivation is on the capacity of participants to make sense of the situation as it develops. The interpretivist philosophy has the expression of a subjective qualitative analysis where the inductive approach is used (Lehman 2007: 98). Thus, interpretivists find fault in positivism. They say that causal links and objective analysis cannot be made in situations where reality is multifaceted, seen by multiple people who interpret events differently (Mack 2010: 7). Knowledge in the interpretive realm is socially constructed rather than objectively determined (Edirisingha 2012; Chowdhury 2014: 433) as is the case with the positivists. Thus, interpretivism rules out methods of natural science by collecting qualitative data (Crossman 2019). Further, the approach, according to Weber, diverges from the positivistic sociology in recognising that the subjective experiences, beliefs and behaviour of people are equally important to study as are observable objective facts (Crossman 2019). The assumption is that reality should be interpreted through meaning – making by research participants, given their actions and activities (de Vos et al 2012: 309 – 10; McKenna 2003:

218; Chowdhury 2014: 435). The ontological supposition that social research can not be done according to the same principles as natural sciences shaped and defined the current study.

The choice of the interpretive approach was driven by the complex nature of the B.Ed (primary) in – service teacher professional development - practice problem. With the problem, the researcher wanted to get the intimate stories (Punch & Oancea 2014: 147; Lehman 2007: 100) of the B.Ed primary in – service students on how the programme attended to their essential problems of classroom knowledge and skills (Sears & Marshall 2000: 211). The explanatory power of the interpretive approach helped the researcher to explain the relative nature and multiple realities (Edirisingha 2012) of the participants' diverse experiences in the theory – practice relationship in primary school teaching and learning contexts. The approach allowed a collective participatory process of active knowledge generation, emphasising context, interaction and situatedness (Harlow & Cobb 2014: 72) by in – service students, lecturers and the departmental chair.

This broad interpretivist theoretical perspective was consistent with Vygotsky's CHAT theoretical framework used in this study. This was where learning was viewed as fundamentally a social process and the full variety of sentiments and experiences of participants were based on their accounts. In using the approach, the study appreciated that Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) as an important cultural institution and social entity where in - service students formed a cultural group, and their experiences helped identify problematic issues related to the programme (Lehman 2007: 100). The approach resonated with the research questions, the objectives and the CHAT theoretical framework used in this study.

In shaping this thesis, it may also be noted that the use of the approach was primarily useful because it provided rich and in – depth information about the institution and in – service

students on the teacher professional development programme. This was achieved through the use of in – depth semi - structured interviews and focus group discussions that ensured co – generative dialoguing (Cohen & Gabtree 2008) with the chair, lecturers and in – service students. The participants collaboratively constructed an in – depth description of meaningful reality (Harlow & Cobb 2014: 72) of the programme and practice. The experiences of the participants were understood from the inside rather than the outside (Mack 2010: 8), in light of individual and collective experiences. With interactive qualitative data collection methods, participants expressed their views about the intricacies and challenges related to the university in - service teacher development programme and its influence on primary school teaching and learning in Zimbabwe.

The evidence presented in this section suggests that the approach is flexible and accommodative. In view of that, the approach accorded the researcher the opportunity to use a design that helped him discover and uncover phenomenon in its real setting namely; case study.

3.2. The research design

The action strategy of how to proceed in determining the nature of the connection between variables is called a research design (Maree 2012: 299). Babbie (2014:91) notes that a research design stipulates who or what is to be studied, when, how and for what purpose. In support, Punch and Oancea (2014:142) state that good research designs, as basic plans, raise four main critical questions. The first question relates to what strategy should be followed. Secondly, within what theoretical framework? Ideally, a research design should be anchored on a theoretical framework which informs and gives direction to the study. The other consideration is who or what is to be studied. The last question takes into account the tools and procedures to be used for collecting and analysing data, answering the 'how' question. A

research design according to Rowley (2002:18) is the logic that links the data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn to the initial questions of the study.

Overall, the research design enables the reader to judge the extent to which using the design would adequately answer the research questions (Sampson 2012: 35). The choice of this design was motivated by the need to engage participants in in - depth professional dialogue grounded in evidence based knowledge (Driscoll et al 2013: 265) of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme.

3.2.1. The single case study design

The study employed a single case study design. Case study is a qualitative investigative approach used to thoroughly describe complex phenomena in ways to uncover novel and deeper understandings (Mertens 2015:245). Similarly, Rowley (2002: 18) writes that the case study as an empirical investigation explores a current phenomenon within its real life context. Rose, Spinks and Canhoto (2015: 1) are of the view that a single case study research design is the study of the one or more specific instances of something. It is one design that demands a high degree of in – depth examination, breath, rigour and understanding into research phenomenon with the following characteristics, according to Ritchie et al (2014: 66) and Rose et al (2015: 2):

- Focusing on an individual unit;
- The study is detailed and intensive;
- The phenomenon being studied is situated in context and
- The use of multiple data

De Vos et al (2012: 321) summarise the case study as:

Involving an exploration of a bounded system, bounded by time, context and or place through detailed, in – depth data collection involving various sources of data.

Further, Merrian (2009: 13) reports that qualitative case studies have the following characteristics:

- The emphasis is on the process, understanding and significance;

- The researcher is the principal tool of data gathering and analysis;

- The process is inductive and

- The product is richly descriptive

Maree (2012:75) argues from an interpretivist framework that a case study is an empirical inquiry that examines contemporary problems within its real – life context in which many sources of evidence are used. This is achieved by responding to 'how' and 'why' questions consistent with case studies. Rowley (2002:17) concludes that the value of case study is when:

A how or why question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control.

The view is supported by Rose et al (2015: 4) who write that the starting point in using the case study design is to formulate appropriate research questions that shape the structure of the study.

From these definitions and characteristics of the case study, the catch words and phrases were that context is very important, participants are accorded a voice to articulate their own experiences, and it uses a multi - perspective and multi - method in collecting detailed data.

Drawn from the case study attributes were positives that motivated the researcher to use the design in this study. The fact that a case study accepted that there are many variables

operating in a single case (Cohen et al 2011: 289) allowed the researcher to engage in – service students, their lecturers and the chair for a multi- perspective analysis of the in – service programme at Great Zimbabwe University. The case study had the ability to help investigate phenomena in – depth and employ multiple sources of evidence. This made it useful to describe specific contexts where generalisability was less important (Rose et al 2015:3). These multiple data sources generated an open cross – checking system, thus compensating the partiality criticism associated with the use of this design. The study of one university, as one case, enabled the researcher to gain greater insight, depth, breath and understanding of the dynamics of how the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme helped students explore complex classroom contexts and issues as well as individual knowledge and professional needs.

The design enabled open discussion on the need to interrogate university curricula using multiple voices. The university curriculum conversation could not be fully understood by limiting it to an individual. The university circumscribed context became a powerful determinant for understanding the curriculum as a never – ending and fast - changing but transformative academic and professional assignment. By involving lecturers, in – service students and chairperson participants, the study became dedicated to listening to the participants' lives, words and actions in assembling knowledge and applying it (de Vos et al 2012:320) in the context of the in – service programme. To achieve this, the researcher employed two different semi - structured interview schedules (one for the departmental chairperson and the other for university lecturers). These were complemented by focus group discussion with the in – service students. In the process, results could converge or could be divergent but the detailed rich and thick descriptions provided a deeper understanding of the participants' views about the in- service programme. In view of this the researcher found the case study as strong in its depiction of reality (Cohen et al 2011:289) through the rich and

vivid descriptions of real teachers in real classroom situations and in real university contexts. It was the thickness of these descriptions that were sufficient to give insights into the in – service problem, thus offering viable solutions.

One of the attributes of the case study that was useful was its ability to use multiple data collection strategies (Maree 2012: 76). The objective in this study was to triangulate methods of collecting data to check consistencies and inconsistencies. Triangulation is one of the major strengths of the case study design (Rose et al 2015: 9). Triangulation refers to the use of an eclectic approach to generating empirically based knowledge (Moran- Ellis, Alexander, Cronin, Dickson, Fielding, Sleney & Thomas 2006: 46). Moran- Ellis et al (2006: 47) observe that triangulation is the epistemological claim that comparing findings from two or more different research methods enables the researcher to conclude whether an aspect of a phenomenon has been accurately measured.

The triangulation involves corroborating evidence from different sources (Flick 2011: 186). Green and Thorogood (2014: 282) have this to say about triangulation:

> *…each method implies a different line of action toward reality – and hence each will reveal different aspects of it, much as a kaleidoscope depending on the angle at which it is held, will reveal different colours and configurations of objects to the viewer.*

The aim of triangulation was to view the research issue from at least two vantage points. The idea was to fill the gaps (Flick 2011: 186; Green & Thorogood 2014:282) and play one method against the other so as to maximise the validity of field efforts (Flick 2011: 186). There was need to come up with a consistent version of the multiple refracted realities (Denzin & Lincoln 2011: 5) at the same time offsetting particular flaws of each method and confronting the biases that are inherent in the use of one perspective.

The basic question to be answered was that of the relevance of the B. Ed (primary) in – service curricula and its strategic value to teacher professional development. This could only be understood through multiple data method. In this study, the researcher used in – depth semi - structured interviews in respect to lecturers and the departmental chairperson and focus group discussion with in – service students. Given the multiple methods of data, the results were more easily understood by a wide audience (Cohen et al 2011: 293) as they were presented in clear, precise and understandable manner. In this regard, criticism about case study objectivity was offset by triangulation of methods and sources.

Together with the interpretivist approach and the case study design, the study remained connected by the qualitative thread as a cross – cutting issue, by creating a mental picture of the context and participants. The thinking was to give a comprehensive and consistent response as to whether the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme needed a one – off adjustment or could be considered for a complete and fresh rethink of its purpose and its utilitarian value.

3.3. The research context

The research site was Great Zimbabwe University. This is a state university situated in the southern part of the country in Masvingo urban. The university was established in 1999 after the recommendation of the Chetsanga report to devolve some teacher training colleges into universities and was mentored by the University of Zimbabwe. After attaining full university status in 2000, it has grown to become one of the institutions of higher learning offering a variety of degree programmes. The university is still under construction and, hence, constrained in terms of teaching space and general teaching and learning facilities. For the block period during the time when in – service students come and given the large student population, the university hires facilities from secondary schools in Masvingo urban.

Currently, with conventional groups, the university uses a multi – campus system where each of the five Schools administratively operates from its own premise.

The Great Zimbabwe University context, in which the study was undertaken, has six faculties or Schools, namely; Commerce, Arts and Heritage, Law, Social Sciences, Agriculture and Natural Sciences and Education. Of these Schools, it was Education which had the critical component and responsibility of pre and in – service professional teacher development. The School of Education has five departments, namely; Curriculum Studies, Educational Foundations, Special Needs, Adult and Continuing Education and Teacher Development. To qualify to lecture in all these departments it was mandatory that lecturers have a minimum of a relevant Master's degree and a teaching/ professional qualification as well as experience at either primary or secondary school level and / or higher and tertiary institutions. It was these lecturers under the guidance of the Chairperson who stirred the B.Ed in – service professional teacher development. The B.Ed (primary) in – service teacher development programme was housed in the Curriculum Studies department.

The regulations for the B.Ed (primary) in – service curriculum had twenty five (25) modules broken down as: twelve (12) content modules from the area of specialisation, thirteen (13) compulsory modules and a research project equivalent to one course in the area of specialisation. The specialisation modules were taken from the primary school subjects namely; Art Education, ChiShona, Ndebele, English, Environmental Science, Home Economics, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Religious and Moral Education, Social Studies, Computer Science and Agriculture. Each student selects one area of specialisation module from these subjects. The students also take the following compulsory modules: Professional and Academic Communication, Information and Communication Technology, Introduction to Zimbabwean History, Educational Administration, Special Needs Education, Research Methods and Statistics, HIV and AIDS Education, Curriculum Theory, Historical

and Philosophical Foundations of Education, Psychological Foundations of Education, Sociological Foundations of Education and Research Project/ Tsvagurudzo/ Isichwayisiso. The normal duration of the programme was two and half (2 1/2) years of part – time study. From the breakdown, it was evident that the curriculum was skewed towards compulsory modules. These compulsory modules were either appreciation or enrichment, with some direct link with teacher classroom teaching and learning. Great Zimbabwe University, thus, has become the strongest provider of this in – service programme much to the benefit of primary education in Zimbabwe.

In the Zimbabwean higher education context, universities have increasingly become national leaders and critical drivers of a lifelong professional learning agenda. With their flexibility and adaptability to emerging and changing contexts, universities are now major sites of creating practically useful information of immediate use in workplaces (Boulton & Lucas 2008:5).

Professionals such as practising primary school teachers have realised the need to enrich their academic and pedagogical knowledge in terms of curriculum development, implementation and evaluation (Hubball & Gold 2007: 5) through in – service training at university. The scholarship of teaching and learning by primary school teachers in Zimbabwean universities is to develop and update informed knowledge and understanding in both theory and practice (Machin et al 2015:31). In modeling the B.Ed in – service teacher, Great Zimbabwe was chosen because of its socio – historical context motivated by the University's rich and long tradition and reputation in the B.Ed (primary) in – service teacher professional development programme since 1999. In addition, the researcher's university work experience has taken place at this university hence has a better understanding of programme and its curricula. Further, its proximity and accessibility to the researcher was another contributory factor.

In addition, the researcher's experience at the institution since 2009, after coming from a primary teacher training college, has had a bearing in understanding and empathetically reliving (Blanche et al 2012: 274) the in – service teacher professional problem in this study. The researcher's observation for the eight years at the institution has been to question how the in – service curriculum has responded to, interfaced with and influenced the changes in the Zimbabwean primary education in an informed and professional manner (Driscoll et al 2013: 257). As an academic and research oriented institution and as in – service university lecturers, there has been constant engagement in professional teacher education dialogue and development grounded in evidence – based research. University programmes that lecturers teach should be shaped by and draw their curriculum and inspiration from the constituency they serve so that they articulate their critical concerns. Great Zimbabwe University has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to produce acceptable and highly knowledgeable primary school teachers with knowledge and skills that resonate with and address primary school teachers' workplace priorities. All these ideas informed the choice of the study site and how the programme had influenced teaching and learning in Zimbabwean primary schools.

The in – service teachers from this programme have become key and strategic manpower resources at primary school level in Zimbabwe with their knowledge and skills helping take the education forward. De Vos et al (2012:21) note:

> *……..the legitimacy of professional guardianship of a body of knowledge depends not only in having a distinct body of knowledge, but on acceptance of the guardianship by those beyond, as well as those within….*

The legitimacy was evidenced by the phenomenal growth in student numbers in the programme as both the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and teachers appreciated the value of the qualification, showing a high approval rating.

3.4. Population and sampling

3.4.1. Population

Population is the group of individuals to which the findings, discussion of findings, and the implications of the study are to be ascribed (Sampson 2012:46). This is the delineation of potential participants by zeroing in and clearly demarcating boundaries. Punch and Oancea (2014: 302) contend that population in research is the total target group of potential participants about whom the researcher is trying to say something. Furthermore, Banerjee and Chaudhury (2010) say that a population is the entire group about which some information is required to be obtained. Thus, a population is a complete set of potential participants with a specialised set of characteristics from which data can be collected.

The selection of the population for this study was informed by the research questions which helped define the population in terms of location and restriction to the University. In the context of this study, the population consisted of lecturers, in – service students and chairpersons from the School of Education. The lecturer population in the Curriculum Studies Department number to fifty. Not all of them teach the B.Ed (primary) in –service modules although they all qualify to teach on the programme given their educational and professional backgrounds. The lecturers have a minimum of a Master's degree in their areas of specialisation. Lecturers rotate to teach on the programme during each semester depending on the modules on offer and lecturer expertise. However, there were some lecturers who had been consistently teaching on the programme. It was these lecturers who added value to this study.

The choice of lecturers as participants was based on the fact that they ensured that the in-service students acquired and continued to develop requisite knowledge and skills needed for a professional upgrade. They enacted a teacher development system anchored on agreed – upon expectations for what these teachers should know and be able to do (McRobbie 2000:1) during university learning period. Lecturers were important resources in the study given that they implemented the in-service action programme including design and development. They translated the curriculum into worthwhile knowledge. In that way, they became critical voices in the study with their vast knowledge and experiences on what and how they taught the programme.

In terms of the B.Ed (primary) in – service students, the programme had generated a lot of interest from Certificate and Diploma holding primary school teachers. These teachers would have trained at primary teachers' training colleges dotted around the country. The groups ranged from one hundred (100) to one hundred and fifty (150) students per semester intake.

For admission to the programme, an applicant should have the following, according to current B.Ed (primary) in – service Regulations for the degree (2015:1):

- Normally passed at least one (1) 'A' level subject, plus five (5) 'O' level subjects or their equivalent, including English Language,
- Undergone training for the profession of teaching, recognised by the University for this purpose,
- Completed at least two (2) years of post-training educational experience recognised by the University or could proceed from the Diploma without teaching experience if they have attained at least three (3) distinctions at Diploma level.

These regulations have a three (3) year lifespan before they are revisited.

The choice of the departmental Chair in the University system was normally done through consultations. The University management usually consulted the departmental lecturer body on suitable candidates based on experience, leadership skills, academic qualifications and professionalism, among some of the determining characteristics. Each department was headed by one chairperson with a tenure of three (3) years.

It was from the population of these lecturers, students and the chairpersons that the participants for this study were drawn.

3.4.2. Sampling and sampling strategies

Sampling is an act, process or technique of selecting a representative part of the population for the purposes of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg & McKibbon 2015:1772). Punch and Oancea (2014:302) add that a sample is the actual group who are included in the study and from whom the data are collected. A sample, thus, is any part of the fully defined population (Banerjee & Chaudhury 2010) and is a subset of the population. Some important questions to ask when deciding on sampling according to Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utriainen and Kyngas (2014:4) include: What is the best sampling method for my study? Who are the participants? What criteria would I use to select them? and lastly, Is my sample appropriate?

 In this qualitative study, the sampling was designed to ensure that the researcher got more adequate interpretative explanations as he opened up the professional lives of the participants (Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2007:240). The idea was to get in - depth educational and familial insights and practices from a small group of lecturers, students and departmental chairperson in the context of teaching and learning on the programme.

It should be understood that sampling in qualitative studies confronts the inescapable problem of rigour. In this study the researcher tried to make sure that the research process was made as

clear as possible. This process attempted to address issues to do with rigour in the discussion of curriculum practice related to the in – service programme (Hubball & Gold 2007:9) at Great Zimbabwe University.

For effective sampling, purposive sampling strategy was employed and it helped the researcher get information - rich participants for the study.

3.4.2.1. Purposive sampling

The choice of participants who are unique and occupy important roles yet involving a small sample size is purposive sampling (Remler &Van Ryzin 2015: 158).The sampling technique, sometimes referred to as judgmental sampling, is based on the assumption that the elements chosen contain the most characteristics of the population that serve the purpose of the study best (de Vos et al 2012:232 & 392; Gilbert 2011: 152). In this study, this discretionary sampling strategy operated on the principle that the researcher could get the best information through focusing on a relatively small number of participants deliberately selected on the basis of known attributes (Denscombe 2010: 34). This is a non – probability sampling procedure in which the researcher identified participants who had the potential to provide significant data (Magwa & Magwa 2015: 68) on the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme at the University. This was possible by using purposive sampling rather than random as random sampling would not assure that the researcher got lecturers and in – service students with enough experience and knowledge concerning the in – service programme under study. Purposive sampling raised two fundamental questions according to Remler and Van Ryzin (2015:158). The first question was: What kinds of people or cases am I missing in my study? And the second was; Are there ways in which those in my study systematically differ from those left out and if so, are the differences important to the findings of my study? Purposive sampling helped the researcher identify lecturers with expertise, experience, proximity, availability and knowledge (Denscombe 2010:25) about the programme.

The purposive sampling strategy confronts the inescapable problem of representativeness. (Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2007: 238; Remler & Van Ryzin 2015: 158). In this case, the study, consistent with the interpretivist philosophy, did not intend to come up with generalisable conclusions as is the case with positivist thinking. The purpose was to provide a detailed account of the lecturers, chairperson and in - service students in this cultural context. The logic was to determine a full range of diverse opinions and experiences of these participants based on their own accounts (Ritchie et al 2014:22).

Using purposive sampling tenets, five lecturers were selected motivated by their richness and the information they brought to the study's research questions. Furthermore, these university curriculum leaders were in a position to communicate the B.Ed (primary) in – service curriculum and programme goals. Not all lecturers were of central importance to this study. The specific purpose that was in mind in using purposive sampling was to target the lecturers who had a direct bearing on the programme, who could answer critical curriculum questions, had the experience and could contribute to the in – service programme narrative at the University. Ritchie et al's (2014:116) two aims of purposive sampling also influenced the choice, namely; the key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter were covered and enough diversity was included so that the impact of the characteristic concerned could be explored.

Lecturers were professionals and critical when it came to the programme reform and curriculum enhancement practices at university level. They were rich data sources and could inform an in – depth and detailed exploration of critical issues and questions regarding the in - service programme. Five lecturers with at least five years' experience with the university, and consistently teaching on the programme were selected using this technique. Five years was a relatively long period of experience to be able to bring and contribute most valuable

and meaningful data to unpack and develop explanations to the in – service - practice research problem.

One departmental chairperson was selected using the same strategy. The basis of this selection was that of being an academic and professional team leader (Boyko & Jones 2008: 8) and lynchpin in the value chain in the students' educational progress (Chun & Evans 2015: 10). The chairperson, as the leader in curriculum development at the university, provided insights as to what was happening with the in – service programme. The purposively selected departmental chair was from Curriculum Studies where the programme was housed. The chairperson helped the researcher in hearing specific needs (Cohen et al 2011:156) regarding course content, student instruction and development during in- service training at the university.

The B.Ed (primary) in – service students were the key participants in this study. They were the end users of the information, what McRobbie (2000:3) calls the knowledge economy. The reason why they came to do the programme was of fundamental importance. Their experiences as practising primary school classroom teachers, the knowledge and skills gap and other competences they thought the programme was capable of filling in was vital information for this study. Engaging the students in this constructive professional educational discourse helped the researcher unpack the programme from the students' perceptions in terms of university – primary schools relationship.

Ten B.Ed (primary) in – service students were chosen using the qualitative homogenous sampling, a type of purposive sampling strategy. The selection was based on the participants' willingness to take time from their packed block schedule to participate during data collection. It was also about the students' ability and willingness to share, communicate their teaching experiences and their opinions (Etikan, Abubakar & Alkassim 2016:2) and how the

programme had provided tools to enhance their teaching work at primary school level. The similarity the participants shared as qualified primary school teachers was that they had at least two years teaching experience and were easily available to help the researcher select information – rich cases. The students were teaching at various primary schools across the country.

With the assistance of the School of Education administrator, the researcher also chose those participants who were proficient and well – informed in primary school teaching and learning. Engaging the administrator was done to ensure that the student – lecturer relationship that existed between the researcher and participants did not impose a sense of obligation to the B.Ed (primary) in – service students. These students were drawn from the classes that the researcher was not teaching.

Purposive sampling gave the researcher direction to focus and restrict self to those participants with the information relevant to the study. Table 5 provides information related to the sampling done using this strategy

Table 5: Sample size, sampling technique and data collection methods

Category		Sample size	Sampling techniques	Data collection methods
Departmental chairperson		1	Purposive	In depth semi - structured interviews
University lecturers		5	Purposive	In depth semi- structured interviews

Students		10	Purposive	Focus group discussion

3.4.2.2. Participant selection

Tables 6 and 7 below listed the purposefully selected participants for the study.

Table 6: Academic, professional and teaching backgrounds of lecturer participants

Lecturer	Academic and professional qualifications	Primary school teaching (in years)	Primary teacher education (in years)	In – service teaching experience (in years)
L1	B.A, Grad. C.E, Masters, PhD	Nil	16	11
L2	B.A, Grad. C.E, Masters	Nil	8	10
L3	B.A, Grad. C.E Masters	Nil	11	18
L4	C.E, B.Ed, Masters, PhD	6 years	5	12
L5	B.A, Grad. C.E, Masters, PhD	Nil	14	12

Table 7: Purposefully selected in - service student participants

Code	Meaning	Pseudonyms	No	Type of data
FG1	Focus Group	Swaz, Netsai,		Qualitative

	Discussion 1	Evie, Tatenda and Allen.	5	
FG2	Focus Group Discussion 2	Peggy, Mbombo, Tafara. Tanyangadzei and Eddie.	5	Qualitative

3.5. Data collection strategies

Data were collected through semi - structured interviews in respect of lecturers and the departmental chairperson and focus group discussion with B.Ed (primary) in- service students. These constituted the primary means of collecting data. According to Maxwell (2013:102), using the multiple methods was beneficial for various reasons, including the fact that one method served as a check on the other, seeing if methods with different strengths and limitations all supported a single conclusion. This strategy reduced the risk of conclusions reflecting only the biases of a specific method. It allowed the researcher to gain a more secure understanding of the in - service issues under investigation. The strategies helped the researcher to comprehensively and insightfully construct first-hand account (Pole & Morrison 2003:3; Beedle & Burkill 2008: 35) of the B.Ed in- service programme story from participants.

3.5.1. In- depth semi -structured interviews

3.5.1.1. Lecturers

The study used in- depth semi -structured one – on- one conversation with lecturers. In – depth semi - structured interviews are sometimes referred to as conversation in context. This inquiry in the manner of a conversation (Rapley 2001:309), was with a purpose to engage the

selected university lecturers who had been with the university for at least five years and teaching on the in – service programme (See Table 2). The interview, was, thus, an inquiry into an issue in a manner of a focused conversation where in – service issues to be discussed were delimited in advance (Patton 2002:343).

During this study the researcher used open – ended questions with five lecturers as they responded to them using their own words and in as much detail as would allow generating rich open – ended responses. It was a way to obtain information through direct interchange with individual lecturers whom the researcher believed meaning related to the in – service programme resided within them. The in – depth semi - structured interviews allowed lecturers and the researcher to collaborate in producing the lecturers' identities and personal lecturing experiences (Rapley 2001:309). In this case, the lecturer - participant had the freedom to explore information related to the topic without having limits.

The questions were about knowledge, experiences, opinions, perceptions, understandings and practices related to the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme they taught. This allowed much more diversified set of authentic responses (Reja et al 2003: 166; Gray 2011: 370). The different lecturers' narratives about the programme experiences gave the researcher multiple voices about the problem. The intention was to generate stories from the lecturers which could complement other data collection instruments (O'Cathain & Thomas 2004). The in – depth semi - structured interviews allowed the researcher to get the two dimensions of the participants according to Rapley (2001:304), namely; to see the lecturers' reality outside the interview and to reflect on a reality jointly constructed by the lecturers and in – service students.

With the in - depth semi - structured interviews the researcher provided a set of questions that guided or helped structure the discussion (Remler & Van Ryzin 2015: 67). For effective

interviews, the researcher used questions that asked for explanations with the latitude to follow leads from the participants' responses. Their perceptions of the in- service programme and how it articulated the broader issues of the primary education sector were sought. This focused and discursive method allowed the researcher and the lecturers to select issues as well as phrase questions (Gilbert 2011:247; de Vos 2012:318) that enhanced an understanding of the in - service programme. In the interview the researcher let the subject talk (Rapley 2001: 301). The use of an interview guide with open ended and flexible enough questions to follow interests and thoughts (Chilisa & Preece 2005:147) ensured that the researcher was consistent in the questioning of the sampled lecturers. Patton (2002: 343) further notes that the interview guide ensures the basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each interviewee, probing, exploring and asking questions. The idea was to get meaning on how lecturers had designed, implemented and assessed the programme in relation to its influence on primary school teachers in Zimbabwe.

During these interviews with lecturers, the programme design through regulations and module outlines they produced was discussed. In the process, follow up questions were asked to allow a rich and textured picture to be produced (Rapley 2001: 315). The notion was to understand their substantive content and illuminate deeper meanings (de Vos et al 2012: 376). The lecturer - constructed curriculum implementation documents showed the entire continuum of teacher development (McRobbie 2000:1) from recruitment to the assessment criteria used. Asking lecturers about these documents was essential to complement information from self-reported interviews and focus group discussion with emphasis on interpreting the meaning the documents might have (de Vos et al 2012: 381). The interview with each participant was approximately between one to one and a half hours, depending on how issues evolved. During these in- depth semi - structured interviews English was the language which was used as the lecturers could express their ideas in the language without

any challenges. Aware that these lecturers were colleagues, the interview work remained facilitative and neutral. The topic initiating questions induced very detailed, comprehensive and constructive talk from the lecturers.

The interviews with lecturers were audio – recorded and interview notes taken. This was done with the ethical principle of consent from the participant seriously adhered to. The participants were asked whether they were comfortable with the interview being audio - recorded and their consent was sought. All the lecturers interviewed did not object to the recordings.

3.5.1.2. Departmental chairperson

In higher learning institutions, a departmental chair is the front – line manager, the chief academic and administrative officer for an academic department (Hecht, Higgerson, Gmelch, Tuker 1999:1; Northern Illinois University 2002:1; Boyko & Jones 2008:6). The researcher employed open – ended semi - structured interviews with the departmental chairperson to explore in detail ideas, views, beliefs and attitudes (Maree 2012:87) on programme design, implementation, quality and identified areas of needed improvement (Hecht et al 1999:3; Chun & Evans 2015: 10). The semi -structured in- depth interview with the chairperson generated knowledge through conversation (Cohen et al 2011: 409) about this B.Ed (primary) in - service programme the department was offering. The chairperson would show how he was alert on in- service curricula issues by suggesting the right treatment regime to the programme achieved by aligning it to primary school teacher classroom needs. Chun and Evans (2015: 11) have this to say about the departmental chairperson's leadership:

> *Chairperson leadership is critical to ensure that students have competencies, knowledge and expertise needed for success at workplaces.*

The chairperson's knowledge and skills as an academic, opinion and instructional leader that arose as a result of his work, was an important signal in this study. Chairpersons drive the whole process of generating the university curriculum implementation documents such as regulations and module outlines. Their facilitation and leadership provide students with educational opportunities necessary for students to be prepared for academic and professional growth (Hetch et al 1999: 3). Their leadership enables the universities to survive and continually develop (Northern Illinois University 2002:1) in the face of so many professional challenges. The chairperson has the delegated responsibility and capacity to maintain and support lecturers' efforts (Mulford 2003:5). The Curriculum Studies chairperson, thus, became better placed in this study to shape the B.Ed in – service (primary) narrative.

The interview with the chairperson was also audio – taped and interview notes were taken. The purpose was to ensure data were accurately captured in retrievable form for analysis. The interview lasted for one and half hours and English was the medium of interaction.

3.5.1.3. Focus group discussion

The researcher employed a carefully planned group based discussion interview, the focus group discussion (FGD) to collect qualitative data from ten (10) B.Ed (primary) in – service students. Boateng (2012: 54) calls it a 'groupthink model' premised on social influence and decision – making done simultaneously by a group of participants. Remler and Ryzin's (2015:70) work is complemented by Odimegwu's (2000:207) findings that a focus group session is a discussion in which a small number of participants, between 5 – 12 members, under the guidance of a moderator, talk about topics that are of central importance to a researcher.

With this method the researcher was able to question in – service teachers systematically and simultaneously about their own stories regarding the influence of the in - service programme

to their classroom practice (Babbie 2014: 329). The focus group interviewing process involved conversational turn – taking and lasted for at least forty five (45) minutes. The FGDs were used to gain intersubjective experiences (Blanche et al 2012: 304) shared by in – service students regarding their views of the programme and its influence to classroom teaching and learning. The choice of the method was motivated by the opportunity it offered participants to personally disclose information facilitated by other group members who supported, commented and disagreed (Odimegwu 2000: 209). Thus, respondents in the FGD helped provide extremely rich data that could be compared and also allowed a wide range of questions to be asked (Punch & Oancea 2014:134). Views were quickly modified and verified during this group interaction.

3.5.1.3.1. In – service students

Ten (10) students were purposefully selected from those doing their final year. Each group consisted of five (5) in – service students. The number five (5) per group was arrived at as a reasonable sample size to ensure good management of the group (Remler & Ryzin 2015: 70; Ritchie et al 2014: 117; Odimegwu 2000: 207). Further, the idea of having two (2) groups was to cross check and compare the data from the groups on the same topic thus strengthening the findings. The students were on the verge of completing their studies and had a full appreciation and a firm grasp of the university B.Ed (primary) in – service programme in terms of its strengths and challenges.

The sample size was big enough to give diverse and rich in - depth responses for the study. The selection of these participants showed the purposive nature of the qualitative sampling where the in - service teachers were selected for their characteristics of teaching experiences at primary school level and doing the same programme. The multiple research participants simultaneously produced data sets (Chilisa & Preece 2005:151; de Vos et al 2012: 301) on the influence of the B.Ed (primary) in-service programme to their classroom needs. Thus,

with this method, the researcher was able to use time efficiently and minimise costs (Remler & Van Ryzin 2015:72; Barbour 2014: 134) but at the same time getting value by uncovering important issues related to the in – service programme.

In carrying out the FGD the researcher used Remler and Van Ryzin's (2015:72) four steps lead, namely;

- 1st step – open with an easy, general discussion. This is meant to loosen up tension and create a free, friendly, relaxed and conducive discussion environment.

- 2nd step – steer the discussion towards the topic. The idea was to tactfully move to the gist of the FGD which was for them to reflect on the in – service programme and classroom practice.

- 3rd step – to focus on the topic using a script to guide discussion. This was achieved by zeroing in on the main issues, probing when and where necessary and testing ideas by allowing others to confirm or disprove ideas raised.

- 4th step – confirm and validate main points with the in - service participants.

The process promptly allowed checking for accuracy as members questioned, complemented, collaborated and compared what others said (Chilisa & Preece 2005:155, Barbour 2014:134). The opportunity to probe for completeness (Reja et al 2003: 171) was achieved in the process. Focus group discussion had the added advantage of open cross – check (Cohen et al 2011: 293). Babbie (2014:330) notes this about the method:

> *The technique is a socially oriented research method capturing real life data in a social environment through group dynamics. Group dynamics bring out aspects of the topic that would not have been anticipated by the researcher and would not emerge from interview with individuals.*

The method, thus, was capable of bringing into the research diverse dimensions from students who were teaching at different primary school locations in Zimbabwe. In the process they addressed three fundamental strengths according to de Vos et al (2012: 361), namely; exploration and discovery, context and depth and interpretation. The advantage of the method was that it allowed for internal triangulation of the data provided as participants made follow ups on issues raised by others (Corbin & Strauss 2008:16).

The method had a social cost in that individual creativity, uniqueness and independent thinking were generally lost (Boateng 2012: 55). In the process there could be some assertive individuals who might want to dominate the group discussion and other participants may hold back some information. The researcher moderated their behaviour as well as encouraged all to participate especially on important issues as they opened up with their experiences in relation to in – service teacher professional development at the university. Babbie (2014:330) further warns that there is need to guard against group conformity or group – think, a tendency to conform to opinions and decisions by outspoken participants.

To focus the discussion, the researcher designed a discussion protocol in English with questions to guide the discussion addressing the knowledge and skills gaps in the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme and what primary school teachers professionally needed. The focus group discussions were conducted in English as the primary school teachers could articulate their ideas very well in the language.

Recoding the data from ten (10) in –service student participants was done through digital audio recorder backed up by handwritten field notes. In this case, the researcher was concerned with capturing important points and detail using their own words and phrases (O' Cathain & Thomas 2004). This was done for coding, content and thematic analysis purposes

(Remler & Ryzin 2015:72). The recording was done with the permission of the participants after disclosing to them how the data would be recorded and used.

3.6. Data storage

Data storage is one of the most critical ethical elements as raw data should only be accessed by those who are authorised to do so. The collected data, in this study, was in retrievable audio tape and field notes. The data were stored in a password protected audio tape in the office where maximum security was guaranteed. This was in line with issues of confidentiality and anonymity as enshrined in research ethical values as well as protecting participants from risks associated with data being traced to individual participants. The researcher will keep the data for at least five years. Future use of the stored data will be subjected to further Research Ethics Review and approval.

3.7. Feedback of findings

Participants deserve to know the findings and how these could help them improve practice. In this regard, the researcher provided contact details which included cell phones as well as email addresses of both the researcher and the supervisor to all participants in case they had questions about the study or would like to access the findings of the study. Moreover, upon completion of the study the researcher will also take every opportunity during departmental research seminars to share the research findings. The researcher will also avail a copy to the university library.

3.8. Data analysis

Qualitative research generates knowledge grounded in human experiences (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules 2017). Thus, qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data from those experiences (Cohen et al 2011: 537; Creswell 2013: 179). In short, it involves making sense of the data in terms of the participants' definitions of the

situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities. It is the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships (Babbie 2007 in de Vos et al 2012:399). Srivastava and Hopwood (2009: 77) have this to say about qualitative data analysis:

> *It is led by inductive approach, that is, patterns and themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis.*

Walliman (2011: 132) states that qualitative data analysis is concerned with simplifying complex information into patterns and easily understood configurations. It takes into account three concurrent flows of action namely; data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification.

Central to organising the data into meaningful patterns was the use of the thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006:79) say thematic analysis is a foundational method for qualitative analysis used to identify, analyse and report patterns within data. Nowell et al (2017) describe thematic analysis as a translator for those speaking the languages of qualitative analysis. While the thematic analysis was largely borrowed from psychology, the adoption of the method was useful in this context of investigating the influence of the in – service programme on primary school teacher's teaching and learning needs. The method assisted in systematically identifying, organising and offering insights into patterns of meaning across the data set (Braun & Clarke 2012: 2; Nowell et al 2017) that provided answers to research questions. It provided a rich, organised, and detailed account of the in – service programme underpinned with relevant data extracts from the three sets of participants.

Thematic analysis, through its theoretical freedom, allowed the researcher to deductively and inductively make sense of commonalities of the collective and shared meanings and

experiences of the chairperson, lecturers and in – service students in their particular circumstances and contexts. It had the advantage of being useful for examining the perspectives of the three sets of participants, highlighting similarities and differences as well as generating unanticipated insights (Nowell et al 2017) and drawing emerging patterns. Further, the approach helped the researcher summarise the key features of the data sets as well as taking a well structured approach to handling data and produce a clear and organised final report (Nowell et al 2017). The selection of themes followed a six phase process namely: familiarising with the data, coding, search for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing up (Maguire & Delahunt 2017: 3354; Braun & Clarke (2012: 6-12). This step – by step analysis driven by what was in the raw field notes and interview audio tapes with shapeless masses of data helped the researcher organise the data into a meaningful chart.

The thematic analysis helped the researcher group related concepts, broad salient themes, recurring ideas or language and patterns of beliefs that linked participants and settings (de Vos et al 2012: 410). Deriving themes was a process by which various accounts gathered were compared with each other to classify those themes that recurred or were common in the data (Green and Thorogood 2014: 210). This was to reduce data into small manageable piles which were then presented in narrative form. Using the thematic approach, the participants' accounts were categorised in ways that could be summarised.

The data analysis resulted in the creation of codes. A code is a name or a label that the researcher gives to a piece of text that contains an idea or a piece of information (Cohen et al 2011: 559). Coding was the process of going through the transcribed data, dividing it into meaningful analytical units (Maree 2012: 105). Newby in Cohen et al (2011: 559) call it tagging. This gave ideas some unique identifying conceptual names and quality through looking for internal convergence and external divergence (de Vos et al 2012:411; Maree

2012:105). De Vos et al (2012: 410) further note that coding is the mechanical data reduction process and analytical categorisation of data into themes or labels. Srivastava and Hopwood (2009:77) opine that the qualitative analyst is always on the hunt for concepts and themes that, when put together, provide the best explanation of 'what is going on' in the inquiry. It can take several forms such as abbreviations, numbers, names, symbols and so on. When the data were organised this way it was easy to manage and discern patterns.

To guard against bias, the records of the detailed field notes were the basis on which answers on the research questions were drawn. The focus was on the meaning they assigned to the learning through semi- structured interviews and focus groups. Conscious efforts to keep in check biases were maintained by keeping in check the researcher's thoughts and reflections. These were also recorded alongside field notes. Thus, the collected data informed the researcher's thinking.

3.9. Trustworthiness concerns

If the goal of conducting research is to produce new knowledge, knowledge that others will come to trust and rely on, then the production of this knowledge needs to be credible (O' Leary 2010: 29). Elo, et al (2014: 3) note that there are three important stages that can inform and improve trustworthiness in qualitative studies as shown on the Table 8 below:

Table 8: Stages in improving trustworthiness in qualitative studies

Stage	Questions
Preparation stage	- How do I collect the most valuable data? - Is this method the best given alternatives to answer research questions? - How do I pre –test the data collection methods? - What are the best sampling methods?

	• Who are the participants?
Organisation stage	• How should concepts, categories and themes be created?
	• How do I ensure that the data accuracy represent the information from participants?
Reporting stage	• Are the results reported systematically and logically?
	• How are connections between data and results reported?
	• Is reporting in a clear and understandable way?
	• Is there full description of the process?

Adapted from Elo et al (2014:3)

The stages and the questions raised showed the researcher's commitment to ensure that the quality of the research process could not be doubted and the results were acceptable and trusted by the research community. The issue of trustworthiness in qualitative studies is critical as it averts the kind of criticism, especially about it being a soft option for researchers. It took into account a number of safety nets that could be put in place through attending to issues that made this study credible.

In this study, the power to elicit belief in the study findings (O' Leary 2010:29) took into account Guba's (1985) (cited in Shenton 2004:64) constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These replaced concepts of validity and reliability as used in positivist researches.

3.9.1. Credibility

This principle refers to the idea of internal consistency. The core questions are; how I can ensure rigor in the research process and how I can communicate to others that I have done so? (Morrow 2005:252). Shenton (2004) considers credibility to respond to the question, how congruent are the findings with reality? Sampson (2012:42) provides an in – depth analysis of

credibility as concerned with the accumulation of evidence that the measures, the findings, the discussion of findings provide a relatively accurate answer to research questions posed in the first chapter. Thus, in this study, credibility highlighted the need to explain how the data collected accurately reflected the multiple realities in the in - service phenomenon (Sikolia, Biros, Mason & Weiser 2013:2). The evidence and explanations had the potential to limit alternative explanations for the results.

In doing this study, the researcher developed a professional relationship with B.Ed (primary) in – service students given that the researcher has also been teaching on the programme. However, the researcher was not teaching the participants for this study. In this regard, with this prolonged engagement (Morrow 2005:252) the researcher managed to gain a full understanding of how the university system operated as well as establish a good rapport with in – service student participants. The researcher remained focused on the study without being clouded by the relationship with the student participants.

In the present study, the use of triangulation, that is the in – depth semi - structured interviews and focus group discussion had the distinct advantage of exploiting their strengths and complementing each other. These methods, where the participants, B.Ed in – service (primary) students, lecturers and chairperson offered various viewpoints and experiences created a rich mental picture of the in - service phenomenon under investigation. This is what Shenton (2004: 66) calls 'circling reality' which is the necessity to obtain a variety of perspectives by using different participants. In the study, the researcher used verbatim transcript (vignettes) of individual interviews and focus group discussion with the chair, lecturers, and students respectively.

 The researcher also used member checking to ensure that the collected and transcribed data were as accurate as possible. The primary concern of member checking is to provide a way

for the researcher to ensure the accurate portrayal of participants voices by allowing them the opportunity to confirm or deny the accuracy and interpretations of data (Candela 2019: 620). In this case, the researcher asked the participants to read the thick descriptions that the researcher had written from the transcripts with the data they had provided. They were, thus, able to verify and review whether the text reflected their thoughts and opinions regarding the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme. The process would convince readers that the findings were credible and could be depended upon.

3.9.2. Transferability

This is the equivalent of external validity in the positivist paradigm. Transferability is the parallel concept that enables readers of the study to make judgments based on similarities and differences when comparing the research situation to their own (Mertens 2015:271; Gray 2009: 194). Sikolia et al (2013: 2). Shenton (2004: 69) further says that transferability is the applicability of one set of findings to another setting. According to Morrow (2005: 252) transferability has at its heart the issue of how far the researcher can make claims for a general application of their story. There are a number of compounding factors that may impinge on issues of generalisability of findings. However if sufficient thick contextual information is provided readers may find comparative similarities and differences with their own contexts.

While this study's intention was to ensure that the results were, first and foremost, understood within the context of Great Zimbabwe University, the potential was that other universities doing similar programmes may learn and gain some insights from this study. It was noted in this study that the researcher made every effort to describe in detail the research participants' diverse perspectives and experiences, methodology and the relationship between the researcher and the participants (Sikolia et al 2013: 2). The detailed information that the

researcher gave was enough for other researchers in similar situations to appreciate the context within which the study was carried out and to see how it could relate to their own.

3.9.3. Dependability

This construct deals with the important issue of the way the study is conducted, which should be consistent across time, researchers and analysis techniques (Morrow 2005: 252). The positivist equivalent of dependability is reliability (Shenton 2004:71). Elo et al (2014: 2) also refer to the stability of data over time under different conditions. Morrow (2005: 252) notes that dependability is about a systematic process that is systematically followed.

In order to address the issue of dependability in this study, the researcher reported in detail the research design that was used and all the research activities and processes, including categories and themes. By giving such thorough explanation and detailed account of the process, the design used and how the data was collected, other readers may replicate the process. The idea was to show the whole approach in order to convince the reader that proper research practices were followed in arriving at the results.

3.9.4. Confirmability

Confirmability refers to how the influence of the researcher's judgment can be minimised and to demonstrate that the data and interpretation are not the figment of the researcher's imagination (Mertens 2015:272, Shenton 2004: 72). In positivist studies, it should answer the question: how objective are the research findings? (Sikolia et al 2013: 3; Elo et al 2014: 2). The issue of confirmability attests to the fact that findings should represent, as far as possible, the situation being investigated rather than the beliefs or biases of the researcher (Morrow 2005: 252). It is about the researcher's concern about objectivity and acceptability of the results. There should be some independent people who can confirm data accuracy, relevance and meaning (Elo et al 2014: 2).

In this study, the researcher gave a detailed account of how the data were gathered and processed and how it ultimately led to the research results. There was also the use of triangulation as described above, all meant to reduce inherent researcher bias. The idea was for readers to see how the data informed the conclusions reached.

3.10. Research ethics

Research deals with people, therefore, the need to ensure that abuses are minimised in the process cannot be overemphasised. Research should be based on mutual trust, acceptance, cooperation and expectations between and among all parties involved in the study (de Vos et al 2012:113). These can be achieved if a researcher observes ethical principles when dealing with human beings.

Research ethics are a set of moral guidelines and rules of conduct. These are woven throughout the research, shaping the methods and the findings (Powell, Fitzgerald, Taylor & Graham 2012:6; Mertens 2015:351). Furthermore, Powell et al (2012:4) note that methodology and ethics are intertwined as ethics add value to research and improve methodological soundness. Ethics in social research are content – specific and usually take a situational relativist approach (Wiles, Heath, Crow, & Charles 2005). This is where it is incumbent upon the researcher to make a choice and make an assessment of those ethical issues that apply to the particular researcher.

The ethical process is seen as on – going as the researcher questions, reflects and acts on his / her relationship with participants during data collection, enabling him to get credible data. Observing ethical issues when conducting research ensures that trust is established between the researcher and the participants and that the well – being of participants is respected. This is the way participants are respected and their needs and concerns are given priority. Hill (2005) suggests four ethical considerations that a researcher should take into account. The

first consideration is welfare. This consideration directs itself to the fact that the purpose of the study should contribute to the well – being of participants, either directly or indirectly. The second thought is protectionism. In this case, the methods should be designed to avoid distress and situations of risk. Researchers also need to consider the other ethical issue of provision. The ethical principle concerns the idea that participants should feel good about having contributed to research as a service informing society, institutions, policy and practice. Lastly, there is the choice of participation. Participants should make informed choices about all aspects of participation, including consent. They also need to be assured that there is no pressure for them to participate. Participants may change their minds without having to give any reason(s).

The researcher planned and conducted the study guided by guidelines set up by UNISA Ethics Review Committee as well as following ethical considerations to ensuring that:

- Permission to conduct the research would be sought from all stakeholders;

- The principle of anonymity and confidentiality was explained and observed;

- Informed consent is obtained from all participants and consent is sought for use of audio – tape. Participants need to be aware that the conversation may be recorded for accuracy when analysing data;

- The study would be of benefit to the university community and

- There would be no physical or psychological harm to participants.

3.10.1. Gaining access to research site

One of the greatest pitfalls in conducting research successfully is the inability to obtain access to the research field (Johl & Renganathan 2010: 42). Johl and Renganathan (2010: 42) note that gaining access involves convincing people that the researcher has decided who should be the participants that should provide information for the research. It also takes into account

where the study should be carried out. Gaining access to a research site is not a right (Cohen et al 2011:81). Gaining access requires the researcher to talk to people, develop correct rapport and willingness to value and learn from them. The process of gaining access, according to Buchanan et al (1988) in Johl and Renganathan (2010: 42), is a four stage cycle involving getting in, getting on, getting out and getting back.

As a case study there was a need to navigate and negotiate entry to research sites particularly the University, lecturers and B.Ed (primary) in – service students in order to access them in their actual lives and natural cultural settings.

The first stage involved gaining official written permission from the University in order to gain access to the research participants, who were the chairperson, lecturers and in - service students. The researcher wrote a letter to the University's Human Resources Department through the Registrar's office and explained the purpose of the study before the researcher hand delivered it. This is at the institution where the researcher works. The idea was to ensure that the University was aware of the research activities happening at the institution. The letter was clear in disclosing the research topic, objectives of the study and the possible benefits of the study to the institution. With the letter from Human Resources the researcher approached participants informing them about the research intention with them to secure their cooperation.

After getting the requisite documentation from the important University stakeholders, the researcher then applied for the ethical clearance from University of South Africa to enable the researcher to collect the data. Data collection was to commence only after the researcher had fulfilled the ethical provisions as enshrined in the UNISA research ethics policy and issued with an ethical clearance certificate.

3.10.2. Confidentiality/ anonymity / privacy

The principle of confidentiality refers to agreements between persons that limit others' access to information (de Vos et al 2012:119). The above terms are used as synonyms and interrelated in this study. This is when participants are assured that what has been discussed would not be repeated or 'offloaded' at least, not without their permission (Wiles et al 2006; Cohen et al 2011: 93). Participants were assured that their responses were to be treated with the confidentiality they deserve. Hill (2005) identified three elements to confidentiality. The first element is public confidentiality where readers cannot identify research participants in the research report. The second element is social network confidentiality where participants have the obligation of not passing on information to friends or others known to participants. The last element is third party breach of privacy where a group may reveal something personal about the participants to another.

Wiles et al (2006) state that confidentiality can include the following: maintaining confidentiality of data/ records by ensuring the separation of data from identifiable individuals. The other way is to ensure that those who have access to the data maintain confidentiality by not disclosing collected privileged research data to others in ways that may identify individuals who have contributed. Confidentiality can also involve anonymising individuals when disseminating findings to protect participant identity.

In this study, in order to protect the participants the researcher used pseudonyms to hide and protect their identities. In the case of in – service students the researcher did not use their real names but those created for the purpose of the study, for example, Netsai, Swaz (see Table 5). As for lecturers the researcher used LI, L2 to identify lecturer participants and as for the chairperson it was DC (see Table 3 and Table 4 respectively). Anonymising them was the researcher's professional and moral responsibility to ensure that they were protected from any harm. Data provided by the participants were regarded as private and kept in retrievable form.

It was also stored and secured in such a way that the researcher was the only one to access and use it specifically for this study.

3.10.3. Informed consent and voluntary participation

Informed consent involves the provision of appropriate information to enable participants to make informed decisions about their participation in the study (Wiles et al 2005). Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest and Namey (2005: 9) add that informed consent is a mechanism for ensuring that participants understand what it means to participate in a particular research study. It enables participants to decide in a conscious and deliberate way whether they want to participate. Powell et al (2012:1) state that informed consent has four important considerations; firstly, an explicit act – verbal or written agreement, secondly, consent can only be given when participants are fully informed about and have an understanding of the research, thirdly, it must be given voluntarily without coercion and it must be negotiable so that participants may withdraw at any stage of the research process.

In addition, Mack et al (2005: 10) observe that participants should be informed on the following: the purpose of the study, what is expected of the research participants, the expected risks (if any) and benefits and also the fact that participation is voluntary and that one can withdraw at any time with no negative repercussions.

Informed consent in this study was both verbal and in writing, informing individual lecturers, B.Ed (primary) in – service students in their group and the Departmental chair in his individual capacity, about the intention of the study. Verbally, the researcher explained the nature of the study to the participants, its objectives and the kind of data they could help generate.

In writing, the researcher further disclosed and consolidated what he had explained to them verbally, empowering them to make an informed decision about their participation in the

study. The consent forms were put in a clear and simple language and to the educational level (Mack et al 2005:11) they could understand, thus ensuring that participants were not put off. The form had a provision for them to sign as their participation commitment though with the latitude for them to withdraw if they felt uncomfortable during the course of the data collection. The forms had issues of anonymity and confidentiality as important ethical values. The researcher assured the participants that the information they gave was confidential and to be kept safe and it would not be traced back to them.

Given that the lecturers, in – service students and the chair were adults above the Legal Age of Majority (eighteen years) and with their level of education, the researcher was convinced that they had the competence, knowledge and capacity to make informed decisions about their participation in the study without being constrained. The protectionist discourse which should be used when dealing with minors did not apply in this case. In this study, it would, thus, be research *with,* rather than research *on* (Powell et al 2012:2) lecturers, students and the chairperson.

Power imbalances could be a big emerging ethical issue and a challenge, especially when dealing with in – service students in the programme at the University where the researcher is a lecturer. In the interaction with the students during the study the researcher managed to de – role and create a simple research relationship with the in - service students, allowing a researcher – participant engagement.

3.10.4. Beneficence

This is a commitment to ensuring that participants get maximum benefits that accrue as a result of the research (Mack et al 2005:8). Heiskell (2010) points out that beneficence is the principle of helping or contributing to the welfare of another. Generally, by conducting research the desire is to ameliorate human suffering and provide life changing solutions to

human problems. Thus, research should transcend looking at peripheral issues but those that help mankind by maximising benefits and minimising or eliminating harm (Powell et al 2012:2). Research should not be for the sake of it.

This study on in – service teacher development had a transformational potential for the in – service teachers, lecturers, the University and the primary school education system as a whole. Primary school teacher preparation is critical for the education system as products model appropriate professional behaviour (Machin et al 2015: 33). The study interrogated the kind of professional knowledge, skills and competences and their influence on teaching and learning in Zimbabwean primary schools. Gravells (2014:4) states that good practice for all programmes is to ensure that there is a system of internal quality assurance. Thus, Carroll and McCulloch (2014:7) declare:

> *In a situation where teachers are under constant scrutiny in relation to children's progress and achievement, teachers need to be confident in their professional and practical knowledge and understanding of how teaching and learning processes work.*

Results from the study would lead to improvements in the learners' learning, lecturers reflecting on their programme and the institution managing to cope with competitive pressures.

3.10.5. Maleficence

Researchers should be obsessed with the desire to protect participants from potential risks (Powell et al 2012:2; Wiles et al 2005) as they participate in the study. The fundamental ethical rule of social science research is that it must bring no harm to participants (Babbie 2007 in de Vos et al 2012:115). Risk usually comes as psychological or physical, depending on the issues under discussion.

Given that this study was about how the B.Ed (primary) in – service teacher development programme interfaced with primary classroom teaching and learning, the risks were outweighed by the benefits. It was a low risk study. The study was not likely to cause psychological harm to participants as the information they would give remained anonymous and not traced to individual participants.

3.11. Summary

In Chapter 3 the researcher went into detail on how the study was conducted describing the decisions about the research approach and the methods chosen. It also explained the various groups of participants involved in the study, namely; the chairperson, lecturers and in – service students. The chapter further pointed out the data collection development processes and how the instruments were adopted in this research. Issues of trustworthiness and ethical principles were explained and how they were taken into consideration. The next chapter presents, analyses and discusses findings from the data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter, Chapter Three, gave a comprehensive account of the procedures and processes of how the qualitative data to be presented in this chapter were collected, analysed and how issues of trustworthiness and ethics were dealt with. This chapter sifts through the collected qualitative data and organises them into meaningful insights so as to reach informed conclusions.

The group of participants who provided this qualitative data were five lecturers who had at least five years teaching experience on the programme, two groups of five B.Ed (primary) in – service students each with at least two years primary school teaching experience and the Departmental Chairperson, The data were collected through in – depth semi - structured interviews in respect of the lecturers and the chairperson and focus group discussions with B.Ed (primary) in – service students.

The presentation and analysis of the data in this chapter were organised around the main research question and sub – research questions respectively;

What is the influence of the university in – service teacher development programme on teaching – learning needs of Zimbabwean primary school teachers?

The sub – research questions that informed the study were;

- What are teaching –learning needs at primary school level?

- What strategies can be used to enhance the provisioning of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme?

The presentation offered some important insights into the participants' views where actual words used by participants during semi - structured interviews and focus group discussion

were quoted verbatim, true to the qualitative principles of trustworthiness such as credibility, dependability and confirmability of the collected data. For ethical reasons and to protect all the participants from harm by ensuring that responses were not traced back to them, pseudonyms were used (Chapter 3 Tables 6 and 7).

Further, as the researcher collected this data being presented in this chapter he was cognisance of Vygotsky's (1978) Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) that underpinned this study. The theory relates to how the individual mental function begins as actual relations between a novice and an expert and that knowledge are socially constructed. Running through this theory are aspects of history, culture and institutional context that shape learners in a learning context. The University was an important institutional context where lecturers and in – service students shared, in interaction, cultural learning activities and socially constructed knowledge.

4.2 Presentation and analysis of findings

The presentation witnessed the emergence of critical voices of the three groups of participants on the B.Ed (primary) in – service curriculum discourse and how the programme was being managed and implemented at Great Zimbabwe University. With the data collected because of the main research question and sub – research questions, the first port of call was to identify significant ideas, categorise and organise them into emerging themes using the thematic analysis framework. As a result, the following broad themes and sub – themes as presented on Table 9 were realised:

Table 9: Research questions, themes and sub - themes

Research questions	Themes	Sub - themes
What is the influence of university in – service teacher development on	1. Academic and professional backgrounds of participants.	• The primary school curriculum • The primary school

student learning?	2.The Zimbabwean primary school context	teachers' responsibilities
What are the teaching – learning needs at primary school level?	3. The in – service teacher development concept 4. The B.Ed (primary) programme implementation	• Understanding the in – service development concept • The in – service programme design and teaching – learning needs • In – service regulations planning • In – service module planning • In – service students competence needs • The in – service programme design and teaching – learning needs • In – service regulations planning • In – service module planning • In – service students competence needs • Participants'

		perceptions of the strengths of the programme
What strategies can be used to enhance provisioning of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme?	5. Enhancing the provision of the in – service programme	• Participants' perceptions of the challenges of the in – service programme • Lecturer autonomy and accountability • Student empowerment

4.3. What is the influence of the university in – service teacher development on student learning?

The question was meant to understand the general factors that impacted on the in – service programme at the University and establish connections between the programme and the in – service students' learning. The academic and professional backgrounds of participants and the primary school context and other sub – themes (see Table 9) were identified as themes that had a bearing on in - service student learning.

4.3.1. Theme 1: Academic and professional backgrounds of participants

The participants were drawn from different subject areas, a display of sampled lecturers and students on the programme. The findings indicated that skilled workforce and students with

right qualifications were critical and had influence on the achievement of goals of the in - service educational programme.

Based on the qualitative analyses, human capital was said to be one of the most important factors that influence the successful implementation and the achievement of in – service programme goals. The knowledge, experience and skills of the lecturers teaching on the programme were critical in order to meaningfully support students to acquire a broad range of experiences and programme growth strategies. The academic and professional profile of the sampled five lecturers ranged from first qualification as Certificate/ Diploma in Education/, Graduate Certificate in Education (Grad.C.E), Bachelor of Arts, Master of Education to PhD (Chapter 3 Table 6). The findings revealed a contingent of highly qualified, knowledgeable and experienced professionals with a strong sense of the primary school contexts and capable of providing education and training to develop competencies for classroom teaching and learning.

 The chairperson showed that factors related to the value of knowledge and skills of the academic staff collectively brought to the programme and the primary school experiences of practising teachers were key drivers and influences of the in – service teacher development programme success at the University. The results also indicated that the chairperson shared the same sentiments with the lecturers that the programme had focused on deepening and widening the knowledge and skills of the in – service students that could be applied in their teaching – learning contexts. The connection between these students and the stakeholders in education helped the students acquire and improve their teaching skills for learning opportunities of primary school learners.

In the same vein, the issue related to the academic and professional experience of the in – service students was central to the quality of students on the in – service programme in terms

of how they could manage and cope as active agents in curriculum discourses and processes at university level. All the students had the basic five (5) Ordinary level subjects, including English language, as was the requirement to train as a teacher in Zimbabwean colleges of education. Only two had one Advanced level subject each. The years of teaching experience for the sampled students ranged from two (2) to fifteen (15).

Most of the students on the programme had the basic low - level academic Ordinary level education not adequate for complex, flexible and adaptable learning. Their ability to discover, reconstruct new knowledge and skills for themselves and negotiate new identities could be limited. The results from lecturer participants showed that students with such an academic level may not be able to meet competing programme demands by exhibiting higher order abilities to acquire, apply and reflect on knowledge and skills at degree level. However, their prior opportunities to engage in primary school teaching was one of the most important influences to the in – service students' professional development. The sampled students it appeared, through their teaching experience had done some self- evaluation about their own competencies, had discovered their potential and limitations and were ready for professional in – service teacher development. The students on the programme influenced and informed the kind of product the University wanted to produce to meet changing primary school classroom demands.

The background information pitted the two groups of participants, that is, professionals and expert university lecturers and the chairperson on one hand and the novice B.Ed (primary) in – service students on the other hand as propounded by Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. The lecturers had primary teacher education knowledge and experience and the students had practical knowledge and realities of the primary school teaching and learning contexts. The participants' primary school world views had a strong bearing on the in –

service teacher development narrative at the University context where learning was regarded as a social process of constructing meaning.

4.3.2. Theme 2: The Zimbabwean primary school context
4.3.2.1. The primary school organogram and the curriculum

The question on the organisation of the Zimbabwean primary school system was asked so as to generally define the context from where primary school teachers operated and how it influenced the in – service programme. This was meant to set the tone for participants to understand and discuss what teachers really do and what competencies are demanded from them by the primary schools as set in the supervision expectations by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Zimbabwean primary school teachers have prescribed responsibilities and duties, according to the data by students. In the same vein, primary schools differed in terms of organisational set up. Firstly, the responsible authority, be it government, church, council or private, then the size of the school in terms of student population, staff and the curricula on offer.

The Zimbabwean primary school activities were basically divided into two categories, namely; the core/ academic and the co – curricula/ extra or those activities outside the classrooms such as sports and clubs. To superintend over these activities generally there is a simple primary school organogram which starts with the Head, the Deputy, senior teacher (s), Teacher (s) in Charge (TIC) and then the rest of the teaching staff. The responsibilities of the administrators are basically to evaluate teacher competence and training needs as they supervise both core and co- curricula implementation and ensure that the school operates smoothly. Tafara, Tanyangadzei (FGD 2) and Swaz (FGD 1) said this about the structure at their schools:

> *The general situation in primary schools is that we have the academic curriculum and*
>
> *extra mural activities. In terms of administrative organisation at our schools we have*

the Head, the deputy, TICs one for infant and the other for the junior levels. These make frequent visits to see how we are teaching various subjects. At times the head and the deputy teach when the staff compliment is small (Tafara, FGD 2).

In co – curricular issues we have a sports master. With the New Curriculum the post of the sports master has become key as sporting competitions are now done at all the level (Tanyangadzei, FGD2).

The heads have a huge responsibility to ensure that expectations from the Ministry are met and they often put in place supervision schedules. For example, the time table, inspection of schemes of work usually every week, learners' books and at times they make impromptu visits to classes to observe teaching. Usually, they share the load with the deputy and senior teachers (Swaz, FGD 1).

Given the data above, the structure varied from one school to another. But the basic structure of the Head and Deputy was mandatory and recognised by the Public Service Ministry. Their mandate was to ensure that teachers fulfilled their professional roles efficiently as learning took place by creating the environment necessary for teachers to do their work. The supervisory structure is focused on the teacher's capacity to implement the curriculum effectively and to identify competencies that need improvement.

The argument was that if the lecturers had a complete understanding of the background of where the in - service students they were teaching were coming from they would help them when they developed the programme goals and instructional strategies that met their contexts. The lecturers would even work with primary school heads and their deputies who supervised teachers as they designed the in – service programme. The information provided by the lecturers and students, therefore, revealed that the primary school contexts were different

hence the in - service students learning needs were also diverse. These should be understood in order to appreciate complex the nature of the primary school contexts.

Another issue raised by students related to the primary school set up was the language question. They reckoned that at primary school level there appeared to be two document policies that were operating. The first one was the 1987 Education Act on using English as the medium of communication and education from grade four upwards. The second was the 2006 Amended Education Act in which the mother tongue languages were to be used in all the subjects for all grades at primary schools. The students revealed that they used code-switching in the mixed ability classes and exclusively used English during supervision visits. Peggy (FGD2) and Evie (FGD 1) had this to say about the issue of language use in classrooms:

> *At primary school level we are supposed to use English because when students write grade seven examinations they use English. I know of the existence of two policy documents regarding language, the 1987 and 2006. These policies remain confusing (Peggy, FGD 2).*

> *At schools the culture is to use English and the contention is that learners are to write all examinations in English and they are likely to struggle if we do not use English. At times in our mixed ability classes, we code switch (Evie, FGD 1).*

It was evident that the students were worried about the language policy at primary school level that was not clear. Language policy issues remain critical as they have a socio - cultural influence on the teaching and learning as they nurture learners in all dimensions of their lives. Language as also noted by Vygotsky, is an important pedagogical tool for classroom communication and the whole teaching learning process and should be clear to teachers.

4.3.2.2 Primary school teachers' professional responsibilities.

Considerable amounts of data were collected related to primary school teacher professional responsibilities in Zimbabwe. Student participants reported that for them to implement the classroom activities, they had to show adequate knowledge and competencies in adopting, adapting and interpreting the national syllabus into an implementable scheme – cum- plan. The scheme – cum plan was a teacher generated document where the scheming and planning were combined following defined curriculum guidelines to achieve main educational goals. Central to developing the document was the response to affective, cognitive and psychomotor skills important for learners' development and these were immersed in the learning objectives, teaching methods, and learning experiences.   Eddie (FGD 2) singled out this responsibility as the most taxing part of his duties. His sentiments were also echoed by Tatenda (FGD1). The ideas below summarise the opinions of the students in both groups:

> *We do a scheme – cum –plan where we do not separate the scheme from the daily lesson plans. The scheme- cum - plan is complete on its own with enough detail to help deliver lessons. It involves interpreting and breaking down the national syllabus into an individual scheme for each subject. This is the most difficult part of our work (Eddie, FGD 2).*

> *We rely heavily on the textbooks to come up with what we teach or at worst we just recycle schemes from other teachers who have taught that grade level. Even with the eleven years of experience that I have been teaching at primary school I still find this part difficult. Now with the New Curriculum the situation is stressing. The practical subjects like Physical Education (P.E), Music, Art and Agriculture impose the biggest challenge and when you have not specialised in these areas you have problems. These days with technology we either do group scheming or just get others' soft copies and change here and there to suit your situation (Tatenda, FGD 1).*

A key aspect of the comments by students was that the most important role which contributed to their effectiveness in the classroom leading to successful student learning had given them challenges. The scheme is also the 'Bible' for the teacher as it were. The challenge could also be traced back to their initial teacher training at college where knowledge and skills to plan and prepare such curriculum implementation documents had not been well understood. The students were honest that they were cheating in their scheming because they found syllabus interpretation difficult. Teachers need to learn and improve this core skill for better learning opportunities for learners.

In – service students in the two FGDs reported that their main responsibility after completing the documentation was the implementation, which was teaching a full range of subject areas in the school curriculum that demand competencies in all of them. Teachers narrated that their daily schedule was crowded and taxing from 7.30 am to at least 4 'O' clock in the afternoon. Tatenda (FGD 1) observed that while they were expected to teach all the subjects, the quality of teaching had never been the same across the curriculum. In some subjects the teachers were comfortable while in others they struggled.

> *Our working day is packed from 7:30 am to 4 'O'clock in the afternoon as we are either teaching or involved in sports. As we teach all the subjects in the curriculum, we do not teach them with the same competencies. Some subjects suffer as a result.*

Allen, in FGD 1, further noted that:

> *Primary school teachers are general practioners. We teach all the subjects in the curriculum. Realistically, it is impossible to know the content in detail for all the subject areas. I may be weak in some subjects and strong in others. We deliberately avoid practical subjects. We take some periods from non- examinable subjects to teach those subjects deemed important such as English, Shona, Mathematics and now*

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Agriculture. As for written work for those non – examinable subjects we just find time to give the exercises to fulfill a requirement. In terms of methods the lecture method is the most dominant because we want to ensure that the pupils get the concepts and pass at the end.

The students paid attention to the quantity of work they had to do as they guided the learners through the most important stage of their education. Their concern was about being effective in a classroom setting in terms of preparation, presentation and instructional selections in all the subject areas in the primary school curriculum. The teachers were overwhelmed with the workload because the many subjects demanded different kinds of knowledge and skills that put a strain on them. The teachers, thus, had used traditional teacher - centred teaching methods that do not unlock learners' potential and expand their horizons. Further, given the data above, the Zimbabwean primary school curriculum had been examination- oriented with examinable subjects getting preferential treatment.

There were also some subjects which Tatenda (FGD 1) called 'suffering subjects' because they were neither taught seriously nor examined during the national examinations. These included the practical subjects such as Music, Art, Physical Education and Home Economics. While there were these stipulations from the Ministry as provided for in the syllabus, it appeared these subjects were ignored. The teaching appeared skewed towards certain subjects where the teacher either had more knowledge and skills or where the subjects were examined. It was also evident from the data that examinations had 'destroyed' other subjects as time for these other subjects has been used to teach examinable subjects. The data from the students appeared to suggest that the programme should be able to increase and develop knowledge and skills of primary school teachers in those subjects that were being ignored to enable teachers to exercise their instructional leadership in all the areas.

In addition to the implementation of these subjects, teachers were supposed to implement Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) which teacher participants said entailed assessing teacher – learning processes, teacher – learner records, resources provision, monitoring and evaluating the achievements of individual learners in all the subjects. Swaz, in FGD 1, had this to say about PLAP:

> *PLAP is about improving the achievement of primary school learners. It entails revisiting the syllabus and targeting concepts that have been proven persistently difficult for pupils to catch up on in all the subjects. The overall aim is to teach from the last point of success. This is a demanding exercise, especially when our classes are as large as sixty learners of different abilities. All this has to be documented in all the subject areas. We even evaluate some subject areas that we have not taught in order to protect ourselves from the powers that be. Over and above PLAP, we are also expected to do individual in – class clinical remediation.*

It was evident from these sentiments that there were so many areas that needed attention in order to help the teachers effectively implement the curriculum. Furthermore, the workload was too heavy for the primary school teacher. Performing these short cuts was clear testimony that there were some competence gaps and it had negatively influenced how teachers had implemented the primary school curricula. Closely linked to the many subjects, teachers needed skills in handling big classes given the mixed ability patterns in the primary school classes.

In addition to the above, the in - service teachers are expected to furnish their classrooms with informative and educative charts that are subject specific. Teachers also created learning centres where they had different items and / or equipment for all the subject areas that acted

as teaching and learning aids and helped unpack concepts. Peggy (FGD 2) added voice to her experience in creating a conducive learning environment by these statements:

We need to create a rich learning classroom with a variety of charts on display, learning centres where we stock some materials that can be useful during teaching and learning and excite student learning. We also have to display children's work as motivation to learners. The charts and the materials in the centres have to be changed regularly. But because of pressure and not being sure what should be displayed we don't attend to these often. The chart making process is not clear to us there are so many theories. Now we hear of media technology and we don't know how we can employ technology in general teaching and learning and more so in the construction of meaningful teaching-learning aids.

The data revealed some significant information on the students' concerns and challenges regarding planning, implementation, assessment practices in primary schools in Zimbabwe. The concerns were raised with a view that the programme would articulate their challenges. In developing the in – service programme, knowledge of all these context factors by lecturers would enable the in – service students to get the best out of their learning experiences at university. What also emerged from the students regarding their teaching challenges was that although they were at different levels of practice, but their professional development needs were the same and an appropriate in – service training programme was necessary. The B.Ed (primary) in - service teachers appeared frozen in their old ways of teaching and needed to update and extend competencies by being introduced to new, innovative and reflective teaching methods.

The students indicated that the teaching field was not complete without the co – curricula activities which teachers were involved in. In addition to their teaching duties, teachers were

expected to show propensity to develop learners in various out – of classroom activities such as sporting, clubs and cultural activities where the teachers ensured learners acquire basic knowledge and skills. The sentiments by Swaz (FGD1) summarised the concerns of all members in the two FGDs:

> *Sports and other outside classroom activities have become very important curriculum areas. After classroom work there are out of classroom activities which are a must for every teacher to be involved in like soccer, netball, athletics, debating club and many others. With the New Curriculum the government has taken sporting very seriously and you have to show great skill in any one. We now have sporting competitions from school level to national level. Some of us do not have skills in these areas. Imagine following each individual learner's skill area and area of sporting interest. Where do we get the skills when we have not done that before?*

The comments by students showed the extent to which the competencies required of the primary school teacher made primary school teaching labour intensive. The responses point to the kind of pressure the primary school teachers are under. Yet, from the data, many teachers did not have the practical knowledge and skills to impart to the learners. The data obtained from the in – service teachers regarding primary school teaching, reflect on a number of focus areas where teachers need to develop and deepen knowledge and skills. These are of direct applicability to teachers' daily work in a changing primary school world. The data showed the usefulness of engagement and collaboration with students who knew their own strengths and weaknesses. Understanding the workplace demands of teachers would help lecturers accept that in – service teacher development starts at primary school. This would influence lecturers to develop an informed, holistic and coherent set of knowledge, skills, competencies and dispositions important for implementing a relevant primary school in - service programme.

4.4. What are the teaching – learning needs at primary school level?

The data gathered related to this question pointed to the essential understanding of the concept in – service teacher development and the planning and implementation of the in – service teacher training programme informed by the needs of primary school teachers. A number of sub – themes emerged.

4.4.1. Theme 3: The in - service teacher development concept
4.4.1.1. Understanding the in – service teacher development concept

The sub –theme presented an overview of the participants' understanding of the concept in – service teacher development and the question was asked to all the three groups of participants, namely; lecturers and in – service students and the chairperson. The essence was to ascertain the range of knowledge this teaching – learning community had of in – service professional teacher development concept. This became critical in shaping the in – service discourse in this study.

The overall response from all the participants showed that they had a good grasp of the concept. They all agreed that in – service was part of the teacher's on - going lifelong learning process meant to enhance, upgrade and update knowledge and skills for effective classroom teaching and learners' learning. From the data collected, the participants' opinions revealed that it was a professional journey to discover those teaching deficiencies and gaps and to enrich and improve the teachers' roles and responsibilities in the classrooms. In all the instances, the participants identified in – service professional teacher development as involving experienced teachers who were in the teaching field who needed to improve knowledge and skills (Lecturer 5) and build on what they had learnt at college (Lecturer 2).

> *In – service teacher development suggests that the university identifies gaps in the*
> *candidature in terms of content, methods and philosophical training, which can then*
> *be addressed by the programme (Lecturer 5).*

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It is a continuum from initial teacher training to in – service showing the development and link and not a disconnected and isolated process. It should transcend the notion that teachers now have degrees, but should be transformative in constructing a new teacher and teaching identity in the classroom (Lecturer 2).

These statements by Lecturer 2 remind us that in – service as continuing education should focus on interest, expressed needs and challenges directly related to the students for them to become competent and knowledgeable classroom practioners. The lecturers understood the need to have an in - service programme that is motivated by identified student needs.

In his analysis, the chairperson considered the in – service professional teacher development programme as building practising teachers' capacities and refreshing them in all the areas of the primary school curriculum. This would deepen their knowledge and skills thereby boosting their confidence during the execution of their duties. The chairperson's thrust was that teachers needed to constantly learn new ideas, theories and concepts considering that education as an information profession was fluid. The chair noted:

It is to capacitate teachers with knowledge and skills that are current, relevant, and useful and are practically applied in real classroom situations during teaching and learning. It should add value to their teaching and children's learning. Teaching is changing, knowledge and pedagogy are shifting hence teachers need to adapt and adopt new teaching trends and styles given the fluidity of the teaching profession. Teachers cannot afford to use yesterday's tools to address today's problems.

In – service students in their focus group discussions agreed with the widely held view that the concept in – service teacher development was related to practising primary school teachers who would have identified and realised their inadequacies in a number of subject

areas. They would want to plug those knowledge gaps by being in – serviced. Two students, Swaz and Eddie's responses in FGD 1 & 2, respectively, summarised the students' ideas:

> *In – service is about the practising teacher's initiative to get new and relevant skills, new knowledge and the degree qualification (Swaz, FGD 1).*

> *Teachers should continue to update and upgrade their skills lest they risk becoming irrelevant in this competitive teaching world. You cannot continue to use old methods in today's changing classroom contexts (Eddie, FGD 2).*

It was certain from the data by the participants' that there should be a string connecting the knowledge and the skills from the university in - service programme and competencies required for practice in primary schools. From their understanding of in – service teacher development, practising teachers have the opportunity to reflect on their competencies and take it upon themselves to develop the required knowledge and skills in various subject areas. These should be directly applicable to the knowledge intensive classroom teaching and learning situation. Understanding this key concept was essential as participants would reflect on whether the in – service programme had addressed practical primary school matters, the students' needs and the kind of knowledge and skills that make up the programme to improve the training system.

4.4.2. Theme 4: The B.Ed (primary) in- service programme design and competencies

The study found that generally both the chairperson and the lecturers did not have the framework that provided guidance to make critical and informed curriculum decision - making regarding the design of the programme. The educational framework is important in the curriculum development process narrative in determining the value questions, formulation and justification of programme purposes, how the knowledge could be selected, organised and packaged, implementation procedures and learning outcomes. In general, it means that

the philosophy would help lecturers and the chairperson as curriculum planners to identify and decide on essential knowledge and skills to be incorporated for systematically planned and relevant learning experiences in the primary in – service programme that would address student needs. The lack of a cohesive framework and principles to make the programme intelligible may result in the programme failing to be compatible with in – service students' concerns and needs.

Evidence from the data collected suggests that the primary in - service programme design process was in the hands of lecturers who made important choices about the goals, the knowledge and skills, learning experiences, instructional decisions and assessment criteria for the in – service programme, with the guidance of the Departmental Chairperson. The chairperson interpreted the design process as:

> *One of my critical professional responsibilities as the departmental chairperson is to superintend over the design of programmes housed in the department. This is a collective process by the department and advised by expert lecturers in different subject areas. As we design these programmes we are not guided by a specific framework but the need to speak to the needs of our clients who are students, the general public and national educational expectations. We are aware that the final word comes from ZIMCHE who approves our programmes. We need to meet their specifications as well.*

In addition to the chairperson's sentiments, one of the founding lecturers of this B.Ed (primary) in- service programme (Lecturer 3) had this to say:

> *When we started to design the programme, we literally travelled to primary schools to meet teachers, primary teachers' training colleges to listen to lecturers; the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to secure notes on their expectations of the*

programme. We went to sister universities to hear their own experiences about what kind of a degreed primary school teacher should emerge out of the programme. We wanted an exhaustive process, the input of all important stakeholders so that students would have positive learning experiences from the programme. As we designed the programme we were guided by what was offered by other higher education institutions elsewhere in the world. At the end, we were convinced that we had designed a programme that would impact and transform the Zimbabwean primary school system because it was aligned to the needs of stakeholders.

Lecturer 1 argued that the way the in – service programmes at universities were designed were, however, flawed and showed serious shortcomings which was a direct contradiction of the exhaustive process explained by Lecturer 3 and the chairperson.

University curricula are designed to suit the needs of universities and not the needs, interests and expectations of students. The traditionally fixed notions are that universities do what they want to do not what schools and teachers need. They are not guided by a philosophy. The needs analyses are sketchily and thinly done, consultation attempts with stakeholders are not exhaustive, comprehensive and adequate to make meaningful programme impact. The design is faulty as it remains technocratic, theoretical, armchair with little or no contact with the intended beneficiaries. It is just another academic exercise, rushed and just fulfilling a requirement and rarely referred to during implementation.

The lecturers had no sound basis to justify curriculum choices for the in – service programme despite being in the same department. They relied on rote – based practices where they dictated curriculum goals and content to in – service students judging by their not mentioning any framework they followed. As a result, no attempt was made to improve the design by

making it a social knowledge construction process through students and other stakeholders' involvement as proposed by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. A comparison of the two lecturers (L1 & L3) revealed strong and serious reservations about the general design process which may negatively impact on the quality of the programme and the product. The data from the DC appeared to indicate that the process was above board, consultative and researched enough to produce a good programme. The contradictions provide some insights and evidence that the in – service initiative at the university may have been designed without all lecturers fully understanding the process as well as the primary school contexts and the students' needs.

The results of this study also indicated that the aims and objectives of the in – service programme were hazy to some of the lecturers and the chairperson. The objectives help define and determine the purpose, knowledge and skills of the programme. This is the level where the desired in - service student product was determined, hence clarity was needed. The two groups of participants were at the heart of the implementation of the programme yet they had different views about the programme objectives. This explained why the lecturers and the chairperson's objectives of the programme came from their theoretical understanding of what in – service professional teacher development meant. Implied in the various statements of objectives from lecturers and the chairperson were that the objectives of the programme were not a shared script raising questions about the vision of the in – service product. The following were the points of the statement of objectives raised by the DC during interviews:

- *For primary school teachers to constantly upgrade their abilities to teach and that they are not left behind in this age of information explosion.*

- *To keep abreast with contemporary issues and knowledge in the field of education*

Below are examples of statements of objectives for the primary in – service programme by lecturers:

- *To empower students with confidence to impart knowledge and skills during teaching and learning (Lecturer 1)*

- *To upgrade qualifications and equip students to efficiently operate in the classroom and to expand, deepen, enhance give depth in their subject areas (Lecturer 2).*

- *For students to teach their subject areas at higher level and become resource persons (Lecturer 4)*

- *To build on what they have learnt at primary teacher training college (Lecturer 5)*

Lecturer 3 who was one of the pioneers of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme felt that the objectives of the programme were:

- *To create a different teacher from the one coming out of the primary teacher training college system*

- *To have an extended teacher with knowledge and skills that could help transform the primary school education system*

- *To train a subject specialist in one of the curriculum subject areas – the idea was to have a peripatetic teacher taking the secondary school model*

- *To create a new and different structure of primary school teaching – the anticipation was that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education was going to introduce subject specialisation teaching at primary school level*

Comparing the results from the chairperson and the lecturers on the in – service programme objectives it could be seen that lecturers had not fully participated in the formulation of the objectives and were teaching on the programme without a sound appreciation of what kind of

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teacher they desired to produce. These instances show that the chairperson and the lecturers' knowledge of the programme objectives was not adequate for generating a well - planned and organised programme derived from the classroom situations of in – service students.

Further, the results also showed that the programme was moved from general to honours degrees without a rationale for doing so.

> *The change from general to honours degree did not follow curriculum design best practices. It was not informed by consultation of stakeholders and needs but came as a directive (Lecturer 1)*
>
> *We were asked at short notice to move from the general in – service to an honours programme in 2013 and we had to comply by adding modules to the programme to the required honours threshold (Lecturers 2).*

Concerning from the interview data was that critical curriculum decisions were more administrative rather than academic. The net effect of such an approach could be in designing a curriculum that may not develop goals that equip students with a broad range of professional knowledge, skills and attitudes and capture complex classroom experiences and student needs. As mentioned in sociocultural literature, problems that are likely to emerge during programme implementation could be avoided by appreciating that knowledge is socially constructed and that students have a role in the design of the curriculum.

Comments by Lecturers 1 & 2 that the programme design was not properly done appeared valid because of lack of consultations with students and other stakeholders. The process had been left to the whims of lecturers and the chairperson who made arbitrary curriculum decisions pointing to a top - down process. Such a process may fail to plan and deliver effective learning programmes. A good programme design should have clearly defined goals,

content, methods and evaluation procedures which are informed by both internal and external players for coherence and relevance.

From the interview data, there was strong evidence of lack of consensus on explicit educational description of the in - service programme. This was especially in terms of goals and learning outcome descriptors, disciplinary threshold standards and proper needs assessment methods to note redundancies and gaps that would inform programme implementation. Goals are important programme design indicators as they would help lecturers and students to answer a host of questions about the purpose of the programme, in what way it was worthwhile and which new learning experiences the programme would address.

One of the most worrying limitations from the data related to the programme was that lecturers and the chairperson, as important educational stakeholders, had mixed messaging of the university design process. The experiences of the lecturers in the programme design showed little understanding of the process and they were not empowered to make important curriculum decisions. At this crucial stage of programme formulation, the lecturers and the chairperson should articulate the kind of student competencies the in - service programme was designed to develop. This could be done by looking at rich opportunities to integrate theory with practice by relating how knowledge and skills could be applied in real teaching and learning settings.

4.4.2.1. In – service programme regulations planning

The data presented by the lecturers and the chairperson suggest that universities devise their own locally produced administrative curriculum documents to guide lecturers, namely; regulations. As observed by lecturers and the chairperson, as administrative and policy tools, regulations were required for the implementation of the B.Ed (primary) in – service

programme that would be aligned to the University education mission and vision as well as the national educational goals. As curriculum tools, regulations help plan the teacher professional development programme and can be effectively translated into practice by matching professional growth and career needs of students. The participants noted that regulations spell out the entry requirements, programme structure and the number of modules and their narrations for each semester, scheme of examination, supplementary examinations, how the results would be published, the grading system and how the results would be determined. According to the participants, regulations gave legal effect to the programme and were a binding document to both the university and the students.

In their statements the participants revealed that the process of coming up with the draft regulations was a long and consultative one, engaging a number of stakeholders whose input would help implementers to attend to critical teacher training needs for the programme. This process was basically driven by the relevant department which would house the programme. A programme with several courses or modules would then be designed to include important knowledge and skills that underpin the knowledge economy that the teachers needed for their professional development, that is, according to participants. These regulations were to be taken seriously because they impacted on the nature of the product coming out of the programme and its performance on the labour market. Evidence from lecturers revealed that lecturers played an important part in the formulation of these regulations given their knowledge, skills and expertise. Lecturers, thus, helped to position the programme to stakeholder expectations.

Lecturers indicated that the regulations were essential curriculum documents that were crucial in the production of in – service graduates with knowledge and skills that would make them competitive and responsive to societal and occupational demands. Comments by Lecturers 1 and 5, and the chairperson showed the importance of regulations:

While lecturers through departments are responsible for crafting the draft regulations, these are supposed to be programme specific and legally binding contractual documents that bind the student and the university and in which the university can be sued or can sue (Lecturer 1).

Regulations which have a three year cycle give legal weight and structure to the programme. Without them then we do not have a programme (Lecturer 5).

The bedrock upon which the in – service programme is built are the regulations. They are the focal point of the programme (Chairperson).

Lecturers 1 & 5 and the chairperson's sentiments were that regulations were central to the programme and needed to be carefully planned, given the legal implications. This could be done by providing a reliable description of the programme and communicating explicitly the intended products. The quality of in – service student experiences depended largely on the important and necessary curriculum decisions which would enable them to acquire different kinds of knowledge and skills through the modules taught. Therefore, curriculum planning strategies should be visible in the draft documents so that they can pass the legal test. If regulations were not well planned they had the consequence of failing to produce products who would be better classroom practioners. The participants noted that flouting regulations had negative ramifications on them as lecturers and the University reputation as well.

Lecturers 1 and 4, while acknowledging that regulations were important, were skeptical about what they had achieved in terms of imparting knowledge and skills needed for primary school practice.

If well-crafted and relevant consultations are done in line with procedural curriculum design practices, regulations would help the programme address critical knowledge

and skills gaps, ensuring that products from the system are better equipped for practice. But as it stands, they do not enhance experiences of students, they do not add value to their professional experiences and lives. Focus should be on learning experiences and content that help teachers articulate classroom realities. Content has become summaries that do not inform practice (Lecturer 1).

In coming up with regulations, we pay lip- service to the important process of consultations, thus allowing the process to be flawed and become pedestrian. Why university curriculum has been allowed to be more localised and with a three year cycle is because they can quickly respond to needs rather than wait while the house is burning (Lecturer 4).

Lecturer 3 and 5 contributed by raising the following concerns:

We have abandoned the founding principles of the programme where consultations were exhaustively done, getting comments from all those stakeholders especially on module narration, on trending issues and even on entry qualifications where Advanced level was a requirement (Lecturer 3).

As we moved from the general programme to honours we just increased the number of modules in our regulations, yet the proper procedure was to consult the stakeholders about which areas could add value to in - service students' teaching and learners learning. Maybe it's because of competition from other universities, that, if you consult them they steal your programme before we even implement it (Lecturer 5).

In their submission, lecturers indicated that in crafting the regulations, consultation of critical stakeholders had not been taken seriously. However, what was evidently not clear was the

model that lecturers used to develop the regulations, an indication of absence of proper curriculum orientation. University curriculum documents should also be reviewed by curriculum experts in order to address critical values of the nature of knowledge, its transaction and evaluation.

There was general agreement by the participants that regulations provided an important lens to understand learning experiences and to address teachers' professional developmental needs. In planning these regulations, it, therefore, required that the lecturers and the chairperson to consult and record in – service students' specific needs as it would not be proper to view these students as recipients of knowledge. Drafting regulations that consider students' views was consistent with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory whereby the lecturers shaped student experiences in such a way that students took an active part, and learning became a social process. If the net effect of the in – service programme was to improve the provision of quality primary school education in Zimbabwe, there was a need to develop regulations that met student competence needs and national aspirations.

4.4.2.2. In – service module/ course planning.

There was a strong indication from the lecturers, the chairperson and the in – service students that the other important implementation document was the module or course outline aligned to the regulations. According to the participants the module outlines were lecturer generated, self - contained and detailed in terms of purpose, goals and/ or learning outcomes, learning experiences, teaching strategies, assessment criteria and reference materials that gave guidance to both the lecturer and the students. Generating module outlines, according to the participants, involved making decisions about what content to be included or excluded, what methods of delivery to be used and the assessment strategies. The participants pointed out that the module outline determined the quantity and quality of learning experiences, the competencies and the skills exposed to in – service students. Module outlines constituted the

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body of knowledge to be taught and assessed and were developed showing lecturer accountability as well as in – built standards of success and failure of the student. The participants indicated that central to the module outlines was that they were curriculum instruments to monitor and evaluate content and skills learnt by the in – service students and their level of proficiency.

Lecturers, in- service students and the chairperson used the terms modules and courses interchangeably. Interestingly, when asked about the difference they noted that it was a matter of semantics and just being different. Lecturers 2, 3, 4, and 5 had the same opinions as shown below:

> *The change from using course to module outlines was just an instruction from management (Lecturer 2).*

> *It was just arbitrarily done. No reasons were given (Lecturer 3).*

> *With the name change nothing else changed (Lecturer 4).*

> *Even if you were to look at our old course outlines and the new module outlines there is no difference in terms of structure and content (Lecturer 5).*

Lecturer 1 pointed out the technical differences between the two terms as:

> *Module outline is a complete learning package with topics to be covered accompanied by literature from prominent scholars' contribution on the topics. The reading material is compiled for students as references and students can read ahead on their own. A programme along the modular lines looks at a complete unit of study, is logically arranged and is associated with open learning and training contexts. Yes with our in - service block release programme it should follow the modular approach and this would help them with relevant reading material given that some remote parts*

of the country may not have access to reading material. A course outline is a skeletal guideline of the topics to be covered by a lecturer for the semester period. The lecturer is responsible for content and prescribed texts and there are long contact hours with students.

Further, in – service students also professed ignorance on the difference and what that could imply. Tanyangadzei (FGD 2)'s ideas reflected the two groups' thinking:

What we know is that what we are learning is not different from what was learnt by those who completed the programme. In fact, what we have noted is that it is now called module outline by all the lecturers but everything has remained the same.

The Chairperson also said that the difference was just academic and nothing substantial had changed.

The difference is the same. The idea is just to remain current in terms of terminology. The content is the same and only name change.

It was interesting to note that the lecturers in the same department, teaching the same programme did not have the same understanding of what they were implementing. From the data it appeared management dictated to lecturers to change from 'course' to 'module' without explaining the rationale. There were no efforts to engage lecturers and students on these important academic issues that impacted on their work and student learning. A constructive discussion was important on these academic changes so that the process would reflect on critical areas of the curriculum rather than being cosmetic. What emerged was that the change was not lecturer - driven and was not motivated by necessity. Any curriculum change needs to match the goals, content of the in - service professional development

programme by improving teacher competencies in curriculum understanding, instructional methods, assessment and technology use that enhance primary school students' learning.

4.4.2.3. In – service students' competence needs

As indicated by lecturers and the chairperson, regulations and module outlines constitute the body of knowledge and skills the programme was to impart to in – service students. They translated to knowledge, skills, competencies and the quality of experiences for student professional development. The B.Ed (primary) in – service programme was designed to enhance the professional growth of practising primary school teachers by helping them acquire knowledge and competences for efficient teaching and the general improvement of the primary education system in Zimbabwe. The programme was intended to allow in-service teachers to make critical reflections about their own practice and how the learning outcomes acquired were made meaningful in the primary school contexts.

The participants demonstrated that to ensure adequacy and quality learning experiences, the programme was moved from General to Honours. The move would increase the teachers' competencies and knowledge base with an additional twelve modules. The question was whether the changes were necessitated by the need to meet the professional and academic needs of primary school teachers or it was purely about just increasing the number of modules. The data collected from the lecturers and chairperson revealed that it was both the need and the desire to make the programme more attractive and marketable. Lecturer 1 observed about the changes:

> *It came to our attention that the in – service programme was offering fewer courses when we saw other similar programmes in other universities. We were tasked to urgently review our regulations with the view of increasing the number of modules from thirteen to twenty - five and the programme becoming Honours. There was a*

need to address a whole range of knowledge and competencies for our students to be comfortable when teaching at primary level.

The chairperson thus agreed that the process was meant to address the needs of the primary school teachers.

We noted our B.Ed primary in – service was no longer responding to the needs of students as there were a lot of information gaps that needed to be plugged and we suggested new modules after research and wide consultations with various stakeholders. Before implementation, the suggestions were tabled and debated at departmental level, guided by subject specialists making changes where necessary and were then sent for approval.

Asked about the extent to which the added modules had addressed the needs of in – service students the chairperson had this to say:

I am happy to say that we have addressed most of the concerns of the students and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education who employ these teachers. I say this because we meet Ministry officials on a number of forums and they have always expressed satisfaction with our B.Ed (primary) in – service product. This is also evidenced by the number of in – service graduates who have been promoted to heads, deputy heads, and specialists in different subject areas at district and provincial levels and book writers for the new curriculum. This suggests to us that we have managed to address the competence needs of both the students and the Ministry.

The responses from the chairperson and lecturers gave the impression that the B.Ed (primary) in – service Honours degree programme had addressed knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to attain personal and national educational objectives. To improve teacher

competencies was related to improving the in – service teacher training programme by identifying teacher training needs from research and consultations. However, the lecturer and chairperson participants did not say that their teacher status analysis of competencies involved engaging and dialoguing with in – service students in the change process. The need to engage students in informing efforts to professionally develop them would have helped in coming up with a relevant programme curricula. It appeared the department was satisfied by the level of acceptance of their B.Ed (primary) in – service product by the Ministry, rather than addressing pertinent difficulties faced by students as they implemented the primary school curriculum.

Generally, the in – service student participants explained that the programme had given them depth and breadth of skills in some curriculum areas, equipped them with subject and pedagogical knowledge, other supporting attitudes and values and had revived their research skills. However, they thought Action Research could have been more appropriate as it focused on solving real classroom challenges. The programme had, by and large, allowed them to do some meaningful self- evaluation about their overall teaching. However, some negative sentiments by students were that the module content had not established a strong link between the established educational theories and effective practice. Mbombo (FGD 2) raised the following about the kind of competencies from the programme and their expectations:

> *We appreciate that the programme through the modules on offer, has given us skills and knowledge in so many areas but not all. The biggest challenge though is that in a majority of cases a lot of issues are not given a classroom context at worst we learn things that we are likely not to use in real teaching and learning situations (Mbombo FGD 2).*

While the research component is good the whole process is rushed as it is done over a semester together with other modules. I am also not comfortable with the fundamental research, it is not very ideal to solving classroom issues. Action research would be more appropriate since it has a direct bearing on classroom issues (Tafara FGD 2).

Tatenda (FGD 1) and Peggy (FGD 2), in commenting on the modules on offer, pointed to the need to align a lot of the content to enrich and broaden their knowledge, skills and experiences for the benefit of primary school teaching and learning and not for examination purposes. There were modules such as HIV/AIDS, ICT, Culture and Heritage, Zimbabwean History, to mention a few, that students said they educationally required and that needed more time on the programme as they were directly in their line of duty. The students suggested the need to carry out a needs analysis and identify training needs based on the results of the needs analysis. This would avoid having programmes that did not connect to primary school teacher needs. Statements below by students show that the department had not fully understood the primary school curriculum context.

There are a number of skill areas that we feel the programme has not addressed. This is why some areas suffer and will never be taught effectively in primary schools. For example, issues of skills in different sporting activities, how to implement PLAP in large classes, how to manage composite classes, media production, clinical remediation and a host of other issues that we feel the programme should give us skills in. This is what the schools are emphasising on, especially with the new curriculum (Tatenda FGD 1).

That the programme had not identified our training needs explains why we do not make any difference when we complete because we go back to do exactly what we had been doing before in – service (Peggy FGD 2).

Some modules that we consider critical at primary level such as Zimbabwean History, Culture and Heritage, HIV/AIDS, ICT are done either as appreciation or just in one semester (Netsai FGD 1).

Given the in – service teachers' concerns about the limitations of the programme, they were asked during focus group discussion which areas should the programme develop in line with their required knowledge and skills. The students revealed that the programme could address the following areas to support and improve their practice given their experiences as primary school teachers:

- Content and pedagogical issues in all the curriculum areas especially the practical subjects.
- Scheme – cum plan
- Basic coaching skills in all the sporting disciplines.
- Assessment skills – examination setting, grading and continuous assessment practices.
- Research that is classroom based like Participatory Action Research (PAR).
- Implementing the Performance Lag Address Programme in large classes.
- Handling special needs learners in large classes
- Managing composite classes
- Creation of classroom learning centres.
- Media production and the creation of a conducive classroom environment.
- Clinical remediation.
- Using ICT technologies in teaching and learning.
- Teaching practice

From the data, the diverging needs of students could be used to plan a more effective in – service teacher development programme. The results obtained from the students revealed that in – service students needed competencies and skills in interpretation and preparation of curriculum documents, teaching, assessment and evaluation, professional ethics and other educational services that could be accessed by their students in primary schools. The realisation of programme goals would only be achieved by taking a holistic approach to professional teacher development discourses. This could be enhanced by understanding the collaborative nature of the process and appreciation that learning is shaped by historical, cultural and institutional contexts as proposed by Vygotsky. By doing so, the programme would identify specific competencies most applicable and essential to primary school contexts. The programme would then capture what the in – service students need to know and do. The programme could take into account skills to understand the nature of learners in the classrooms, infusing other cross – cutting issues in their teaching, the language to transmit the knowledge, how to monitor and manage the learning process and assess learners' work for efficient teaching and learning. It should be the experiences of the in – service students that should inform the programme curricula so that it develops the capabilities the students need for them to effectively function in modern day primary school classrooms. The data by students reaffirmed that the regulations and the modules on offer should be revisited in terms of creating new content areas that reflect their teaching needs.

4.4.2.4. Participants' perceptions on strengths of the in – service programme

The evidence presented by both groups of participants; lecturers and in - service students suggested that the in – service programme was an important avenue for teachers to update their knowledge and skills to help them face new educational challenges. Their perception of the in- service programme was that if well planned, it had the power to improve teachers' confidence, efficiency, ability, motivation, knowledge and skills for the primary teachers'

professional work. The consensus among the lecturers and the students was that a comprehensive in – service programme should speak to issues of quality and relevance by addressing the discrepancy between the teachers' existing competence levels and the needed competencies. Approaching the in – service from that angle, the participants agreed that it would enable it to open various information access points that were vital for students' professional growth and better teaching in primary schools. The students outlined how the programme could achieve this as shown by Netsai's (FGD 1) sentiments:

> *In- service is an important and good programme for us. It is an avenue for self – development and to improve classroom practices by learning new concepts, methods, trends and approaches. Curriculum theory, educational management and special needs education were important learning areas for us as teachers to unpack the classroom practices.*

In the same vein, another student, Tafara (FGD 2), raised the point that from the time she joined the programme the modules they had done had provided in – depth knowledge and skills related to her main study area. She claimed that she could now teach all the topics comfortably and with confidence. The programme, according to the students, had given them a competitive edge in the primary school education sector.

> *Although we are teaching at primary school level and all the subjects, the main subject has given me a lot of information and I can teach all the English topics with confidence unlike the content I got from college. The programme has also offered the extra incentive that most of the teachers who have obtained this qualification have been promoted to senior teachers, deputy and even heads of schools and with it a salary increase. This is an affirmation by Government that the programme has value.*

The general perception by these students during FGDs underlined the importance of the programme as building the capacity of the primary in - service teachers through exposing them to reflective practice and new ideas for them to be better teachers. The programme had also given them depth in knowledge and skills in a subject area and made them specialists. From the data, the student participants noted the differences between the in – service programme and college training. They noted strength in depth and breadth in some new content areas at in – service level and said this had strengthened the teachers' knowledge of subject matter drawn from the curriculum they were using.

The lecturers saw the programme as having enabled the primary school teachers to analyse their own practice and the effects on student learning. Lecturer 3 and 5 noted that the programme had produced teachers who could effectively manage the primary school curriculum.

> *What the programme has done is to empower the primary school teacher to manage the primary school curriculum more effectively thus becoming more competent in content delivery, especially in the subject area in which they specialise (Lecturer 3).*

> *The programme is premised on the assumption that the best primary school teacher is the one who knows most about the subject s/he is teaching. This is a programme that has broadened their horizons on educational issues (Lecturer 5).*

In the same vein, Lecturer 1 saw the programme as having benefited the in –service students mostly in research.

> *It has exposed them to comprehensive research practices and packages and how to solve typical classroom problems as opposed to the kind of research they did with the*

Curriculum Depth Study (CDS) at college level, which was just an appreciation though Action Research could be more appropriate.

All the participants generally agreed that the programme had positively impacted on the in – service students' professional wellbeing despite the discrepancies noted. From the data obtained from the lecturers, the programme was above the teacher training college standards. The programme was up to date with detailed information about teaching and learning trends. However, they noted that the programme should be viewed as a continuum which started with teacher training at colleges of education. Raised from the interviews with the lecturers were also issues related to some improved quality and quantity of the content the programme had imparted to the students. According to the participants, the programme, it appeared, had to some extent managed to empower practising primary school teachers with some knowledge and skills in some areas on how to implement the primary school curriculum.

4.5. What strategies can be used to enhance provisioning of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme?

In response to the question on strategies that could be used to enhance the provision of the in – service programme, sub – themes that identified gaps, weaknesses and student aspirations emerged to inform decision making that could improve the programme.

4.5.1. Theme 5: Enhancing the provision of the in- service programme
4.5.1.1. The challenges of the in – service programme

While the general argument from the participants was to acknowledge the programme as indispensable to educational development at primary school level, participants also noted some challenges. The personal and group narratives indicated a number of challenges, that, if addressed, could ensure that the in – service primary teacher development programme was a complete story where the needs of students were taken care of.

In – service teachers in the focus group discussion were critical of the duration of the programme, where two and a half (2 1/2) years was deemed as too short for comprehensive study. The students' views regarding the duration were noted by Tatenda and Peggy (FGD 1 & FGD 2), respectively;

This programme is offered on block release, this is during our schools holiday break. At most, we are talking about each module having thirty six hours. In short, we can call it a one and half day semester (Tatenda, FGD 1).

Block period is serious business. It is during this period that we are supposed to have contact time with lecturers, prepare for individual and or group presentations in all the study areas, write at least two assignments as part of coursework, research and read independently. There is no time even to reflect on what has been taught. There is no time for sports to refresh and relax the mind, even lunch time is not there (Peggy, FGD2).

The students' concerns that the programme had not been afforded adequate time for them to get maximum benefits appeared genuine. It seemed the students reckoned that the programme was good but that there was lack of careful planning regarding the time factor.

In the same vein, the interviews with the lecturers showed that they were aware of time constraints regarding the programme. Lecturers noted that when the programme was offered on full time, they had ample time to exhaustively discuss curriculum issues, their application and implications. Students had time to do research and produce quality work. When asked during interviews about reverting to the conventional full time programme, the lecturers indicated that Government had no financial resources. They could not afford paying two teachers, that is the one on the programme and a relief teacher taking over the teaching load

of the full – time in – service student. The government support was critical in the effort to develop a complete in – service product.

Lecturer 1, 2 and 5 also agreed that one of the biggest challenges of the programme was on the duration which had compromised a lot of things.

The question of time factor is a worrying phenomenon for us as it has compromised a lot of teaching and learning. Two and a half years puts a lot of strain on both students and us lecturers. During the short block period, there is no rest especially with at least four modules each, it's really taxing. Their time – table is packed (Lecturer 1).

During block period, teaching becomes lecturer directed rather than lecturer facilitated as you would want to complete the module outline content before students leave. We give the students notes rather than having the students do most of the research. This has a negative effect on the kind of in – service teacher we are to produce, one who is spoon - fed (Lecturer 2).

Block release is here to stay as we have no choice as the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has not been granting Manpower Development Leave (MDL) for full – time in – service students due to the poor economic performance of the country. Block release becomes the only option for in – service students (Lecturer 5).

While acknowledging that the time – table was heavily packed, Lecturer 3 and 4 noted that this was the nature of block release programmes worldwide. This was the abridged version of their ideas:

While the time – tables for all block release programmes are packed, this is the nature of these programmes. At least students have longer periods to reflect and research

when they go back to their schools. They are guided to read by the notes and module outlines they get while at university (Lecturer 3).

The block release needs one who can balance and manage time. The assumption is that they are adults and disciplined enough to manage their academic affairs (Lecturer 4).

It was commonly assumed that these participants implementing the same programme should have the same shared understanding of how the programme should be run and the challenges both students and lecturers had. This created a feeling that reaching a consensus about resolving the duration issue may be problematic. Generally, from the lecturers, chairperson and students' stories, the in – service teacher preparation programme needs a longer time so that students on the programme get application - based knowledge and skills to be effective teachers. What was obtaining with regards duration of the programme further created a gap between primary school teacher needs and university – based teacher development and may contribute to difficulties experienced by the in – service teachers.

The DC also concurred that the period was too short. He affirmed that the duration of the programme, which is two and half year's block release, may not be adequate to cover in detail most of the students' academic and professional needs. He stated the need to revisit this area in view of reviewing the duration of the programme. The DC observed:

To ensure adequate and comprehensive coverage of the content and other pedagogical skills and issues the in – service teachers may need for effective execution of duty, the question of the duration of the programme must be revisited and addressed. There is need for a student friendly time - table that can give students enough time to work on their assignments, read and research to ground them in

important curriculum issues that they confront everyday as they teach. As it is now,

the time is inadequate.

The probable explanation about the duration was that with adequate time the programme would achieve the desired in- service goals. From the data there was evidence to suggest that the duration of the programme had the greatest impact on the kind of in – service product as more time meant students would be given time to experiment with new and stimulating knowledge and skills. The above collective sentiments from the participants indicated that because of the duration of the programme, the time - table had remained packed, depriving students of a thorough understanding of what they would have learnt.

In their analysis, the participants also noted that the programme was examination oriented. The students in both FGD 1 and 2 were concerned and were able to show that the focus and emphasis of the programme was on examinations, resulting in superficial exposure to important educational experiences. The student participants acknowledged that most of the lecturers teaching on the programme wrongly placed high premium on examinations at the expense of shaping the education and educational product. Students from the two FGDs were in agreement that lecturers were always in a hurry to complete teaching the content in the module outlines for examination purposes. To the students, it reduced the quality and restricted the competencies and skills to be developed. The in – service programme, according to student participants should transcend the examination rooms as the story should be about implementable and exploitable knowledge. This excerpt from Netsai (FGD 1) and Mbombo (FGD 2) summarised how the issue of examinations had affected the programme:

From day one lecturers emphasise the importance of examinations. Some even start

by giving us some 'grazing areas', the potential examinations areas. Some do not

come for lectures regularly but towards the end of the block period, they come to

teach topics in the examinations for fear that we may fail. We feel that most of the work for in – service should be continuous assessment rather than stress us with examinations yet what we want is more of application of learnt concepts (Netsai, FGD 1).

We become good at reproducing and recalling what has been taught during examinations. We pass yet we would not have learnt much and can not even apply the learnt concepts. More so, much of the information learnt is theoretical (Mbombo, FGD 2).

It was evident from these students that the issue of examinations had destroyed meaningful learning. It had led to narrowing teaching to examinable components ignoring curriculum depth and breath. Interesting to note from the students was that while acknowledging the importance of examinations, they considered the goals of the in - service programme as important above promoting the culture of teaching to test. It appeared from the data provided by the students that the programme had been reduced to a system of examination rather than a system of education. Focusing on the acquisition of content predicated on simple recall was counterproductive, according to student participants. The suggested issue of continuous assessment needed a complete rethink and redefinition of the ultimate purpose of the in – service programme by the Curriculum Studies department at the University.

Of interest was that all the lecturers and the DC did not consider the issue of examination as having serious negative consequences on the programme. To the lecturers and the DC all was well, possibly because the students had not raised the issue.

The other area of concern by the chairperson and lecturers was on the issue of specialisation. The lecturers and the chairperson highlighted that the programme had prepared in – service

primary students for specialisation, yet students were required to implement all the subjects in the primary school curriculum. The chairperson noted:

> *We have continued to produce a specialist primary school teacher yet on the ground these teachers are general practioners teaching all the subjects in the primary school curriculum. We acknowledge that our product has that problem. This is how the programme was formulated and we are still to think how to address this issue. The thinking was that the primary school system was going to take the specialisation route but that has not happened. Students go back after in – service with knowledge and skills in one area and they continue to struggle in the other areas especially in ICT where we have just on appreciation module yet ICT has become the in- thing in education. We don't have adequate infrastructure in this area.*

The students also agreed that the programme had prepared them for specialisation. According to the students, the in - service programme should find some slots for other subject areas to make the programme more complete, competitive, stronger and effective for the primary school teacher. The lack of ability to effectively implement other subject areas even after in – service compromised the strength of the programme. Eddie, (FGD 2) remarked:

> *Specialisation is not a big problem but there is need to learn other subject areas. It might not be in the same detail like in our main subject areas. The problem is when we do not do some of these subject areas that we teach at primary school level. We have more specialisation modules at the expense of other content areas we think are important like ICT which has become important in the new curriculum. Some areas as Zimbabwean History, Culture and Heritage have become important at primary school level yet they are offered in one short semester. The programme is an example*

of a slow system response to curriculum issues – they do not quickly address the shifting trends in education. This is a big gap in the programme.

Given the data from students, lecturers and the DC, the primary school curriculum had not called for a specialist teacher and the fact that the programme had failed to address this skewed position was a big gap. The University in - service curricula needed to be widened to increase the quality of education across the primary school curriculum especially the use of ICT tools in teaching and learning as well as listening to new primary school education trends. It appeared the University, through the Curriculum Studies department, had not found ways of solving the problems. Discussions with participants it showed that these issues needed urgent redress. The university had failed to respond to current needs of the students. Lecturer 2 noted this concern:

The reason why university programmes are not centrally and nationally designed is because they need that latitude to adopt and adapt to the changing needs of the labour market. Sadly, we have been found wanting with regards to the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme.

The above remarks by in - service students, the chairperson and lecturers revealed that the programme had its own fair share of challenges. It was evident from these in - service stakeholders that there were some areas that needed to be looked into in view of improving the relevance of the programme. What was needed was for the stakeholders to dialogue on these important issues to come up with a responsive, relevant and meaningful in – service programme that prepared students for classroom work. This could be achieved through collaborating with students who had grassroots teaching experience. This is an aspect encouraged by Vygotsky's CHAT theory that learning should occur in meaningful contexts organised around the culture and experiences of the students.

The data on the weaknesses of the programme draws our attention to the need to identify important aspects of learning for the programme especially those that are of concern to the students so that the in - service students work on problems that are significant to them. The most important feature was how to create learning opportunities that feed into the primary school teacher practice.

4.5.1.2. Lecturer autonomy and accountability

The data from the chairperson and lecturer participants revealed consensus that the development of module outlines remained the responsibility of the individual lecturer. The lecturer assigned to teach each module developed what they perceived as important for students to learn. Asked about how they were initiated into the production of these outlines, lecturers and the chairperson observed that they were not oriented on what constituted a credible module outline. Just like with the regulations, there was no mention of models and principles used to plan the module outlines by the lecturers, which is the product, process or the eclectic approaches. The data revealed that the lecturers developed these important educational implementation documents without a framework. To that end, lecturers noted that when appointed, they heavily depended on colleagues who had taught the module and other senior members of the department for guidance. With some confidence and experience, they continued to add their own ideas. The views of Lecturer 1 reflected on the state of affairs with regards to the production of module outlines.

> *The bottom line is that the individual lecturer is responsible for the production of the outlines for those courses one teaches. Whether the course outlines connect with the college education, the university programme and classroom teacher needs it's anyone's guess. The lecturer is given the freedom to craft what he/she is comfortable to teach given his/her knowledge and expertise with the hope that they know what the*

needs of the students are. There are no checks and balances as to the quality of the outlines produced.

Lecturer 3 and 5 provided evidence of some deficiencies as a result of the lecturer autonomy and curricula freedom in developing module outlines.

The argument about individual lecturers producing their own module outline has been linked to creating an enabling environment in which lecturers can express themselves without constraints and have the latitude to adjust their outlines to respond to new and emerging issues that may arise even midway through the semester. This is the kind of autonomy that should go with university programmes (Lecturer 3).

What I have noted is that autonomy should go with responsibility because without supervision some in – service modules have been monotonously routine, same outlines every semester. It's usually the same content, same approaches and same notes. This is ruining the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme as there is so much happening in education that needs to be addressed. I admit the way we have handled the issue of module outlines has been faulty (Lecturer 5).

The other lecturers also shared the same views that lecturers had huge responsibilities on their shoulders as the module outlines determined the desired knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities learnt by in – service students. The data demonstrated that lecturers, in coming up with outlines, had not been guided and the process was left to individual lecturers to make the huge decisions without a sound basis for the decisions. The data emanating from the lecturers was that while lecturers had the knowledge and expertise, they needed to be monitored when producing module outlines so that they connect professional learning and professional practice.

The monitoring and quality assurance, according to Lecturer 1, was that it should rest with the sections where there was expertise in the subject area. The sections had the capacity to reflect on critical decision points contained in the module outline document than the chairperson.

> *In sections this is where there is subject proficiency and the members can help each other check on the quality of course outlines. After producing the module outline one can give it to a colleague in the section for comments and suggestions. In that way, we assure ourselves of quality course outlines. The chairperson's supervision may be limited given that he or she might not know the content in all the subject areas.*

The chairperson admitted that there were no checking mechanisms on the quality of the module outlines. What he said was that the University quality assurance directorate had issued a uniform template for lecturers to use when producing module outlines which he said had gone a long way in guiding lecturers to produce credible module outlines. The chairperson noted:

The system has trust in the ability of the lecturers to produce credible and standard module outlines. This is what we call autonomy where lecturers are allowed to experiment with ideas. While I subscribe to that I agree that without checks and balances the programmes may stagnate in the hands of lecturers who are not innovative and experimental. However, I also think that the system has always kept lecturers in check in terms of module outline standards in the form of:

- *Sending examination papers and module outlines to external examiners*
- *Chairperson has the right to check the module outline and visit lecturers as they deliver lectures*

- *Peer review, when fellow lecturers check on what the peer is doing in the subject area*

- *Inviting external examiners to check on compliance, for example, on regulations, module outlines, assignments etc.*

- *Lecturer capacity building through exchange programme such as sabbatical and contact leave to understand practices in other similar institutions.*

With all these efforts I am convinced that lecturers can deliver credible module outlines that can be effectively translated into practice and giving the right knowledge and skills to our students.

The department seemed to generalise and trust that all lecturers had the capacity to articulate a vision of teaching and learning through module outlines that helped in – service students get requisite content and skills needed for their teaching in primary schools. It appeared from the data that the department did not have mechanisms and the capacity to check on the quality of the module outline produced by individual lecturers, yet, it was the most important curriculum implementation document. It appeared that it was this autonomy which deprived universities of the competitive edge and efficiency to develop sustainable solutions in primary education. If unchecked and no meaningful reflection is done by lecturers, the autonomy would drive a wedge between the in – service programme and students. Autonomy should be accompanied with accountability.

What came out was the existence of a quality assurance entity at the University which had produced a module outline template. The researcher's evaluation is that coming up with a template may not be enough but what is contained in that template should be the concern of the quality assurance body. The participants did not mention the role of programme regulatory authority Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE), with regards to

quality assurance of the module. It appeared ZIMCHE had not taken a keen interest in these outlines with the hope that lecturers produce quality outlines. Their role, it appeared, ended with the regulations which they approved.

4.5.1.3. Student empowerment

The in – service students noted that they have remained peripheral when critical decisions about the B.Ed (primary) in - service programme have been made yet they are the most important stakeholders in the programme. When they enroll for the programme, the stage would have been set already and they only have to fit into the programme without their input. The understanding was that lecturers, who do most of the preparatory work, were knowledgeable professionals who would have invested a lot of time and research to produce the programme that meets the needs of in – service students. The FGD data and students' expectations of the programme, however, showed that lecturers should engage in – service students in planning the curriculum. This is against the background that they had experience gained from actual practice in the primary schools and could easily articulate their academic and professional needs. Allen (FGD 1) and Tafara (FGD 2) lamented the current situation where they had no say in the programme content they were studying:

> *We don't know where they get these modules and the content from. Maybe, they think we cannot make any meaningful contribution yet we are there in the primary schools (Allen, FGD1).*

> *What I see in the module narration and content is that our voices are missing because everyone keeps on complaining why the lecturers are avoiding certain areas that we feel are important to us. What we say as we evaluate each module at the end of the year is never considered. What I have noted is that the same modules and content have been done, recycled – no change (Tafara, FGD 2).*

Lecturers, on the other hand, admitted that the University did not have an established platform to consult students when designing a programme such as the B.Ed (primary) in – service. The general consensus among lecturers was that students had not been formally consulted on programme design and the situation was unfortunate and an oversight on their part. The feelings were that the department was capable of producing an in – service programme that was relevant to student needs.

Lecturer 1, 2 and 4 pointed out that the students' voices in the in – service programme was an important but missing dimension.

> *The student voice is a critical missing element from the regulations and the course outlines. Students should be engaged more meaningfully and productively especially at the formative stages of the in - service programme (Lecturer 1).*

> *Students are symbolically invited to meetings where very little of curriculum issues are discussed. Consultations with them to know their needs, the gaps they want filled in by the programme should be carefully identified (Lecturer 2).*

> *There is the need to create conditions for students to participate and contribute to the programme content. This would enrich our in – service programme as well as make the programme more relevant. In our case, the process does not favour students; hence, they may get a degree certificate which does not mean much to them in terms of classroom practice (Lecturer 4).*

The same views were expressed by the chairperson who saw a lot of sense in involving the in - service students in the whole curriculum development process. According to him, the students should be given the opportunity to suggest what and how they should be taught.

The area of student voice is completely ignored and never taken seriously by the lecturers. They are the 'victims' of the programme as they have no power to change the programme content and how it is taught. There is the need to consult them given that in – service students are senior, mature and experienced practising students who know what they need. However, there are few instances where they are taken on board such as during board meetings where two representatives attend and raise concerns of the student population and during module evaluation at the end of the academic year. Unfortunately, for the module evaluations, it appears lecturers have not used them for programme improvement but for promotion purposes.

The data from the in – service students show that lecturers and the chairperson think and feel that the programme had been very relevant and useful for their practice even when they were not consulted. The points raised by the students become important for the University in – service programme staff to examine the kinds of skills students need as they go through the programme by engaging them.

The data from participants showed that meaningful in – service teacher learning is dependent on a range of factors including providing a context based on paying attention to the needs of students. In – service students as practising teachers can bring a wealth of information to the programme that can shape the programme objectives, content, teaching approaches and evaluation strategies. Learning at university level is most effective when directed by the needs of students which are rooted in their primary school experiences. The in – service vision and the construction of knowledge should be shared and collaborated as envisioned by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. The current status quo of programme formulation determined by lecturers who design, develop and deliver the programme without student ideas missed out on important student needs.

4.5.1.4. The future of the programme

The findings from the study revealed that if well packaged the programme would benefit both the lecturers and the in – service students and provide exciting learning pathways. The contention by the students was that the primary school sector was now saturated with almost all schools manned by qualified teachers and these required in- service to add value to their teaching and student learning. All participants expressed growth and development prospects for the programme. There was consensus among students, lecturers and the chairperson that there was no education system that could thrive if teachers were not in – serviced so that they remained relevant in this ever-changing educational terrain. The participants recognised that the programme had received considerable attention and remained the most sustainable way of helping teachers to develop professionally. However, the programme needed to be calibrated in such a way that it remained relevant and more responsive by addressing emerging primary school and national educational priorities.

4.6. Summary

This chapter presented qualitative data that were organised according to the emerging themes using the thematic analysis. The evidence presented in the chapter was about the quality of participants on the programme and their understanding of in – service professional development. Further, the chapter was premised on important discussion points related to how the participants interpreted their own experiences with the programme design, implementation, how programme learning outcomes were connected to their teaching – learning needs, strengths, discrepancies and gaps in the programme were identified and measures to improve the in - service programme status. The next chapter discusses findings and their implications to this study. It also gives informed conclusions and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction

The previous chapter presented results of the data collected from the three groups of participants namely; the chairperson, lecturers and in – service students. The main objective of the study was to explore the influence of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme on teaching – learning needs of primary school teachers in Zimbabwe. In this current and final chapter, the researcher presents a detailed discussion of the major findings in line with the main, sub- research questions, themes (Chapter Four: Table 9) and the CHAT theory (Chapter Two 1.2) which guided this study. The chapter discussed three major findings. The first major finding was that the in – service programme at the University had minimal influence on primary school teachers' teaching – learning needs. Secondly, it was found that the programme did not adequately address the teaching – learning needs of the primary school teachers. Finally, it was also discovered that for the programme to be relevant and meaningful there was a need to engage primary school teachers at all the stages of the B.Ed (primary) in - service curriculum development processes, that is, from design, implementation to evaluation.

The present chapter, further gives a comprehensive summary of the study, provides some meaningful conclusions reached, the recommendations made, and how the issue of in – service teacher development in Zimbabwe could be explored further in other programmes offered at the University.

5.1. Discussion and summary of findings

5.1.1. The influence of the in - service programme on the teaching – learning needs of primary school teachers

The main findings revealed that the programme, by and large, had minimal influence on in – service students' teaching – learning needs at primary school level. Majority of the participants indicated that there were some structural challenges in the programme. Most of the challenges were attributed to the programme design in the absence of a guiding philosophy and also in implementation challenges that needed the Curriculum Studies Department to make considerable adjustments to articulate students teaching and learning needs. Considered as such, Ornstein et al (2011) point out that philosophy is the beginning point in curriculum decision – making. It is the basis upon which all subsequent decisions regarding the curriculum are made. In addition, Hurlimann et al (2013) lament that curriculum development is central to teaching quality, yet it is rarely given priority in university departments.

The rich, diverse and bigger picture of the primary school education context was not clearly understood and articulated by the Department in the in – service curriculum documents. The in – service students had plural experiences of the primary school teaching – learning contexts which the Department could have activated as evidence to directly support and influence the in – service programme intervention. In addition, the Department at the University needed to understand these primary school contexts in order to build and maintain a strong relationship of value – exchange between the institution and the primary schools in Zimbabwe. The study findings show that factors underpinning the programme design and implementation strategies should be drawn from a clear description of the primary schools milieus for the programme to be meaningful to the students. Contrary to common belief about universities, Karimi et al (2012) found that universities faced challenges of planning the

curriculum such as; incomplete identification of real needs of students, non- revision of curriculum to suit students' changing needs, inadequate use of curriculum experts and disregarding the role of students in developing curricula.

Evident from the study findings was that the University in - service programme – primary school connection; arguably had the potential to identify conceptual gaps, needs, trends. The connection could also promote the exchange of educational perspectives and interests of the in –service students thus activating discourses that could strengthen the programme. In the same vein, Wanzala (2013) argues that universities in Kenya, which are centres of excellence in education and knowledge generation, are unfortunately, not serving these anticipated purposes. Universities should be important knowledge and skills development hubs where practising teachers can be nurtured and further improved in their teaching skills and content delivery (Shigwedha et al 2017). In this regard, unfortunately and sadly so, it appeared that the Department had not valued the issue of continuity because it had not established a good rapport with primary school teachers and their contexts. What Vygotsky's CHAT theory makes apparent is that learning is a social activity related to mental changes which are based on new experiences and processes that were influenced both from within and outside the university. The need to establish such meaningful and professional connections would strengthen the effectiveness and influence of the programme on students' teaching – learning needs.

Establishing the educational relationships between the university and primary schools would be a manifestation of a sociocultural theoretical intention to understand the interesting and emerging patterns of meaningful participation and collaboration by all important stakeholders in knowledge construction and teacher professional socialisation. It is a widely held view that if there is collaboration, in – service teachers get empowered with practice knowledge as well as information that would make the greatest difference in student learning (MacRobbie 2000;

Cimer 2010; McGuinness 2011). However, the need to break down these boundaries and disrupt the frozen status quo may draw contestations from stakeholders. Yet, that would be ideal and help to explain the deep – seated meaning and purpose of the in- service programme and its influence on primary school teaching and the learning needs of Zimbabwean primary school teachers.

The major aim of the in – service teacher development programme should be to provide updated knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to serving teachers so as to improve and refine their practice and enhance the learning outcomes of learners (Alene & Prasadh 2019). The study found that for the programme to positively influence teaching – learning needs of primary school teachers, the planning should start with a clear statement of ends (outcomes) followed by serious discussion on the recruitment criteria of both students and lecturers. Currently, the lecturers were recruited and deployed to teach on the programme on the basis of their academic and professional competencies. On the other hand and as already indicated, student recruitment to the programme was mainly premised on their work - related experiences as primary school teachers. However, student recruitment should also have included higher academic qualifications that would help them understand complex curriculum and educational issues. The implication of the low qualifications would be that lecturers may not pitch the standard of teaching high enough in order to effectively communicate with the students. In – service teacher development programme should make an important contribution to teacher efficacy, curriculum discourses and overall primary school education.

The study also found that the programme, in terms of teaching and assessment, had remained firmly rooted in lecturer – centred lecture methods and examination - oriented practices. This was done at the expense of more active and interactive methods that could help students to attend to their fundamental classroom problems. From the findings, in – service should be

about initiating the students into multiple perspectives needed to make sense of their teaching – learning contexts rather than to narrowly focus on examinations. The lack of understanding of the programme goals had manifested in the lecturer – centred teaching and emphasis on examinations. This had created a fixed, static and superficial appropriateness of the programme. The finding is supported by Miller's (2000) argument that curricula in most universities still means that objectives should be defined and measured in terms of students' tested achievement. Miller's (2000) observation was similar to Doherty's (1994) notion that pedagogy at most universities has remained static commodities with simplistic input – output models of education. The suggestion from student participants that modules should be on continuous assessment sounds plausible as this would enable students to test and apply a repertoire of theories, skills and competencies in less stressful and meaningful learning conditions. Unfortunately, the suggestion remained unnoticed as Nascimento (2014) observed that university systems were characterised by specialists who speak as other stakeholders such as students, listen.

In addition, the findings indicate the importance of lecturers' academic and professional experiences as crucial dimensions to the in – service product output. The analysis of the profile of staff suggests academically and professionally strong lecturers who were likely to produce professionally powerful in – service graduates. They had adequate exposure to real issues of primary school professional practice. Thus, the study revealed that the programme's success and student learning were, to a large extent, a function of the human capital. To this end, Adeyanju (2015) reinforces the importance of human capital when he observes that the indices or inputs for quality education are the teaching force which must be qualitatively adequate, adequately educated and professionally prepared. The lecturers had considerable teaching experiences and overall academic ability to make a difference in the teaching and learning lives of the in – service students. However, they did not create favourable conditions

for programme improvement. The possible explanation was that there was a need to align academic staff skills, experiences and competencies to the programme and a focused analysis of students needs which would contribute to making the in – service programme more vibrant and relevant.

To this end, the results of the study indicate that both the University context variables such as the quality of the lecturers teaching on the programme, the curriculum design and development processes, lecture room strategies used to implement the programme and knowledge of primary school contexts were critical in influencing in – service teachers' learning outcomes. The quality of the academic staff carried the University and the Department vision to ensure that in- service students' learning was effective and sufficiently of high standard. Unfortunately, the lecturers did not show an understanding of students' needs. The idea is consistent with Hubball and Gold's (2007) thinking that for the programme leading to the degree to have integrity, it should be organised around substantive and coherent curricula that define expected learning outcomes.

5.1.2. The teaching and learning needs at primary school level

The study results revealed that the needs of in – service primary school teachers were diverse. They were mostly conceptual, contextual and methodological (Alene & Prasadh 2019) in order for lecturers to address the teachers' classroom teaching – learning requirements. Furthermore, the results indicated that the programme had added value in some and not all of the curriculum areas. In those areas addressed, the programme had generally provided depth and breadth, thereby enriching the in – service students' primary school curriculum discourses. The possible explanation was that the programme implementers (the lecturers) had the experience and knowledge in these areas which would enable them to scaffold students to higher levels of conceptualisation. Findings indicated that students had benefitted from being enriched and were now more knowledgeable, especially in the specialisation area.

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That experience allowed them to be more critical and reflective on practice and added new learning areas of practical relevance to primary school curriculum matters as well as self – actualisation with the qualification and possible promotion. The findings, further, indicated that students knew the issues that were potentially central to their work contexts. Thus, they expressed their satisfaction with the level of attention paid by lecturers to some of them. The findings show that in these areas the students and the lecturers unintentionally shared values that enriched students professionally.

Despite the said benefits, participants noted that the in – service programme needed to be kept modern and relevant by addressing a number of curriculum areas.

The results provide evidence that according to the in – service students' needs, there was need for the programme to address personal and collective deficiencies in the curriculum and instructional methods, develop schemes of work and assessment approaches, and to teach diverse learner population and instructional technology, among others. The other area of in – service students' intervention and interests in professional development was on developing their capacity and expertise in managing large, mixed ability classes in the Zimbabwean primary school settings. The study results indicated that primary school classes were way above the recommended class sizes and teachers needed a set of coping strategies that could have a positive bearing on their effectiveness so as to appropriately manage the learning of learners with different characteristics.

Over and above the large and mixed ability classes, other demands included implementing PLAP, Early Reading Initiative (ERI), remediation and the language of instruction (Item 4.3.2.3 Chapter 4). The study found that these were real issues drawn from teachers' problem list of classroom challenges and experiences. Building and reviewing the teachers' knowledge and skills on these areas would be a desirable direction for the programme.

Gravells (2014) and McGuinness (2011) are of the view that if teachers are to be teachers after in – service, then they need to be fully engaged in all aspects of professional identity and development especially, the key result areas mentioned above.

The teachers' classroom behaviour in terms of attitudes, beliefs and organised classroom events are critical in enriching learners' experiences. If the in - service programme does not produce teachers who can demonstrate strong knowledge and competencies about these broad principles and strategies (Kyriacou 2007; Karakus et al 2015), teachers may find it difficult to create a meaningful and productive teaching – learning environment in their classrooms. In – service students needed the confidence to make important professional decisions and judgments during teaching and learning.

Therefore, findings of the study provided evidence that there was a huge gap between the in – service students' school experiences and needs and the university curriculum programme. This had disadvantaged the students as the programme had missed the mark. The differences were seen in the intended curriculum goals, processes and beliefs about the programme. Literature (Alene & Prasadh 2019; Wolfe & Poon 2015; Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports 2011; Liakopoulou 2011; The Turkish Ministry of National Education 2006; Cruz 2004; Chapter 2: 2.7) has shown that in – service students need a wide range of competencies not just in a few areas. In this vein, therefore, students criticised the programme for being narrow in its approach. Some of the curriculum and instructional activities that could enable in – service students to become effective classroom decision – makers who impact on their learning were not included in the programme. This study result corroborates Hubball and Gold's (2007) findings that a coherent programme should be responsive, all inclusive, and connected to the needs and circumstances of the pedagogical content. It should also be carefully designed to develop students' knowledge, skills and abilities through multiple integrated and progressively challenging learning experiences.

Okobia (2013) laments the situation in universities where subject content takes up to 80% of teacher preparatory time and she observes that the scenario has adverse consequences on teacher competency skills in classroom pedagogy. For this reason, the in – service concept should be about teaching teachers to improve their teaching in all areas. Students need opportunities to discuss knowledge, skills and real classroom problems that cut across the whole range of primary school curriculum and grade levels (Robinson 2013) given the diversity of the students' teaching needs and contexts. The nuances that help to explain this were that primary school teachers in Zimbabwe taught the whole range of subjects while the in – service programme had emphasised on specialisation. It was difficult to explain this finding. However, but it might be related to challenges lecturers had in assembling and balancing the goals, needs and contexts of curriculum. This, according to Robinson (2013), had negatively impacted on primary school teachers who demonstrated half-hearted implementation or no implementation in some subject areas, pointing to an insufficient knowledge base. Therefore, the contribution of working teachers to the in – service programme is of primary importance as they have experience gained from actual practice (Liakopoulou 2011).

Overall, the University had remained an academic institution whose in – service students had knowledge and skills that were not broad enough, nor very relevant to the diverse primary school situations. The programme had not prepared students adequately enough for the ever – changing needs of the primary school teaching and, in general, the primary education system in Zimbabwe. To this end, the findings suggest what Wanzala (2013) and Martin (1999) observed that university programmes appear to be both more in demand and yet, less essential.

5.1.3. Strategies to enhance the provisions of the in – service programme

The study's results indicate that if there had been dialogue between in - service students and lecturers, knowledge production for the programme could have gone beyond the realms of the University and the academic staff to embrace other stakeholders in the primary school education sector. It could have been more meaningful then. This result is consistent with what Alene and Prasadh (2019) concluded in their study in Ethiopia where they discovered that in – service professional development for teachers was a function of an integrated interplay of internal and external factors. Further, Lee (2005) suggests that professional development cannot be handled by an isolated strategy. In the same spirit, Rubin and Silva (2003) hold the view that there is a need to promote principles of shared decision – making, democratic governance and student – centred change.

According to the results of the current study, in – service students were not strategically involved at the macro level of programme design and micro implementation level, thus, making the programme foreign to them. The Chairperson and the lecturers did not realise that students were an important information gathering source for the programme and did not acknowledge that they were also learning as they implemented the programme. In line with Vygotsky's CHAT theory, lecturers and students should be co – inquirers with the lecturer mediating among students' personal meanings that emerge from the collective thinking.

Contrary to expectations, sharing ideas with the in – service students was not a common culture at the University. An academic dialogue and agreement could have been a key programme identity and an enhancing factor. Recent literature according to Bovill and Bulley (2011) suggests that students should be co- creators, co- producers and co- designers of their own learning. However, students had little to say about the content of the in – service curriculum (Osler 2010; Leu & Ginsburg 2011; Rubin & Silva 2003). The analysis supports the notion that lecturers were not very proactive in search for information, vacuum and areas

in which training and competencies were most needed to inform critical programme decisions. This indicates that primary school issues were better articulated by classroom teachers as they know more about the multifaceted nature of the primary school teaching – learning responsibilities than lecturers. The results, thus, indicated the importance of assessing the relationship between module content and practice.

A possible explanation for these results may be that lecturers had failed to appreciate that learning does not exist in a social vacuum. It is acknowledged that learning takes place in social, historical, and situationally specific contexts in which dialogue, collaboration and engagement are key strategies in the process of knowledge construction as proposed by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. In addition, DuPreez and Simmonds (2014) advise that Curriculum Studies is not a spectator sport. It requires participation in its complicated conversation. The findings point to the significance of engaging of in – service students in their learning. Engaging the primary school in - service teachers becomes a process of social interaction. It should take place within the framework of participation as students acquire tools, skills, values, attitudes and beliefs that are relevant to their practice. This should be an iterative process where students continue to be engaged in feeding into the programme design, module planning and implementation at the University.

Another important finding was that there was over emphasis on the acquisition of academic knowledge through subject specialisation and other foundational modules. There was too little development of practical skills and personal attributes that might enable the in – service students to be effective and efficient during their execution of duty. These practical skills and attributes depended on the nature of the modules on offer, wherein learning experiences and practices were embedded. The characteristics would enable the in – service students to systematically articulate real classroom problems as well as discover new knowledge and practices through self – directed learning. By drawing on the relationship between theory and

practice, Altun (2011) was able to show that teachers complained about theoretically based university in – service training where practical sessions were highly limited.

The possible implication of this result was that in – service students and lecturers prioritised to cover decontextualised content at the expense of developing higher cognitive processes related to practical activities and problem - solving skills as suggested by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. It is of note to signal, as Fullan (2001) does, that, generally, teacher development programmes lacked clear goals and overall cohesion. Reflecting on this statement, learning at this level should transcend the mastery and recall of information and content – driven coverage. Rather, it should be about the demonstration of competencies acquired through adequate professional socialisation that is informed by practice - based learning in line with the values of the concept of in – service learning.

In view of the above and for cohesion, there should be a strong relationship among programme components such as goals, the module content and the outcomes or student competencies. The process would act as programme evaluation and feedback. It becomes a systematic iterative approach to determine what contributes to programme effectiveness and sustainability by reflecting on student learning, goals and outcomes. To this end, McGuinness (2011) and Carroll and McCullock (2014) suggest that the programme should build the teachers' competencies through theoretically informed praxis that help them make positive and principled input into primary school teaching and learning.

The result also indicated that time was one of the barriers to making the programme more effective. Little time allocated had resulted in little meaningful interaction and in – service students had realised few benefits from the programme. Generally, interaction time with lecturers is related to the depth and breath of student experiences (Lee 2005) at university. It allows the students to experiment and interrogate new practices, knowledge and skills. The

study findings suggest that the programme should not be about completing stipulated learning hours. It should be about providing in – service teachers with activity - supportive educational environments and opportunities to build and grow their understanding to solve classroom problem. The major argument for longer programme duration was to build the teachers' capacities to use quantitative and qualitative programme information for students to systematically appreciate skills, gaps, strengths and weaknesses (Wolfe & Poon 2015). This could result in high quality teaching and learning in their respective classrooms (Cruz 2004). The move from block release to the traditional residential full time would guarantee adequate time to manage learning and make the programme more productive and meaningful.

The findings further indicated the need to support the in – service students to unlock motivation opportunities for primary school teachers to update and upgrade their knowledge through the programme. The net effect would be to contribute to sustainable primary school education development in Zimbabwe. The finding reflects what Alene and Prasadh (2019) found in Ethiopia that government should attend to the in – service teacher needs in order to improve motivation and commitment. The two Ministries of Primary and Secondary Education and Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare had not enacted and promoted policies to deal with the contexts and conditions in which the in – service students were learning. The Ministries had not encouraged all primary school teachers to undergo in – service teacher development training. Thus, the way in – service teacher development had been discoursed in the two ministries appeared to suggest that in – service was not an important focus and priority area.

The study results also indicated that the Department appeared more inclined towards teaching at the expense developing research skills and competencies. Research could be meaningfully connected to teaching and learning if properly planned, handled and managed. The study findings showed that the Department had invested in an inappropriate fundamental research.

Thus, Leu and Ginsburg (2011) suggest the use of Action Research which is one formal approach to reflection which could help teachers to investigate the effectiveness of instructional practices or issues about student learning. Karakus et al (2015) also consider that inappropriate research approaches and lack of high quality teacher education research hinders the development of an effective, consistent and research - based teacher education curriculum.

The implication was that classroom researches had the potential to increase the connection between the programme and the in - service students' classroom problems. The participants indicated that adopting Action Research would give the students the opportunity to point out educational gaps as they reflected on what they would be learning and its application. Students would become partners in knowledge construction, thereby contributing to sustainable quality primary school education in Zimbabwe.

The section discussed the major findings of the study, possible explanations and implications with regards to how the programme had been designed, implemented and evaluated. As a result, the section discussed how the programme would be improved. The next section presents conclusions and recommendations.

5.2. Conclusions

Based on the research questions in Chapter One and empirical data presented in Chapter four, the researcher made informed conclusions of the study. The conclusions informed the recommendations that address the research findings.

Generally, the in – service programme was seen by all the participants as an indispensable educational asset for continuous professional capacity building and the enrichment of primary school teachers. However, it was noted that the programme had not achieved the desired goals and the educational function of attending to all the teachers' professional needs. The

study established that there were many professional areas that were considered essential by the primary school teachers which needed more attention so as to guarantee their effectiveness as classroom teachers. The influence of the programme on primary school teacher needs was minimal because of the failure by the Department lecturers to engage and collaborate with critical stakeholders, especially students, during programme design and implementation. Further, the programme needed periodic reviews to establish its worth and relevance. Such lack of evaluation and student engagement may have contributed to the failure by lecturers to identify gaps, overlaps, inconsistencies and offer appropriate alignment of the programme to suit the needs of the Zimbabwean primary school teachers. Sadly so, lecturers, in the Department, believed in their capacities to develop a relevant and meaningful in – service programme even without adequate curriculum development knowledge and skills as well as guiding principles.

The lecturers' experience, academic and professional qualifications had given them the confidence to deliver a relevant in – service programme, but unfortunately, these were not sufficient. Lecturers needed further professional development to have a comprehensive understanding of the primary school contexts to inform their practice. The Department lecturers had faced challenges of planning needs – based in – service curriculum. The Department's failure was seen in the programme's inappropriate goals and in appropriate assessment criteria used which emphasised on examinations at the expense of practice skills.

The study also concluded that students and lecturing staff at the University did not share the same notion of what constituted teacher needs at primary school. Lecturers operated in a decontextualised manner. This had resulted in lecturers and in – service students being compartmentalised in different ways and only connected at implementation level. This was the level where students engaged with a content which was not relevant to their teaching –

learning needs. Central to this was the disconnect between what the programme offered as in - service modules and the teaching – learning requirements of the primary school teachers.

The students showed that their needs were holistic and originated from practical challenges they encountered during their execution of duty. On the other hand, lecturers' input in the programme was theoretically researched and imagined from their own experiences with the programme. Thus, the study concluded that the University in – service programme did not convincingly speak to the needs of the primary school teachers. There was a weak link between the programme and the primary school teachers' competence needs. There was need to develop sustainable programme solutions. The fix included a conversation around how students could be connected to the development of in – service goals in order to restore the health of the programme. Building requisite knowledge and skills of primary school teachers should be a critical component of primary school education success.

The study further concluded that there were lessons that could be learnt from the analysis of policy to creating communication and sharing the knowledge on a platform with students. The platform could have the potential to generate important insights that might increase the worth of the in – service programme and product. In – service university degrees presuppose that the knowledge and skills translate to better teaching and student learning in primary schools. So, it is important not to lose sight of the role of students when thinking about how the programme could shape in – service teachers' professional competencies and conduct. There is, therefore, the need for policy makers at institutional and departmental level to clearly establish programme and student performance indicators. On this basis, the programme could be evaluated to ascertain its contribution to primary school teacher needs. This requires a bottom – up approach to programme design and implementation so as the programme to have significant impact on primary school teachers. The current situation where the programme has remained a strait jacket and traditional in approach, managed and

controlled by lecturers, with students relegated to the fringes of the University in – service curriculum, it has been difficult to link the programme to real practice issues.

Given the complex nature of the Zimbabwean primary school context, the study findings suggest the need for strong and systematic strategies to integrate and align the in – service curricula with learning outcomes so as to enhance the provision of the programme. The study concluded that the Department had not exhaustively consulted the curriculum stakeholders. There was little open – feedback from them and this explained why the students' needs list was not part of the programme. As a result, it was prudent that in – service student teacher – centred curricula reform take on board concerns and input of all stakeholders in the primary education context so that concerns that are critical to the programme are communicated in a clear and meaningful way. The results of the study showed that in – service teachers' contribution, participation and shared decision making were the missing piece in the in – service programme puzzle, yet these teachers showed deep familiarity with primary school teaching – learning needs than lecturers.

The study noted that students had remained passive and foreign to a programme that was meant to improve their practice. Therefore, central to enhancing the provision of the in – service programme was for lecturers to listen to students' needs stories and initiate positive programme changes as well as changes to practice.

5.3. Recommendations

The research findings and conclusions have established a number of knowledge, practice and professional gaps that need the stakeholders' attention so as to secure and protect the programme objectives. It is against this background that the study made several recommendations to important stakeholders so that they could develop pathways that could

ensure that a credible and acceptable programme focus was achieved. In light of the above the following recommendations were made:

- Curriculum development at the University has received a fractured focus yet it is the core business of the University. The University did not have a well-informed in – service programme and did not advise on the use of curriculum design and development best practices. The recommendation, therefore, is for the University to create a strong Curriculum Development Department responsible for proper programme development, implementation and evaluation. The Department should be well supported, resourced and staffed with personnel who have the expertise in curriculum design and development.

- The role of ZIMCHE as the higher education external quality assurance supervisory authority and the internal quality assurance directorate should be expanded to go beyond approving programme regulations alone but to also include approval of module outlines. The production of these curriculum implementation documents at the University should be closely monitored, assessed and subjected to both internal and external review processes in order to guarantee the quality of the in – service programme and its products. To just approve the regulations is a job half done.

- University in - service curricula has remained closed and protected from primary school stakeholders, especially teachers, resulting in their teaching – learning requirements not being met. Students had not been engaged and consulted in important curriculum decision – making process for a responsive, relevant and meaningful in – service programme. The recommendation is that the University opens space for student involvement, dialogue, collaboration and shared decision – making

so that the curriculum development process in the Department is socially constructed. The professional development and growth of the primary school teachers could be possible if the programme addressed their needs.

- The programme was offered on block release where the time was inadequate for productive interface between the in – service students and curriculum content. The recommendation is that the programme should revert to full – residential model that allows students the opportunity to interrogate primary school issues that are of importance to their professional practice. With block release, the in – service students are constrained.

- The in – service students funded their own studies and used their holiday time to professionally develop themselves. This calls for the Government of Zimbabwe, through the line Ministries of Public Service Labour and Social Services, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and Ministry of Finance to support the B.Ed (primary) in - service students by granting them Manpower Development Leave and by also extending grants, loans and bursaries as government initiative to motivate primary school teachers to take up in – service professional teacher development to improve primary school teaching and learning.

- Introducing a practicum component to the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme would go a long way in marrying theory and practice. The suggested recommendation was to give in – service student teachers opportunities to put into practice the theories learnt with a one semester teaching practice. This could strengthen the in – service product quality with students being strong both in theory and practice.

- The Department should also prioritise and strengthen the research agenda among both students and lecturers on primary school issues. The recommendation was to embrace Action Research as the appropriate and relevant research design that could solve real practical classroom problems. This type of research has the net effect that the in – service graduates could inform classroom decisions and change practice through research.

- In – service programme evaluation should be an iterative process so that it is packaged in such a way that it is flexible, always initiating and reflecting positive and new changes to module design and curriculum practices that include practices that are critical to students' teaching - learning needs. Evaluation, either internally or externally, would ensure that unnecessary practices in the programme were rectified and the programme improved to meet its intended objectives. With evaluation, the programme could be vibrant and transformational.

- The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should ensure that it becomes mandatory for all primary school teachers to go for in – service training after serving for a given period. Currently, there is lack of systematic in – service professional teacher development policy for primary school teachers. It should be government policy that in – service training for primary school teachers be not voluntary but a must do. Teaching is an information profession and information is dynamic, the need to constantly update and upgrade it cannot be overemphasised.

5.4. Suggestions for further research

Given the above findings and recommendations, the study recommends the following for further research:

- To do a similar research with the B.Ed (secondary) in – service programme.

- To do a similar research study with the B.Ed (primary) pre – service students.

- To do a comparative study on the performance of in – service graduate teachers and those who have not done the programme.

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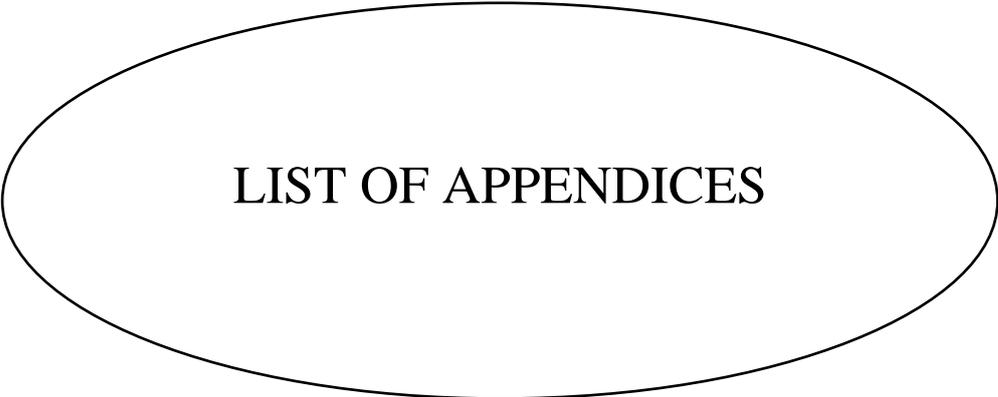
LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Robert Mugabe School of Education

Curriculum Studies Department

Box 1235

Masvingo

14September 2017

The Registrar

Great Zimbabwe University

Box 1235

Masvingo

Dear Madam

Re: **Application for permission to carry out research at Great Zimbabwe University**

I am a PhD candidate with the University of South Africa (UNISA). I am kindly asking through your good office for permission to carry out my research with participants at the institution. My thesis topic reads: **The interface between in – service teacher development and classroom teaching and learning in Zimbabwean primary schools.** The study involves collecting data through in – depth unstructured interviews with purposefully selected lecturers and a departmental chairperson and focus group discussion in respect of B.Ed in – service(primary) students.

The data collected will be primarily for the purpose of this study and will be treated with utmost confidentiality respecting important ethical conduct as I deal with human participants. There are no financial implications for the University.

I also undertake to ensure that the study findings will be made available to the University and the public for the benefit of all stakeholders.

Your assistance in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Albert Mufanechiya

PhD Candidate (UNISA)

Student No: 50790366

Email: mufanechiya66@gmail.com

Cell: 263 712 358 494

Supervisor: Prof M.J Taole

Contact: +27 84 361 1705

APPENDIX 2

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

PERMISSION TO CARRY STUDY AT GREAT ZIMBABWE

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Registrar

P O Box 1235
MASVINGO
Tel: 039-264701
Fax: 039-264701

Off Old Great Zimbabwe Road
MASVINGO
E mail: registrar@gzu.ac.zw

GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY

31 October 2017

Mr. A. Mufanechiya
Great Zimbabwe University
Robert Mugabe School of Education and Culture
Curriculum Studies Department
P.O. Box 1235
MASVINGO

Dear Mr. Mufanechiya

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY

The above matter refers.

This is to confirm that your request has been approved.

It is hoped that your research will benefit the University and it would be appreciated if you could supply the office of the Registrar with a final copy of your study, as the findings would be relevant to the University's strategic planning process.

Sincerely,

S. Gwatidzo (Mrs)

GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY
REGISTRAR'S OFFICE

3 1 OCT 2017

P.O. BOX 1235, MASVINGO
ZIMBABWE
TEL/FAX: (039) 264701

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PARTICIPATION REQUEST AND CONSENT LETTER TO
CHAIRPERSON

</div>

Great Zimbabwe University

Robert Mugabe School of Education

Box 1235

Masvingo

7 November 2017

The Chairperson

Great Zimbabwe University

Curriculum Studies Department

Box 1235

Masvingo

Dear Prospective Participant

RE: **Request for participation in a research study**

My name is **Albert Mufanechiya** a Curriculum Theory lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University; Curriculum Studies Department. I am doing PhD studies with the University of South Africa under the supervision of Prof. M.J. Taole. I am kindly inviting you to participate in my study. My thesis topic reads: **The interface between in – service teacher development and classroom teaching and learning in Zimbabwe primary schools.**

The study aims to find out how the B.Ed in – service professional development articulates classroom needs of Zimbabwean primary school teachers. The idea is to see how the in – service programme offered by the University add value to practising primary school teachers.

You are invited because of your leadership of the department that is offering the B.Ed in – service (primary) degree. Further, your experience and information that you have gained over

the years will be vital in unpacking critical issues about the programme during this discussion.

I am, therefore, kindly seeking for your consent to be a participant in this study by responding to semi - structured interview questions. The study involves audio taping the interview discussion. The interview may last for at least one and half hours depending on how issues unfold during the interview process. It should also be noted that participation remains free and voluntary. You will be free to withdraw when you feel you wish to do so during the process of the study. I also promise that the collected data will be used only for the purposes of this study, journal articles and or conference proceedings. The ethical considerations related to **anonymity and confidentiality** will be adhered to, to ensure that as a participant you are not harmed and or prejudiced by participating in this study. There are no financial or material benefits for participating in this study.

I commit myself to honesty and impartiality during the process of the study. I will also endeavor to avail to you and other stakeholders the findings of this study by placing copies in the University library and presenting my findings at public research seminars.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated corporation and valued participation.

Yours sincerely

Albert Mufanechiya

PhD Candidate (UNISA)

Student No: 50790366

Email: mufanechiya66@gmail.com

Cell: 263 712 358 494

Supervisor: Prof M.J. Taole

Cell: + 27 12 429 3541

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I ………………………………………….., confirm that **Albert Mufanechiya,** asking for my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential and anticipated inconvenience of participation. I have read, he has explained to me and has understood what it means to participate in this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty. I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and or conference proceedings, but my name will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified. I

agree to the recording of the interview. I have received a copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant's Full Name(s) (Please print)……………………………………………..

Participant's signature………………..Date……………………………………….

Researcher's Full Name(s) (Please print)……………………………………………

Researcher's signature……………………   Date …………………………………

APPENDIX 4

PARTICIPATION REQUEST AND CONSENT LETTER TO LECTURERS

Great Zimbabwe University

Robert Mugabe School of Education

Box 1235

Masvingo

7 November 2017

Prof/ Dr. /Mr. ………

Great Zimbabwe University

Curriculum Studies Department

Box 1235

Masvingo

Dear Prospective Participant

RE: **Request for participation in a research study**

My name is **Albert Mufanechiya** a Curriculum Theory lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University; Curriculum Studies Department. I am doing PhD studies with the University of South Africa under the supervision of Prof. M.J. Taole. I am kindly inviting you to participate in my study. My thesis topic reads: **The interface between in – service teacher development and classroom teaching and learning in Zimbabwe primary schools.**

The study aims to find out how the B.Ed in – service professional development articulate classroom needs of Zimbabwean primary school teachers. The idea is to see how the in – service programme offered by the University adds value to practicing primary school teachers.

You are invited because of your long history of teaching on the B.Ed in – service (primary) programme. Further, your experience and information that you have gained over the years will be vital in unpacking critical issues about the programme during this discussion.

I am, therefore, kindly seeking for your consent to be a participant in this study through responding to semi -structured interview questions. The study involves audio taping the interview sessions. The interview may last for at least one and half hours depending on how issues unfold during the process. It should also be noted that participation remains free and voluntary. You are free to withdraw when you feel you wish to do so during the process of the study. I also promise that the collected data will be used only for the purposes of this study, journal articles and or conference proceedings. The ethical considerations related to **anonymity and confidentiality** will be adhered to, to ensure that as a participant you are not harmed and or prejudiced by participating in this study. There are no financial or material benefits for participating in this study.

I commit myself to honesty and impartiality during the process of the study. I will also endeavor to avail to you and other stakeholders the findings of this study by placing copies in the University library and presenting my findings at departmental research seminars.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated corporation and valued participation.

Yours sincerely

Albert Mufanechiya

PhD Candidate (UNISA)

Student No: 50790366

Email: mufanechiya66@gmail.com

Cell: 263 712 358 494

Supervisor: Prof M.J. Taole

Cell: + 27 12 429 3541

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I ………………………………………….., confirm that **Albert Mufanechiya,** asking for my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential and anticipated inconvenience of participation. I have read, he has explained to me and has understood what it means to participate in this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty. I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and or conference proceedings, but my name will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified. I

agree to the recording of the interview. I have received a copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant's Full Name(s) (Please print)…………………………………………………..

Participant's signature…………………..Date………………………………………….

Researcher's Full Name(s) (Please print)………………………………………………….

Researcher's signature…………………… Date …………………………………………

Appendix 5

Great Zimbabwe University

Robert Mugabe School of Education

Curriculum Studies Department

Box 1235

Masvingo

7 November 2017

B.Ed In – Service (primary) Student

Great Zimbabwe University

Box 1235

Masvingo

Dear Student Respondent

RE: **Request for your participation in a research study**

My name is **Albert Mufanechiya** a Curriculum Theory lecturer, Curriculum Studies Department at Great Zimbabwe University. I am doing PhD studies with the University of South Africa (UNISA) under the supervision of Professor M.J. Taole. My thesis topic reads: **The interface between in – service teacher development and classroom teaching and learning in Zimbabwe primary schools**. I am kindly asking for your participation by being a member of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The thrust of the study is to understand how the B.Ed in – service (primary) professional teacher development has articulated primary school classroom teacher needs. The idea is to find out how the in – service programme offered by the University adds value to practising primary school teachers.

Your participation in this study is absolutely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study whenever you wish without any repercussions. The FGD will last approximately forty five minutes depending on how issues evolve. The discussion will be audio taped to facilitate

accurate collection of data which will be transcribed for analysis. The discussion will take place at a mutually agreed place and at a time that is convenient to you. My relationship with you during this study will be that of researcher and participants and not that of lecturer – student. It should be noted that there are no financial or material rewards for participating in this study.

All information collected during the focus group discussion will be treated with **confidentialit**y. It will not be traced to participants as only codes and pseudonyms will appear in the study report. This is basically to protect your person and identity.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will benefit you as an in – service student teacher, the University, the primary school sector and most importantly the learners whom we all regard as our future.

If you are willing to participate, kindly sign the declaration of consent given below.

Thank you in advance for your valued cooperation and participation.

Yours sincerely

Albert Mufanechiya

PhD Candidate (UNISA)

Student No: 50790366

Email: mufanechiya66@gmail.com

Cell: 263 712 358 494

Supervisor: Prof M.J. Taole

Contact: +27 124 293 541

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I …………………………………………… grant consent that the information I share during focus group discussion may be used by **Albert Mufanechiya** for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be digitally recorded and I grant consent for these recordings, provided that my privacy will be protected. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the group discussion to any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant's Name (Please print)……………………………………..

Participant's Signature ………………… Date …………………….

Researcher's Name: (Please print)…………………………………….

Researcher's Signature …………………. Date ……………………

Appendix 6

SEMI – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHAIRPERSON

My name is **Albert Mufanechiya**, doing PhD studies with the University of South Africa (UNISA). My topic reads: **The interface between in – service teacher development and classroom teaching and learning in Zimbabwean primary schools**. The study seeks to find out how the B.Ed in – service (primary) professional teacher development articulates classroom needs of primary school teachers. The idea is to see how the in – service programme offered at the university adds value to practicing primary school teachers.

I am kindly asking for your valued participation in this study by responding to semi - structured interview questions. I am also kindly asking for your honest opinions and professional input during the interviews. The information you will provide during the interview will be solely for the purpose of this study, journal articles and conference proceedings. It will be treated **with great care and confidentiality**. Your name will be kept **anonymous** and only a pseudonym will be used. Participation remains voluntary. Am, therefore, asking for your free, honest and professional opinions during the interview.

The questions asked will be just a guide and you are free to contribute any other ideas during the interview process.

Thank you very much for your considered voluntary participation.

QUESTIONS

1. What are your professional responsibilities as the departmental chairperson?
2. What do you understand by the term 'in – service teacher development'?
3. What are objectives of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme?

4. What are the primary school teacher competences that the programme is addressing?

5. Do lecturers who teach on the programme have the competences to assist the in – service students acquire relevant knowledge and skills related to primary school teaching and learning?

6. What are the strengths of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme?

7. Which areas do you think need revision and why?
8. As you revise your regulations, what considerations do you address?
9. In what ways do students given suggest what is taught on the programme?
11. What do you think about lecturer autonomy in deciding module content for in – service programme?

12. Are you satisfied with the B.Ed (primary) in – service product and why?

13.   How do you see the future of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme at this university?

14. Any other comments related to the B.Ed in – service (primary) programme?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX 7

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:5px;">SEMI – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LECTURERS</div>

My name is **Albert Mufanechiya**, doing PhD studies with the University of South Africa (UNISA). My topic reads: **The interface between in – service teacher development and classroom teaching and learning in Zimbabwean primary schools**. The study seeks to find out how the B.Ed in – service (primary) professional teacher development articulates classroom needs of primary school teachers. The idea is to see how the B.Ed in – service (primary) programme offered at university level adds value to practising primary school teachers.

Am kindly asking for your valued participation in this study by responding to semi - structured interview questions. I am kindly asking for your honest opinions and professional input during the interviews. The information you will provide during the interview will be solely for the purpose of this study, journal articles and conference papers. It will be treated **with great care and confidentiality**. Your name will be kept **anonymous** and only a pseudonym will be used when necessary. Participation remains voluntary. Am, therefore, asking for your free, honest and professional opinions during the interview.

The questions asked will be just a guide and you are free to contribute any other ideas during the interview process.

Thank you very much for your considered voluntary participation.

QUESTIONS

1. What is your professional teaching background?
2. How long have you been teaching on the B.Ed in – service programme?
3. What do you understand by the term 'in – service teacher development'?
4. What do you think are the objectives of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme?
5. What experience do you possess with regards to the primary school curriculum and practices?
6. Do you think the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme addresses primary school teacher classroom needs?
7. In your opinion, what are the strengths of the programme to the primary school teachers?
8. What are the shortcomings of the programme?
9. Which aspects of the programme do you think should be revised and why?
10. How do you decide on the module content that you teach on the programme?
11. In what ways are students given a chance to suggest what needs to be taught on the programme?
12. What do you think about lecturer autonomy when lecturers implement the programme?
13. Are you happy with the B.Ed (primary) in – service product?
14. Any other comments related to the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR B.Ed (PRIMARY) IN – SERVICE STUDENTS

I am **Albert Mufanechiya**, doing PhD studies with the University of South Africa (UNISA). My topic reads: **The interface between in – service teacher development and classroom teaching and learning in Zimbabwean primary schools**. The study seeks to understand how the B.Ed in – service (primary) professional teacher development articulates primary school classroom teacher needs. The notion in this study is to find out how the B.Ed in – service (primary) programme has added value to your teaching.

I am kindly asking for your valued participation in this study by being a member of the focus group discussion and responding to questions. I am seeking for your honest opinions and professional input in this discussion. The information you will provide during the focus group discussion will be specifically for the purposes of this study, journal articles and conference proceedings. It will be treated with **great care and confidentiality**. All the names of participants will be kept **anonymous** and only pseudonyms will be used where necessary. Participation in this study remains voluntary and if you have any questions please feel free to ask.

The questions asked are just a guide, feel free to add and provide as much information as you can during the discussions.

Thank you very much for your considered voluntary participation.

QUESTIONS

1. How many years of primary teaching experience do you have?
2. During those years that you taught at primary level, what have you learnt as you implemented the curriculum?
3. What competences do you need to become an effective primary school teacher?
4. Which aspects of the B.Ed (primary) in –service programme do you find useful/ relevant for your teaching?
5. What are your opinions about B.Ed in – service programme in terms of:
   a. Strengths?
   b. Weaknesses?
   c. What should be revised?
6. Are you given an opportunity to suggest what needs to be taught in the programme?

7. In what ways is university in – service programme different from primary teacher training college programme?
8. In your opinion, do you see yourself different from the way you teach as a result of being on this programme?
9. Overall, what is your general view of the programme?
10. Any other comments related to the in – service programme and your expectations?

APPENDIX 9

SAMPLES OF TRANSCRIPTIONS

TRANSCRIPT 1

SEMI – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH CHAIRPERSON

1. What are your professional responsibilities as the departmental chairperson?

- To upgrade programmes so that they meet the standards of the user Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
- To upgrade and supervision members of staff as they discharge their professional duties
- Read and understand what is obtaining on the ground in terms of educational developments
- Listening to the public on their views about the university programmes housed in the department and design programmes that speak to their needs
- Giving direction to the design of the programmes in the department.

2. What do you understand by the concept in – service teacher development?

- A teacher training programme designed to assist practising teachers to upgrade and update their skills that can be practically applied in classroom situations
- It is meant to equip practising teachers with new knowledge and skills as these are always changing. The way we used to teach has changed and knowledge and pedagogy has shifted
- It is to capacitate teachers to professionally execute their classroom duties with confidence.
- It is about teachers being current and keeping abreast with information technology

3. What are the objectives of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme offered at this institution?

- To meet the new demands of primary school classroom teaching and learning
- To constantly improve the human capital in the primary schools for efficient delivery by upgrading their abilities to teach
- To keep abreast with contemporary knowledge and skills – to produce a contemporary teacher with requisite knowledge and skills

4. What do you think are the primary school teacher competences needs that the programme addresses?

- Competences in pedagogy, delivery of content. The in – service programme addressing content, pedagogy and moral issues
- Knowledge and skills are not adequate, Unhu is necessary
- Primary school teachers teach all the subjects, and primary in –service programme is based on subject specialisation. One cannot be a master of nine subjects

- University programmes develop specialists
- Primary schooling is moving towards specialisation, for example, Agriculture and computers are now being taught by specialist teachers
- Building on what the teachers did at primary teacher training college. The educational terrain has changed and there is need to close the gaps

5. Do you think lecturers who teach on the programme have the competences to help in – service students get relevant knowledge and skills?

- Yes
- At university those who teach on the programme have the competences as they are specialists and they are recruited from secondary and primary schools in Zimbabwe
- Those with primary school background have finer details about primary school issues and secondary school trained may not have the specifics

6. What, in your opinion, are the strengths of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme?

- It has managed to capacitate primary school teachers with relevant knowledge and skills to manage primary school classroom activities with confidence
- The programme has given primary school teachers unique skills in implementing primary school curriculum
- It has opened avenues for primary school teachers to advance themselves academically
- The programme has complimented what the students did at teacher training college
- Has informed primary school teachers on both theory and practice issues
- Students have been promoted on the basis of the qualification

7. Which areas need revision?

- One area is the deployment of staff which has not been seriously considered, the programme be manned by primary trained lecturers
- The duration of the programme, two and half years, may not be adequate to ground students on important knowledge and skills they need. It needs revisiting
- There is need for a student friendly time – table that gives students enough time to research and do their assignments
- Programmes are reviewed after every three years, but at times, the department does not take heed of the timelines and programmes fall behind
- The University is supposed to closely work with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to ensure that it meets their expectations, but at times this is not done
- There is need for work related learning/ teaching practice

8. In what ways are the students' voices recognised in the programme?

- This area is usually ignored, students are 'victims' of the programme
- Students are consulted through departmental and School boards. Block students are not represented
- In formulating regulations and module outlines there are no student voices. Module evaluation is only done at the end of the year

- Sadly, lecturers have not used feedback from students during module evaluation to improve the programme but for promotion purposes.
- Delivery of lectures in the hands of lecturers and students are silent observers
- There is need to consult students since that they are senior, mature and experienced
- May be students are not involved because they have no time for it as they will be too busy

9. What do you think about lecturer autonomy in the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme implementation?

- I appreciate that it is a contested area
- It should be to a certain extent
- What are important are standards. Autonomy should be within a certain framework
- Standards are checked through sending examinations papers to external assessors for checks and balances and departmental boards when lecturers present students' marks
- Chairperson supervises and observes lecturers teach
- Peer review, this is when other lecturers check on what colleagues are doing in the subject area

10. Are you satisfied with the B.Ed (primary) in – service product and why?

- Happy but not happy
- I am happy because the product is getting recognition through promotions
- The demand has increased
- It's the university's milking cow
- Not happy, as the university needs to evaluate the in – service programme. There is need for an internal evaluation mechanism.

11. How do you see the future of the programme?

- A bright future, certain and secure
- The primary education system is pleased with our in – service product
- Teacher in primary schools want higher qualifications
- Some are moving towards Masters and PhDs while remaining in the classroom

12. Any other comment

- None

TRANSCRIPT 2

SEMI – STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH LECTURERS

1. What is your academic and professional teaching background?

- Certificate in education obtained from a primary teacher training college
- Bachelor of Arts from university
- Bachelor of Education from university
- Graduate Certificate in Education from university
- Master of Education from university
- Doctor of Philosophy
- Teaching at primary and secondary schools
- Teaching at primary teacher training college
- Teaching at university

2. What do you understand by in – service teacher development?

- Upgrading of qualifications involving qualified teachers
- It is a continuum from initial teacher training to in – service showing the development and link and not a disconnected process. It is about building on what students have learnt at college
- Equipping primary school teachers to effectively operate in the classroom
- It suggests that you identify gaps in the candidates in terms of content, methods, philosophical training which the programme should address
- The primary school teacher has a teaching background and some teaching experience but the knowledge base is inadequate
- Teachers lubricating their skills by getting degrees and furthering their education
- Deepening, enhancing and broadening competences

3. What do you think are the objectives of the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme?

- To expand the primary school teachers' knowhow in their subject areas by giving them depth in the content areas
- Help primary school teachers to operate with confidence and effectively as classroom practioners
- To upgrade primary school teachers in their abilities to teach so that they are not left behind in the information explosion
- To keep abreast with contemporary issues and knowledge in education
- For the teachers to become resource persons
- To create a different teacher from the one coming from the teachers' colleges
- To train a subject specialist in one curriculum area.
- To have a peripatetic teacher taking the secondary school model

4. How much do you know of the primary school curriculum and practices?

- Have once taught at primary school
- Obtained through teaching practice

- Through lecturing at primary teacher training institution
- Through lecturing on the B.Ed primary in – service programme

5. Do you see the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme addressing primary school teachers' classroom needs?

- Yes, the academic content side is well addressed. What they get is more than enough to operate at primary school level and beyond
- The Theory modules help them during teaching and learning
- They are guided to come up with the school syllabuses and extract content to primary school learner level
- The programme complements the primary teacher training programme
- The nature of the programme is to open their minds and not to duplicate what they are doing at primary school
- No, in terms of skills and the practical side, the programme is not doing well
- The programme does not address them in full the problems of students

6. In your opinion, what are the strengths of the programme to the primary school teacher?

- It gives primary school teachers professional confidence and empowers them to manage the primary school curriculum
- Primary school teachers become reflective and critical thinkers in the classroom
- The students are exposed to the comprehensive research packages and practices to solve typical classroom problems as opposed to the Curriculum Depth Study
- Allows students to look at their own weaknesses
- Curriculum depth is rich in their subject area than the level at teachers' college. In the specialised area they can teach with ease and may not avoid some topics
- The programme brings in new concepts

7. What are the shortcomings of the programme?

- Slow in responding to primary school teacher needs
- University curriculum constructed to suit the needs of universities. The fixed notions are that universities do what they want to do not the needs of primary schools
- Design shortcomings – not based on school based problems
- The needs analysis is sketchily and thinly done. Consultations with the primary school system are not exhaustive, comprehensive and adequate enough to make meaningful programme impact. The design remains technocratic, theoretical and armchair with little or no contact with intended beneficiaries
- The university curriculum design is another academic exercise, rushed, fulfilling a requirement and rarely referred to during implementation
- The implementation has remained sterile, frozen in the lecturers' hands that have no primary school experience. Most lecturers have no experience in implementing teacher development programmes in general and in particular, primary in – service programme which is focused on specialised knowledge and skills
- Most of the lecturers teaching on the programme are drawn from the secondary school sector. They have no knowledge of the organisation of the primary school curriculum

- Most lecturer publications on the in – service programme reflect less knowledge and recognition of critical issues that need to be addressed. Most researches do not reflect that they are teacher educators.
- Need to introduce Action research for the in – service teachers
- There is an emphasis on subject area specialisation. There is this notion that no primary school teacher can be a specialist in all the subjects
- The selection of students is not done by lecturers. Students choose what subject they want to do hence producing poor performers
- There are no facilities. The groups are very large and this has compromised on quality
- There are so many part - time lecturers without in – service teacher training background and experience
- No induction is done with lecturers appointed to the department and to teach on the programme
- The duration of the programme is too short. The block period is packed, no time for library work, research and independent reading

8. How often do you revise regulations and module outlines?

- After every three years
- Sometimes the timelines are not respected

9/10. What are the considerations when you revise the regulations?

- The regulations are supposed to be legal documents in which the university can either be sued or can sue. As it stands the regulations cannot stand the legal standards
- Regulations have become administrative tools rather than curriculum tools
- As an administrative tool, they are a requirement for the existence of the programme. As a curriculum tool it can be effectively translated into practice
- Regulations are supposed to enhance the experiences of the students yet it appears they do not add value to their professional experience and lives
- Lecturers consider what is obtaining in educational terms at primary school level. They also consider modern educational trends, new educational dimensions informed by research and observations
- Views and ideas from consultation with important stakeholders

11. How do you come up with the number of modules that the B.Ed (primary) in – service students should take?

- Preferred the term 'course' rather than 'module outlines' because they are limited in several respects. They are merely guidelines with a list of approaches
- It depends on what the programme should be covered
- Lecturers were asked by management to increase the number of courses to convert the general B.Ed (primary) in – service to honours
- This is done through researches as well as considering modern educational trends, new dimensions and observations

12. Do you consider the students' views when developing module outlines?

- A critical missing dimension from the curriculum documents

- No, module outlines usually represent the views of the individual lecturer, yet they should bring in the team work approach. Module outlines are exclusively lecturer manufactured
- There is no platform to consult students, yet they know the concern areas. University curriculum is a strait jacket
- At times one can take on board their sentiments during lectures
- Students' voices only heard through end of year module evaluation
- Students symbolically engaged through meetings where very little curriculum issues are discussed. Meeting are more administrative
- The process does not favour student engagement hence they get a certificate which does not mean much to them in terms of classroom practice

13. What do you think about lecturer autonomy in coming up with module content for the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme?

- It is good as lecturers are free to choose the content that they are comfortable to teach but this should be guided by regulations
- Lecturers can also effectively evaluate what we have taught
- It is not about what the lecturer likes, it should be directed by the programme
- Allowing total independence creates chaos
- Autonomy is not about changing the thrust of the programme. It should not be about lecturer throwing away certain core elements of the programme but it is about taking a different view
- A lot of modules have frozen in the hands of the lecturers, no innovation, creativity and lecturers teach the same things semester in and out
- No proper induction of lecturers
- There are no checks and balances. Lecturers should constitute themselves into an association and have periodic meetings to share experiences on modules and the programme

14. In your opinion, are you satisfied with the B.Ed (primary) in – service product and why?

- Yes , the students are being recognised by the Ministry by getting posts of responsibility
- Not happy as the programme goals are hazy. Lecturers are not clear about the prototype teacher they want to produce from the programme
- Products do not get classroom competences
- The primary school teachers should feed into the programme
- The manner of introducing and taking on board the changes do not speak to students needs

15. How do you see the future of the programme at this university?

- The future is bright there are so many teacher out there who need in – service training

16. Any other comments related to the B.Ed (primary) in – service programme?

- There is need to align teacher education programmes from initial training to in – service and be done by linking primary schools to education faculties at universities – this is a critical missing dimension

- Invest in information, research and trending on educational provision relevant to school improvement
- Teachers on in –service programme should be government funded through educational loans and grants
- More resources are needed as the future of primary education is on in – service training
- University should have internal evaluation strategies for the programme by finding ways of following up on students to see what they are doing

TRANSCRIPT 3

> FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH B.Ed (PRIMARY) IN – SERVICE STUDENTS

1. What are your academic and professional qualifications?

- 5 O levels including English
- Levels and A levels
- Certificate and diploma in education from a primary teacher training college

2. How many years of primary school teaching experience do you have?

- Ranging from 2 to 14 years of service as primary school teachers

3. During your teaching years, what have you learnt as you implemented the primary school curriculum?

- There is too much work, the workload is very heavy
- Classes with mixed ability are difficult to handle
- Teacher pupil ratio is too big
- It is difficult to implement all the subjects with the same competence
- Non – examinable subjects are neglected
- There is lot of paper work especially with Performance Lag Address Programme and Early Reading Initiative

4. What competences do you need to become an effective primary school teacher?

- Syllabus interpretation in all the subject areas
- Content in practical subjects like Physical Education, Music, Art and Design, Agriculture and those who have not majored in these subjects find it difficult to teach them
- Managing composite classes
- Media production and creation of classroom learning centres
- Coaching skills in various sporting disciplines
- ICT tools in teaching and learning
- Research which is classroom – based e.g. Action Research
- Enrichment in all subject areas

5. Which aspects of the programme do you find relevant to your teaching?

- Curriculum theory module
- Some modules in the main subject area
- The research component but should be classroom based like Action Research

6. What are your opinions about the B.Ed (primary) programme?

a) Strengths

- depth and breadth in some subject areas especially subject of specialisation

- giving confidence in the teaching - learning context and empowered to implement the primary school curriculum
- getting new ideas, pedagogical skills, becoming critical thinkers and problem solvers
- improves the communication skills
- becoming a specialist in the subject area
- being promoted to posts of responsibility
- becoming academic in the presentation of work
- opening up avenues to develop in academic areas

b) Weaknesses

- Duration is too short and time table packed. There is no time to research and do independent reading, no time to refresh and reflect
- There is overemphasis on examinations
- The lack of practical skills, teaching practice/ classroom simulations should be considered
- The university emphasises on subject specialisation at the expense of other subjects we teach at primary school level
- Government has failed to grant manpower leave and educational grants to in – service students
- Important areas such as ICT, HIV/AID, History of Zimbabwe, Heritage Studies are offered as appreciation yet they are core curricula at primary level

7. Are you given an opportunity to suggest what needs to be covered in the programme?

- No, the opportunity is not there
- When we come we just get module outlines and we do not know where the lecturers get the content from

8. In what ways is the university in – service programme different from the primary teacher training college programme?

- College teacher training is basic in terms of knowledge and skills
- The depth and breadth of the work is different, there is more at university level
- You learn a lot because of semesterisation
- At college we got content and skills in all the subject areas

9. In your opinion do you see yourself different from the way you teach as result of the programme?

- Yes – we have the depth in content, knowledge and skills
- We are now more confident in curriculum delivery
- We are now specialists

10. Overall, what is your general view of the in – service programme?

- A good programme
- There is need to look for some aspects that improve the programme especially how the content could be applied in real classroom situations

APPENDIX 10

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UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2017/10/18

Ref: **2017/10/18/50790366/31/MC**

Name: Mr A Mufanechiya

Student: 50790366

Dear Mr Mufanechiya

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2017/10/18 to 2022/10/18

Researcher:

Name: Mr A Mufanechiya

Email: mufanechiya66@gmail.com

Telephone: 263 392 66658

Supervisor:

Name: Prof MJ Taole

Email: taolemj@unisa.ac.za

Telephone: +27 84 361 1705

Title of research:

The interface between in-service teacher development and classroom teaching and learning in Zimbabwean primary schools

Qualification: PHD in Curriculum and Instructional Studies

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2017/10/18 to 2022/10/18.

The **low/medium/high risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2017/10/18 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

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1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date 2022/10/18. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:
The reference number **2017/10/18/50790366/31/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,

Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Prof V McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

APPENDIX 11

<div style="border:1px solid black; text-align:center">LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE</div>

Prof J. Gonye

PHDA – English (University of Venda) MA – English (University of Zimbabwe),

Grad. C.E (University of Zimbabwe), B. A – English (University of Zimbabwe)

Current position: Associate Professor (English) (Great Zimbabwe University)

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jgonye@gzu.ac.zw

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: Confirmation of Editing of Albert Mufanechiya's Doctoral Thesis   (Student Number: 50790366)

I, Jairos Gonye, have edited **Albert Mufanechiya's** Doctoral Thesis with the title: '**The interface between in – service teacher development and classroom teaching and learning in Zimbabwean primary schools'** to be submitted to **UNISA** in terms of the requirements for the attainment of a Doctoral degree in Curriculum and Instructional Studies.

Thank you

Jairos Gonye   (Associate Professor) - GZU   Date: 30/01/ 2020